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Little short of national murder: Forced migration and the making of diasporas in the Atlantic world, 1745--1865

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LITTLE SHORT OF NATIONAL MURDER:
FORCED MIGRATION AND THE MAKING OF DIASPORAS IN THE ATLANTIC
WORLD, 1745-1865

BY

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BA, Boston University, 1996
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DISSERTATION

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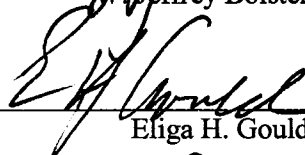
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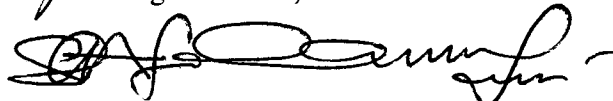
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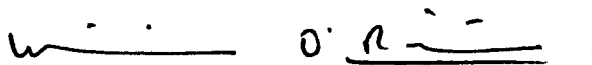
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ABSTRACT

LITTLE SHORT OF NATIONAL MURDER: FORCED MIGRATION AND THE MAKING OF DIASPORAS IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1745-1865

By

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University of New Hampshire, September 2006

Removal – or, the exile and forced migration of marginalized cultural and racial groups from one region of the British Empire and, later, the United States, to another less volatile region – emerged as a key tool in the construction of the Anglo-American Atlantic World. British officials used removal to secure the empire, ridding the realm of Catholic menaces, black insurgents, challenges to the throne and the brutal conflicts between English colonists and Native Americans. American leaders, after the conclusion of the American Revolution, viewed removal as a viable solution to the problem of slavery and the potential troubles induced by freeing the slaves. Thomas Jefferson, among other Virginians, Britons and West Indians, advocated removing all freed blacks to parts unknown. At the same time, black Masons in New England embarked on the first organized attempt to land free African-Americans in Sierra Leone in 1795/6, calling on free Africans in America to return to their native land to Christianize the continent. By 1812, Paul Cuffe advocated black emigration partly for religious reasons, but also in an effort to open new trade opportunities with West Africa.

Later, the American Colonization Society – heavily supported by current and former slaveholders, high profile politicians such as Henry Clay, and moral improvement organizations – motivated some freed blacks to voluntarily go to Africa to settle Liberia. Soon, however, free blacks who formerly supported voluntary emigration began to view the idea as removal, a colonization scheme forced on them by powerful whites. Many blacks such as James Forten and

Richard Allen refocused their attention on building strong, free black communities in America, while others looked to black organized and sponsored emigration to Haiti. As the Civil War erupted and the United States faced the prospect of thousands of free blacks, Abraham Lincoln's government joined the growing Haitian colonization movement, sponsoring a colony in Haiti that failed within one year. Lincoln also called for the creation of a colony in South America for newly emancipated African-Americans, revealing the extent to which removal had become a highly racialized and institutionalized ideology that went far beyond the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Indeed, removal and colonization served as a key ingredient in America's plans for territorial expansion throughout the nineteenth century. Men like Thomas Jefferson attempted to replace free blacks with immigrant white Europeans, which they believed made for a more harmonious and stable republic.

INTRODUCTION

When scholars of American history and culture imagine removal, they often mention the Indian Removal Act of 1830 or call to mind images of the Trail of Tears.¹ Yet, by the time of Andrew Jackson's calls for the removal of the Cherokees and other Native Americans from their ancestral lands, the practice of dispersing entire groups of people had a long history whose roots lay in British expansion in the Atlantic world.² As the British Atlantic world expanded in the eighteenth century, officials employed removal on a larger and much more aggressive scale.³ British imperial officials periodically

¹ American Indian removal is a topic on which insightful scholarship is numerous. See: David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Sovereignty and the US Supreme Court*. Austin: University of Texas Press 1997; Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*. New York: Viking Press, 2001; Jane F. Lancaster, *Removal Aftershock: The Seminoles' Struggle to Survive in the West, 1836-1866*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994; Theda Perdu, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979; and Michael D. Greene, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982; and Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

² The idea of removing troublesome peoples extends back centuries. Greeks and Romans used removal to secure new territorial holdings. For example, in 41 B.C. Romans recaptured strategically valuable land on the island of Sicily, removing all of the inhabitants of rebellious cities, such as Tauromenium (present-day Taormina), and replacing them with loyal families. The British may have been familiar with such stories, because of the popularity of Greco-Roman sagas popular in early modern Britain. M. I. Finley, *A History of Sicily: Ancient Sicily to the Arab Conquest*. New York: Viking Press, 1968. Pages 148-150.

³ The British conquest of Ireland played an important role in the development of removal as tool for political and social control. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Crown endorsed a systematic resettlement policy that ousted Irish landholders in favor of their English counterparts. Many English officials argued that English settlers would improve the land while also spreading the civilizing influence of English cultural and religious beliefs. See, Nicholas Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern established, 1565-1576*. New York: Barnes and Nobles Books, 1976; Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001; and *Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Kingdom or Colony*. Ed. Jane H. Olmeyer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

confronted small and large-scale revolts and uprisings, and usually these were met with swift, iron-fisted responses.

Local and metropolitan authorities also dealt with less violent types of resistance to imperial policies: for example, colonists protested taxes, merchants demanded duties on competing British colonial products, and peoples newly absorbed into the empire refused to take the Oath of Allegiance to the crown. These ongoing small-scale acts of resistance caused the British Empire to become a product “of transatlantic negotiations and authority constructed on the colonial margins rather than transplanted from Europe.”⁴ As a result, local authorities held considerable influence in these negotiations of power. Quick decisions were often needed, highlighting the slow lines of communications between officials in London and the colonies, and leaving colonial leaders to make important imperial choices that sometimes resulted in the removal of entire racial, ethnic, and cultural communities.

Local officials were on the frontlines in the attempts to diffuse revolts in the British Atlantic.⁵ They favored the idea of transporting and removing troublesome populations because it solved a key problem: removal dispersed the very people believed to be at the heart of resistance movements and uprisings. Local authorities were confident of quelling revolts when placing accused conspirators into exile. Moreover, officials instructed local – and often decidedly non-British – populations on issues ranging from

⁴ Elizabeth Mancke, “Negotiating an Empire: Britain and its Overseas Peripheries, c.1550-1780,” in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries on the Americas, 1500-1820*. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy, eds. New York: Routledge: 2002. p.236.

⁵ The role of imperial officials on the periphery of empire has been revived recently as topic of interest among scholars of the Atlantic World, see: Laura Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 and Eliga H. Gould, “Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772,” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Summer 2003) 471-510.

acceptable cultural practices to the parameters of racial inclusion to tolerable religious and political affiliations. In using similar derogatory and negative terms – such as *rascals* or *savages* – to describe a broad spectrum of races, ethnicities and religions, authorities placed non-British peoples on the social as well as physical margins of the empire. In addition to dealing with people on the margins, another benefit of removal included freeing land seen as misused, inefficiently used or simply neglected. Forcibly dispersing the population enabled local officials, merchants and the crown to repopulate the region with people they believed were better suited to properly exploit the given environment.

Neither the challenges Britain faced as a result of the diversity of its Atlantic empire, nor the use of removal as a solution disappeared after American Independence. At the end of the eighteenth century, the fledgling United States faced uncertainty in dealing with the moral, social, legal and political questions of a society in upheaval. This time, however, no issue played a larger role in integrating these many different concerns than the problem of slavery. American leaders worked repeatedly to resolve the issue. Significantly, Thomas Jefferson reflected at length on this concern, favoring the removal of free blacks from white society, and Jefferson found widespread support for his colonization schemes among white contemporaries, as well as later generations.⁶

⁶ Thomas Jefferson set forth an elaborate argument that described whites and blacks as being in a state of war with one another. Slavery was a state of war, Jefferson argued, and as a captive nation, slaves will always seek freedom and independence for their nation. Jefferson further reasoned that two distinct nations, one of former slaves and one of white republicans, could not coexist on the same land and thus the only reasonable solution proved to be the removal of one of the nations. For further discussion of Jefferson's writings about race relations, see Chapter Four. See also Peter S. Onuf, "To Declare Them A Free and Independent People: Race, Slavery and National Identity in Jefferson's Thought," in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 1998), 1-46. Thomas Jefferson. *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martins Press, 2002.

White Americans from all parts of the nation discussed removing free blacks from the United States. The concept of removal was transformed as a result of conversations between wealthy and powerful white elites such as Jefferson, James Madison, Samuel Hopkins, and William Thornton. Instead of removing blacks from one part of the United States to another territory under its control, as the British did when removing groups, American officials wanted to rid the country of free blacks and create a new nation for them somewhere outside of the United States' boundaries. Americans called this form of removal colonization: the transplanting of American residents overseas to create colonies populated with cast-offs from the United States in various locations of the Atlantic world. By the time of Jefferson's death in 1826, the policy of removal had been transformed into a highly racialized concept used by Americans to deal with the difficult issues raised by slavery and territorial expansion.⁷ The British had used removal broadly, applying it to troublesome ethnic, racial and religious groups; Americans focused their colonization efforts primarily on free blacks.

This increasingly racialized ideology also helped to shape another issue confronting the young United States. Until the Civil War, Americans wrestled constantly with the question of national security. Gabriel's Rebellion in 1800 and Nat Turner's Revolt in 1831 heightened fears of widespread slave revolt.⁸ Moreover, continued warfare with Native Americans increased white America's concerns over the security of the nation. Removal to another more remote region of the United States, or potentially to another

⁷ See Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Americans racialized removal in a similar way to Eric Hinderaker's description of racialized imperial control over the Ohio Valley.

⁸ James Sidbury, *Ploughshares Into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; and *Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory*. Kenneth S. Greenberg, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

continent offered one solution to the question of how to deal with groups considered to be a threat to national security. Like Native Americans, African Americans faced removal. However, African Americans faced a different form of removal: colonization. Whites imagined a nation devoid of African Americans, who were deemed too dangerous and numerous to be relocated within American territories. Instead, whites hoped colonization in West Africa, Haiti or elsewhere in the Atlantic world would await free blacks.

The formation of the American Colonization Society in Washington, D.C. in 1816 signaled the full transformation of removal into colonization. The Society held the express goal of colonizing and repatriating the “notoriously ignorant, degraded and miserable, mentally diseased, brokenspirited” freedmen who “wander unsettled and unbefriended through our land.”⁹ Using terms similar to those employed a century earlier by British officials to describe marginalized cultural groups, the American Colonization Society emerged as the only federally funded proponent of colonization. Building on Thomas Jefferson’s belief that whites and blacks could not live peacefully side-by-side in a free republic, advocates of colonization embraced the policy of removal pioneered by their British counterparts. Indeed, colonization became the American version of removal.¹⁰

⁹ *African Repository*, Vol. I (1825) p.68. As quoted in Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 21.

¹⁰ The major exception to plans for international colonization and removal is the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the ensuing dislocation of thousands of Native Americans. However, Jacksonian Indian Removal fits within my scheme in two ways. First, Native Americans were removed to Indian Territory beyond the Mississippi River and, more importantly, beyond the borders of established white American settlements. Separating freed slaves from white society was the main gain for advocates of colonization. Second, the population removed in the 1830s was, when compared to the African-American population of the United States, relatively small. A few thousand people were much easier to remove than several million, as demonstrated by British officials in the eighteenth century.

Discussions about removal and colonization were not limited to white elites. Free African-Americans looked to colonization to strengthen community ties and provide relief from oppressive social conditions in the United States. Shortly after the American Revolution, free blacks in northern cities explored the possibility of resettling in West Africa to begin life anew, and to spread Christianity and the virtuous ideals of liberty and free labor to native Africans. During the 1770s-1790s, free northern blacks advocated a voluntary form of colonization that would resettle only freemen willing to go to Africa to spread Christianity or, for those people born in Africa, to return home. Emigration, as free blacks called this form of colonization, experienced challenges – such as inadequate funding – that prevented the movement from growing beyond the words and petitions of its primary advocates in free black fraternal societies. Emigration gained support from white advocates of colonization who joined with blacks in an attempt to help plan and fund the movement. William Thornton and other white men perceived emigration as an alternative method of attaining their goal to remove free blacks. It mattered little to them whether or not blacks voluntarily left. Thornton and his contemporaries supported emigration for very different reasons than did black advocates who saw emigration as a chance to reconnect with their brethren across the Atlantic.

During the early nineteenth century, amidst the abolition of the international slave trade by Great Britain (1807) and the United States (1808), the emigration movement was transformed into a new version of colonization. Although free African-Americans, led by men such as Paul Cuffe and Prince Saunders, still advocated voluntary emigration of blacks to West Africa, Haiti and other parts of the Atlantic world, the goal of the émigrés changed. Black leaders envisioned the transference of African-American culture –

religion, political and social economies, and education – to persons of African descent in the lands to be colonized.

While whites looked to purge the United States of free blacks, Cuffe, Saunders and other key African-American leaders embarked on a plan to remake the African diaspora in their own image. Successful and educated, these men had internalized Benjamin Franklin's ideal of the self-made man, reasoning that if they benefited from adhering to certain principles, such as hard work, sobriety, and piety, then other blacks in the Atlantic would also. Cuffe, Saunders, and Martin Delaney ran counter to most black elites' opposition to colonization, but in many ways they helped emphasize a point Richard Allen and other anti-colonization black elites argued: that blacks should hold the power to migrate on their own terms. They appropriated whites' ideas regarding colonization in order to advance an African-American imperialist agenda. Rather than removing people against their will, they wanted to spread Christianity and American values such as liberty and free labor to other blacks in the Atlantic world. Colonization transformed once again as African-Americans' – whose descendants had already been removed from Africa in the slave trade – responded to another possible forced migration at the hands of whites, this time under the auspices of the American Colonization Society and its backers. African-American leaders developed this form of colonization as a strategy of resistance against removal plans advocated by white Americans.

Later, as black leaders traveled the Atlantic looking for new places to colonize, white Americans renewed their calls to remove free blacks from the United States during the Civil War. The Emancipation Proclamation seem to assure America that wide-scale emancipation would occur, causing anxious whites to refocus on colonization as a way to

deal with a large population of freemen whom they believed to be violent by nature. A new vigor surfaced in the white-led colonization movement, one not seen since the Jeffersonian era. Because the American Colonization Society seemed in disarray, Abraham Lincoln attempted to return to Jeffersonian colonization schemes, implementing them himself. One scheme failed in Haiti. Another scheme, to land several thousand black farmers in Ecuador, never materialized. When faced with the founders' worse fear – the consequences of wide scale emancipation – the Civil War generation returned to colonization as the best method of removing newly emancipated blacks from the United States. Still, the expense and logistics involved in relocating millions of people proved too difficult to make colonization successful.

Although Indian Removal is inter-related with the kind of removal and forced migration I discuss in this dissertation, significant differences existed. To begin with, Indian Removal was a fully state sponsored activity, legitimated by the Indian Removal Act of 1830, a specific law passed by Congress to relocate thousands of Native Americans to the western side of the Mississippi River. Indian Removal was funded and carried out by U.S. officials and military personnel. Forced migration, as I conceive of it, impacted a much larger population in the Anglo-American Atlantic world, and it never received full logistical and military support from central governments in London or Washington, D.C. It was left to local officials – although sometimes with explicit approval or implicit support from central agencies – to plan, conduct, and fund acts of removal: Nova Scotia's officials relied on New England military personnel paid for by wealthy merchants; Jamaican officials paid for much of the Maroons' supplies in Nova Scotia. Additionally, Jefferson never fully resolved how to pay for mass colonization of

free African-Americans to Africa, and the American Colonization Society gained some government funding in their efforts to colonize free blacks, but they still relied heavily on state colonization societies and individual donors to fund their projects.

Indian Removal focused on opening lands and redistributing a population with historic land claims. As a result, Native Americans differed legally and politically from the Scottish Highlanders, Acadians, Maroons, Africans, and African-Americans. Indeed, they were, as Justice John Marshall formulated in his ruling in the 1832 case *Worcester v. Georgia*, “domestic dependent nations,” a status that noted Native Americans’ ability to enter into treaties with the U.S. government, while also highlighting the federal government’s somewhat paradoxical right to govern them. Native Americans held highly desirable lands that white Americans prized, and support for removal of Native Americans often emphasized the growing conflict between white settlers and Indians for this land.

In 1828, Indian Commissioner Thomas L. McKenney explained the reasons removal of Indians should be undertaken. He conceived of removal as a benevolent act, one where Indians would not be left to “linger out a wretched and degraded existence, within districts of country already surrounded and pressed upon by a population whose anxiety and efforts to get rid of them” could result in “circumstances” in which “*they must perish*.”¹¹ In McKenney’s mind, removal would effectively protect Native Americans from greedy whites. No such arguments surfaced during the debates surrounding the removal of Acadians, Maroons or African-Americans. These groups

¹¹ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1828*, reprinted in *Major Problems in American Indian History*, Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. p.2003.

were considered to be in or on the brink of open rebellion, and with no ancestral claims to the lands, their potential threat was deemed to be too great.

Indian Removal must be understood as the capstone to a century's worth of forced migration administered by Britons and Americans. The men who schemed to remove the Acadians, Maroons, and African-Americans were frustrated by the lack of full government support. The Indian Removal Act of 1830, the Trail of Tears, and other instances of Indian Removal represented the triumph of forced migration: the policy directed at Acadians, Maroons, and free blacks became law, even if intended for groups most white Americans at the time believed to be far less dangerous to the future welfare of the United States than free blacks.

This study is organized in three sections. Part One, "the British Precedent," focuses on British officials' efforts to construct a manageable Atlantic Empire in the eighteenth century. In this section, I examine individual cases of removal, demonstrating that complex issues of race, ethnic and religious otherness, rebellion and economic development were at the core of the forced exile of Scottish Jacobites, Acadians, and Trelawney Maroons of Jamaica.¹² Chapters one and two consider how the British applied

¹² The literature on the Highland Clearings is extensive and, for the purposes of this project, it can be divided into two categories: romantic and scholarly. The mythical literature, although often based on fact, romanticize the Highland Clearings, usually referring to the '45 as a proud moment in Scottish history. For an important overview of such work, see: Murray G. H. Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995. For more academic oriented works on the Highland Clearings and the various Jacobite Rebellions, including the epic one in 1745, see: Frank McLynn, *The Jacobites*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985; Fitzroy Maclean, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*. New York: Athenaeum, 1989; and Paul Kleber Monod,

small-scale acts of transportation – of convicts, Indians and rebellious slaves – to large-scale acts of rebellion and perceived disloyalty, focusing especially on the Scottish Jacobite rebellion against the crown in 1745, and the Acadians’ refusal to take the Oath of Allegiance in mid eighteenth-century Nova Scotia. These two cases represent unambiguous examples of removal: the systematic collection of peoples to be deported from their communities. Chapter three examines a group of 550 Maroons removed from Jamaica after the Second Maroon War of 1795.¹³ In the diaspora for forty years, the Maroons’ demonstrated one group’s successful attempt to retain their distinctive identity against outside pressures to convert to Christianity and adopt British cultural norms. These chapters show how British imperial authorities used removal to maintain order and instruct local populations on social norms and acceptable behavior. But, more importantly, these chapters chronicle the development of removal as a policy employed by local officials, and later adopted in London by white elites to deal with issues and anxieties arising from England’s growing free black population.

Part Two, “The American Evolution,” explores the issues of slavery and emancipation that confronted the founders and the early republic. Chapter four examines

Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. Much like the literature on the Highland Clearings, relevant work on the Acadians can be divided into two bodies: mythical and scholarly. One example of mythical and romantic works is by Carl A. Brasseaux, *In Search of Evangeline: Birth and Evolution of the Evangeline Myth*. Louisiana: Blue Heron Press, 1988. Other, more scholarly works, include: Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001 and Naomi E. S. Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-1784*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press, 1992.

¹³ The literature on the Jamaican Maroons is scant with the notable exception of Richard Price’s work, in particular, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*. New York: Anchor Press, 1973. The literature on the Trelawney Maroons is composed primarily of Mavis Campbell’s exceptional monographs, especially *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796*. New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990. See also Lennox O’Riley Picart, “The Trelawney Maroons and Sir John Wentworth: The Struggle to Maintain Their Culture, 1796-1800,” *Collections of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society*, Vol. 44, (October 1996) p.165-188.

how elite whites, including Thomas Jefferson, transformed removal into colonization during this period.¹⁴ Elite whites believed for a variety of reasons that removing the free black population of the United States to a colony in West Africa or elsewhere in the Atlantic world would facilitate prosperity and growth.¹⁵ Jefferson emerged as the most influential and powerful advocate of colonization. Together with other elite whites, Jefferson believed they could fashion a stronger republic based on white free laborers without competition from free blacks. Moreover, Jefferson argued that removing free blacks lessened the threat of racial intermixture that would result in the dilution of white Americans' mental faculties.

Part III, "Remaking the African Diaspora," chronicles African-Americans' reaction to white-led colonization schemes. To many blacks, whites' colonization plans appeared to be a form of forced migration. Chapter five illustrates how even while white-led colonization remained in the planning stages, the idea of being removed prompted free African-Americans to reconceptualize colonization. Free blacks – some born in Africa, some in America – looked to Africa as a place of opportunity: a place where they

¹⁴ The literature on colonization focuses exclusively on the movement in terms of American history, neglecting the broader Atlantic contexts and origins of the idea. See, P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. New York: Octagon Books, 1980; Richard West, *Back to Africa: A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970; and Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975.

¹⁵ See P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. New York: Octagon Books, 1980; Richard West, *Back to Africa: A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970; Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Institution: A History of the American Colonization Society*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005; Claude Andrew Clegg, *The Price of Liberty: African-Americans and the Price of Liberia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004; Henry Noble Sherwood, "Early Negro Deportation Projects," in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (March 1916); Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina's *Black London: Life Before Emancipation*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995; and Stephen J. Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London's Blacks and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement, 1786-1791*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994.

could escape America's racist society and do good by instructing native Africans in Christian values, liberty and the virtue of free labor. Early emigration efforts laid the foundation for later African-American imperialism and the remaking of the African diaspora.

Chapter six examines Paul Cuffe's construction of pan-Atlantic black identity through black-led colonization. Cuffe's vision of interconnected networks between nations and communities of free blacks served as a precursor to later attempts by blacks to remake the African diaspora. Chapter seven explores how black colonizationists imagined the emergence of a strong, unified pan-Atlantic black identity based on the acceptance of African-American values and ideals. Black colonization leaders such as Prince Saunders, John Russwurm, and Martin Delaney encountered an unexpected reality: that African-Americans differed dramatically from native Africans. Their goal changed, much as Paul Cuffe's had, focusing instead on the enlightenment of residents of West Africa, Haiti, and any other free black nation through the transference of African-American culture. At the core of African-American imperialism lay the Christianization of their African brethren.

Finally, chapter eight, "Lincoln and the Return to Jeffersonian Colonization, 1860-1865," examines how Abraham Lincoln's calls for the creation of colonies in Haiti and South America represented a return to Jeffersonian ideals previously abandoned by the American Colonization Society. Faced with the Founders' greatest fear – the consequences of mass manumission – Lincoln planted a colony for free blacks in Haiti, which failed within a year. By the time of Lincoln's assassination, it became clear that

colonization could not work due to expense, uncooperative foreign leaders, and the deterioration of the American Colonization Society.

The scholarship available on exile and dispersion focuses mainly on individual events at the expense of a broader historical context; it characterizes individually removed groups as exceptions. As a result, the central role removal played in the construction of the Anglo-American Atlantic world has been overlooked.¹⁶ Scholarship available on each of these case studies presented here focuses almost exclusively on the individual act of removal or colonization.¹⁷ Such works are important and interesting in themselves, but they fall short in their scope. This project intends to link together a series of events that have previously been seen as unrelated. Removal permeated the mindset of Anglo-American officials to such a degree that they often imagined an Atlantic world void of undesirables. As a result removal created new diasporas, and in resisting removal plans, African-Americans refashioned the African diaspora. Because removal impacted cultural groups around the Atlantic world, this project fits squarely within the context of transnational history, following the connections outlined by earlier generations of Atlantic historians. The policy of removal gained momentum as governments attempted

¹⁶ Such scholarship includes David Eltis, ed. *Coerced and Free Migration: Global Perspectives*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002; Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001; Eric J. Richards, "Scotland and the Uses of Atlantic Empire," in Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, *Strangers Within the Realm: the Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992; Douglas R. Egerton, "Its Origin Is Not A Little Curious: A New Look at the American Colonization Society," in *Journal of the Early Republic*. Vol. 5, No. 4 (Winter 1985); Peter S. Onuff, "Every Generation is an Independent Nation: Colonization, Miscegenation, and the Fate of Thomas Jefferson's Children," in *William and Mary Quarterly*. 3rd Serial, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Jan 2001); and William L. Anderson, ed. *The Cherokee Removal: Before and After*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991.

¹⁷ A recent prominent example is John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from Their American Homeland*. New York: WW Norton, 2005.

to centralize, and as populations diversified. In an ever-growing Atlantic world, officials – both local and national – looked to removal as way to increase control of racially, ethnically, or religiously intolerable peoples.

This dissertation explores the development of removal policy by considering several key types of documents. First, government papers provide the background for understanding the process of determining which groups should be removed. Correspondence between the War Office, Colonial Office and personal letters of British officials highlight the frequency with which authorities considered removal a viable option in their attempts to maintain colonial order. Moreover, these documents reveal extensive debates surrounding the use of removal, making it clear that it was not always an easy decision for those officials – the governors, assemblymen and military leaders – on the frontlines. Voices of those removed emerge from these documents. Documents produced by literate removed populations help us understand how the affected population dealt with the issues of being forcibly dispersed. In those cases where the population was largely illiterate, friendly and sympathetic Britons and Americans provided us with their account, often including quotations claimed to be from those persons being removed. Still, these sources must be approached with caution and assessed against other documents in an effort to reconstruct the experiences of marginalized peoples.

References and discussions concerning colonization appear in a vast array of published and unpublished private documents, while also surfacing regularly in government publications such as the *Congressional Record*. The *African Repository* and the annual reports of the American Colonization Society provide an overall picture of the events, discussions, and ideology behind the colonization movement after 1816.

Surprising amounts of material give balance to the colonization debate. Paul Cuffe's papers are well known, but several lesser known diaries, memoirs, and political tracts written by black advocates of emigration and critics of the American Colonization Society also exist. These documents allow a fuller understanding of the voices in the colonization movement, revealing how blacks transformed the idea of colonization from one based on removal to one based on emigration.

Removal, whether utilized by Great Britain or the United States, created diasporas. The term "diaspora" derives from the Jewish exodus. The dispersal of Jews from Palestine amongst non-Jews is a classic example of a diasporic people.¹⁸ Slave cultures and free men of color in the United States often referenced the Jewish Exodus in describing themselves, and by the 1960s a new generation of scholars began to apply the concept of diaspora to the study of African history and culture.¹⁹ Some three decades later, attention once again focused on the concept of diaspora. The term is now used to describe a variety of migration experiences.²⁰ Applying the term "diaspora" to all migratory peoples is risky. Not all such groups possess important attributes that make them diasporic peoples: "the role played by religion, the homeland, and memory,

¹⁸ Stéphane Dufoix, *Les Diasporas*. Paris: Que sais-je, Presses Universitaires de France, 2003; and Simon Dubnow, "Diaspora." *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Vol. 5, New York: Macmillan, 1937. P. 126-130.

¹⁹ See Joseph Harris, "Introduction to the African Diaspora," in *Emerging Themes in African History*, T.O. Ranger, ed. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968; and George Shepperson, "The African Diaspora – or the African Abroad," in *African Forum: A Quarterly Journal of African Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Summer 1966), 76-93.

²⁰ See, Khachig Tölölyan, "Rethinking *Diaspora(s)*: Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment," in *Diaspora*, Vol. 5, (Spring 1996), p. 8.

especially in the memory of tragedy, in fostering long-distance nationalism and “return” movements” is central to the definition.²¹

This study examines the making of diasporas in the Atlantic world as well as the *remaking* of one portion of the global phenomenon known as the African diaspora. Only those peoples who confronted forced migration from established homes and lands are included.²² Each of these groups must also be considered within a transnational framework because they moved across “international borders and settle[d] and establish[ed] social relations in a new state,” and “maintan[ed] social connections within the polity from which they originated.”²³ Moreover, in a “transnational” forced “migration, persons live their lives across international borders.”²⁴

This dissertation focuses on the making of Scottish, Acadian and Maroon diasporas, as well as the *remaking* of the Atlantic littoral’s black diaspora. For each group the concept of “diaspora” illuminates the complexities inherent to dispersed communities. The groups included in this study encountered what Stuart Hall calls *décalage*.²⁵ *Décalage* is the difference in time and space that dispersed peoples experienced; a “kernel of precisely that which cannot be transferred or exchanged, the

²¹ See William Safran, “Recent French Conceptualizations of Diaspora,” in *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*. Vol. 12, No. 3 (2003), 437-441.

²² Under strict social scientific definitions, my conception of “diaspora” fits the *categoric* model, which does not include all refugee or immigrant communities. See, Dufoix, *Les Diasporas* and Safran, “Recent French Conceptualizations of Diaspora,” p. 438.

²³ See Nina Glick Schiller, “Transmigrants and Nation-States: Something Old and Something New in U.S. Immigrant Experience,” in *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*. Charles Hirschman, Philip Kasinitz, and Josh De Wind, eds. New York: Russells Sage, 1999. P. 96. Also, Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Blanc-Szanton, “Transnationalism: A New Analytical Framework for Understanding Migration,” in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 645, (1992), 1-24; Thomas Faist *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000; and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ For more on *décalage*, see Brent Hayes Edwards, “The Uses of Diaspora,” in *Social Text*, Vol. 19, No. 1, (Spring 2001), 45-73.

received biases that refuse to pass over when one crosses the water.”²⁶ *Décalage* captures the diverse ways in which dispersed peoples and communities developed once in the diaspora.²⁷ It is not enough to suggest that Acadians, Scots, Maroons and African-Americans reacted in similar ways to removal; rather, the differences and uniqueness of each group’s response to dispersion must be considered.

It is important to briefly discuss another key term used in this study. Although Paul Gilroy’s concept of the “Black Atlantic” is useful when analyzing late nineteenth- and twentieth-century pan-Atlantic identity, in this study the black Atlantic refers to the *remaking* of one area of the African diaspora by African-American imperialists within the geography of the Atlantic world in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.²⁸ It is not my intention to replace the African diaspora with the black Atlantic as an area of study; rather, it is a mechanism to shift attention to a tightly focused region of the north

²⁶ Edwards, *The Uses of Diaspora*,” p.65.

²⁷ I use the term *Décalage* in an attempt to heed historian Colin Palmer’s warning that “Scholars must be careful not to homogenize the experiences of the diverse peoples of the modern diaspora.” Fundamental differences often exist between individual communities within a given diaspora. See Colin A. Palmer, “Defining and Studying the Modern Diaspora,” in *Perspectives*, Vol 39, No. 6 (September 1998).

²⁸ Paul Gilroy’s concept of the Black Atlantic – a space where blacks employed a double consciousness (derived from W.E.B Du Bois) that allowed them to work within white European as well as African cultural worlds – provides insight into how removed peoples dealt with their transnational existence. Although Gilroy’s work focuses on the mid to late nineteenth-century, this concept fits well within the experiences of removed peoples’ experiences in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic World as well as the African Diaspora of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, it falls short in allowing for the diversity of blacks’ experiences in the face of removal. Moreover, relying too much on the black Atlantic concept erroneously suggest that most, if not all, free blacks reacted in similar ways to colonization and forced migration. As my study demonstrates, African-Americans and other free blacks may have envisioned a black Atlantic identity, but it did not necessarily ring true – as their own actions and writing attests – during the era under study. For more see Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. For criticism of Gilroy’s concept, see Louis Chude-okei, “The Black Atlantic Paradigm: Paul Gilroy and the Fractured Landscape of “Race,”” in *American Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (1996), 740-745; and Christine Chivallon, “Beyond Gilroy’s Black Atlantic: The Experience of the African Diaspora,” in *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2002), 359-382.

Atlantic where African-Americans, Africans, Afro-Britons and black West Indians faced a sharply racialized type of removal. Elite whites expected to limit free blacks' chances of assimilation into white British and American culture and, as a result, removal aimed at relocating blacks to more isolated and less developed parts of the Atlantic. The Acadians were dispersed mostly to other North American colonies where it was assumed they would assimilate into British society. Blacks were sent to remote or disease stricken destinations such as Sierra Leone. In other words, a rather different diasporic experience awaited blacks targeted for removal and colonization in the Atlantic world: it was a social, political, and economic space unique to persons of color.

In the British Atlantic world, removed groups entered an extra-legal space, occupying a status outside the "law of nations" and imperial requirements for citizenship.²⁹ Removed groups' position in the Atlantic world's legal fold proved to be, at best, open to interpretation and, at worst, fully unprotected by the law.³⁰ Without the full protection of citizenship rights in an established republic or empire, removed and marginalized peoples had little access to the rights and privileges of the Age of Reason and the Atlantic Revolutions. For example, it became increasingly clear to free blacks toward the end of the American Revolution that people of color did not fit within the

²⁹ Historian Eliga H. Gould argues that "the law of nations' main purpose was to mediate relations between central governments in Europe, it was not always clear how far or in what ways its customs and conventions applied to any of these [marginalized] groups, especially in hinterlands and extraterritorial waters where European states were either absent or underdeveloped." Gould, "On the Margins of Europe," p.4.

³⁰ The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed "floating nation[s]," or ships, "freely move[d] across the globe...conveying American" or British "claims to authority and influence." It was on these same ships that entire racial and cultural groups were transported into various degrees of exile. See Linda K. Kerber, "Toward a History of Statelessness in America," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (September 2003), p.727. See also, W. Jeffrey Bolster, "An Inner Diaspora: Black Sailors Making Selves," in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America*. Eds. Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

parameters of revolutionary American ideology. As Linda Kerber notes, “although they [African-Americans] were physically located in the national state,” the United States “made” them “no promises to the rights of man.”³¹ Persons of African descent were systematically “deprived” of the fundamental rights of mankind,” becoming an unrecognized population within a recognized republic.³² As such, African-Americans lacked the protections of citizenship, which included the ability to resist expatriation, removal, and forced immigration out of the United States.

Euro-American groups shared a common experience with blacks in the formation and reformation of their respective diasporas. All of these groups were politically, culturally and socially marginalized, yet all fought the system that intended to eradicate them. Several thousand Acadians returned to where their homes once stood. The Jamaican Maroons continually attained legal redress for their grievances, eventually returning to Jamaica. Free African-Americans opposed colonization; but they still attempted to return to an imagined African homeland that was, in reality, unreceptive to their Christian missionary ideals. For each of these groups, the initial dispersion was followed by a voluntary removal undertaken in an effort to regain a connection with their ancestral lands.

An important difference between white and black reactions to removal becomes clear from this study. Although united by their symbolic home of Africa, numerous differences existed between groups as varied as the Jamaican Maroons, free blacks in Newport Rhode Island, Black Loyalist refugees in London, and many others.³³ Yet,

³¹ Kerber, “Toward a History of Statelessness in America,” p.732.

³² Ibid.

³³ See James Sidbury, “Saint Domingue in Virginia: Ideology, Local Meanings, and Resistance to Slavery, 1791-1800,” in *Journal of Southern History*, Vol.63, No.3 (Aug 1997), 531-552;

blacks temporarily set aside ethnic or group identity in favor of a racial union that they believed would strengthen African and African-American resistance to oppression. Once in Africa, however, these Christian missionaries and merchants realized that living in a transatlantic diaspora had transformed them into a very different people than continental Africans.

White ethnic groups who experienced removal reacted in the opposite manner: rather than attempting to unite across ethnic divides, whites focused on their own group's survival. There is simply no evidence to suggest that Acadians identified with the Scots targeted during the Highland Clearings, while sources suggest little if any sympathy flowed from the Scots as the Acadians were transported around the Atlantic. Two distinct racial groups reacted to removal in two distinct ways. One group looked to strengthen itself by subscribing to prevalent white Anglo-American racial assumptions of the period. The others chose to remain fastened to their ethnic heritage, thereby promoting the uniqueness of their groups' experience. In both instances, removal policy strengthened the cultural groups it intended to destroy: removed peoples' ethnic, religious, and racial identity hardened in the face of uncommonly oppressive experiences.

Marginalized groups in the Anglo-American Atlantic gained a voice by operating within the constraints of an oppressive society. By the middle of the eighteenth century, marginalized peoples gained limited opportunities to seek redress. The Acadians and

Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998; and W. Jeffrey Bolster, "An Inner Diaspora: Black Sailors Making Selves," in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America*. Eds. Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. For more on the experiences of Black Loyalists Refugees in the diaspora, see Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.

Maroons both utilized petitions to various colonial courts and legislative bodies to address their complaints and to resist deportation. Blacks in the revolutionary era wrote addresses and petitions to local, provincial, and state governments to protest their lack of true liberty. Later, in the antebellum period, African-Americans who opposed white-led colonization founded numerous newspapers and published under the auspices of sympathetic printing presses. In petitioning the British Parliament, protesting to the Massachusetts General Courts, and publishing anti-colonization tracts, pamphlets and newspapers, free blacks announced to the Atlantic world that their fate rested not in the hands of white governments or slaveholders, but in their own actions and endeavors.

Removal – or, the exile and forced migration of marginalized cultural and racial groups from one region of the British Empire and, later, the United States, to another less volatile region – underwent a variety of transformations from 1746-1865. British officials’ use of removal in the eighteenth century is most accurately described as a component of imperial policy developed, shaped, and implemented on the periphery and in the provinces of the empire. Removal emerged as a policy during this era because it offered British authorities an expedient course of action that followed definite criteria in dealing with certain issues or circumstance.

Whitehall condoned removal, although not always the destination of removed communities, but local officials on the frontlines of empire decided whom, when, and where. Removed groups typically held the following attributes: they were, or thought to

be nearly, in a state of rebellion; they had a history or tradition of rebellion; they were unwilling to satisfactorily swear allegiance to the king (or were believed to be disingenuous when doing so); they were racially or ethnically and religiously marginalized; and finally, they were deemed unable to assimilate as a whole group into society. Even though it may appear that relatively few acts of large-scale removal occurred in the eighteenth century British empire, when compared to the numerous rebellions and revolts at the time, the policy remained a viable option to provincial and colonial officials.

British and American philanthropists, wealthy elites, scientists, and moral reformers adapted the idea at the core of removal policy – relocating entire communities – to advance their goals. Elite whites in the Anglo-American Atlantic world applied the concept of removal to what they believed was a dangerous free black population descending on port cities. Granville Sharp, James Fothergill, Thomas Jefferson and other prominent whites expanded the concept of removal. Free blacks possessed most of the criteria for removal outlined earlier in British policy, minus the lack of willingness to swear allegiance to the king. Instead of removing free blacks to other established parts of the empire, however, they would be used to colonize uncivilized parts of the Atlantic because they were considered too dangerous and incapable of assimilation to remain in settled areas.

Removal became colonization, a plan of action that rested on the forced migration of blacks. This time, however, reason, duty, and religious mission were the forces at play: white supporters of colonization attempted to compel free blacks to remove to Africa by appealing to their morality, connections to their ancestral homelands, and their

Christian spirituality. They believed such non-physical coercion would be successful. The undercurrent beneath the surface of colonization was the resistance by whites – even many abolitionists – to blacks’ full participation in American society.

At the same time that white-led colonization schemes emerged in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Anglo-American Atlantic world, the concept of removal experienced another transformation. Removal created Scottish, Acadian and Maroon diasporas in the eighteenth century, but beginning in the seventeenth century (in the British Atlantic) the transatlantic slave trade emerged as the greatest single example of the creation of a diaspora. Free blacks targeted for colonization by elite whites in the early nineteenth century had either experienced removal directly or indirectly when they or family members were brought to the Americas on slave ships. Now, with discussions about colonization circulating the Atlantic, free blacks reacted strongly to the possibility of a second removal. The prospect of colonization, a form of removal, caused some free blacks to rethink their place in the Anglo-American Atlantic. Some native-born free Africans in American port cities saw colonization as an opportunity to return to their homelands, and they volunteered to be removed. Others identified colonization for what it was: a way to remove free blacks from America.

Finally, this study would be incomplete without considering the consequences of removal: the creation of diasporas. In each of the first three chapters, I demonstrate how removal directly resulted in the creation of new diasporas in the Atlantic world; in chapters six and seven, I examine how removal and colonization sparked African-American efforts to remake the African diaspora. Removal and the creation of diasporas were interconnected events in an era of social, political and economic upheaval and

reorganization in the Atlantic world. At the core of any diaspora is removal, whether a policy utilized by government officials, or a scheme with finite goals advanced by intellectuals and elites. At the core of removal is the manner in which targeted groups reacted, persevered and survived the ordeal.

**PART ONE:
THE BRITISH PRECEDENT**

INTRODUCTION

The roots of removal can be found in England's attempted conquest of Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The English crown endorsed a systematic resettlement policy that ousted Irish landholders in favor of their English counterparts. English officials and intellectuals argued that English colonists would improve the land while also spreading the civilizing influence of English cultural and religious beliefs.³⁴ Although not removal as strictly defined in this dissertation, these imperial activities provided the context for later acts of mass deportation by British officials.

The common law enforcement practices of transportation and banishment removed criminals in colonial America and the rest of the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century British empire. These actions tended to focus on very small groups, prisoners-of-war, and individual agitators, such as Indians involved in uprisings, or religious dissidents.³⁵ In 1691, Virginia legislation required manumitted slaves to be transported out of the colony for fear they might incite slave revolts.³⁶ On the eastern side of the

³⁴ See, Nicholas Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern established, 1565-1576*. New York: Barnes and Nobles Books, 1976; Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001; and *Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Kingdom or Colony*. Ed. Jane H. Olmeyer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

³⁵ For example, in 1676 Major Richard Waldron banished approximately 200 Indians from Dover, New Hampshire for fear they might extend Metacom's War north to New Hampshire. For more, See "Sham Fight with Indians at Dover, September 7, 1676," in *Provincial Papers. Documents and Records Relating to the Province of New-Hampshire, from the Earliest Period of Its Settlement, 1623-1686. Volume I*. Nathaniel Bouton, ed. Concord: George E. Jenks, 1867, p.357. For more on religious dissidents, see, Selma R. Williams, *Divine Rebel: The Life of Ann Marbury Hutchinson*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1981.

³⁶ H.N. Sherwood, "Early Negro Deportation Projects," in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (March 1916), p. 485; and Jeremy Belknap, *The History of New*

Atlantic, Parliament passed a series of acts aimed at quelling further violence and social unrest in England's cities. One of these pieces of legislation, the Transportation Act of 1718, drew on lessons learned in the wake of the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion in Scotland, which found banishment of the rebels a particularly effective method of restoring order.

A key penal reform, the Transportation Act of 1718 enabled the courts to use banishment as punishment for crimes against property at their discretion, rather than as an alternative to capital punishment as had previously been the case.³⁷ The new legislation opened the application of transportation to broader interpretation by representatives of the crown. British officials on the frontlines of empire – provincial assemblymen, governors, military officers, and ministerial agents – would expand the purpose of the Transportation Act of 1718 by the middle 1740s, when increasing imperial conflict necessitated more radical measures.

In what became the second largest forced migration in the Atlantic world, only the Atlantic slave trade removed more people, persons transported from England to the colonies numbered at least 50,000.³⁸ Often seen as a solution to England's growing

Hampshire, Volume I. New York: Arno Press, 1972. p.142-145. Also, British authorities advocated banishing a particularly unruly group of former slaves. In 1731, amidst several decades of war, London-based officials in Whitehall – the seat of foreign policy – contended the Maroons must be subdued with “the reduction or expulsion of these runaway negroes absolutely necessary for the peace and settlement of Jamaica.” If the Maroons chose not to resettle on lands away from the general population of the island, then “sufficient force” would be used to “conclude a treaty with them for their being transported to one of the uninhabited Bahama Islands, or some other part of you Majesty’s Dominions in America.” Once off the island, Jamaican officials could return to the business of building a colony and turning the rich soils of Jamaica into some of the more profitable agricultural lands in the Atlantic world. See, 15 July 1731, Council of Trade and Plantations to the Duke of Newcastle, CI 137/47, ff. 107-109, in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1574-1739*. Karen Ordahl Kupperman, John C. Appleby, and Mandy Banton, eds. London: Routledge in association with the Public Record Office, 2000. P.186.

³⁷ For more, see A. Roger Ekirch, *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718-1775*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. p. 15-18.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p.1. This included approximately 2/3rds of all people convicted of crimes in London.

poverty and crime rates, transportation also served as a way for the metropolis to provide labor for its colonies on the periphery. The majority of persons transported away from England carried with them a seven-year banishment, which included an indenture of service.³⁹ Many of these colonists did not survive their sentence due primarily to the harsh living and working conditions in the Chesapeake and West Indies, where most were shipped.⁴⁰

These early forms of removal evolved into a policy that reflects what Eliga H. Gould terms “the contested nature of law beyond Europe” that “underscored the wider Atlantic as a place of war, chaos and violence.”⁴¹ Representatives of the British crown constructed a core strategy to deal with large groups of disloyal, disobedient and dangerous peoples – the very persons believed to be responsible for the war, chaos and violence Gould discusses. As British officials in eighteenth-century Scotland, Nova Scotia, and Jamaica implemented removal it became a fluid policy meant to address fundamental concerns that included: taking the oath of allegiance; threats of collusion between Catholics, French neutrals, local indigenous peoples, Maroons, former slaves and French continental soldiers; and the ability – and willingness – of marginalized racial, ethnic and cultural groups to assimilate into British society.

³⁹ Ibid. p.7-8.

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.4-5. Also, for more on indentured servitude, see: Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and Servitude in Colonial North America: A Short History*. New York: New York University Press, 2001; and Hilary Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Servitude in Barbados, 1627-1725*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989.

⁴¹ Eliga H. Gould, “Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772,” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Summer 2003), p. 3. Other works have also shaped my interpretation of the legalities of removal. Laura Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, circa 1550-1700*, New York: Cambridge University press, 2000; J.G.A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987; and several selections from *The Many Legalities of Early America*, ed. Christopher Tomlins and Bruce H. Mann, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

-- CHAPTER ONE --

IMPERIAL SCHEMES: CREATING REMOVAL POLICY IN THE BRITISH
ATLANTIC WORLD, 1745-1754

As British imperial forces lay siege to the French fortification at Louisbourg, military leaders discussed the removal of captive French – soldiers and citizens alike – and their allies, the St. Johns and Nova Scotia Indians.⁴² The British squad drawn primarily from the men of Massachusetts and New Hampshire captured Louisbourg on June 17, 1745. These Puritan New Englanders had now “reduc[ed]” the property to their control with the “goodness of God” as their guide.⁴³ A flurry of letters and reports traveled to and from Boston, Halifax, and Cape Breton (or, as the French called it, Ile Royale), detailing the siege and daring actions of New England’s fighting men. Street celebrations erupted in Boston, Portsmouth, and other cities in the region as news of the victory arrived. Various British officials claimed heroic status in the battle, while bickering over whom should gain the highest praise and reap the largest rewards from His Majesty.⁴⁴ Excitement spread throughout New England as France’s main military base along the North Atlantic coast fell into British hands.

⁴² These bands were a part of the Mi’kmaqs.

⁴³ Charles Chauncey to William Pepperell, July 4, 1795 in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 1st ser. I (1792): 49-50.

⁴⁴ Numerous letters in the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 1st ser. I (1792) and *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society* 1st ser. XI (1907) detail various attempts by wealthy New England military leaders to gain fame from their role in the capture of Louisbourg. Letters contained in the Sir William Pepperrell Papers, located at the Massachusetts Historical Society, reflect increasing jealousy between Pepperrell – the named leader of the expedition – and

The capture of Louisbourg remains an important event in the seemingly continuous warring between the French and British in the eighteenth century. New Englanders gained a temporary respite from French attacks even though the British ceded the fort back to the French at the end of the War of Austrian Succession in 1748. The British empire was in the midst of a century rife with deep imperial rivalries, and territorial and social reorganization. Capturing the fort played a key part in alleviating the anxieties associated with these changes and conflict but local authorities remained concerned with the local French Acadian population. French representatives reported that diplomats, “as well as the Missionaries have assured us of this; the French Acadians will not hesitate to take up arms...and [they] will be backed by some sedentary troops for their protection against the resentment of the English.”⁴⁵ Control of the fort failed to eliminate animosity toward the French. If hostilities seemed likely to erupt then “the English” would “have recourse to...at least adopt measures to keep” the French “in a strict and severe subjection.”⁴⁶ What occurred behind the scenes on board the commanding vessels that lay offshore of the fort, as British commanders weighed exactly which measures to take against the unruly French, proved even more important for the future of British Atlantic policy than the capture of Louisbourg.⁴⁷

Colonel Warren, the man who led many of the forces on the ground. It should also be noted that several of the New England leaders, most rich from the region’s prominent shipping and manufacturing industries, put up their own money in support of the battle with the belief that the crown would reimburse them once the fort had been taken. Taking control over the fort was a cause in which most Puritan New Englanders believed and had desired for generations, see George A. Rawlyk, *Yankees at Louisbourg*. Orono: University of Maine Press, 1967.

⁴⁵ Letters of Messrs. DeBeauharnois and Hocquart to Count DeMaurepas, Quebec, 12 September, 1745. New York Col. Documents, Vol. X, in *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia: Papers Relating to the Acadian French, 1714-1755*. Thomas B. Akins, ed Halifax: 1869. p.157.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Louisbourg was located in the territory known as Acadia, which encompassed modern New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and parts of northern and eastern Maine. The term *Acadie*, as the

William Pepperell, William Shirley and other New Englanders decided to remove “above seven hundred French prisoners, and above Two Thousand French prisoners at Louisbourg,” to be “sent home to France immediately” to “free” the area “from the distress & [sic] danger of War.”⁴⁸ Some of these twenty-seven hundred prisoners were likely French soldiers, but most were French Acadians, inhabitants of Cape Breton.⁴⁹ The French Huguenot Paul Mascarene – an important British politician in Nova Scotia and a man with close ties to William Shirley, the Governor of Massachusetts – seemed optimistic after the fall of Louisbourg. Mascarene reported that “our French inhabitants refus[ed] to take up arms against us.”⁵⁰ Even so, other authorities remained skeptical about French allegiances. Indeed, within weeks, Mascarene himself wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, “the attachment of the Acadians to the crown of France could not be doubted” because “they will not hesitate to take up arms as they see themselves at liberty to do

French inhabitants referred to the region of present day Nova Scotia and parts of northern and eastern Maine, may have derived from an old Mi'kmaq word, *akade*, that marked an area of abundant trees, birds, fish, and fur-bearing animals. Jean Verrazano, in 1524, called the area *Arcadie* due to its bountiful and beautiful forests and Royal officials in France knew of the region as *la Cadie*. For more on the various names of Acadia, please see Oscar William Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955. (3-5).

⁴⁸ William Shirley to Penobscot and Norridgewalk Indians, July 12, 1745 in *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society* 1st ser. XI (1907): 337-338.

⁴⁹ At this moment it is difficult to pinpoint just how many of the French were civilians, although literature in the field suggest that upwards of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the prisoners could have been French missionaries, Acadians and possibly even Mi'kmaqs, see Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*. Philadelphia: University Press, 2001. p. 108. William Pepperell accounts for 2,000 French “collected” with the goal of transporting them to France. The term “collected” raises the possibility these were civilians living outside of the fort who needed to be gathered up, as opposed to a group within the confines of fortified walls. See William Pepperell, *An Accurate Journal and Account of the Proceedings of the New England Land-Forces, During the Late Expedition Against the French Settlements on Cape Breton, To the Time of the Surrender of Louisbourg*. London: A & S Brice, 1746.

⁵⁰ See, WA Calnek, *History of the County of Annapolis, including Old Port Royal and Acadia, with Memoirs of its representatives in the Provincial Parliament, and Biographical and Genealogical Sketches of its Early English Settlers and their families*. Toronto: William Briggs, 1897. p.105.

so.”⁵¹ Mascarene’s change in opinion reflected the uncertainty of the situation. British officials believed the French were biding their time for a more opportune moment to revolt.⁵² William Shirley and other New Englanders deeply mistrusted the French after decades of French and Indian wars; they knew better than to guarantee peaceful cooperation. They believed in deterrence: deporting the most volatile Acadians would compel those who remained behind to cooperate.

In deciding to ship these colonists from North America, New Englanders were not acting in an entirely new manner.⁵³ British colonial officials had previously removed non-British peoples they encountered as they expanded the boundaries of the British Atlantic empire.⁵⁴ Removing entire populations from the empire, imperial officials argued, satisfied the need for “immediate care [to] be taken for the defence and maintenance thereof by the nation.”⁵⁵ The New Englanders were satisfied by their triumph that summer, but they also knew success lay in securing the fort from future recapture, and removal seemed to insure their prize.

Something changed at Louisbourg, however, making 1745 a key turning point for removal in the British Atlantic world. The transportation, evacuation and deportation of

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Reports streamed in to support Mascarene’s conclusion: “That after the War broke out and was proclaim'd in form, the Inhabitants by their own Confession continued to transport numbers of Bullocks and Sheep out of the Province to Lewisburgh [sic] whilst in the hands of the French contrary to all Orders given to prevent it.” See, *Nova Scotia Archives IV: Minutes of His Majesty’s Council at Annapolis Royal, 1736-1749*. Charles Bruce Ferguson, ed. Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1967. p. 83.

⁵³ As an example, Indians were forced to migrate from South Carolina during the Yamasee War. 1715-1718. See, James H. Merrell, *The Indians New World: Catawbas and their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

⁵⁴ In fact, New Englanders and Virginia Planters had been removing small groups of Indians and newly freed slaves since the 17th century.

⁵⁵ Duke of New-Castle to Commodore Warren and William Pepperell, June 18, 1745 in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 1st ser. I (1792): 48.

peoples occupying valuable land – whether for strategic or agricultural purposes – had been employed by the crown and individual officials on the periphery of empire since the sixteenth-century conquest of Ireland. But, these New Englanders upped the ante. They planned to systematically rid Cape Breton of all the Catholics, bandits, and townfolk that they could capture; whereas previously in sixteenth-century Ireland, transportation focused on landowners and nobility.⁵⁶ Already suffering from losses to French privateers based in Louisbourg and aware of its potential aid in protecting the New England fishing fleet, Britons – especially New England merchants – understood the centrality of the fort to the growth of the British Atlantic empire.⁵⁷ Moreover, taking the fort would cripple France’s power in North America and finally provide the protection New England had long wanted.

The decision to deport the French from Cape Breton quickly gained support around the British Atlantic, making Cape Breton and Nova Scotia a key site of removal in the eighteenth-century. Wealthy New England landholders and merchants backed the action, further popularizing the use of removal as a way to deal with troublesome peoples during 1740s and 1750s. Even so, British officials in peripheral colonies such as Nova Scotia, as well as agents in Whitehall, debated a variety of methods to assimilate such “uncivilized” peoples as the French and Indian Catholics into the Protestant British

⁵⁶ It is important to remember that actual revolts and conspiracy theories, including the Stono Revolt in 1739 and the New York Conspiracy Trials of 1741, helped raise anxiety over Spanish and French Catholic plots to destroy the Protestant British North American colonies. For more on Ireland, see Nicholas P. Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established, 1565-1576*. New York: Barnes and Nobles Books, 1976.

⁵⁷ John Robert McNeill, *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain: Louisbourg and Havana, 1700-1763*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985. p. 90-97.

empire.⁵⁸ The quandary concerning assimilation versus removal would surface repeatedly throughout the empire, and in the decades to follow.

Another Catholic group raised the concerns of imperial officials in 1745. Across the Atlantic, on the battlefields of the Scottish Highlands under the direction of Charles Edward Stuart, the Scottish Jacobites rebelled against the House of Hanover. The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 added further questions concerning the integration of Catholic peoples into the growing empire. British officials regarded the Jacobites in a similar way as they viewed the French Acadians in Nova Scotia: untrustworthy because they spoke a foreign language and because they were, the British believed, under the influence of the Pope. Removal and forced migration emerged at the center of proposed solutions to deal with the problematic French populations in the Scottish Highlands, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. The Scottish Highlands became a proving ground where methods of removal and pacification could be tested.

By the commencement of the massive deportations of Acadians during the Seven Years War in 1755-1763, Nova Scotia had been transformed from an important military outpost to a colony playing a leading role in creating imperial policy.⁵⁹ Past scholars

⁵⁸ In discussions of the Black Loyalists, the Jamaican Maroons and returning Acadian exiles, Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrate how central Nova Scotia became to the movement of unwanted peoples in the British empire.

⁵⁹ There is not a large historical debate concerning removal outside of the American context, but there is literature concerning each group discussed in this chapter. For more on Ireland, please see Nicholas Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern established, 1565-1576*. New York: Barnes and Nobles Books, 1976; Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001; and *Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Kingdom or Colony*. Ed. Jane H. Olmeyer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. For more on Acadia and Novas Scotia, please see, John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from their American Homeland*. New York: WW Norton, 2005; Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001; Andrew Hill Clark, *Acadia: The Geography of Early Nova Scotia to 1760*. Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968; Oscar William Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*. Baton Rouge:

have focused on politics, war, economics or single groups deported to or from the Scottish Highlands, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton; none have examined the formation of removal policies that ultimately reached far beyond the shores of the Canadian Maritimes.⁶⁰ Yet, removal shaped imperial procedure for the rest of the eighteenth and into the early nineteenth centuries, forcing thousands of people into exile.

The '45 and the Origins of a Scottish Diaspora

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ireland served as a model for future colonization efforts by English plantation societies and investment groups. Ireland also served as an example – or, at least, as a testing ground – for how to control and assimilate troublesome peoples. More than one hundred fifty years later, British officials faced resistance from another hostile Catholic population in Scotland. The pacification of the Scottish Highlands incorporated removal as one component of a broader attempt to remake Scottish society and its economy. The Highland Clearings, as removal was referred to in this region of the empire, did not provide an exact model for officials in Nova Scotia; rather, it illustrated the early stages of removal that focused on reshaping the landscape based on models of efficient English industrial towns such as Manchester.

Louisiana State University Press, 1955; and Naomi E.S. Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-1784*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.

⁶⁰ The 19th-century historian W.A. Calnek noted that the British strategy to disperse the Acadians in small groups “reminds one of shipments to New England and reduction into slavery among the colonists, of Scotch prisoners whom Cromwell captured at the battle of Dunbar, in 1650, and a further large consignment of similar unfortunates in the following year.” See *History of the County of Annapolis, including Old Port Royal and Acadia, with Memoirs of its representatives in the Provincial parliament, and Biographical and Genealogical Sketches of its Early English Settlers and their families*. Toronto: William Briggs, 1897. p.125.

Charles Edward Stuart, Bonnie Prince Charlie as he was known to supporters, sparked the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 in Scotland and Northern England.⁶¹ Charles' father, King James VIII of Scotland, helped finance this invasion of England by Catholic rebels. The Scottish Jacobite army failed in its quest to retake control over the expansive British empire.⁶² Despite the support he had received from Jacobites in France, little support from the Highland clans materialized and the army needed more than these followers. The base Bonnie Prince Charlie had counted on winning – the poor Englishmen and disillusioned nobility – were not willing to oust the House of Hanover. Indeed, they encountered malicious and violent resistance from the Englishmen and women thought to have been on their side, with some children even joining in terrorizing the retreating Jacobite army.⁶³

Despite taking Edinburgh and marching as far as south of Derby by December 1745, the Jacobite Army met with strong resistance from British forces. The Jacobites were decimated on the fields of Culloden in April 1746, and they retreated quickly. With the Jacobite Army defeated, its leaders being drawn and quartered, and with the hope of a Catholic monarchy in London now fading, Bonnie Prince Charlie retreated back to France. Charles' exploits in exile lived in contemporary lore – including reports that he

⁶¹ Charles was born in Rome, blessed by the Pope and hailed as the great new hope – and partner for Prince Henry VIII – in the quest to reestablish the Stuart throne in England. Charles' father, exiled King James VIII of Scotland, made a deal with the French, who would finance and transport the 10,000 plus troops to the British Isles in 1743. Fitzroy Maclean, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*. New York: Athenaeum, 1989.

⁶² For more on the uprising, see Frank McLynn, *The Jacobites*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985;

⁶³ As Linda Colley discusses in *Britons*, poor Englishmen were content to live out their lives independently of interference from outsiders, such as those invading Jacobites from France. Reports also suggest that children participated in slicing the throats of sleeping Jacobite soldiers. See, p. 78-82.

fooled British spies through disguise.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the Roman-born exiled claimant to the throne remained what his father and grandfather had been before him: a king with no seat.

Much has been written on the various Jacobite rebellions from 1688 to the final conflict in 1745. Attention has focused on the individual landlords and clan chieftains transported out of Scotland and placed in exile, with perhaps none more famous than James VIII. The '45, as modern Scots refer to the Jacobite Rebellion and the decisive Battle of Culloden, remains one of the most significant events in Scottish identity formation not only for how it affected those Highlanders who remained in the Isles, but also for the impact it had on thousands of Scottish immigrants.⁶⁵ The Highland Clearances systematically forced the Highlanders off their land in a program the British government called the pacification of Scotland. Later, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, thousands more were “encouraged” to immigrate to North America

⁶⁴ For a concise example, Robin Nicholson, *Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Making of a Myth: A Study in Portraiture, 1720-1892*. Lewisburg, Pa: Bucknell University Press, 2002; David Daiches, *Charles Edward Stuart: The Life and Times of Bonnie Prince Charlie*. London: Pan Books, 1975; and Sir Compton Mackenzie, *Prince Charlie and His Ladies*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1935.

⁶⁵ It is particularly difficult to ascertain exactly how many Scots were cleared out of the Highlands for two reasons. The clearings happened over the several decades, and it is not entirely clear what percentage of Scots who emigrated to the Continent and North America were forcibly removed. Ned C. Landsman notes that the Scots’ demonstrated an extraordinary “willingness” to emigrate from Scotland during the seventeenth century – with as many as 200,000 leaving the country, 40,000 to Poland alone – which made the Scots an unusually mobile people in the Atlantic. This precedent coupled with imprecise data collection by record keepers and historians (such as not differentiating between “North British” peoples and Scots) adds to the difficulties in determining how many Scots were removed from the Highlands. Moreover, determining the destination of immigrant Scots can be even more problematic for these same reasons. See Landsman, “Nation, Migration, and the Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600-1800,” in *American Historical Review*. Vol. 104, No. 2 (Apr 1999), 463-475; and Landsman, ““Border Cultures, the Backcountry, and the North British Emigration to America,” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Vol. 48, No. 2 (April 1991), 253-259.

and Australia.⁶⁶ These civilizing efforts centered on modernizing Scotland, fostering industry, and instituting an economic system that would keep Scots content and less likely to rebel. The effect was the forced migration of thousands of Scots to various parts of the British Atlantic world throughout the late eighteenth century.

British officials moved decisively to “civilize” Scotland. Part of their civilizing program included refashioning Scottish culture to reflect England’s. Writing in 1805, the Earl of Selkirk reflected on the “rapid decline of their [Highlanders’] genuine manners” that he witnessed upon visiting the region.⁶⁷ Prohibitions on Highland dress and customs were passed to strike at the visible ties to community the rebels held. Perhaps most importantly, however, was the abolishment of Heritable Jurisdictions that excluded clan chiefs from passing their lands on to offspring. The British reorganized the Highlands into territories that were friendly to economic development; models were developed based on the success of newly industrialized cities to the south. The basic sentiment – which reflected the optimism of the burgeoning British Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth-century – revolved around the idea that economic gain brought peace, with one official promising, “make...the Highlanders as rich and industrious as the people of Manchester and they will be as little apt to rebel.”⁶⁸ Meanwhile, ridding Scotland of its distinct social and political identity by driving out “these old-fashioned gentlemen” who

⁶⁶ The colony in Australia was founded in 1788 in New South Wales. Originally a penal colony, at least 1.6 million people (from all over the British empire) arrived in New South Wales and other Australian colonies during the nineteenth century. See Eric Richards, “How Did Poor People Emigrate from the British Isles to Australia in the Nineteenth Century?” in *The Journal of British Studies*. Vol. 32, No. 3 (July 1993), 250-279.

⁶⁷ Thomas Douglas Selkirk, *Observations On the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland with a View of Emigration*. Toronto: SR Publishers limited, 1969. p. 3.

⁶⁸ “On the subject of civilising the Highlands,” 1748, GD 248654/1, in Scottish Record Office. Also, see Plank, p. 116.

held ties to the chief and clan system of government, called for the forced evacuation of thousands of rebellious peoples, including mostly non-elites.⁶⁹

Most telling were the activities embarked upon by British officials “for the Purposes of civilizing the Inhabitants...of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.”⁷⁰ A campaign to change the Highlands into a model of acceptable British society began by removing the most problematic peoples of the region, shipping them to the Caribbean and the Americas. Several thousand Scots arrived in the Caribbean by 1750, with several hundred others settling in the Americas.⁷¹ Supporters of the civilizing efforts, which included removal, argued that the Highlanders must have promoted “amongst them the Protestant Religion, good Government Industry and Manufactures, and the Principles of Duty and Loyalty to His Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, and to no other Use or Purpose whatsoever.”⁷² Still, the process of transforming the Scottish Highlands into an economically viable and politically stable region of the British empire took several decades. The mass forced migration of Scots to British North America did not begin in full force until the 1750s, reaching its zenith in the 1780s, 1790s and early nineteenth-century when many Scots emigrated to the United States, Canada, and Australia.⁷³

⁶⁹ AJ Youngson, *After the Forty-Five: The Economic Impact on the Scottish Highlands*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973. p. 36.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ See David Dobson, *The Jacobites of Angus, 1689-1756: In Two Parts*. New York: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1999; Frances McDonnell, *The Jacobites of Perthshire, 1745*. New York: Clearwater Publishing, 1999; and Frances McDonnell, *Highland Jacobites, 1745*. New York: Clearwater Publishing, 1999.

⁷² Youngson, p. 27.

⁷³ For more on where these migrants settled, see Marianne McLean, *The People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition, 1745-1820*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991; David Dobson, *The Original Scots Colonists of Early America, 1612-1783*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1989; T.M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire and the Shaping of the Americas, 1600-1815*. Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2004; and Stephen Hornsby, *Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton: A Historical Geography*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.

But it is the discussion regarding removal that proves most enlightening in examining the development of policy in the British Atlantic empire. The Scottish Jacobites were cast racially as cultural others. British officials identified their distinct language, religious beliefs and cultural traditions as examples of Scottish inferiority. Similar discussions and the voices of support for removal in Scotland emanated from the cold climes of the Canadian Maritimes. Back in Nova Scotia, the region's officials were looking to the Scottish experience as a model of how to begin their own efforts to transform the province from a bastion of popish influence in North America to a stalwart Protestant, industrious, and strategic Atlantic crossroad. The New Englanders' removal of French inhabitants and soldiers from Louisbourg in 1745/46 sparked ideas from several key figures in Britain's north Atlantic power structure. Nova Scotia became a hotbed of experimentation with new policies to secure the empire and make it more productive and profitable. Even though the pacification of the Highlands would take several decades, Nova Scotia's leaders believed a similar policy could have an immediate impact in their province.

"To counterbalance the Deadweight of these French Inhabitants"⁷⁴

On the eve of the fall of Louisbourg in 1745, Acadia's social and economic landscape seemed to have changed little since New Englanders attacked the French in 1690. The demography of Acadia, however, had transformed dramatically. In 1730, approximately 5,000 French people lived in Acadia; yet, by 1750 the population had

⁷⁴ Paul Mascarene in late 1745, in James P. Baxter, "What Caused the Deportation of the Acadians?" in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Vol. XIII (April 1907), p.142.

increased by nearly fifty percent to 7,500 persons.⁷⁵ Extensive intermarriage with non-French, including Native Americans and English and Irish soldiers housed in the forts in the province, accounted for this rapid population increase. Up to thirty percent of marriages during this twenty-year period were between Acadian women and non-French men. Meanwhile, the British population remained steady at approximately 5,000 persons.⁷⁶ British officials grew uneasy as they observed these changes in the demography; they knew it could prove even more difficult to wrest control of the province from the French if the population was allowed to increase at these rates.

As Louisbourg changed hands in 1745/46, a new British administration arrived on the island. One new arrival in Louisbourg brought with him direct experience with the recent Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Admiral Charles Knowles, charged with protecting the shipping lanes of the British coast during the '45, was appointed Governor of Ile Royale in 1746. His appointment released then Governor Charles Warren to lead any possible attempts for "securing the subjection of the French inhabitants" of Nova Scotia as well as in the ongoing conflicts with the continental French.⁷⁷ There is no mistaking that Knowles' experience with the Jacobite Rebellion shaped his dealings with the Acadians in North America as he witnessed the debates behind the scenes of the

⁷⁵ Perhaps as many as 10,000 Acadians lived in Acadia by 1750, but it is difficult to ascertain exact figures given the ephemeral boundaries of New France, Acadia and New England. However, Gysa Hynes provides solid estimates for a population that was centered on *Ile Royale* and the fort at Louisbourg. See "Some Aspects of the Demography of Port Royal, 1650-1755," in *Acadiensis*, Vol. 3 (Autumn 1973), 3-17. p. 14. See also "Distribution of population in the Maritimes, 1750," in Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History*. p.65.

⁷⁶ See, Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History*. p. 46 and 65.

⁷⁷ George Arthur Wood, *William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts, 1741-1756: History, Volume I*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1920. p. 314.

pacification of Scotland.⁷⁸ Knowles remained an active participant in the debates even after moving to Nova Scotia.

Perhaps more important is Knowles' role in bringing the idea of removal to the Canadian Maritimes: Admiral Charles Knowles advocated the concept of removal to perhaps the most influential man in the region, Massachusetts' Governor William Shirley. Shirley and Knowles developed plans to resettle the most troubling portion of the Acadians, replacing them with Britons and other Europeans. The idea hinged on the example set by Pennsylvania, where German and Swiss settlers became integral members of the colony.⁷⁹

Admiral Knowles agreed with leading political theorists in England about the appropriate method of controlling continually rebellious peoples. For example, the Duke of Cumberland, William Augustus, was a leading proponent of transporting and removing all the Highlanders off the British Isles, sending them to British North America. Specifically, Cumberland proposed sending the Jacobites to Nova Scotia. This action solved several key problems for British officials, both in the frontier territories of the Highlands and the Canadian Maritimes, as well as in Whitehall. First, administrators in Nova Scotia had to deal with the Acadians who were perceived to be uncooperative

⁷⁸ It should be noted that Knowles was brought up on court martial charges in 1750/51 for questionable conduct in military operations in the Caribbean. For more, Sir Charles Knowles, *The Conduct of Admiral Knowles on the Late Expedition: Set in a True Light*. London: J. Clarke, 1758; and Plank's discussion of Knowles, p. 116.

⁷⁹ According to historian Geoffrey Plank, Shirley subscribe to the plan because "the creation of a cosmopolitan society, would transform the Acadians and thurn them into loyal subjects." Footnote 46 in *An Unsettled Conquest*, p.116-117. Moreover, the Acadians were aware of discussions that proposed deportation, even if "we cannot imagine" that the English "could entertain the idea of removing those people, in order to substitute Englishmen in their stead...utterly inhuman as it may be.", "Letter from *Mssrs. DeBeauharnois and Hocquart to Count DeMaurepas, dated at Quebec, 12th September, 1745,*" in *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia: Papers Relating to the Acadian French, 1714-1755*. Thomas B. Akins, ed. Halifax: 1869. p.157.

and hostile toward the British population. Augustus and Knowles, and eventually Shirley, believed that the most effective way to suppress potential rebellions from within the Acadian population was to deport them out of the region to more stable colonies. Second, England needed to deal with the Scottish Rebels. Both Augustus and Knowles argued for removal of Scots to Nova Scotia in order to replace the departing Acadians. Perhaps the rebellious Jacobites would prove less threatening in a different, more remote location like Nova Scotia.

Knowles repeatedly contacted Shirley in an attempt to gain support for the idea, but Shirley proved reluctant. Continued attacks on New England's troops posted in Minas, Nova Scotia convinced Shirley that something must be done to deal with the Acadians, and he turned to removal's most vocal and well-connected advocate in the region: Admiral Knowles. Still a proponent of transporting Highland Scots to Nova Scotia to replace outgoing Acadians, Knowles faced resistance from Shirley on this part of the idea, but together the men wrote a letter to Whitehall proposing the removal of problematic Acadians.⁸⁰ Knowles' knowledge of and support for the pacification of Scotland, which included removing rebellious Jacobites, proved vital in convincing Shirley of the benefits of deporting the Acadians. Shirley saw Nova Scotia as a region rife with rebels, interlopers, and French enemies of the Crown and the New England colonies; Knowles had already participated in the pacification of a similar region of the empire, and together the men hatched a plan that would eventually result in the removal of several thousand Acadians. Although Knowles lost the opportunity to transport

⁸⁰ For more on the correspondence between Shirley and Knowles, see Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest*, p.116 and note 47 on p.196.

Scottish Highlanders to Nova Scotia, it seemed likely to him that removal of the Acadians would make his tenure as governor easier.

Paul Mascarene opposed the removal of Acadians because, he argued, they did not pose a danger to the security of the province. A well-respected Protestant Frenchman living in the British garrison at Annapolis Royale, Mascarene first arrived in the province in 1710. Mascarene was familiar with Nova Scotian and Boston politics: he often wintered in Boston where he attended society gatherings and built relationships with the region's elite. His experience in both provinces provided him with a unique perspective. Although Protestant, Mascarene was also French and he seemed particularly sympathetic to the Acadians' concerns. As a Frenchman in Nova Scotia and a Protestant in Boston, Mascarene negotiated two worlds in communicating French concerns to their British counterparts.

In a series of correspondence between British officials in Boston and Annapolis Royale, Mascarene informed them that talk of removal had made its way to the Acadian villages throughout the region. This chatter caused "terrible alarm, which made many put themselves on their guard, but being very much frightened."⁸¹ Confusion reigned, especially because the Acadians, "who had taken the Oath, and who were allied to the greatest families," were not "able to succour from the Government['s]" protection "which they had well foreseen when they reserved in taking the Oath of fidelity (sic) a

⁸¹ Notes from Council, Friday the 4th of January 1744-45, reprinted in *Acadia and Nova Scotia: Documents Relating to the Acadian French and the First British Colonization of the Province, 1714-1758*. ed. Thomas B. Akins. Cottonport, Louisiana: Polyanthos, Inc. 1972. (154-155) This council was hosted by the Honorable Paul Mascarene, Esq. at the fort of Annapolis Royale with William Skene Esq., Erasmus James Philips Esq., Otho Hamilton Esq., Edward How Esq., and Edward Amherst Esq. in attendance.

dispensation from everything that related to war.”⁸² The Acadians, especially those who had intermarried with British soldiers or who were mixed-race and had “any Indian blood in them” feared the consequences of an influx of British soldiers sent from Boston.⁸³ Indeed, “the favor therefore that they demand is to know whether the people of Boston have a right to force them, and expose them to such danger.”⁸⁴ Bostonians, and New Englanders in general, had developed a strong sense of mistrust toward Acadians based on a legacy of conflict in North America. Furthermore, clashes with French forces and local Indians impeded New England’s commercial fishing and trade.

Other ideas of what to do with the Acadians soon entered the debate; not all were convinced that deportation was the answer. William Shirley debated the idea, understanding that even the Highlanders in Scotland were not all removed after the ’45. Many stayed, assimilating into the British society imposed on Scotland as part of the massive plans to “improve” the region.⁸⁵ Such a model was applied to the Acadians. The focus of removal centered, at first, on the most bothersome and disorderly Acadians. The main problem for the British with the Acadians and their Mi’kmaq allies was their Catholicism and ethnic difference. Assimilation seemed to offer an alternative solution to the drastic and costly measure of complete removal because “the present generation of the French might be made at least contented, peaceable subjects” while “the next generation good Protestant ones.”⁸⁶ Perhaps, Shirley wondered, some Acadians could

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ For more on how Highlanders became more like the Lowland Scots – that is, less Scottish and more British in appearance, speech, and culture – see Selkirk, *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland With a View of Emigration*. p.3.

⁸⁶ Knowles and Shirley to Newcastle, April 28, 1746. Knowles and Shirley to Newcastle, 28 April 1747, RG1, Vol. 13A, Doc 25. National Archives and Records Management, Nova Scotia.

eventually acquire the attributes of being British. The governor believed assimilation should be attempted before removal was adopted, but Shirley's resolve was tested often as rumors of French-Mi'kmaq conspiracies streamed in from the woods beyond British settlement.⁸⁷

In the summer of 1747, Shirley increased his support of assimilation policies by suggesting that 2,000 New Englanders resettle in Chignecto. The Acadians who lived there would be dispersed to towns throughout New England to make way for this civilizing British influence in the region. In short, by having these 2,000 Acadians immersed in British society in New England, they would lose their less desired cultural attributes.⁸⁸ As important would be the influence of the 2,000 New Englanders on the surrounding Acadians and Mi'kmaqs. The expense of the War of the Austrian Succession ended any potential for financial support from London of Shirley's endeavors.

In 1749, Edward Cornwallis, veteran of the Battle of Culloden and the early pacification efforts of the Scottish Highlands, took the helm of the government in Nova Scotia. Cornwallis was sent to Nova Scotia to establish a colony "fit to cause a considerable number of British subjects to be forthwith settled" for "improving and extending the trade and Fishery thereof."⁸⁹ Built on the shores of Chebucto Bay, the

Furthermore, Massachusetts was virtually bankrupt from funding the capture of Louisbourg and the crown was offering little financial support at this moment for the removal of Acadians.

⁸⁷ Contained within numerous letters between Mascarene, Knowles, Shirley and Cornwallis are reports of alliances between Acadians and Indians, and attacks on English homes and settlements. See especially, *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia: Papers Relating to the Acadian French, 1714-1755*. Thomas B. Akins, ed Halifax: 1869. p.153-166.

⁸⁸ Shirley to Newcastle, July 8, 1747 in *Correspondence of William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts and Military Commander in America, 1731-1760, Volume I*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912.

⁸⁹ "A Declaration with relation to the French Subjects of His Majesty King George Inhabiting Nova Scotia, sent to the Acadian French by Govr. Cornwallis on the formation of the Civil Government at Halifax in 1749," in *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of*

colony of Halifax emerged as the center of provincial government. With the backing of a council appointed by the king, Cornwallis promised the Acadians who took the oath of allegiance that his government would allow them to continue to possess “any cultivated land.”⁹⁰ Cornwallis and the council attempted to appeal to the Acadians, suggesting they could partake in building a prosperous province based on expanding trade and fishing.⁹¹

The program to civilize the colony gained crucial backing when the Board of Trade granted enough money for Cornwallis to establish schools and entice Protestants from other parts of the realm to migrate to Nova Scotia and help with the cause.⁹² Cornwallis was expressly instructed to ensure the “said French inhabitants may be converted to the Protestant religion and their children brought up on the principles of it” and that they “may be subjected to such Rules and Orders as hereafter be made for the better ordering and governing the said Townships.”⁹³ This could be accomplished through intermarriage amongst Catholics and Protestants.⁹⁴ Cornwallis embarked on a

Nova Scotia: Papers Relating to the Acadian French, 1714-1755. Thomas B. Akins, ed Halifax: 1869. p.165.

⁹⁰ Ibid. The council was composed of Cornwallis, Mascarene, Colonel Edward How, John Gorham, Benjamin Green, John Salisbury, and Hugh Davidson. Colonel How was particularly wary of the Acadians. He was present when the Acadians killed Colonel Noble in a surprise attack in Minas in 1747. Just two years after Cornwallis’ appeal to the Acadians, How would also be killed near Beaubasin in a “treacherous” manner by another Acadian leader, Father Le Loutre, whom the British identified as the leader of Acadian insurgents.

⁹¹ The French members of the council Cornwallis dealt with represented the major French settlements such as Annapolis. The men were: Alexander Habert, Joseph Dugad, Claude Le Blanc, Jean Melancon (the spokesman), Baptiste Gaillard, Pierre Landry, Pierre Gotrau, Pierre Doucet, Francois Bourg, and Alexander Brossart. *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia: Papers Relating to the Acadian French, 1714-1755.* Thomas B. Akins, ed Halifax: 1869. p.168.

⁹² In 1749 alone, the British government spent 40,000 pounds to lure Protestant settlers.

⁹³ Placide Gaudet, “Acadian Genealogy and Notes,” in *Report Concerning Canadian Archives for the Year 1905.* Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 1906. p.49.

⁹⁴ This scenario seemed increasingly likely as the specter of prosecution loomed over those Catholic priests who punished intermarriage. For more, see Plank. p.119-120.

long-term project to assimilate these foreign peoples into the Protestant British Atlantic empire.

The turn toward a policy of assimilation of the Acadians made numerous British officials optimistic about the prospects of pacifying Nova Scotia. Cornwallis offered cooperation in exchange for peace. With the Acadians still refusing to take the oath of allegiance, Cornwallis conceded “that a forced service is worth nothing,” and that a subject “compelled to be so against his will, is not very far from being an enemy.”⁹⁵ Moreover, “this Province is your country; you and your fathers have cultivated it; naturally you ought yourselves to enjoy the fruits of your labor.”⁹⁶ Cornwallis’ approach seemed to offer the Acadians opportunities for market exchange and economic gain; yet, in the same letter, he noted that there are infinite reasons for the Acadians to evacuate the province so that His Majesty’s subjects might cultivate it. Cornwallis seemed conflicted. He believed the British could secure control over Nova Scotia by appealing to the Acadians’ desires to cultivate their farms – a mainstay, Cornwallis asserted, of Acadian heritage.

Even while being implemented on the geographic periphery in Nova Scotia, removal policy became a key ingredient to the construction of Great Britain’s Atlantic empire. British law emphasized individual rights during the eighteenth-century’s Age of Enlightenment. Sir William Blackstone’s four-volume study of English law in the late eighteenth century, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, addressed the tension between the interest of the individual and the state. Blackstone, an Oxford University

⁹⁵ WA Calnek, *History of the County of Annapolis, including Old Port Royal and Acadia, with Memoirs of its representatives in the Provincial Parliament, and Biographical and Genealogical Sketches of its Early English Settlers and their families*. Toronto: William Briggs, 1897. p.117 at Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

professor credited with organizing the massive texts that formed the foundation of British law, argued that banishment enabled the individual “to claim the *right* [emphasis mine] to abide in his own country so long as he pleases.”⁹⁷ “No power on earth,” he continued, “except the authority of parliament, can send any subjects of England *out* of the land against his will; no not even a criminal.”⁹⁸ Authorities in Nova Scotia effectively ignored this principle by deporting Acadians.

Existing on the periphery of empire, away from London, Parliament and the crown, Nova Scotian officials could form local policy that built on imperial precedent, but addressed the concerns of their province or colony. Sometimes imperial interests outweighed those of the individual. “Despite the empire’s growing unity” during the eighteenth century, as Eliga H. Gould notes, “assertions of the outer Atlantic’s inherent violence remained expressive of the many contested spaces” in the British empire, “where neither British nor any other conception of the law possessed undisputed authority.”⁹⁹ Local officials interpreted the law according to the circumstances they confronted; lower level officials such as provincial governors, assemblies, and military officers constructed new methods to deal with conflicts in their region. Although aware and often supportive, officials in London – at Whitehall and Parliament – were not at the forefront in developing removal plans. British officials on the geographic periphery of the empire expanded the scope of English law in social, political and legal spaces determined by the circumstances they faced in the Atlantic provinces.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England; in Four Books*, ed. Thomas M. Cooley. Chicago: Callaghan and Company, 1899. page 126.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Gould, “Zones of Law, Zones of Violence,” p.474.

¹⁰⁰ See Gould, “Zones of Violence, Zones of Law.”

Amidst several French attacks during King George's War, Massachusetts' Governor Shirley increased his support of plans to rid the area of troublesome French people.¹⁰¹ Shortly after the French attack on the fishing village of Canso in the late 1740s, a maneuver to regain the fort at Louisbourg was thwarted as the French fleet ran aground off the coast. Governor Shirley appeared frustrated, noting that "It grieves me much that I have it not in my power to send a part of 500 men forthwith...and burn Grand Pre, their [Acadians] chief town, and open their sluices, and lay their country to waste."¹⁰² Moreover, argued Shirley, the French "had so general an effect as to prevent the settlement of any one English family within the province."¹⁰³ Shirley believed it was necessary for English settlers to have access to the rich lands of Nova Scotia to secure the province and make it a contributing part of the British empire.¹⁰⁴ In this manner, the Governor viewed the province as an integral component in the growth of the British Atlantic empire.

Evidence suggested the Acadian inhabitants had conspired with their Indian and continental French counterparts to fight the British. Paul Mascarene summarized the information he had gathered, noting that "it was notorious that there were several among them that had been officious towards the enemy, and had gone so far as to discover even all the effects that belonged to the English, by which means the enemy."¹⁰⁵ Mascarene

¹⁰¹ Also known as the War for the Austrian Succession. For more details see Plank, pages 106-137.

¹⁰² Shirley to Pepperell, 25 May 1745. *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 6th Series, 10 (1899), p. 219.

¹⁰³ Shirley to Newcastle, 20 October 1747, RG1, Vol. 13A, doc. 32. Nova Scotia Archives and records Management.

¹⁰⁴ Securing Nova Scotia from the French effectively made the province an extension of New England.

¹⁰⁵ Council, May 25th, 1745. in *Acadia and Nova Scotia*, p.156.

was not convinced, however, arguing that the Acadian inhabitants had helped British forces by saving the British ships and keeping them out of French hands:

That [it] was known that all [the] plunder the enemy had made by seizing the two schooners which came from Boston...was dispersed and bought up by the inhabitants of Mines (sic)...in order to be returned to the British proprietors, as well as three prisoners they had redeemed out of the hands of the enemy.¹⁰⁶

Little doubt remained in Mascarene's mind as to the allegiance of *most* Acadians. Still, the Huguenot found himself one of few British authorities backing the long-term loyalty of the Acadians.

Yet, Mascarene's words proved ineffectual as local officials grew increasingly suspicious of the Acadians. After more conflict and skirmishes with the local French, the Huguenot admitted, "From whence it appears how necessary it is to put this Province on a better Foot than it has been or is at present."¹⁰⁷ "One of the greatest inconveniences it labours under," Mascarene conceded, "is having a large number of Inhabitants, who cannot be reckon'd to be attach'd to the British Interest."¹⁰⁸ Foreseeing recurring problems and questions over the Acadians' allegiance, Mascarene observed, "though they have been kept from joining the Enemy in Arms, it cannot be depended upon but that they may do so at some other time."¹⁰⁹ With removal seeming to be the only option, Mascarene optimistically developed a new plan. He believed that Nova Scotia's prosperity – and importantly, prosperity within the British system and *not* under French rule – could be achieved: "To counterbalance the Deadweight of these French Inhabitants, a Number of British Familys might be settled on the Eastern Coast of this

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from Paul Mascarene to Governor Shirley, April 1748, in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Vol. XIII (April 1901), p.160.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

Peninsula” to farm and harvest the timber.¹¹⁰ At least this way, Mascarene and other British officials could be sure their colonial citizens would remain loyal.

Resolved to deport the Acadians, the question then became: exactly which Acadians posed an imminent threat to the British? Governor Shirley’s answer was to summon the French inhabitants to take an oath of allegiance in place of their expired oath of fidelity. The oath proved inadequate because of a question concerning “a clause” that “they always stood was promised to them.”¹¹¹ The clause ensured the Acadians’ neutrality by stating they were not “obliged to take up arms against the French,” hindering British officials’ attempts to determine who was a threat to His Majesty’s province.¹¹² But, Mascarene suggested that, in lieu of removal, the British supply the Acadians with the commercial goods they needed, thus keeping them from “having any intercourse with the enemy.”¹¹³ The Frenchman’s argument reflected the fundamental idea behind the pacification of Scotland: prosperity gave little reason for rebellion.¹¹⁴

Mascarene’s suggestion seemed to have allayed some fears among the British. In 1749, Cornwallis made an official declaration in which he, once again, called for the Acadians to take oaths of allegiance in return for Britain’s religious toleration. Cornwallis proposed the Acadians retain “peaceable possession of such lands as are under their cultivation” on condition they follow “laws of Great Britain and likewise submit to such Rules and orders as may hereafter be thought proper to be made for the

¹¹⁰ James P. Baxter, “What Caused the Deportation of the Acadians?” in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Vol. XIII (April 1901), p.89.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Letter from Paul Mascarene to Governor Shirley, April 1748, in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Vol. XIII (April 1901), p.160.

¹¹⁴ Selkirk’s, *Observations On the Present State of the Highlands* uses 223 pages of observed data to argue this point in support of the success, in his mind, of the pacification of the Scottish Highlands.

maintaining and supporting of His Majesty's Government."¹¹⁵ Once again, the French inhabitants willingly took the oath of allegiance with a spoken clause inserted – overseen by Paul Mascarene – that excused the Acadians from taking up arms against the French army. Cornwallis believed the clause illegitimate. The oath was deemed unofficial until the Acadians agreed to remove the clause. This never occurred.

Governor Cornwallis and the French representatives continued to debate the details of the oath. After an exchange of letters, proclamations, and declarations between the two groups, an exasperated Cornwallis turned to diplomatic law. He contended the Treaty of Utrecht stipulated “those [French] who chose to remain in the province became at once the subjects of the King of Great Britain” and that it “is not the oath which a King administers to his subjects that makes them subjects,” rather “the oath supposes that they are so already.”¹¹⁶ According to Cornwallis, the Acadians were subjects of the crown and the oath only reaffirmed their “fidelity” to Britain.

Local officials in Nova Scotia began to accept the idea that widespread assimilation and allegiance of French-Acadians seemed unlikely. Indeed, Cornwallis looked to history to strengthen his case: “Gentlemen, you deceive yourselves if you think you are at liberty to choose whether you will be subject to the king or no” because “you have been [subjects] for more than thirty-four years past...and you have had the full enjoyment of your possessions and your religion.”¹¹⁷ The problem for Cornwallis was the Acadians’

¹¹⁵ “A Declaration with relation to the French Subjects of His Majesty King George Inhabiting Nova Scotia, sent to the Acadian French by Governor Cornwallis on the formation of the Civil Government at Halifax in 1749,” in *Acadia and Nova Scotia*, pages 165-166.

¹¹⁶ Reply from Governor Cornwallis to Deputies of French Districts, in *Acadia and Nova Scotia*, 174-175.

¹¹⁷ *Acadia and Nova Scotia*, page 174-175.

lack of “attachment and...zeal for your [English] king.”¹¹⁸ Upon refusing to renounce all connections to France, then, according to Cornwallis, the Acadians might leave the province on their own accord and possibly find refuge in Spanish-Catholic colonies to the south. Otherwise, they would be removed to wherever British officials deemed fit.

The likelihood of the French inhabitants *removing themselves* from the province proved remote at best. In the eighteenth century removal became a tool to control not only conquered peoples, but also subjects of the crown with legal standing with the empire. In believing that they had taken a legitimate oath of allegiance to the crown, the Acadians expected legal rights and protection. British officials instead focused on the Acadians’ insertion of the clause – the refusal to take up arms against the French – as a sign of disunity that precluded them from full allegiance to king. They believed the French had to be dealt with in order to secure the province.

Over the next five years, from 1749-1754, local British officials and French deputies argued with each other about loyalty. On successive occasions British authorities claimed the Acadians were aiding Indians and the French army. In response, British troops occupied towns such as Piziquid, Annapolis, and Chinecto among others.¹¹⁹ After investigating various inhabitants, British authorities were able to uncover some Acadians who were aiding Indian and French incursions. Still, as the Lords of Trade at Whitehall admitted themselves, the French had been surprisingly quiet over these last few years.¹²⁰ Regardless of such observations from London, local officials resigned themselves to the unlikely outcome of peaceful assimilation.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Piziquid is presently called Windsor, Nova Scotia.

¹²⁰ For more detail on these events, please see *Acadia and Nova Scotia*, pages 176-208.

The Acadians aggravated British colonial officials by petitioning Halifax often, asking for recognition of their neutrality while also claiming loyalty to the House of Hanover. According to British sources, as Catholics the Acadians remained under the influence of “incendiary French priests among them.”¹²¹ Local officials named Louis Joseph Le Loutre as an example.¹²² Irritated authorities described Le Loutre, the Vicar-General of Acadia and missionary to the Mi’kmaqs, as “a Man of boundless egotism, a violent spirit of domination” who has an “intense hatred of the English, and a fanaticism that stop[s] at nothing.”¹²³ The priests proved elusive because of their knowledge of the thickly forested terrain, further aided by the French population’s willingness to shield them from policing authorities. With these types of instigators roaming the countryside, few provincial officials doubted removal as the best option for securing the future development and peace of the colony.

In early 1754, the newly appointed governor of Nova Scotia became a leading proponent of Acadian removal. First appointed to Louisbourg in 1747, Governor Charles Lawrence later became a key architect in the settling of Germans in the province in the early 1750s. The new governor argued that the Acadians were becoming increasingly difficult for three main reasons that were tied to their refusal to take the oath of allegiance and insistence on “having at the same time from the Governor an Assurance in Writing,

¹²¹ Governor Lawrence to the Lords of Trade, 1 August 1754, reprinted in Calnek, *History of the County of Annapolis*, p.118.

¹²² Le Loutre was one of only five such priests working among the Mi’kmaqs who also had a permanent base in the province at the time. Le Loutre arrived in Acadia in 1737 where he immediately became a leading anti-British activist. He was also accused of killing an English colonel in a surprise attack in 1751. For more, *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia*. Thomas B. Akins, ed. Halifax: Charles Annand, 1869. p. 178; and also Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History*, p. 74.

¹²³ *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia*. Thomas B. Akins, ed. Halifax: Charles Annand, 1869. p.240.

that they should not be called upon to bear Arms in the defence of the Province.”¹²⁴ First, “there is no regular method of administering Justice amongst them, they grow very uneasy at the decision of their disputes having been so long put off from time to time.”¹²⁵ Second, their having refused the oath “is an absolute bar in our Law, to their holding any landed possessions.”¹²⁶ And, third, they threatened the security of the province with their cooperation with the Indians and the French continentals. Without an oath taken by the French, the Lords of Trade advised Governor Lawrence to occupy forts such as the decrepit one in Minas to “restrain the French inhabitants and prevent them from carrying supplies to the French.”¹²⁷ What began as a simple occupation of a French town surrounding one old fort became the first in a series of removals in the province.

Alarm over the suspected intentions and disloyalty of the Acadians remained present in New England. With close ties to Nova Scotia, Massachusetts’ officials and merchants grew anxious over the potential impediment the Acadians could have on the fisheries, lumber trade, and other inter-colonial economic ventures. A concerned Governor Shirley of Massachusetts wrote to the British Lords of Trade in November 1754, “if Nova Scotia should be lost by any sudden blow, the eastern parts of the province of Massachusetts Bay, and the whole province of New Hampshire [would fall] (within which tracts of territory are included the woods from whence Royal Navy is now supplied with masts, yards and bowsprits).”¹²⁸ The Governor argued, “all the seacoast as

¹²⁴ Letter From Governor Lawrence to John Winslow, 11th August 1755, in John Winslow Military Papers, Box 1, Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹²⁵ Both quotes appear in Governor Lawrence to Board of Trade, Halifax, 5 December 1753.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Lords of Trade to Governor Lawrence, Whitehall, 4 March 1754.

¹²⁸ 11 November 1754, Shirley to Lords of Trade (British Ministry), as quoted in Henry S. Burrage, “The Occasion of the Expulsion of the Acadians in 1755,” in *The Collections of the Maine Historical Society*, Volume I. Portland: Maine Historical Society, 1904. p. 279.

far as Merrimac river with the whole fishery westward of Newfoundland” would “soon fall into the possession of the French.”¹²⁹ Shirley was alarmed “by the situation of their new seacoast abounding with most commodious harbors for the largest ships of war” because the French could “be able to dispute [our] mastery of the eastern part of the Atlantic Ocean with the British navy.”¹³⁰ Indeed, if large parts of New England fell to the French, then it raised the possibility of losing control over the continent. Shirley helped solidify support in England for the removal of more than those Acadians who ran afoul of the law. Indeed, Britons increasingly called for the expulsion of as many Acadians as could be rounded up and boarded onto ships.

Concerns about the French siphoning the resources of the colony further exacerbated the tension between Britons and Acadians. In 1754, Lawrence complained, “They have not for a long time brought anything to our markets, but, on the other hand, have carried everything to the French and Indians, whom they have always assisted with provisions, quarters and intelligence.”¹³¹ Worse still was the idea that the food and materials were being given directly to the Catholic enemy. Lawrence was quick to point out the involvement of “incendiary French priests among them,”¹³² strengthening the long-standing characterization of the Acadians as papal servants.

Imperial officials argued that the Acadians served as an impediment to further settlement of the colony. Nova Scotia held the potential to be a key resource for the British people and their military, *if* the timber, fish and agricultural lands could be utilized. But, for Lawrence, the Acadians “possess the best and largest tracts of land in

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Governor Lawrence to the Lords of Trade, 1 August 1754, Calnek, p.118.

¹³² Ibid.

the Province” which “cannot be settled while they remain in this situation.” In his opinion, “it would be much better” if “*they were away.*”¹³³ Only once the Acadians were cleared away could the British begin to properly cultivate – and civilize – the land.

Frustrated, the turning point for Lawrence came at the fall of the French held Fort Beausejour in June 1755. Two hundred Acadians were found inside with guns and ammunition, reaffirming what he had already suspected of the so-called French neutrals: they were secretly in accord with the French king to undermine British control in the region. Lawrence ordered the Acadians to surrender their arms, bar none, while also commanding every Acadian to take an unconditional oath of allegiance. In a systematic rebuttal of French petitions for leniency in their punishment, Lawrence noted numerous occasions on which the Acadians acted in a manner inconsistent with their claimed allegiance. For example, the Acadians wanted “their Canoes for carrying Provisions to the Enemy, and not for their own use or the Fishery,” as they had previously claimed.¹³⁴ Evidence seemed irrefutable, which increased local authorities’ concerns.

After several more failed attempts to have the Acadians take the oath of allegiance, Governor Lawrence gave orders to send the French out of the province. Lawrence based his decision on three assumptions, arguments first developed in 1745-47 in Scotland and Nova Scotia: legal precedence that stated the Acadians should be removed because they rebelled and failed to take the oath (upon advice from Chief Justice Jonathan Belcher, Jr.), and, according to a precedent set in Ireland, because the Acadians seemed likely to

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Response to letter from the inhabitants of Mines, Pisiquid and the river Canard, 24 June 1755, in “Papers Relating to the Forcible Removal of the Acadian French from nova Scotia, 1755-1768,” in *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia*, Thomas B. Akins, ed. Halifax: 1869 p. 252.

be “an obstruction to the Intention of settling this Colony.”¹³⁵ Governor Lawrence, though, was different than his predecessors in Nova Scotia in that he *acted* on these legal arguments that supported removal. Indeed, Lawrence maintained, “nothing now remained to be considered but what measures should be taken to send them away, and where they should be sent to.”¹³⁶ It was now, he argued, “absolutely incumbent upon us to remove” the Acadians.¹³⁷ Lawrence shouldered a burden that he believed, as a British official on the periphery of empire, required him to take control of the situation and to enact a policy he considered beneficial to Great Britain.

Despite support emanating from London, Governor Lawrence came under fire from politicians and philosophers around the Atlantic. The eighteenth-century political philosopher Edmund Burke expressed his opinion that removal proved “most inhumane...and upon pretences, in the eye of an honest man,” it is “not worth a farthing” to “root out [these] poor, innocent, deserving peoples, whom our utter inability to govern, or to reconcile” has given “us no sort of right to extirpate.”¹³⁸ France took particular notice of British policy in the Maritimes, petitioning the Royal Government to allow the Acadians to remove themselves, to leave on their own volition without interference from British officials. The petition was not well received. Still critics existed and they attempted to defend the Acadians, a population of as many as 18,000, with seemingly little recourse against a giant, global power.

¹³⁵ Letter from Governor Lawrence to John Winslow, Halifax, Nova Scotia, August 11, 1755, John Winslow Military Papers, in Massachusetts Historical Society, and Plank, 145.

¹³⁶ Council held at the Governor’s House, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 28th July, 1755. John Winslow Military Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹³⁷ Governor Lawrence to John Winslow, Halifax, Nova Scotia, August 11, 1755, John Winslow Military Papers, in Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹³⁸ Oscar William Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*: Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955. p. 17.

Other criticism came in the form of challenges to Lawrence's power as governor. In response, Lawrence assigned Chief Justice Belcher to determine the validity of laws passed by the governor that were not also approved by the province's assembly, including his orders to remove the Acadians. Chief Justice Belcher considered the validity of the laws and came to the conclusion that in "countries acquired by the crown through conquest...the king had the right to govern according to expediency."¹³⁹ Furthermore, Lawrence, acting in conjunction with the crown, "could legislate without the consent of the people" until the province was sufficiently settled.¹⁴⁰ By virtue of occupying an extralegal space on the periphery of empire, Lawrence held the power to remove the Acadians so long as he represented the interest of the crown.

Nova Scotia's officials constructed removal policy in part on the foundations laid by the British military's program to pacify the Scottish Highlands. Charles Knowles and Edward Cornwallis transferred the fundamental idea of assimilating those Catholics willing to play by the rules of British society, while transporting the most difficult peoples out of the province. Moreover, William Pepperell and others had set a precedent in 1745 when they rounded up 2700 Acadians for deportation to France. The transference of policy from the British Isles to North America combined with past conflicts to expand the use of mass removal to other parts of the empire.

¹³⁹ Ralph Greenlee Lounsbury, *Jonathan Belcher, Jr., Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931. p. 177-178.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

This initial use of removal illustrates the chaotic and oppressive nature of the Atlantic world.¹⁴¹ Removal, as it was implemented in eighteenth-century Nova Scotia, emerged as a policy constructed by local officials based on criteria that included oaths of allegiance and the threat of collusion between French-Acadian inhabitants, Mi'kmaqs, and French continental soldiers. The language used by local British officials described the Acadians as cultural others.¹⁴² Provincial officials worried that the Acadians would continue to impede their attempts to construct a stable corner of the British empire, leading to further conflict, bloodshed, and war. Fear of revolt, French and Spanish incursions, as well as Indian attacks haunted colonial officials, creating an atmosphere of tension and hostility towards anyone supporting rival European empires.

Discussions of removal occurred amongst authorities on the periphery of empire, away from London, Parliament and the crown. As the eighteenth-century progressed, removal was implemented less and less by London, Whitehall or Parliament; rather, lower level officials such as provincial governors, assemblies, and military leaders employed the policy. Removal became a local policy. Legal debates between officials in London often gave way to decisions by those officials on the frontlines – colonels, local governors, or assemblymen – who saw events unfolding before their eyes. By the 1740s,

¹⁴¹ Eliga H. Gould, “Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772.” p.3. Other works have also shaped my interpretation of the legalities of removal. Laura Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, circa 1550-1700*, New York: Cambridge University press, 2000; J.G.A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987; and several selections from *The Many Legalities of Early America*, ed. Christopher Tomlins and Bruce H. Mann, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

¹⁴² Although the terms “other” and “otherness” have fallen out of favor among scholars in recent years, I believe this word is appropriate to describe less than ideal – according to British accounts – religious, racial, and cultural characteristics held by the Irish, Acadians, and maroons profiled in this dissertation. See Marianne Constable, *The Law of the Other: The Mixed Jury and Changing Conceptions of Citizenship, Law, and Knowledge*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Nova Scotia began to slowly emerge as a key site of European imperial, as well as social, conflict during the eighteenth century. The responsibility for removal migrated from the halls of London to the small enclaves of sparsely settled – yet strategically important and resource rich – Nova Scotia.

-- CHAPTER TWO --

“NEW HEBREWS BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON:”¹⁴³
ACADIANS IN THE DIASPORA, 1755-1770

John Winslow, Lieutenant Colonel of New England’s “first Battalion,” arrived in the French-Acadian village of Minas, Nova Scotia on August 18, 1755. The 315 soldiers accompanying him were intent on securing some four hundred residents.¹⁴⁴ Winslow had been ordered to watch the town while his superiors – Nova Scotia’s Governor Lawrence among them – decided when and where to deport the Acadians. Lawrence promised Winslow that “reducing the French Inhabitants of this Colony to a proper obedience” would result in “forcing them to quit the Country.”¹⁴⁵ A resident of Marshfield, Massachusetts, Winslow’s orders were to halt “Encroachments [the Acadians] had made in [the British] Province.”¹⁴⁶ Urged by his fellow Britons to “route all such Vermin from

¹⁴³ Originally appears in Joseph Guillaume Barthe, *Le Canada Reconquis par la France*, as reprinted in James P. Baxter, “What Caused the Deportation of the Acadians?” in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Vol. XIII (April 1901), p.98.

¹⁴⁴ John Winslow received his orders from Massachusetts Governor Shirley on 28 February 1755, elevating him to Lieutenant Colonel of the first Battalion of a New England Regiment. The orders placed him at the helm of Great Britain’s forces in Nova Scotia, while making him subject to the orders of Governors Shirley, Lawrence and any other “Superior according to the Rules, and Discipline of War.” “Journal of Colonel John Winslow at Grand Pre, Autumn 1755,” in *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society, Vol. III*. (1883), 71-196. p.115.

¹⁴⁵ Governor Lawrence to John Winslow, 11 August 1755, John Winslow Military Papers, 1734-1774, 2 Boxes, 1 Volume, at Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹⁴⁶ Cable to Winslow, 24 September 1755. John Winslow Military Papers, 1734-1774, 2 Boxes, 1 Volume, at Massachusetts Historical Society.

the Land,” he led the descent of nearly 2,000 men on various French Acadian villages in 1755-1756.¹⁴⁷

Yet, in the middle of that French village, and in the early stages of the Seven Years’ War, Winslow grew impatient as he became increasingly worried about his soldiers’ security in such a potentially hostile setting. The colonel, acting within his commissioned powers, ordered approximately 200 Acadian men to board a British transport vessel awaiting them in the harbor. A somber scene ensued, reported Winslow, with one man, “wch I told of my Self to Divied from the rest...Slowly...went off praying, singing and crying,” while “being met by the women and children all the way.”¹⁴⁸ The vessel was quickly loaded with the men of village while the women and children were left to harvest the wheat growing in the Nova Scotia’s rocky fields. By December, the remaining French inhabitants of the village were marched to the transport, “carrying off their children in their arms, others carrying their decrepit parents in their carts,”¹⁴⁹ and shipped to one of several destinations scattered throughout Britain’s North American colonies.¹⁵⁰

The “expedition” aimed at removing the French from the volatile lands of Nova Scotia attests to the region’s centrality in the struggle for empire in the Atlantic. Winslow acknowledged a long-standing belief among New Englanders about the nature of European imperial rivalries in North America, remarking to a friend that he could not

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ John Winslow, “Journal” in *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, volume 3, 1883. P. 109.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p.164.

¹⁵⁰ Massachusetts (2,000), Pennsylvania (500), South Carolina (500), Virginia (1100), Maryland (1000), Connecticut (700), North Carolina (500), Georgia (400), and New York (250) each received exiled Acadians. These figures are approximate, represented a base total of 6950 people sent to the British North American colonies only. Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest*, p. 149.

rest “till his Majesty is in possession of Canada And the whole Continent of North America.”¹⁵¹ Men like Winslow looked forward to helping raise the “Nation...to a Higher pitch in Glory and Welth [sic] then as yet it ever obtained.”¹⁵² In order to accomplish this goal the neutral French – as local officials tentatively called the Acadians – must be “divide[d]...among the Colonies” to prevent them from going “whither they pleased” which “wou’d have doubtless strengthened Canada.”¹⁵³ Furthermore, Lawrence suggested, “they may be of some use as most of them are healthy strong People.”¹⁵⁴ Lawrence believed the Acadians “cannot easily collect themselves together again” once removed, making it “out of their power to do any mischief and they may [even] become profitable, and it is possible in time, faithful Subjects.”¹⁵⁵ For the governor, however, ridding these rebels from Nova Scotia would be an important step in securing the resource rich-lands of the province as the early stages of the Seven Years War erupted all around him.

Nova Scotia’s officials encountered few challenges from London in removing the Acadians. The king and his ministers considered the Acadians a hindrance to the growth of the province, but at the heart of this policy lay disillusionment with assimilation as the primary method of dealing with cultural others in the empire. Men like Paul Mascarene believed in cultural assimilation of the French – though only to abandon the idea later – within the British empire. Protestant by birth, Mascarene differed vastly from his French-Catholic counterparts in the eyes of British officials though, serving in the vestry

¹⁵¹ Winslow to King Gould, Esq., 26 June 1755,.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Lawrence to Winslow, 11 August 1755, John Winslow Military Papers, at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

of Boston's premier Anglican Church and participating in Boston's elite social circles. Indeed, British officials in Nova Scotia must have wondered to what extent the average French-Acadian could resemble Paul Mascarene.¹⁵⁶

Once it became clear that *all* Acadians faced potential expulsion and removal from Nova Scotia, new challenges awaited the French. The Acadians met distrust wherever they settled. In Britain's North American colonies, suspicion of collusion with the French and Indians combined with fears that this unpredictable Catholic population might incite widespread slave revolts. Furthermore, the sudden arrival of the exiles in the ports of Boston, Philadelphia and other major colonial cities infuriated more than one local official. Left to pay for the newly arrived alms cases, organizations for the poor begged local legislatures for money, increasing demands on already war-weary coffers. Finally, the responsibilities thrust on colonial governments by Governor Lawrence were tinged with imperial ramifications. Lawrence made it clear the empire's security rested on making sure the Acadians did not return to Nova Scotia.

What happened to the numerous groups of deported Acadians depended on how individual host colonies dealt with the influx of exiles. Some were imprisoned while others were cared for as though they were dutiful British Protestant subjects. Excruciating deaths from smallpox awaited several hundred of the 6,000+ Acadians removed from Nova Scotia. Regardless of their experience, all exiled Acadians were labeled as others, mostly for religious reasons, yet sometimes for racial reasons. They were a nebulous population, neither French, nor British, nor Indian, yet influenced by

¹⁵⁶ Other French Huguenots moved in the elite circles of colonial America. The Faneuils, one of the wealthiest families in late seventeenth and eighteenth-century New England, originally emigrated to New York after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Protestant Frenchmen like Peter Faneuil and Paul Mascarene were not Catholic Acadians, and the question remained: could they be held as models for cultural assimilation?

these three cultures. Their numbers were too small to be considered a politically organized nation in an era when nations ruled with military and economic might. Still, in many Britons' minds, they were dangerous: Acadian intermarriage with local Indians increased the unpredictability of these dispersed peoples. Some colonial officials strengthened colonial alliances with local bands of Indians to thwart Franco-Indian collaboration.

As a dispersed cultural group, the Acadians formed a new diaspora in the Atlantic world. Acadians were driven to return to Nova Scotia. Sometimes they embarked on the risky journey back to Nova Scotia without state support and lacking any guarantee they would be allowed to remain in the province. After 1763 and the end of the Seven Years War, however, many Acadians were given the choice of returning to their lands. And by 1770, their colonial hosts paid for transports to carry them back to Nova Scotia. These offers to return the Acadians did not originate with Nova Scotia's governmental authorities; rather, individual towns and legislatures in colonies such as Massachusetts and Pennsylvania initiated attempts to send the exiles back north.¹⁵⁷ Reflecting the tenuous nature of a diasporic existence, Acadians in Virginia were not afforded the opportunity to return to Nova Scotia: anxious authorities loaded them onto a ship bound for England in 1756 rather than "give them their liberty to go where they please," fearing "many of them" would "return to Nova Scotia."¹⁵⁸

Nevertheless, thousands were unwilling to uproot themselves once again, remaining scattered in the diaspora within the Atlantic world. Approximately 3,000 Acadians dispersed to France and England never returned to Nova Scotia. Once in exile,

¹⁵⁷ See Reed, "The Acadian Exiles, or French Neutrals, in Pennsylvania," p.295-315; and Jewett, "The Acadians in Rowley," 367-388.

¹⁵⁸ Millard, "The Acadians in Virginia," p.250-251.

the Acadians realized that imperial conflict combined with social and religious anxieties inexorably to shape their future. Their experiences in the diaspora hardened Acadian identity, transforming them from a group of neutral French colonists to a distinct ethnic group who held less in common with Euro-Americans than with Native Americans and other persons of color.

“Clearing the whole country of such bad subjects”¹⁵⁹

The origins of the Acadian people dates to 1604, when Pierre du Gast de Monts arrived with 150 French colonists. A motley group, the original European settlers developed a separate Acadian identity from other French colonists in New France during the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁰ Isolated from other French colonists in Quebec by mountains and rugged terrain, faced with rocky soil and a harsh climate, the French colonists in Acadia turned to local Native Americans, the Mi’kmaqs, for survival. Cooperation between the two groups resulted in tight social and cultural relations unusual in British New England or French Quebec. Intermarriage with Native Americans and a trickling of further immigration from France ensured a general increase of the colonial population during the seventeenth century. In 1671, the documented population was 342 (179 *hommes*, 163 *femmes*). By 1693, 935 colonists were counted (524 *hommes*, 411 *femmes*), but in 1698 a slight drop, with only 786 persons (426 *hommes*, 360 *femmes*), was

¹⁵⁹ Governor Lawrence to Commandant Handfield of Annapolis, 11 August 1755. Reprinted in Calnek, *History of the County of Annapolis*, p.119.

¹⁶⁰ The original colonists were convicts, Huguenots, priests, laborers, and nobles. See Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*, p. 4.

noted.¹⁶¹ In sharp contrast, as many as 2,000 colonists lived in the settlements along the Saint Lawrence River, including Quebec, in 1650.¹⁶²

Due in part to their isolation from Quebec, and neglect by the French government in Paris, Acadians developed strong trade ties with New Englanders by the 1640s, marking the beginning of a contentious relationship with the British colonists to their south. Ties between the two regions were complex by the time of the first of several attacks on Acadian forts by New England armies in 1690. So profound were the ties that one British officer, John Nelson, owned a warehouse in the town being attacked, Port Royal.¹⁶³ Despite close economic relations, British and French imperial conflicts often spilled over to Acadia and New England.¹⁶⁴ In the wake of the Glorious Revolution, the 1690s witnessed heightened friction borne from Catholic France's support of James II, the former Catholic King of England. Many New Englanders and other British colonists engaged the French, whether in Quebec or Acadia, because they feared the consequences of French victory in North America. The Acadians declared themselves neutral during this era in part because France failed defend their towns or farms, even though French soldiers rebuilt key forts around Acadia that were used to launch attacks on British North America. Anglo-French imperial rivalries quickly isolated the Acadians at the turn of the eighteenth century, leaving them caught between competing Atlantic powers.

¹⁶¹ These statistics are subject to question. As Jacques Houdaille makes clear, the transient and dispersed nature of the Acadian population made it difficult for census takers to gain a clear idea of how many colonists lived in the region. Further complicating the census was the Acadians' close relationship with local Indians. Who was and was not Acadian remained unclear in many situations. See, Houdaille, "Quelques aspects de la démographie ancienne de l'Acadie," in *Population* (French edition), 35e Année, No. 3 (May 1980), 600-601.

¹⁶² John A Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec*. Toronto: Copp Clark Pittman Ltd., 1993. p. 20.

¹⁶³ For more on Nelson, see Richard R. Johnson, *John Nelson, Merchant Adventurer: A Life Between Empires*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

¹⁶⁴ See Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest*, p. 10-12.

Embarking on a plan to remove the Acadians in early August 1755, Colonel John Winslow marched into Minas to occupy the town and what remained of its fort. Governor Lawrence charged Winslow with quickly “Disposing of them [Acadians] in such a manner as may best answer our Design in preventing their reunion” and to “expedite as much as possible their Discharge.”¹⁶⁵ Winslow acted largely upon his own accord, deciding when and which transports to send the villagers. What followed was a massive deportation effort that attempted to rid the region of the remnants of the Acadian people. Soldiers destroyed ships and vessels and also herded the cattle, oxen, horses and sheep because “the Property of the French Inhabitants are become [sic] forfeit to his Majesty.”¹⁶⁶ In this manner, Acadian removal resembled the early stages of the Highland Clearances in Scotland that began after 1746.

Thousands of Acadians arrived in the British colonies to the south, with some eventually reaching the shores of British Honduras. All had a variety of experiences. In testimony recounted to the Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania, John Baptiste Galerm revealed why the Acadians thought of themselves as “French Neutrals.” French officials were suspicious of the Acadians and charged them with conspiracy against the crown in Paris; much like those British officials who accused the Acadians of collusion with French soldiers. Indeed, Galerm recounts, “those of our people settled near” French forts “had many of their Settlements burnt by the *French*.”¹⁶⁷ The Acadians occupied a unique place between the French and British empires, managing to forge more productive

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ The Orders of the Day, Forte Cumberland Camp, August 11, 1755, reprinted in “Canadian Archives,” Placide Gaudet, *Acadian Genealogy and Notes Concerning the Expulsion*. Pawtucket, Rhode Island: Quintin Publications, Inc., 1996. pages 10-11.

¹⁶⁷ The name of the fort is illegible. *A Relation of the Misfortunes of the FRENCH NEUTRALS, as laid before the Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania* by John Baptiste Galerm, one of said People. Evans #7669

and peaceful relationship with local Mi'k Maq peoples than with other colonial Europeans. Few Anglo-Acadian marriages occurred during the 1740s and 1750s in Nova Scotia, yet, according to British observations, numerous Acadians married within Mi'kmaq communities. The French neutrals occupied a middle ground, refusing to take up arms against either the British or French. Their lives were difficult primarily because they had little legal support in either the French or British system. Neither side trusted the Acadians' loyalty, making them prime candidates for removal.

Although the Acadians experienced the trauma of removal, colonists involved in the process of expulsion faced certain challenges as well. On the surface, John Winslow could appear to be a hardened commander; yet, Winslow battled his emotions regarding what he deemed a “disagreeable business.” Winslow recorded in his journal his internal conflict, commenting, “things are now very heavy on my heart and hands” because the expulsions are “a troublesome affair, which is more grievous than any service I was ever employed in.”¹⁶⁸ The Acadians represented two previously distinct racial and cultural groups – French Catholics and non-allied Indians – heavily despised by Britons after one hundred years of imperial conflict between New France and New England. Winslow's adversaries were hardly soldiers, however, especially when confronted by a reasonably trained volunteer service composed of Anglo-French war veterans. Winslow confronted an ethical dilemma only surpassed by the larger concerns of the British Atlantic empire: this disagreeable business must take place, according to his superiors, in order to help secure the rest of the North American colonies.

¹⁶⁸ Journal of Colonel John Winslow, in *Collections of Nova Scotia Historical Society*, Vol. III, p. 80 (283-284).

Other New England soldiers shared Winslow's opinion that the manner in which removal was carried out seemed particularly cruel. On 15 August 1755, Abijah Willard "ordered the sergts. [sic] to see all the men drawed up in a body and march to the hous where the french were."¹⁶⁹ "Then," they "serged every Hous in th. Plase for their arms and found sum fine guns and then went in to the house and told them that they must go with me to fort Cumberland."¹⁷⁰ Willard instructed his men to "Burn all their Buildings" – a custom of war – "which made them look very sober & Dejected." "One of the french akt me for what Reason for he said he Never had Taken up arms against the English since they had the fight at menas [Minas]," and that he had "since swore by the bible that he never would before Majr. Philips of anopils. [Annapolis]."¹⁷¹ The man added that "he was Ready to sware now," while "all the Rest mad the same Reply."¹⁷² Although Willard had conflicting opinions regarding the methods used to remove the Acadians, he agreed with Lawrence's reasons to deport the Acadians. Willard listened to the protesting French, after which he declared to "them they was Ribbils."¹⁷³ Rebels were perhaps the single largest threat to any growing empire, much less a realm becoming as diverse as the British Atlantic.

But Willard chose to reason with the Acadians. When "The french man askt me [rebels] in what. I answered him In harboring the Indians from St. Johns Island to go to the English settlements in New England and novicotia and find them proitions and ammunition." To "which they answered me and said they was oblige to go or Indians

¹⁶⁹ Abijah Willard, "An Unwritten Chapter of Evangeline," in *Magazine of History*, Vol. IX, (January 1909), 10.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p.11

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

would Kill them.” Willard replied, “if they [sic] had ben true they might of ben protected by the English and I told them they might Carry their familys with if they though [sic] best.” After this exchange, the Acadians “ast me for to have the Liberty to go with their familys to the Island of St. Johns but soon answered them itt Did not Lie in my power to Do it and they askt me Liberty for 2 hours to consult whether they thought Best to carry their familys.” Willard was encouraged when “they mad Reply that they had chose to Leave their familys which I Readyly granted for I Did not want the trouble of the women and children.”¹⁷⁴ A conflicted Willard accomplished his mission by reminding himself of the greater impact removal would have on the empire. Later that night, as the New Englander wrote in his journal, he turned to more immediate issues facing the soldiers, bitterly noting that “Beers was given this Day in Lew of Rum.”¹⁷⁵

Yet, on the next day, 16 August 1755, the affair seems to have worn on Willard as his patrol carried out their mission. He notes that “our party...Behaved like good souldiers” and at “Aboute 3 o’clock this afternoon I ordered the whole to be Drewd up in a Body and bid the french men march off and sottt fire to their Buildings.”¹⁷⁶ A last act, on orders, pierced through Willard’s thick skin, however: “[we] Left the women and children to Tack Care of themselves,” absent of any shelter or town infrastructure. Ridding this strategically important British province of a Catholic menace was reasonable to Willard; yet, leaving women and children to rebuild a town and harvest their crops with the icy Maritime winter approaching left the man “with great Lamentations which I

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

must confess it seemed to be something shocking.”¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, his soldiers fulfilled the Governor’s orders to protect the interests of the British Atlantic empire.

Frustrated by the lack of success of earlier attempts to assimilate the Acadians, Shirley, Lawrence and others proceeded with the removal of Acadians. Even as the Acadians were being shipped to various destinations around the Atlantic world, local officials prepared for the next phase of operations. Lawrence made sure that “when the French inhabitants are removed, you [Colonel Monckton] will give orders that no person presume to take possession of any lands until a plan of the whole has been laid before me.”¹⁷⁸ A plan for assimilation of the Catholic peoples of Acadia had been in place since at least 1747, gaining support throughout the 1750s, but officials relinquished all hope of transforming the most troublesome of Acadians to the civility of British life. It was not enough to settle Scots, Germans, and others in Acadia. Instead, by 1755, removal became the best way to offer “terms of encouragement to English settlers” in place of these resistant French neutrals.¹⁷⁹ British authorities, with the support of Whitehall and the crown, endeavored to fully transform the colony into a British province devoid of the problematic Acadians.

Far from being an easy endeavor, removing the French Acadians proved extreme in its violence, intended totality and mercilessness. Scholars and poets have highlighted some of the more dramatic moments in the expulsions. There are also deeper connections between how the British drove out the Acadians, cleared the Highlands of unwanted Jacobites, and the way in which they interacted with other captive populations

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Both quotes as reprinted in Archdeacon WO Raymond, *Colonel Alexander McNutt and the Pre-Loyalist Settlements of Nova Scotia*. Royal Society of Canada, 1911. p. 25.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

in the empire. The Jacobites and the Acadians were, for the most part, not under arrest, not enslaved, nor was it intended for them to experience widespread forced labor. They were, however, captives in the empire. With the Seven Years War raging between the French and British, the Acadians were in some instances prisoners of war, such as in the fort at Louisbourg. Leading British commanders believed the Acadians should all be prisoners, arguing “they might have been kept in proper subjection while troops remained in Nova Scotia,” but once these troops were needed somewhere else in the empire, locals believed the Acadians would act out against the crown once again.¹⁸⁰

The Acadians were also held captive for their refusal to take an unconditional oath of allegiance to the king. Considering past broken promises to take the oath by Acadians and their leaders, Lawrence believed “There was no reason to hope their proposed Compliance proceeded from an honest mind,” which was brought about “only by the Effect of Compulsion and Force.”¹⁸¹ Furthermore, according to Lawrence, the governor was required to consider “persons who once refused to take the oaths” as “Popish Recusants” who would “therefore...not now be indulged” to take it and “were thereupon ordered into Confinement.”¹⁸² So long as their allegiance to the British crown appeared suspect, the Acadians were in a state of captivity.

¹⁸⁰ This was Jeffrey Amherst’s opinion, as quoted in Oscar William Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955. p. 16.

¹⁸¹ Winzerling, p. 16-17.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

Creating a Diaspora in Exile

At the same time the Acadians were being deported from Nova Scotia, the Young Pretender wandered about the Continent in exile, understanding that he could never return to England. Charles Stuart, like the Acadians, experienced the “unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and [his] true home.”¹⁸³ British efforts to send them to a variety of destinations made the Acadians confront a future where it seemed their culture and identity could not be retained. This also seemed to be the case for those Scots who remained on their native lands in the Highlands after the British embarked on a plan to pacify the region.¹⁸⁴

The two stages of Acadian removal reveal the making of a diaspora. During the Seven Years War, from 1755-1763, sizeable groups of Acadians were shipped to at least twelve different locations (ten of the British North American colonies, England, and France), excluding those who fled into the woods and countryside. Yet, more importantly, the nomadic wandering inherent with exile began a second stage of removal by 1758. Acadians began to move again, on their own accord and through their own persistence. From 1758-1785, the approximately 2,000-3,000 Acadians who had been deposited in seaports of England and France made their way back to the American side of the Atlantic. Some settled, at least temporarily, in the Canadian Maritimes, but most

¹⁸³ Edward W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003. p. 173.

¹⁸⁴ For example, methods of farming and labor changed dramatically in the 50 years after the Jacobite Rebellion in 1745. Farms were no longer overcrowded and overworked, but were modeled after English farming practices which used a minimum of persons to produce maximum yield. See Selkirk, *Observations*, p. 25.

were scattered throughout the Caribbean, New Orleans, and even Quebec, whose *habitants* were previously intolerant of these other French North Americans.¹⁸⁵

Authorities in Nova Scotia miscalculated the willingness of their peers throughout the British Atlantic to accommodate the exiles and the end result was not what they had expected. British colonial officials worried about the impact of a rebel Catholic population on an already tense and anxious citizenry. Governor Lawrence wrote each of the colonial governors to alleviate their concerns, imploring them to “receive and dispose of [the Acadians] in such a manner as may best answer *our design in preventing their reunion.*”¹⁸⁶ Still, colonists in the territories that received Acadians question whether expulsion was the right move. Colonial officials worried about adding more French Catholics in the colonies because “more than probably they would have found means to join the French on the Ohio.”¹⁸⁷

Senior officials in the North American colonies that received Acadians contacted one another to discuss the situation. Jonathan Belcher (Senior) of Massachusetts – a colony that received the largest influx of Acadians – contacted Governor Morris of Pennsylvania. Belcher noted, “I am truly surprised how it could ever enter the thoughts of those who had the ordering of the French Neutrals, or rather Traitors and Rebels to the crown of Great Britain, to direct any of them into these Provinces.”¹⁸⁸ In a time of war, when “we have already too great a number of foreigners for our own good and safety

¹⁸⁵ Naomi E.S. Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-1784*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992. p. 98-99. Some returnees from France found their way as far south as the Falkland Islands, though their stay was short as war forced them to move once again.

¹⁸⁶ As reprinted in Calnek, *History of the County of Annapolis*. p.125.

¹⁸⁷ 10 May 1756, Governor Dinwiddie to Secretary of State, in Millard, “The Acadians in Virginia,” p.249-250.

¹⁸⁸ 25 November 1755, Jonathan Belcher, Sr. to Governor Morris, as quoted in William B. Reed, “The Acadian Exiles, or French Neutrals, in Pennsylvania,” in *Contributions to American History*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Historical Society, 1858. p.293.

most immigrants fell suspect,” Belcher continued, “I think [the Acadians] should have been transported directly to old France.”¹⁸⁹ Most troublesome, however, was the thought that “these people would readily join with the Irish Papists, & c., to the ruin...the King’s Colonies, and should any attempt to land here, I should think it, in duty to the King and to his good people under my care, to do all in my power to crush an attempt.”¹⁹⁰ To some officials in North America, it seemed that Nova Scotia’s assembly and governor were passing on their problems; other colonies had their own issues with which to contend. For others, it was more personal. Jonathan Belcher was the father of the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, Jonathan Belcher, Junior, the same man who had given Governor Lawrence the legal approval to remove the Acadians. Tension between government officials about the decision to deport the Acadians carried across family lines during wartime.

Other colonial officials were not as accommodating as those in Boston (where approximately 2,000 exiles landed) or Pennsylvania, where the colony’s longstanding policy of religious toleration made the Catholic exiles feel more welcome than in other places. Approximately 1,140 Acadians disembarked in Virginia, causing “much embarrassment to the people” of that state.¹⁹¹ The governor and the planter elite were not willing to accept the French neutrals in their midst. Circumstances in Virginia and other southern colonies differed from those in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Alarmed by the influx of French settlers, Virginia’s Governor Dinwiddie wrote to the Secretary of State, believing “they behaved here mutinously and were tampering with the Negro Slaves, which together with the Invasion of the French and Indians on our Frontiers,

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Émile Lavrière, *Tragédie D’Un Peuple: Histoire Du Peuple Acadien De Ses Origines A Nos Jours*. Vols 1, 2. Paris: Librairie Henry Goulet, 1924.

made our people extremely uneasy.”¹⁹² Although it is unclear whether or not Acadians were in actual contact with slaves, Dinwiddie’s concerns reflected a very real fear of corruption and collusion. Moreover, “as they would not vote any Allowance for their maintenance, I was brought to a necessity of assenting to their being transported to Britain at the Charge of this Colony.”¹⁹³ Despite the expense of sending out the Acadians, Dinwiddie noted, “I hope it will appear more eligible than their remaining here, as its more than probabl[e] they would have found means to have joined the French on the Ohio.”¹⁹⁴ Virginia’s unsecured western frontier suffered from repeated French and Indian attacks because of failed attempts by George Washington and others to defend that same backcountry. Dinwiddie worried that some of the 1,140 Acadians might join with other French colonists in these borderlands and, in the worst-case scenario, “corrupt” the slaves, inciting them to rebel.¹⁹⁵

Western Pennsylvania experienced some of the worst fighting in the Seven Years War because of the vastness of unsettled lands west of Philadelphia and the coast. One Philadelphia man reflected Pennsylvanians’ awareness – and wariness – of the colony’s unprotected backcountry, asking, “May God be pleased to give us success against *all* [italics mine] our copper-colored cannibals and French savages, equally cruel and perfidious in their nature.”¹⁹⁶ Perhaps most worrisome to the Protestant inhabitants of the colony remained the horrifying notion that its past lax immigration policy towards

¹⁹² 10 May 1756, Governor Dinwiddie to the Secretary of State, as quoted in Clifford Millard, “The Acadians in Virginia,” in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. XL (December 1932), p.249-250.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p.251.

¹⁹⁶ Wilton Paul Ledet, “Acadian Exiles in Philadelphia,” in *Pennsylvania History*, Vol. IX, No. 2, (April 1942), p.120.

Catholics left it susceptible to even more trouble. Indeed, ships holding the Acadians were kept offshore until it could be determined whether or not the French neutrals would attempt to join with other Catholics – mostly German and Irish – living in Pennsylvania.

Beyond the war, however, other anxieties emerged. British officials throughout the North American colonies had difficulty reconciling the fact that Acadians intermarried with Indians in Nova Scotia. In a 1760 edition of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, a seemingly mundane report on the health of the peoples of the colony illustrated how locals perceived the Acadians as racial others:

Tis Presumed you will naturally expect some News relative to the present situation of this Colony...What few escape the Indians, no sooner arrive in Town than they are seized with the Small Pox, which generally carries them off; and, from the Numbers already dead, you may judge the fatality of the Disease. Of the white Inhabitants 95; Acadians 115; Negroes 500; were dead two Days ago, by the Sexton's Account. About 1500 white Inhabitants, 1800 Negroes, and 300 Acadians, have had the Distemper, and chiefly by Innoculation.¹⁹⁷

The Pennsylvanians identified the Acadians not as French in the same manner as the Huguenots, who were included presumably in the count of white inhabitants, but as a separate group between the whites and “Negroes.” The Acadians were an additional racial group within an increasingly diverse colony. Such a perception of the Acadians as racial, ethnic, and religious others supported Nova Scotian officials’ arguments – originating in Nova Scotia – that, even though of European heritage, they were not capable of assimilation. The *Gazette* labeled the Acadians as outside the standards of white Protestant society, perhaps inspired, in part, by the Acadians’ high death rate that more closely resembled blacks’ than “white Inhabitants’.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 10 April 1760.

¹⁹⁸ 6% of 1500 “white Inhabitants” died, whereas 28% of 1800 blacks and 38% of 300 Acadians fell to the disease.

Fighting Exile, Returning Home

Despite laws and acts designed to discourage group identification and the potential for collusion, Acadians in the diaspora attempted to shape their own fate rather than resign themselves to British officials, colonial governors, and local assemblymen.¹⁹⁹ Scholars have focused intensely on scenes of destruction and despair in retelling and examining the horror of Acadian removal; however, once in the diaspora, the Acadians fought to keep their cultural traditions alive and their ethnic identities intact.²⁰⁰ Indeed, by examining the journey of exiled Acadian groups, it becomes clear that removal and the resulting exile, although it did mean certain change, did not always spell the end to group identity. Rather, exile transformed these already marginalized and liminal peoples. The French Acadians were forced to face many directions at once in attempting to assimilate into British or continental French societies.²⁰¹

Still, other Frenchmen remained in Nova Scotia, awaiting the return of the Acadians. A French loyalist soldier, Charles de Champs de Boishebert, who eluded officials in Nova Scotia, reported that French superiors implored him to support those remaining Acadians in this English colony. Governor Vaudreuil of Quebec, born in New France in 1698, soothed de Boishebert's worries. Vaudreuil held many posts throughout

¹⁹⁹ British authorities passed several laws in an attempt to limit the possibility of exiled Acadians joining together in revolt. For example, laws forbade Acadians from moving about freely, assured the dispersal of the Acadians in small numbers throughout colonial towns and prohibiting Acadians from watching – and learning – militia training maneuvers. For more on these laws, see Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History*, p. 116.

²⁰⁰ In fact, many scholars and writers point to the manner in which modern descendants of immigrant Scots – particularly in the United States and Canada – wear kilts, hold near and dear their tartans, and host festivals to celebrate their heritage. Much of these were nineteenth century inventions or adaptations of Scottish traditions.

²⁰¹ There are indications that other groups of Acadians resettled further south also attempted to return to their native lands. A group of 100 Acadians who had previously landed in Georgia took to small wooden boats, floating their way north to New York where they were eventually jailed and prevented from journeying further. See Doughty, *The Acadian Exiles*, p. 147.

his political career, including governor of both Trois-Rivières and Louisiana from 1733-1753, and he was well aware of the unique circumstances confronting colonists in North America. The governor was “assured of the loyalty of both of the Acadians and Indians who, without our presence” and attempts to regain French territory, “would consider themselves abandoned, and, perhaps, give their allegiance to the English.”²⁰² He instructed de Boishebert to “draw” Acadians “from all quarters...striv[ing] to reunite families and to make a compact body of people” because “the Acadians thus united” along with friendly Indians, “will be forced to oppose the enemy if the occasion should arise.”²⁰³ Quebec’s governor seized the opportunity to fuel British officials’ fears. Lawrence worried that not enough Acadians had been deported, noting “about five hundred of the inhabitants” who “are still lurking about in the woods.”²⁰⁴ The potential for trouble caused by these remaining French weighed on the minds of the governor and other local officials.

Boishebert carried out his orders, refusing to let the British ship the Acadians out without challenge. In late 1755, Boishebert reported that he had encountered a Portuguese transport carrying 226 Acadians bound for Carolina. The Acadians had mutinied, taking control of the ship rather than allow themselves to be removed. After burning the ship, Boishebert sent them overland to French held Quebec where he believed the Acadians would remain secured from British Nova Scotia. Afterwards, in 1756, he reported back to French officials that hundreds of Acadians who had been deported to the American colonies were now arriving back to Acadia, with “the first

²⁰² *Charles des Champs de Boishebert: A Canadian Soldier in Acadia*, memoirs translated by J. Clarence Webster. Private publication, 1931. p.11.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ Lawrence to Shirley, reprinted in Calnek, p.119.

detachment numbered about fifty and came from Carolina, whose governor had given them permission to leave.”²⁰⁵ According to the French soldier, Nova Scotian authorities’ worst fears were being realized: the Acadians *were* reuniting and finding their way back to the province and the potential for a united French population – sparked by a sudden air of cooperation between the Quebecois and Acadians – appeared to be coming to fruition.

Just one year after the initial deportations occurred, it became clear that Lawrence’s plan for dispersion would be more difficult to implement than first believed. Governor Lawrence advocated dispersing the Acadians in small groups throughout the North American colonies. In doing so, he surmised, they were less likely to collaborate with the one another in resisting their exile, while also – at least theoretically – proving easier to assimilate into British colonial society. Lawrence had not considered the reaction of his fellow colonial administrators upon receiving these French castoffs with very little notice, nor did he realize the level of disruption the Acadians would cause.

On 24 May 1756, Virginia Governor Dinwiddie became alarmed at his colony’s precarious place between Carolina and Acadia. In writing to the Secretary of State, Dinwiddie seemed annoyed by his Carolinian counterpart, “Governor Glen of South Carolina sent a ship with fifty of those people to be landed here; I ordered the Master to carry them back again, for our people are much alarmed and in great confusion in having any of them amongst us.”²⁰⁶ While the ship’s master complied, Governor Dinwiddie expressed deep concern over reports that “there are three hundred of them from Georgia

²⁰⁵ *Boishebert*, p.12.

²⁰⁶ Governor Dinwiddie to the Secretary of State, as reprinted in Clifford Millard, “The Acadians in Virginia,” in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. XL (December 1932), p.250.

coasting the Shores in Canoes.”²⁰⁷ “They certainly will land at proper places, “he continued, “rob, and I fear, murder the unguarded and unwary people.”²⁰⁸ Perhaps the unease of Virginia’s colonists along the frontier and in the backcountry fueled Dinwiddie’s words, but the governor also worried about the future of his wealthy planters. Virginia proved to be a major staging ground for the Seven Years War, particularly on the western flank, making its residents acutely aware of the French and Indian collusions against the British. Dinwiddie noted, “it is more than probable they would have found means to have joined the French in the Ohio.”²⁰⁹ Such a scenario could also threaten the colony’s valuable agricultural economy.

The governor also wondered about the impact the Acadians might have on the larger British Atlantic empire. Even though their numbers were not adequate to topple the British colonies in North America, the potential for their aggregate influence seemed strong enough that they will “probably in Time reach Nova Scotia, and be of great Prejudice to the Colony.”²¹⁰ For Dinwiddie, the solution remained his “hope” that “our sending them to Britain, to be sent to France, will be more justifiable, as they will then be out of the way” of the military theatre in North America.²¹¹ Surely, he reasoned, officials safe and secure in the metropole were better equipped to deal with a few hundred French neutrals. They had fortified prisons as opposed to the colonists who, on the front lines of the global conflict, had little time or resources to secure these dangerous people.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. p.249-250.

²¹⁰ Ibid. Dinwiddie had already reported in May of 1756 that “A Committee of the House of Burgesses have [sic] hired vessels to transport them to Britain...with 299 of these people on board.” The ship simply awaited further instructions from the Secretary of State.

²¹¹ Ibid.

The removal and transportation of Acadians around the Atlantic did not please all in Whitehall. In the late autumn of 1756, Dinwiddie heard from his disgruntled king. The governor seemed confounded by “his Majesty’s displeasure, and disapprobation of sending Neutral French (that were sent here from Nova Scotia) to Great Britain.”²¹² Dinwiddie defended himself to his friend, the Rt. Honorable Henry Fox, “it was what I could by no means evade, they refused taking Oaths to his Majesty” and, besides, the “Assembly addressed me to clear the Country of them as they were biggotted Papists.”²¹³ The king understood these fears brought on by the Acadians’ presence to be real and ubiquitous. Indeed, “one” had already “concerted to run away with a sloop from Hampton.”²¹⁴ Nevertheless, Dinwiddie understood that he must convince the king his move was in the best interest of the empire and not just Virginia’s. Other governors had failed this litmus test, releasing some Acadians to go free (such as those from Georgia and South Carolina who now paddled along the coast in search of Acadia), providing them with “their Liberty to go where they pleased.”²¹⁵ Dinwiddie guarded the larger interest of the crown, fearing that “many of them are returned to Nova Scotia,” the colony in which they had already caused so much trouble. From Dinwiddie’s perspective, the Acadians were much less threatening in France than in his colony.²¹⁶

All the original group of French Acadians deported in 1755/56 – some 6,950 – arrived in Britain’s North American colonies.²¹⁷ The bulk landed in Carolina, Virginia,

²¹² Ibid. p. 250-251.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid. Dinwiddie did not want the Acadians returning to Nova Scotia. To him, across the Atlantic seemed the only safe place to send the Acadians.

²¹⁷ This an estimate provided by historian Geoffrey Plank. I have intentionally used this figure because it varies somewhat from other estimates I have given. My reasons are twofold: first, it

Maryland and Massachusetts, but wherever their transports took them, these French men and women utilized the legal and political systems they had grown accustomed to in their years of dealings with Great Britain. They gained support from overseers of the poor who were sympathetic to their plight, aiding in passing restrictions on the binding of their children in the mid-Atlantic colonies.²¹⁸ Kindness from those who received them comforted the exiles to some degree, but perhaps the hope that their fate was only temporary also enabled them to continue on. Members of charities for the poor reported, “Those who have survived” smallpox “flattered themselves with a hope that at the End of the Warr, they should be restored to their former Possessions.”²¹⁹ Often these same charitable societies seemed perplexed at the Acadians’ delusion that they were “dispossessed out of Political Considerations rather than by way of Punishments for any Offence.”²²⁰ Interestingly, the Acadians were more aware of the true purposes behind their removal from Nova Scotia than the average British citizen in the American colonies,

highlights the inaccuracies of colonial records. Second, it demonstrates how massive of an undertaking Acadian removal was by illuminating the inability of colonial record keepers to track with accuracy the amount of French men, women, and children deported. See *An Unsettled Conquest*, p. 149 (and fn. 47, chapter seven).

²¹⁸ Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History*. p. 116. In Pennsylvania, for example, an act was passed that required townships within four specified counties to oversee the poor and destitute exiles. These organizations, generically referred to by the legislature as “overseers of the poor,” supported the Acadians by providing food and shelter, but also by helping them petition the colonial legislature. See, *An Act for Dispersing the Inhabitants of Nova Scotia into this Province into the Several Counties of Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, and Lancaster and the Townships thereof, and Making Provisions for the Same*. J.T. Mitchell and H. Flanders eds., *Statutes at Large of Pennsylvania from 1682-1801*, Vol. 5 (1896-1915, 215-219).

²¹⁹ Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History*. p. 116. Smallpox, Pennsylvanian officials reported, was rampant in the Acadians. Also, in Boston in 1764, Boston Selectmen reported smallpox in 14 homes, while it seemed that few of the Acadians had been previously exposed to the disease. Boston Selectmen’s Minutes, 1764, pages, 1, 18, 28 & 54 as reported in Pierre Belliveau, *French Neutrals in Massachusetts: The Story of Acadians Rounded Up by Soldiers from Massachusetts and Their Captivity in the Bay Province, 1755-1766*. Boston: Kirk S. Griffen, 1972. p. 223. Also, see Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-1782*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2001.

²²⁰ Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History*. p. 116.

knowing full well that their fate was the result of plans for political reorganization in the British Atlantic world.

The Acadians resisted their exile by petitioning the British government on both the local and imperial level. The petitions usually addressed the issues of injustice of laws that restricted their liberty. The Acadians shipped to Pennsylvania engaged the colonial government often and, according to the Earl of Loudoun, it proved annoying. The Acadians' petitions symbolized the troublesome nature of these "very mutinous" peoples. "They sent me a Memorial in French," the Earl grumbled, "setting forth their grievances," but "I returned it and said I could receive no Memorial from the King's subjects but in English."²²¹ Growing increasingly irritated, the Earl continued, "they had a general meeting at which they determined they would give me no Memorial but in French, and as I am informed they come to this resolution looking at themselves entirely as French subjects."²²² Through such petitions, the Acadians aligned themselves with the enemy in part to gain leverage in order to pry themselves out of their dire situation. Just two months earlier, in February, they had implored the Assembly to "please tell us, whether we are Subjects, Prisoners, Slaves or Freemen?"²²³ Absent of an answer, they provided one for local officials in an effort to force their hand.

The Acadians also used petitions to resist colonists' calls for forced labor. Having "neither Meat or Bread to eat for many Weeks together," the Acadians were

²²¹ Similar petitions surfaced in Massachusetts. Earl of Loudoun to William Pitt, 25 April 1757, as printed in William B. Reed, "The Acadian Exiles, or French Neutrals, in Pennsylvania," in *Contributions to American History*. Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1858. p.305.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, Vol. VI, p.4509.

“necessitated...to pilfer and steal for the Support of Life.”²²⁴ In Pennsylvania, as in other colonies, the legislature enacted laws to bound out the children of the Acadians help their families’ upkeep, with most indentures lasting until the age of 18 for girls, and 21 for boys. The parents were not happy with these resolutions and they began to take steps to combat the law. Indeed, in 1757, the Acadians petitioned the assembly, demanding to be removed again and even offering to sell their possessions to pay the costs.

Pennsylvanian officials moved quickly to crack down on such grassroots efforts. In 1757, five ringleaders were arrested for having “uttred [sic] menacing Speeches against His Majesty and His liege Subjects” while behaving “in a very disorderly Manner” and inciting resistance amongst the French neutrals.²²⁵ Accused of “stir[ring] up all the disturbances these people make in Pensilvania [sic],” and persuading “them to go and join the enemy and...prevent them from submitting children to be put to work,” Charles LeBlanc, Jean Baptiste Gallerme, Philip Melancon, Paul Bujauld, and Jean Landy were secured on board the *Sutherland* in order to be “disposed of as his Majesty’s servants shall think proper.”²²⁶ Four years later, in 1761, a committee appointed to look into the finances of the Acadians found that most children had not been bound out for work. Frustrated officials estimated that nearly £10,000 had been spent on the exiles’ upkeep, even though the colony had received little productive labor in return. Adding further to officials’ frustrations were reports that as many as 250 Acadians had died from smallpox.²²⁷

²²⁴ Reed, p. 123.

²²⁵ S. M. Sener, “The Catholic Church in Lancaster, Pa.” in *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, Vol. V (1894), p.314.

²²⁶ Earl of Loudoun to William Pitt, 25 April 1757, in Reed, p.306. Also of note is Reed’s notice that petitions in Pennsylvania all but ceased after the deportation of the Five Ringleaders.

²²⁷ Ledet, p.125.

Petitions were not restricted to Acadians who landed in the North American colonies. Indeed, with 340 deportees living in the English seaport of Bristol and as many as 3,500 in continental French seaports alone, a potentially powerful lobby arose.²²⁸ Citing their “faithful neutrality” in Acadia, they hoped that “We shall be sent into Our Countries and that our Effects etc., which We have been dispossessed...will be restored to US.”²²⁹ By 1762, the French court’s interest was piqued by the petitions of the exiles. With the Seven Years War nearly over, the French sent the Duke of Nivernois to England to treat, but he eventually became an advocate for the Acadians after being contacted by a group confined in Liverpool. The Acadians petitioned the Duke to help them gain “improvement in their position” or at least “a chance of settling in France or in the French colonies.”²³⁰ In a brief letter to the Duke, the Liverpool Acadians described their experiences, while also informing the diplomat of their allegiance to “His Most Christian Majesty.”²³¹ Through such a display of loyalty, the Acadians won the support Louis XV, which eventually led to them being sent to France.²³²

Of particular interest is the role that the nearly 1,100 Acadians confined in England played in the negotiations that would eventually lead to the Treaty of Paris of 1763, and it was in these discussions that Louis XV addressed the fate of *all* deported Acadians. British General Jeffrey Amherst led the negotiations between Britain and France upon the fall of Montreal in 1760. In defeat, French Governor Vaudreuil gave Amherst 55 articles of peace which included two clauses about the Acadians, who were,

²²⁸ British ports that housed Acadians included Bristol, Liverpool, Southampton, and Falmouth. Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*, p. 33 and footnotes 3 and 34, p. 171.

²²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 120.

²³⁰ Edouard Richard, *Acadia: Missing Links of A Lost Chapter in American History, by an Acadian*. New York, 1895. p. 312.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*, p. 26-27.

by the 1760s at least three generations removed from France. Article 39 contended the British should not deport the French from North America and Article 59 guaranteed the return of officers, militiamen and Acadian prisoners in New England. Amherst agreed to both clauses, but “with reservation to the Acadians.”²³³ By 1763, Louis XV was infuriated with the terms, rejecting the treaty until Britain agreed to allow the Acadians back into Canada, or at least to France. Amherst, aware of the social and political consequences of allowing the Acadians back into war-torn Nova Scotia, agreed to send to France the Acadians in England and some who remained jailed in Halifax.

Another 3,000 Acadians arrived in France by the end of 1763. Their arrival reflected the “rays of the morning after a stormy night” when that “fortunate day of our delivery...would unite us to our *confreres*.”²³⁴ Once in France, however, the Acadians realized a schism existed between their political allegiance to the King of France and their cultural identity as French North Americans. The *confreres* they imagined in France did not exist. Some 1,000 Acadians immediately left, believing they had better opportunities in the French Caribbean colonies. Their optimism that life in the hot, disease-ridden environs of the Caribbean would prove better than on the continent reflected a split between France and this group of former colonial subjects. In the seemingly short time that Acadians lived apart from their Continental brethren, intermarriage with Native Americans and life in the backcountry of North America changed their identity in profound ways. Furthermore, for decades Acadians felt neglected by the French crown, witnessing an infusion of money and soldiers to protect

²³³ Ibid. p. 27. Also see *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 25 December 1760.

²³⁴ “Letter from Acadians in Halifax to Nivernois, August 13, 1763.” In *Correspondence Politique Angleterre*, 1763, p. 57-61. According to estimates in Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History*, p.122.

French forts in Nova Scotia, but little aid to Acadians themselves. Perhaps this legacy of neglect fostered Acadians' skepticism regarding lands promised by the French crown in 1763; nearly 1,000 Acadians decided not to find out if the crown would produce the acreage.²³⁵

The Acadians did not find peace on the Continent as they had anticipated. Confronted by a strange social and political system, the Acadians often appeared restless and ungrateful to the French. Several landowners commented on the seeming gluttony displayed by the Acadians and a lack of willingness to abandon their decidedly North American habits, such as demanding more "North American foodstuffs."²³⁶ Moreover, some officials, both in France and other parts of the Acadian diaspora, believed the Acadians should assimilate more readily into French and British society, but "such is the Bigotry and Obstinacy of these People that they have chosen rather to live miserably" in their kinship groups "than to separate and live comfortably" amongst their host societies.²³⁷ Regardless, the Acadian exiles realized France was not their home, the continental French were not *confreres*, and that a return to Acadia was unlikely. The Acadians' experience as diasporic peoples transformed them from colonists with France as an imagined homeland, to exiles who looked to Nova Scotia as a symbolic home.

Acadians throughout their Atlantic diaspora fought to change objectionable circumstances and living conditions. In 1763 in Boston, a group of sixty families, some with pregnant women, some newborns, united in an effort to regain their farms, homes

²³⁵ Winzerling, *Acadian Odyssey*, footnote 34, p. 171.

²³⁶ Such food included a preference for beer. For a more detailed discussion, see Naomi E. S. Griffiths, "The Acadians Who returned to France," in *Natural History*, 90 (1981), p.48-57.

²³⁷ "Report of the Committee, 12 July 1760" in the Journals of the House of Assembly, in *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina, South Carolina Colonial Records*.

and reestablish themselves in their native lands. Motivated by the promise of the Treaty of Paris and the conclusion of the Seven Years War, the Acadians may have been persuaded that all was safe for resettlement in Acadia after less than seven years in exile. Poor and destitute, some 60 families marched several hundred miles across the harsh northern deciduous forests of New Hampshire and the buggy marshlands of Maine's remote valleys in order to reach Acadia (presently located in parts of northeastern Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia). Once they arrived, the families encountered the realities of exile, of losing one's home.

Upon entering the now heavily English villages of Acadia, the ragged group read English names where once French names were inscribed. The people and the land appeared different. Indeed, "above all wherever they appear, everyone looked askance at them, as if they were ghosts from a different age."²³⁸ These French men and women from a time past "frightened the children, and alarmed the men and women of the villages."²³⁹ Some of these homeless Acadians were resettled on Prince Edward Island, while others were arrested and sent to Halifax, later immortalized in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

Other Acadians in the Atlantic faced more dire circumstances. By the end of the Seven Years War in 1763, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* – which had been giving its audience regular updates on the fate of the Acadians in and outside of the colony – reported that some Acadians were sent to Cape Francois in the West Indies in November of that year. A few months later, the *Gazette* reported the French had been removed to land allotted to them at Cape [Nicholas] along the Windward Passage and "are by no

²³⁸ Rameau de St. Père, *Une Colonie Féodale*, II. Paris: 1889, p. 342. Translated by Winzerling, in *Acadian Odyssey*, p. 20.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

means pleased, either with their reception or situation.”²⁴⁰ Within months, however, the news became grim. As of February 1764, “out of 700 Acadians that went from these Colonies, 400 are dead” because “they had been put to many Difficulties.”²⁴¹ The *Gazette* noted that previous reports of the Acadians being given land proved false, “when they landed they had no House to put their Heads in, till they built one themselves.”²⁴² Worst of all, the *Gazette* noted, “they were kept to work like Negroes, allowed no Land, and had no Money for their work.”²⁴³ By May of 1764, the remaining 400 Acadians reportedly sailed for New Orleans.

Undaunted by such grisly reports, 66 Acadian families gathered in Boston in the fall of 1764 at the prospect of starting anew in San Domingo. Officials held a letter from the island’s Governor who offered land and free transportation to the Caribbean. However, as winter neared it became increasingly clear that no ships would arrive from the island. In response, the Acadians petitioned to the governor for help. Work options and the prospect of spending another long and cold winter mired in disease and hunger did not appeal to the French.

Massachusetts’ residents were anxious yet benevolent hosts to the Acadians in the nine years since receiving them.²⁴⁴ *The Boston Gazette and Country Journal* lamented the possible “Stupidity of our Conduct” in deporting the Acadians, noting, “if they should seize upon a Number of our Vessels in [Boston] Harbour, and carry them off, could we

²⁴⁰ The reports refer to the destination as Cape Nicola, which is known today as Cape Nicholas. *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 15 February 1764

²⁴¹ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 18 February 1764

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ Massachusetts law required towns to provide basic shelter and tools for Acadians. Massachusetts General Court Acts, 1755-1756, Chapter 35. SC7, Series 207, Engrossed Acts. Massachusetts State Archives.

blame them for it?" Citizens of Massachusetts were urged to show compassion for these people who were "obliged to quit the Possessions of their Estates...dispersed...without any Hopes of ever returning to their Native Country" of Nova Scotia.²⁴⁵ In 1766, Governor Francis Bernard reflected on growing empathy for the Acadians in the British colonies. In an address to the General Court, Bernard remarked, "Ever since I have been Governor of this Province, I have had a great compassion for this people as everyone must who considered that it was by the exigencies of war rather than any fault of their own that they were removed from a state of affluence and brought into poverty and dependence." In spite of the recent memories – and debt – of the Seven Years War, American officials changed the tone of the debate, even helping Acadians find their way back to Nova Scotia. In September 1767, the Town of Rowley, in Massachusetts, voted to allow its French population to join a large group of some 890 Acadians taking the passage back to Canada.²⁴⁶

Voices condemning the original deportation of thousands of Acadians grew louder at the conclusion of the Seven Years War. Even Jonathan Belcher, Junior – now governor of Nova Scotia – spoke out against removal. Rather than focus on his own role in providing the legal standing on which former Governor Lawrence based his arguments for removal, Belcher remarked, "Gov. [sic] Lawrence had encouraged and protected the disorderly part of the military under his government, in several outrages on the property; persons, even the lives of inhabitants."²⁴⁷ Defending his own role in the expulsions, Belcher criticized Lawrence's "abusing those [powers] which were lawfully vested in

²⁴⁵ *The Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 23 August 1756.

²⁴⁶ Jewett, "The Acadians in Rowley," p.384.

²⁴⁷ Millard, "The Acadians in Virginia," p.251.

him for better purposes.”²⁴⁸ After the dust of the Seven Years War settled, criticism focused on Lawrence’s handling of the French even though little meaningful criticism occurred at the most crucial time in 1755.

With a renewed sense of security in their Atlantic holdings, Britons aided the return of hundreds of Acadians to Nova Scotia. Questions about Acadian neutrality began to seem less important as other troublemakers emanating from the elite of the North American colonies and Africans in West Indies took center stage beginning in the 1770s. As the American colonies became more aggressive in their protests against London, Parliament, and eventually the crown, British officials focused their attention on these potential devastating developments in the empire. Rebellious groups such as the Acadians remained irritating to local officials, but one very large revolt in North America by British subjects suppressed all else until later in the 1780s and 1790s.

By the mid-eighteenth century, transporting individuals and small groups of troublesome peoples out of hot spots in the British empire had been transformed into a politically viable method of social control. By the capture of Louisbourg, the Jacobite Rebellion and the Acadian expulsions in the 1740s and 1750s, removal had become a way to deal with uncooperative and decidedly non-British peoples in the ever-expanding British Atlantic empire. Debates about Acadians’ and Scots’ potential for assimilation swirled amongst leading imperial officials in London and on the periphery of empire, whether the barren Highlands or the cool rocky soil of Nova Scotia. Populations who

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

refused to assimilate, or those who rebelled, were dealt with tenaciously. But after war's end and the termination of the Acadian expulsions, permanent removal of white French men, women, and children no longer seemed appropriate to many Britons.

Removal meant a variety of destinations. Removal guaranteed exile. Even those Acadians able to return to Nova Scotia found their homes taken over by new residents, forcing some to move to Quebec, or live in the woods. The Jacobites and Acadians dealt with exile in similar ways: retention of group identity became a central coping mechanism. These diasporic peoples dealt with removal through legal challenges and petitions to local and imperial agents; removed groups often turned to local assemblies and the British Parliament for redress to unsatisfactory circumstances. Furthermore, they refused to abandon their cultural identities by resisting assimilation. In defying attempts to absorb the Acadians into British society, they contributed significantly to an ongoing redefinition of racial and cultural norms in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic world. Dispersed peoples were forced to live multidimensional lives: they attempted to retain traditional cultural identity while, in some cases, thriving within the constraints of accepted British social norms.

The making of the Acadian diaspora forced people who previously referred to themselves as French neutrals to confront a new reality. They were no longer French colonists claiming neutrality in the imperial conflict between Great Britain and France of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Both empires welcomed them as exiles provided they would assimilate into the dominant culture. This was impossible.

A key trait of diasporic peoples is the pull to "return" to their homeland. At first, Acadians were unsure where this land lay. Was it France? Their experiences on the

European continent suggested otherwise. Being Acadian meant demanding too much bread and drinking beer instead of wine. It meant generations of intermarriage with Mi'kmaq. It meant speaking with an accent. And, finally, being Acadian meant the experience of *décalage*, that kernel of biases and experiences shaped by travel over the waters of the Atlantic. Before the deportation of 1755, Nova Scotia's French colonists called themselves French neutrals. Yet, Nova Scotia's French neutrals became Acadians at the moment the deportations commenced in 1755.

-- CHAPTER THREE --

“BLACKENED BEYOND OUR NATIVE HUE:”
REMOVAL, IDENTITY, AND THE TRELAWNEY MAROONS ON THE MARGINS
OF THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1796-1800

Nova Scotia played host to another removed community some forty-one years after the beginning of the Acadian deportations. With the American Revolution now over, Nova Scotia emerged as a major stronghold for the British empire in North America, serving as a base of military operations and home to thousands of black and white loyalists seeking refuge from the late war. Nova Scotia's demography changed dramatically since the deportations of the Acadians, particularly in the last two decades of the eighteenth century.²⁴⁹

In the spring of 1796, at the conclusion of the Second Maroon War in Jamaica, over 550 rebellious Trelawney Maroons were corralled onto the transport *Dover*, awaiting in Port Royal. Despite the Maroons' oath of allegiance to the crown, Jamaica's Assembly passed the *Act of Deportation*, empowering the island's governor to remove these former slave hunters to the remote province of Nova Scotia. On 4 January 1799, three years after their removal, the Trelawney Maroons petitioned the House of Commons of Great Britain. Referring to themselves as “wretched Petitioners,” the Maroons repeatedly appealed to local officials to be removed from what they described

²⁴⁹ For example, 5,900 white Loyalists and former soldiers relocated to Shelburne and Birchtown alone, with another 2,700 blacks – servants and former slaves – joining them. Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997. p.38.

as the inhospitable climate of Nova Scotia. Their petitions consistently emphasized the cold northern climate as a hardship, particularly when combined with the low quality of farmland on their assigned lands and the ongoing attempts of white Nova Scotians to impose Christian values on the Maroon community.

After their first cold winter in the northern province, the exiled Trelawney Maroons grew more assertive, claiming to the British Parliament that “the Soil of Nova Scotia will never answer to transplant Maroons in, nor will they ever thrive where the Pine Apple does not.”²⁵⁰ Invoking popular contemporary British scientific and racial theories in their petitions, the Maroons continued: “Such a Phenomenon is no where to be found in nature, such Incongruities and such Antipathies do not exist in the moral or Physical World, as a West Indian to be reconciled to Nova Scotia.”²⁵¹ Due to past encounters with manipulative officials back in Jamaica, the Maroons looked to the British Parliament as the “Seat, Fountain head, of Law, Equity, and Justice.”²⁵² Parliament remained the governing body the Maroons “humbly trust[ed],” believing it would enable them to “soon...find Relief” by granting a second removal in just four years.²⁵³ This time, the Maroons asked to be removed from Nova Scotia to “any Climate or Country...congenial

²⁵⁰ Maroon Petition to the House of Commons of Great Britain, Colonial Office, 217/70. Public Records Office, Kew, England.

²⁵¹ The Maroons referenced older seventeenth-century racial concepts based on the idea that climate affected race and a body’s corporal constitution. Being largely illiterate, the Maroons may not have understood these concepts in the same way Britons did. However, their experiences with Europeans in the late seventeenth-century and throughout the eighteenth-century would have exposed them to such ideas, whether directly or indirectly. For more, see Joyce Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001; Linda Schiebinger, “The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-century Science,” in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 4, Special Issue: the Politics of Difference (Summer 1990), 387-405; and William Ragan Stanton, *Leopard’s Spots: Scientific Attitudes Towards Race in America, 1815-1859*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

²⁵² Maroon Petition to the House of Commons of Great Britain, Colonial Office, 217/70. Public Records Office, Kew, England.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

to their natures and Constitutions,” otherwise preferring “Death in its most awful Shapes...to a Residence in Nova Scotia.”²⁵⁴ After a year of petitioning to leave Nova Scotia, the Trelawney Maroons were gratified in October of 1800, when they arrived in Sierra Leone, Great Britain’s newest colonial outpost in West Africa. In an agreement reached with British imperial officials, the Maroons took on a familiar role: once in Africa, they became a police force over the increasingly rebellious Black Loyalists.

In several petitions to Nova Scotia’s Governor John Wentworth, and other leading imperial agents, the Maroons adopted popular British racial theories of Africans by portraying themselves as frail and incapable of dealing with the cold winds and snow of a northern winter. The petitions called for officials to address these problems of racial incompatibility. Rather than confront another paternalistic governor directly, which had not worked in Jamaica, the Maroons decided to play on British ideas of racial and cultural identity. The Trelawney Maroons’ attempted to shape their future by using overlapping political identities acquired in the diaspora. By 1800, the Maroons completed a transformation from their role as some of the most feared peoples in the empire, to a group with whom many whites – including British agents and officials – sympathized.

The Trelawney Maroons revolted in 1796 to restore their threatened position of autonomy in Jamaica. After the 1739 treaty that ended the First Maroon War, the Trelawney Maroons carved a unique place in Jamaican society by defining themselves against other blacks on the island. Choosing to identify with their largely Akan and

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

Coromantee ethnicities – believed by the British to be the most fierce and capable African warriors – the Trelawney Maroons existed within a complex web of African ethnicities.²⁵⁵ This ethnic identity served to warn British officials of the potential for serious trouble if the community was crossed, but it also legitimated their slave-hunting activities in the eyes of those they hunted. Enslaved Africans knew the reputation of Akan and Coromantee warriors in Africa, making them fearful of these colonial descendants. Nonetheless, existing in between white and black Jamaica proved risky because, as the Trelawney Maroons discovered during the Second Maroon War, life on the margins could be isolating. Having pushed the limits of British tolerance and without allies among other Maroons on the island, the Trelawney Maroons faced two hostile worlds, one white and one black, during and after the Second Maroon War in 1795/96.²⁵⁶

Upon arrival in Nova Scotia, the Trelawney Maroons worked to preserve their community from external influences by embarking on a campaign to reinvent their racial identity and preserve their culture. In their first year in the province, the Maroons' encountered the coldest winter on record in Nova Scotia. In that same year, it became clear that Governor John Wentworth held aspirations to push the mores and lifestyle of

²⁵⁵ In *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998, Michael Gomez found that Africans in multi-ethnic and polycultural American communities accepted the idea of race only when it offered them a way to resist slavery and to combat their marginal status in the Atlantic World. Gomez's argument that Africans-Americans' ethnic identity surpassed their racial identity until the early nineteenth-century in the United States applies to the Maroons. The Maroons, as Gomez suggest of other Africans in America, resisted whites' racial identification of them until advantageous in their resistance movement.

²⁵⁶ I refer to "margins" of empire as any combination of a social, political, economic, racial or cultural space in which individuals or groups existed that resides outside of mainstream society. The Trelawney Maroons were on the margins in at least three ways: the margins of the British Atlantic empire; the periphery of Jamaican plantation society, despite their periodic interaction with planters, whites and slaves; and dissidents of the larger Maroon society on the island. For a variety of discussions concerning the relationship between the center and periphery in empire, see Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy, eds. *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

white Nova Scotia on the Maroons. From the moment they disembarked from their transport, Wentworth launched a plan to ‘civilize’ the Maroons by converting them to Christianity and teaching them British cultural traditions. The weather and their experiences with xenophobic whites convinced the Maroons that their very survival depended on a second removal, away from the icy environs of Nova Scotia and to a warmer region of the Atlantic.

Nova Scotia became a crossroads of sorts in the late eighteenth-century Atlantic world and African Diaspora. A sojourn for thousands of blacks on their way to Africa, Nova Scotia emerges as a site of contest, where Euro-Americans, Africans and African-Americans challenged the meaning of race, citizenship, identity and blackness. The Trelawney Maroons were a small contingent in this steady stream of exiles and émigrés in the African Diaspora who forced white officials and the general public to consider key questions regarding race, ethnicity, and the extent of political and social inclusion. Even while the Trelawney Maroons claimed racial weakness when facing the cold conditions, the Maroons resisted conversion to Christianity and adherence to the social realities created by British racial and cultural ideals. Demands made by the Maroons – and satisfied by officials in London – depict an Atlantic world in upheaval: the British empire faced the question of how to incorporate growing masses of freed blacks. Africans in the diaspora confronted obstacles by having to live within dual cultural realities.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ For the scholarship directly influencing my understanding of the development of racial ideology and the interconnection and fluidity of race and culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as concepts of the African Diaspora, see: W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997. Also see Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1998 (Introduction and Conclusion); Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country*

Years of dealing with British official aided this small black community in determining what needed to be done to reach their goal. By serving as a black police force in Sierra Leone, the Trelawney Maroons returned to their place in between black and white society in the Atlantic world. Still on the margins of the empire, the Maroons were on familiar ground, working within a double consciousness that had allowed them to form an independent community and identity in Jamaica. While in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone, the Trelawney Maroons encountered historical circumstances that forced blacks to face several directions at once. As the Trelawney Maroons' story demonstrates, meeting whites' expectations while maintaining their cultural identity proved delicate and perilous, sometimes resulting in removal.

Once at sea and away from the isolated mountains of Jamaica, the Trelawney Maroons exerted pressure on the boundaries of racial and cultural discourse in the Atlantic world. These exiles refused to stand idly by while white officials considered their fate and exploited their marginalized position in the Atlantic world.²⁵⁸

Marks: The transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998; Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Race and Ideology in American History," in Kousser and McPherson, *Region, Race and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1982; and Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

²⁵⁸ For more on the interconnectedness of the Atlantic world, please see: Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, *Black London: Life Before Emancipation.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995; Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000; Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988; Horn, James, *Adapting to A New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997; Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1996; D.W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986; and Nicholas Canny, *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland in the Atlantic World, 1560-1800.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. For more on the relationship between centers and peripheries in the construction of the Atlantic

Paradoxically, they did so by presenting themselves as further “blackened” by racist imperial policies. The Trelawney Maroons illustrate the complexities and meaning of freedom on the margins of empire in the Atlantic world.²⁵⁹ Their identity as black people meant that any freedoms gained often hung in the balance as an increasingly diverse British empire attempted to sort out notions of freedom, citizenship and racial and cultural realities. In pledging their allegiance to the crown, the Maroons positioned themselves to take full advantage of changing conditions, such as being removed to Sierra Leone.

The Maroons appear in studies as peripheral members of the African diaspora; as anomalous examples of the Atlantic world's racial, social and political constructs; or, in some anthropological studies as examples of cultural persistence.²⁶⁰ As Atlanticists attempt to uncover the interconnectedness and intermingling of peoples bound together by a common ocean, more studies of Maroons throughout the Atlantic have emerged.²⁶¹ These studies have generally overlooked the larger context of Maroons in the Atlantic world, instead focusing on their regional influences. Yet, these marginalized communities had a larger impact. The Trelawney Maroons emerge as a fine illustration

World, see *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries on the Americas, 1500-1820*, eds. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy. New York: Routledge, 2002.

²⁵⁹ The Maroons were an illiterate society. Therefore, written accounts from Maroons are usually authored by a sympathetic – or, in some cases, hostile – white man. This presents obvious interpretive problems for scholars and therefore I have been highly critical of the documents used in this dissertation.

²⁶⁰ Please see: James D. Lockett, "The Deportation of the Maroons of Trelawney to Nova Scotia, then Back to Africa." in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Sep. 1999) 5-14; Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*; Richard Price, *Maroon Societies*; Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972; and Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.

²⁶¹ For example, Richard Hart, *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery: Blacks in Rebellion*. Kingston: University of West Indies Press, 2002.

of a ripple effect throughout the Atlantic world. One event – a slave rebellion in St. Domingue – directly affected a neighboring community's future, the Trelawney Maroons', who then altered life in another corner of the Atlantic, the British province of Nova Scotia. Then, after removal to Africa, the Trelawney Maroons altered the course of Sierra Leone's founding. In under a decade, a community originally formed by runaway slaves in the seventeenth-century affected three different corners of the Atlantic world. Within three decades, the Maroons returned to Jamaica, a place that no longer matched the memories they fervently guarded throughout their Atlantic sojourn. Life in exile had changed them, while the fluidity of empire and the tumult of Atlantic Revolutions had transformed the once familiar cockpit country.

Community Formation on the Margins of Empire

Imperial conflict yielded one of the British empire's most intriguing historical characteristics: the founding of numerous Maroon societies in Jamaica that dated from the British invasion of the Spanish held island in 1655. As empires competed for control of the Atlantic's vast resources, regions were transformed in unpredicted ways. The development of Maroon communities throughout the Atlantic World illustrates a continual "reorganization" of cultural, economic and social spaces.²⁶² Even after particular regions had become important centers of trade or agriculture – such as late

²⁶² Amy Turner Bushnell and Jack P. Greene describe imperial competition in the Atlantic as a process of reconstruction, where Europeans attempted to control the Atlantic – its peoples, economy and socio-cultural spaces – in three stages of colonization. For more, see "Peripheries, Centers, and the Construction of Early Modern American Empires: An Introduction," in *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*. eds. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy. New York: Routledge, 2002.

seventeenth and eighteenth-century Jamaica – communities existed on the margins of mainstream colonial society. The Jamaican Maroons not only lived on the geographic periphery of Jamaica, they also lived on the margins in between black and white British society. As quasi-independent communities high in the mountains of the island, the Maroons defined their identity in opposition to enslaved Africans, free mulattoes and white residents of the island.²⁶³

The British encountered some 1500 newly freed itinerant slaves who crisscrossed the rugged country of Jamaica, working as guerilla fighters alongside their former owners in defense of the island.²⁶⁴ As the last Spanish resistance fighters fled or were captured, these ex-slaves quickly formed small communities in the rugged mountains of Jamaica. This cockpit country – so-named for the numerous crevices in which runaways could hide amongst the rugged mountains of Jamaica – served them as a natural defense against hostile captors, while also providing some hunting grounds and a few acres on which to plant crops. Throughout the 1660s, 1670s, and 1680s, small bands of guerillas, identified by their various leaders' name, fought against British troops stationed in Jamaica. These battles largely ceased as the British colonial government issued bounties of 20-30 £ for each rebel's head, allowing the British to focus their efforts on building plantations.²⁶⁵

As Orlando Patterson notes, Jamaica remains unique in that "during more than 180 years of its existence as a slave society, hardly a decade went by without a serious,

²⁶³ See, Rhett S. Jones, "White Settlers, Black Rebels: Jamaica In the Era of the First Maroon War, 1655-1738." Ann Arbor: Xerox University Microfilms, 1977. PhD Thesis, Brown University.

²⁶⁴ Orlando Patterson, "Slavery and Slave Revolts: A Sociohistorical Analysis of the First Maroon War, 1665-1740," in Price, *Maroon Societies*, p. 252-253.

²⁶⁵ In 1662, 505 slaves lived in Jamaica, by 1743 the slave population numbered approximately 45,000. See Patterson in Price, *Maroon Societies*, p. 255.

large-scale slave revolt threatening the entire system."²⁶⁶ Indeed, the First Maroon War consisted of several revolts and uprisings throughout a seventy-year period beginning in the 1670s, with each insurrection involving Maroons as well as 50 to 400 slaves. Maroon communities grew to a few thousand as runaways gathered in the Cockpit Country, but their numbers remained well below the slave population.²⁶⁷ In 1739, the Maroons and Jamaican Assembly met and agreed on a peace deal to end the war. The resulting treaty recognized distinctions between Maroons and other blacks on the island – highlighted by Maroon land ownership – and it declared the Maroons to be in "a perfect State of Freedom and Liberty."²⁶⁸ Moreover, the treaty guaranteed them free trade with whites, the hunting of wild animals, and 1500 acres on which they could plant crops, hunt, and build homes.²⁶⁹

The Maroons periodically raided plantations for food and women throughout the next fifty years during lean harvests or as wives were needed. Efforts by local authorities to halt these raids foundered, partly because the Maroons proved far too valuable in their slave-hunting capabilities.²⁷⁰ The Maroons protected their identity outside of – even against – slavery by agreeing to hunt runaway slaves and return them to their masters, drawing the ire of slaves. Furthermore, the Cockpit Country remained daunting to the British, with one Governor of the island commenting that the land was "the most rugged and mountainous Country in the Universe."²⁷¹ Indeed, the strategic locations of Maroon

²⁶⁶ Patterson in Price, *Maroons Societies*. p. 246.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 264.

²⁶⁸ P.R.O., C.O. 137/23, C.O. 137/56.

²⁶⁹ Such as tobacco, coffee, cotton and other crops.

²⁷⁰ For more on these events, see Mavis Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*.

²⁷¹ P.R.O. WO 1/92. "Letters of Earl of Balcarres," Balcarres to Samuel Vaughn, August 1, 1796.

communities served them well, providing cover, defense, and enough food – except during the worst of seasons – on which to live.

As a result of the Maroons' belligerence and raids, Jamaica's governor assigned two white Superintendents to permanently reside among their communities.²⁷² The Maroons entered a condition from which they continually maneuvered over the course of next fifty years to become independent.²⁷³ Indeed, the Superintendents developed into an important connection between the Maroons and their white counterparts.

Two types of runaway communities formed in Jamaica after the First Maroon War. The Leeward and Windward Maroons existed as separate and often inharmonious communities. The Leeward Maroons became known as an Akan and Coromantee stronghold, with iron-fisted leadership from Cudjoe, a war hero from the First Maroon War. Cudjoe provided the foundation for the strong, centralized communities that developed from the Leeward bands, including Accompong and Trelawney Town (originally named for Cudjoe, but later renamed after Edward Trelawney who served as the island's governor in the 1740s).²⁷⁴ These bands became known as the fiercest and most intimidating of the lot, partially due to British perceptions of Cudjoe, who was known to walk around ominously with a machete, a horn of powder, a bag of shot and a reddish tint applied to his skin, and also because of their Akan and Coromantee

²⁷² P.R.O., C.O. 137/23, C.O. 137/56.

²⁷³ A particularly useful analogy is the guardianship of Indians developed by Massachusetts and other colonies. Massachusetts appointed guardians to reside among local Indian tribes to ensure their safety, the installation of Christianity and Christian values, and to keep Indians from interfering with the affairs of local whites. For more information, see: Daniel R. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth Century Eastern Massachusetts*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

²⁷⁴ Campbell, *Maroons of Jamaica*, p.150. Also, see pages 164-186 for a detailed discussion concerning the inconclusive "facts" of the founding of various Maroon towns.

ethnicity.²⁷⁵ Furthermore, Cudjoe and other leaders acted unpredictably in their dealings with whites, which served to reinforce British racial constructs of Maroons' aggressiveness and risk taking.²⁷⁶

By the late eighteenth-century, Maroon communities faced challenges from the island's General Assembly. Living under the parameters of the 1739 treaty, the Maroons had developed a strong sense of independence with the emergence of cultural and political leaders such as Cudjoe and Nanny.²⁷⁷ This community building centered on land ownership – a key marker that separated them from enslaved blacks – kinship ties, and hunting runaway slaves. New colonial laws, however, offered individual Maroons

²⁷⁵ The English were familiar with the Akan, having dealt with them extensively in Africa in the Slave Trade. Part of this conception of them as capable warriors stems from their own internal socio-political reshuffling that occurred as more and more wealth could be gained from the slave trade. Furthermore, the English knew that the Akan social structure included both a female and male head of the household who held high moral authority. See Gomez, p.108-111.

²⁷⁶ Of the Windward bands of Maroons, perhaps Nanny, "Queen Mother of us all," remains the most well known of their leaders. Some evidence suggests Nanny received a separate land grant from the British during the mid eighteenth-century; regardless, she appears repeatedly in archival records, acting in diplomatic roles, and helping to shape her community's future with a strong focus on gaining valuable land assets. Under the direction of important figures such as Queen Nanny, the Maroons conducted business according to the terms of the 1739 treaty, establishing independent settlements on the island and forming communities around strong military-like leaders. Exact population figures for the Maroon towns prove elusive, but approximately 300-500 persons inhabited each community, with kinship links between each town. Other, smaller bands of rebellious and more recent runaway slaves also exacted some violence against white islanders. Some of these runaways, such as Three Finger'd Jack and Quaco Venter raised havoc among the planters in the 1770s and 1780s. White officials quickly placed bounties on their heads open anyone on the island – including Maroons – who turned in these outlaws. Older Maroon communities, such as Trelawney Town, distinguished themselves from these smaller bands of outlaws and runaways by refusing to let their towns serve as havens for outlaws. See, Campbell, p. 164-186; Karla Gottlieb, *The Mother of Us All: A History of Queen Nanny, Leader of the Windward Jamaican Maroons*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2000, 1-22.

²⁷⁷ One such law, enacted in 1791, resulted from British officials growing weary of offering the Maroons assistance in times of food shortages. The new law found it "lawful for any Maroon negro or negroes to appear in person before the justices...to publicly and solemnly...declare...that he, she, or they, are desirous and willing to give up any right he, she, or they may have to any part of lands which have been granted to the Maroon negroes." As quoted in Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, p. 186.

fair treatment and public assistance if they gave up their land.²⁷⁸ These laws, intended to deal with the poor and destitute, seemed to highlight British intentions to erode the cohesion of Maroon communities. A few Maroons accepted the offer, but others, such as the residents of Trelawney Town, condemned it.²⁷⁹ As the island's slave economy grew, the British attempted to gradually regulate and control the Maroons and their threat to the plantations.²⁸⁰ By the 1770s, land disputes between whites and Maroons illustrated the precariousness of Maroon land ownership. White surveyors often used land disputes as an opportunity to raise questions about the validity of boundaries marking Maroon lands, which symbolically cast doubt on Maroon freedom.²⁸¹

Despite some attempts by British imperial agents to treat the Maroons in a similar manner to freed blacks on the island, local officials often treated Maroons as distinct from other blacks. One incident in the 1770s demonstrates this dual reality. A Maroon killed a white Captain. Promptly tried for the murder, he was found innocent. The Maroon's exoneration was partly due to British fears of rebellion among a united Maroon community and partly because the court found that the Maroon had acted in self-defense.²⁸² White islanders did not fear a united front among freed blacks to the extent

²⁷⁸ Colonial (and later state) courts in North America often exchanged land for civil protections (such as government care for the poor) with Native Americans; see Daniel Mandell, *Behind the Frontier* and Ruth Wallis Herndon and Ella Wilcox Sekatau, "The Right to a Name: The Narragansett People and Rhode Island Officials During the Revolutionary Era," in *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Summer 1997), 433-462.

²⁷⁹ According to Mavis Campbell, those Maroons that did accept the General Assembly's offer were linked sexually with whites on the island, while others had not resided on Maroon lands for some time. See *The Maroons of Jamaica*, p. 186-188.

²⁸⁰ Indeed, anthropologist Mavis Campbell notes that when she asked to view a copy of the 1739 treaty in the possession of present-day Jamaican Maroons, they were "somewhat elusive" (perhaps to protect it) about the location of the document. *The Maroons of Jamaica*, P. 278.

²⁸¹ For a discussion concerning law and marronage status, see Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. p.59-66.

²⁸² Campbell, *The Fighting Maroons*, p.207.

they feared a Maroon coalition because the First Maroon War proved the dangers of a Maroon insurrection. Furthermore, whites were particularly fearful of the Trelawney Maroons because of their militaristic social organization, ethnic heritage, and ruthless hunting of other runaway slaves. As a result, the Trelawney Maroons were viewed differently than other blacks on the island, further enhancing their views of themselves as above other black islanders. The Maroons often avoided punishment in situations that would have resulted in death for a slave or freed black.²⁸³

By the end of the eighteenth-century, the relationship between the British and Maroons grew unstable as small pockets of violence, land claims and trade disputes heightened tensions between the two factions. Besides offering the Maroons legal parameters that enabled independent economic, political and social development, the 1739 treaty also set a relatively peaceful tone for Anglo-Maroon relations provided the Maroons continued hunting down runaway slaves and did not increase their sporadic plantation raids. Until the 1790s, the guidelines set forth in the Treaty of 1739 had been generally respected by the British and the Maroons. Yet, Jamaica was on the cusp of dramatic change with the departure of Governor Adam Williamson in late 1794 and the arrival of his replacement, Lord Balcarres, in early 1795. The freedoms gained by the Maroons – land ownership, self-government, free trade, among others –were soon threatened by conspiracy theories fueled by the Maroons' increasing defiance of British power. The nearby Haitian Revolution began a process of destabilization of the

²⁸³ The Maroons' service to white islanders also contributed significantly to their separate identity from other blacks on the island. In two planned slave rebellions, one in 1776 and one in 1791, the Maroons astonished their black counterparts by allying with whites to quell the violence. This proved most significant in the eyes of slaves because of their strong kinship ties with one another from the region presently called Ghana. See, Geggus, "The Enigma of Jamaica in the 1790s," p. 274-276.

Caribbean's plantation economy that resulted in a fundamental shift in the social and imperial order. As a result, many communities on the margins of empire, such as the Trelawney Maroons, experienced profound change.

"...for the purpose of doing mischief"²⁸⁴

Lord Balcarres' disgust toward the French and their Revolution is well documented. His arrival on the island in late winter/ early spring of 1795 marked a new period – at least in his mind – in Jamaican history where French "Principles...would suffer no inlet whatsoever for their doctrines."²⁸⁵ Lord Balcarres encountered his worst fears in 1795 while tarrying in Grenada en route to Jamaica: a French conspiracy. Balcarres watched his brother quell a rebellion by freed blacks and mulattoes in Grenada that was inspired by the French Revolution and, at least to Lord Balcarres', led by French insurgents.²⁸⁶ Events like these proved to heighten Balcarres' later fears of French insurgents arriving in Jamaica from nearby Haiti.²⁸⁷ Balcarres was neither alone nor

²⁸⁴ Public Records Office, Colonial Office 137/93, Williamson to Dundas, 28 February 1794.

²⁸⁵ Campbell, *the Maroons of Jamaica*, p.209.

²⁸⁶ See Edward Cox, *Free Coloreds in the Slave Societies of St. Kitts and Grenada 1763-1833*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984 and Craton, *Testing the Chains*.

²⁸⁷ For more on the Age of Revolution in the Caribbean, see R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, 2 vols. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press 1959; *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus, eds. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997; Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990; David Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue 1793–1798*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982; CLR James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Overture and the Saint Domingo Revolution*, New York: Dial Press, 1938; and Lester D. Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

groundless in his concern regarding the spread of French revolutionary ideals.²⁸⁸ Indeed, more than twenty slave revolts occurred in the Caribbean during and after the Haitian Revolution.²⁸⁹ Nonetheless, some historians remain unconvinced of a direct French connection with such violence.²⁹⁰

Lord Balcarres was convinced even before the start of the Trelawney Maroons' rebellion that a French inspired slave revolt would occur on the island. He remained in contact with the Duke of Portland, the king's secretary and main foreign policy advisor, and officials throughout the empire concurred with Balcarres' suspicions of French treachery. Balcarres learned that earlier in 1794, Governor John Wentworth of Nova Scotia reported to Portland that the French had hijacked the British brig *Mars* and were planning to sail it and its much needed provisions into Boston Harbor.²⁹¹ Wartime incidents like these raised the level of suspicion in the empire. With Haiti's revolution coinciding with yet another Anglo-French war in the mid-1790s, Britons grew increasingly wary of French Catholics, while British Caribbean possessions seemed particularly vulnerable in the midst of such socio-political upheaval.²⁹²

²⁸⁸ Officers were sent to Ireland and Scotland to raise troops for the war in the Caribbean. Also, Jamaica's outgoing Governor, Adam Williamson, was ordered to St. Domingue to aid in the war effort. *Royal Gazette*, November 14, 1793, P.R.O. CO 141/1.

²⁸⁹ Geggus, *Turbulent Times*, p. 7-8; and Craton, *Testing the Chains*. Furthermore, the tension in Jamaica had risen with the onset of America's War for Independence, which prompted slave revolts and failed plots (as late as 1791) on the island. See Geggus, "The Enigma of Jamaica in the 1790s," 274-276.

²⁹⁰ See Craton, *Testing the Chains* and Geggus, "The Enigma of Jamaica in the 1790s."

²⁹¹ P.R.O. CO 217/66, Secretary of State Correspondence Notes, 1795-1797; Wentworth to Portland, Halifax 26 November 1794.

²⁹² War between the French and British had been declared in 1793. Even Balcarres' predecessor felt anxiety toward the events in Haiti; especially in considering the involvement of the French in these affairs. Sir Adam Williamson, as he departed the island in 1794, vocalized his concern about the spread of the revolt in Haiti. For Williamson, there was "no doubt a great many dangerous persons from St. Domingo in North America" who would engage in "mischief" to disturb Britain's profitable sugar colony in Jamaica.²⁹² Under these conditions, the island's white officials faced a perplexing situation trying to defend the various inlets, harbors, and landing sites

Growing instability in the Caribbean afforded the perceptive Trelawney Maroons the opportunity to gain an advantage in their negotiations with island officials for a new Superintendent. Petitions to Jamaica's House of Assembly, like planter John Shaw's, expressed dissatisfaction with the Trelawney Maroons whose "flock are continually trespassing on his and the negro [sic] provision-grounds and have totally destroyed the provisions thereon."²⁹³ The petition called for the erection of a dividing fence to separate his plantation from Trelawney Town. The Maroons, whom the Assembly ordered to help build it, refused to comply, leaving Mr. Shaw half of a dividing fence. As incidents like these increased in frequency, Maroon-white relations soured further.²⁹⁴ Such defiance worried white Jamaicans, perhaps signaling an end to the relative cooperation they had enjoyed from the Trelawney Maroons since the 1739 treaty.

In refusing to comply with orders to build a fence, the Trelawney Maroons' capitalized on anxieties that gripped the island. The Maroons believed Britons' alarm afforded them more room in dealing with Jamaican officials. Drawing from a tradition of risk-taking – beginning with their founding by runaway slaves, fighting powerful European empires and raiding plantations – the Maroons constructed an independent

around the tropical island. White Jamaicans were keenly aware of the difficulty of keeping French Catholic bandits off their land and they worried about ways more conspicuous than water borne approaches in which the French could infiltrate their island. For example, one recently naturalized subject of Britain, one Francois Belloc of St. Domingue, asked the island's council to provide him with a new plantation on which to bring his "Negroes" to start anew. Then, Belloc applied for financial aid from the British government. Local officials must have been suspicious of a Frenchman, naturalized as he was, resettling on an island so close to Haiti given that Belloc had been en route to Baltimore to start afresh in America. Nevertheless, Balcarres granted Belloc a domicile on which to restart his plantation. P.R.O. CO 137/93, The Most Humble Petition of Francois Belloc of the Island of Saint Domingo, Planter but Now a Naturalized British Subject.

²⁹³ P.R.O. CO 140/83, *Votes of the Honourable House of Assembly of Jamaica, In Session November 4, 1794 – February 28, 1795*. Printed by Alexander Aikmen, St. Jago de la Vega., 21 November 1794, Petition from David Shaw.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. Shaw showed frustration with the Maroons' non-compliance, arguing that it would only cost a mere 150 *l* to build the fence.

black community. Refusing the Assembly proved a bold strategy and, if it worked, it would resolve several issues confronting Trelawney Town.

With Jamaica's non-white population outnumbering whites by at least twenty-two to one, maintaining a tenuous peace among "Negroes already on the island" took on new significance.²⁹⁵ The House of Commons' bill to fund the arrival of more troops, rather than "Negroes from Africa" whose "frequent arrivals" brings slaves the "greatest joy," served as a warning bell for Jamaica's white population.²⁹⁶ Observers, such as the agent to Jamaica Stephen Fuller, believed that this bill, "being brought at the very time the French have given Freedom to all their Negroes" in Haiti, would more likely "incite an Insurrection in our Colonies than any thing that has hitherto happened." Adding troops to secure the island at the same time the French freed slaves in Haiti reinforced white Jamaicans' intent to keep their slaves' status permanent. Fuller, with experience gained in a thirty year career as agent to the island, warned that the British were being seduced by the "most political of all" the French's "strokes since the Revolution" which would "likely...turn out the most injurious to Great Britain" and its Caribbean islands.²⁹⁷ White Jamaicans worried about the message increasing the number of troops on the island sent to their slaves.²⁹⁸

British imperial officials spoke with trepidation about the island's future. By the winter of 1794/95, whites fretted over rumors of a grander plan by the French to retake the Caribbean. Uncertainty flourished in the face of multiple Atlantic revolutions. These worries mainly centered on the reaction of the African population of the island, including

²⁹⁵ For more on the British Caribbean's population ratios, see O'Shaughnessy, p. 7-8.

²⁹⁶ P.R.O. CO 137/93, Fuller to Dundas, 19 March 1794.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ P.R.O. WO 1/92, Portland to Balcarres, 30 September 1795. Jamaica's *Royal Gazette* advertised the mustering of two "Battalions of Negroes to consist of 1000 men each."

the Maroons, who had already been petitioning local authorities about their unhappiness with nearby planters and appointed superintendents. What began as a discussion regarding the *possibility* of Haiti's Revolution spreading to nearby British islands became a near *certainty* in the eyes of white Jamaicans in the spring of 1795. They seemed to have forgotten the previous 50 years of relative peace on the island.²⁹⁹ Henry Dundas, Sir Williamson, Stephen Fuller and others were convinced that the Trelawney contingent's latest disobedience, such as refusing to build Shaw's fence, signaled the beginning of a full-fledged insurrection.

The Trelawney Maroons themselves did little to convince the white population otherwise. It is unclear if they were aware of the magnitude of the larger imperial issues that would surface from a revolt British officials thought to have originated with French insurgents. Still, they continued to press for a new Superintendent, and for change in their trade routes; and they persisted in trespassing on surrounding planters' lands to gather food.³⁰⁰ Adding to the strain caused by the Maroons, delays in the arrival of merchant ships triggered "much distress." Blamed on the Anglo-French war, their late arrival added to the "fear" extant on the island by "occasion[ing] the loss of a considerable part of the crops."³⁰¹ The first sunrise of 1795 greeted an island abuzz with tension, frayed nerves and conspiracy theories – emotions boosted by the bold actions of the Trelawney Maroons.

²⁹⁹ Since the 1739 treaty, Anglo-Maroon relations, although rocky at times, could be characterized as one of cooperation in matters of trade and property ownership. Only with the re-surveying of the Trelawney Maroons' property boundaries and their dissatisfaction with the recent Superintendents did Anglo-Maroon relations officially sour.

³⁰⁰ According to the Agent to Jamaica, Stephen Fuller, in 1794 the Trelawney Parish's "cultivation and produce" increased to amounts higher than any other parish on the island. P.R.O. CO 137/93 18 February 1794, Fuller to Dundas.

³⁰¹ P.R.O. CO 138/33, Balcarres to Lord Portland, 16 July 1795.

Fighting For A Place Apart: The Second Maroon War

The Second Maroon War was an attempt by a marginalized community to shape its future. Life on the margins of empire was precarious, and communities like the Trelawney Maroons fervently guarded whatever freedoms they had attained in staking their position between black and white societies. With the future of the lenient and cooperative superintendent threatened, the Maroons took action to avoid falling under tighter controls that a newly appointed overseer represented. Through it all, the Maroons strove to retain their place as free black community.

On May 11, 1795, shortly after his arrival in Jamaica, Governor Balcarres reported an attempt to burn down Kingston. True to form, Balcarres credited the French with causing this ripple in his island's "Tranquility," adding, "your Grace knows how very jealous I am of everything that has the tendency of Insurrection," voicing his concern that "if the minds of these mountaineers have been poisoned by Emisseries [sic] it may prove fatal to the Country,"³⁰² Balcarres hoped there was no French involvement in this insurrection. On the 21st of July 1795, Balcarres informed the crown of another "insurrection having taken place among the Maroons of Trelawney Town."³⁰³ Even though the governor still held hope that the Maroons were "merely [in a] dispute with the whites in the neighborhood," Balcarres' quickly suspected other causes for their state of rebellion.³⁰⁴ The governor knew of past transgressions by the Maroons, stating that they

³⁰² As quoted in Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, p. 209 and P.R.O. CO 137/95, Balcarres to Portland, 19 July 1795, as quoted in Campbell, p. 210.

³⁰³ P.R.O. WO 1/92, Deposition of John Merody, Assistant to Trelawney Town, 29 August 1795.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

had "been for some time in a state of Rebellion," but he noted the differences between these most recent acts and their previous affairs.³⁰⁵ Indeed, Balcarres viewed the newest incarnation of the Trelawney Maroons' actions against Royal Officials with trepidation precisely because he believed the French were "at the Bottom of it."³⁰⁶ If this is the case, "it becomes infinitely more alarming."³⁰⁷ But this insurrection differed because it "commenced with a Rapidity which offers more Method then [sic] in any former Dispute."³⁰⁸

Governor Balcarres noted also that the Trelawney Maroons had "made friendship with the Maroons of the Town of Accompong who are naturally hostile to them."³⁰⁹ Given the swiftness of the turn of events and a previous lack of cooperation between the two communities, the governor saw French fingerprints all over this revolt. Perhaps, he surmised, the Trelawney Maroons were inspired by the success of Toussaint L'Overture's army of slaves and freed blacks, motivating them to cooperate with past rivals – including the slaves they had previously hunted – to unite in opposition to the British.³¹⁰

By late July, the crisis worsened when two Maroons were summarily convicted of stealing.³¹¹ Whippings, their punishment for stealing two hogs, pushed the Trelawney Maroons over the edge. The Maroons saw themselves as distinct from other black islanders, with a key component of this identity centered on their slave-hunting activities.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ The Maroons continued to hunt slaves for whites until early July 1795, however. By continuing the practice of slave hunting, the Trelawney Maroons were reasserting their separate identity from slaves, making sure British officials understood that despite the possibility of cooperation between the Maroons and slaves, Trelawney Town's inhabitants were still socio-culturally different than their chattel counterparts.

³¹¹ Campbell, p. 211.

The roles were reversed with the hog thieves' conviction. Slaves now inflicted physical punishment on the Maroons, while whites watched. The Maroons' were angered: one envoy reported: "[the] Maroons wish nothing else from the Country but Battle."³¹² Furthermore, the Assembly learned that the Maroons "obliged the Superintendent to quit the Town...having turned [him] out of the Town."³¹³ Since 1793, the Trelawney Maroons had asked the council for a new superintendent, but they witnessed little action on the issue. For the past sixteen years Trelawney Town had been left without a superintendent – a key diplomatic figure – because the last satisfactory one, Colonel John James, received a promotion in 1779 to become the superintendent of all Maroons on the island. James' shifted his attention from one community toward the other Maroon towns. Balcarres received reports that James was the Maroons's "Idol" because he embodied the courage and strength of character admired by his people.³¹⁴ The Maroons required a superintendent to provide support on issues of trade and land ownership, but also someone respectful of their existence as a community separate from other black communities on the island. The Maroons determined Thomas Craskell to be "a very unfit Person for that Office" because he lacked strength in character to properly deal with

³¹² P.R.O. WO 1/92, 18 July 1795, Campbell and Perry to Balcarres.

³¹³ P.R.O. WO 1/92, Deposition of John Merody, Assistant to Trelawney Town, 29 August 1795.

³¹⁴ In the right man's hands, the Superintendent ensured the freedom of the Trelawney Maroons by acting as a go-between who dealt with trade or slave hunting instead of internal socio-political matters amongst the Maroons. The Superintendent arbitrated disputes involving land, trade and daily concerns like theft. More importantly, the Superintendent was to be an advocate on behalf of Maroon interests. James, according to the Maroons, was the only man capable of fairly representing them. British officials believed the Maroons "require and love a Man of undaunted Courage and one that will make them Sensible of it when Occasion requires" and in this role, James stood as a key symbol in Maroon independence: a British official who refused to exert the crown's authority over the Trelawney community, choosing to deal with them as a legitimate nation instead.

Maroons who had broken the law.³¹⁵ By sacking Craskell the Maroons sent a clear message to the Assembly about the urgency of finding a suitable superintendent as well as their displeasure with the whippings.

After this incident, the Trelawney Maroons became even more aggressive. They "threatened the destruction of the two Plantations nearest them and of all the white People on them," according to Balcarres. Furthermore, residents of Trelawney Town were called in, "the Women sent to the Woods" and, in a show of force, "they [the Maroons] propose to kill the Cattle and those Children who may be an Incumbrance [sic]."³¹⁶ By threatening to kill the cattle – a primary source of food – as well as their children, to whom they were later described as being "extremely attached,"³¹⁷ the Maroons hoped to exploit whites' perceptions of them as savage African warriors. The Maroons reaffirmed their masculinity – one based on a warrior culture that practiced polygamy – by protecting their women.³¹⁸

The Trelawney Maroons continually sent signals of war to white Jamaicans throughout 1795. The island's Council called eyewitness John Thorp, an envoy sent to Trelawney Town, to testify about the activities of the Maroons. In his testimony before the Council, Thorp noted that he found the Maroons "in every aspect prepared for

³¹⁵ Ibid. Although the Maroons had no official capacity to sack a Superintendent, the Jamaican Assembly and other officials did not appear to find their actions unacceptable. Indeed, the Assembly sent a delegate of four magistrates to negotiate the disputes with the Maroons. It appears that the Maroons themselves found the Superintendent a critical figure in keeping tensions with whites to a minimum. Perhaps this notion dates back to the founding of the Maroon towns that were organized around central figures like Nanny and Cudjoe who served in a diplomatic, military as well as social capacity.

³¹⁶ P.R.O. CO 140/84, 23 July 1795, Council Minutes.

³¹⁷ CI 217/67, Blacks in the Military, Digby Militia. As reprinted in Mavis Campbell, *The Fighting Maroons of Nova Scotia*. p.28.

³¹⁸ Powerful women, such as Queen Nanny, were not unusual in Maroon communities. By excluding such an integral segment of the population from the coming rebellion, Trelawney Town's leaders fashioned their identity to play into British stereotypes that viewed men as more threatening than women.

Hostilities" upon his visit to Trelawney Town the week prior.³¹⁹ In light of "our Long Boats" being captured daily "by the French Privateers Composed of Motley Crews," he stressed, it "would be a fine Opportunity for the Brigands to have executed their favourite plan of Universal destruction to British property."³²⁰ From what Thorp viewed in Trelawney Town, it left him little doubt as to a connection between the Maroons and French insurgents. After the Maroons demonstrated their readiness for war in front of Thorp, the envoy found it "highly proper to temporize," or pacify "them."³²¹

As reports of the Trelawney Maroons' efforts to build coalitions with other Maroon communities trickled into Balcarres' office, he anxiously wrote to the Duke of Portland. Balcarres believed that "the Trelawney Maroons, possessing a Country of inconceivable strength...concentrating in a moment on the five smaller Maroon Nations, were a force formidable to this Country."³²² He maintained the Trelawney Maroons were "a Power, commanding, at their Pleasure, the Aid of Plantation Negroes, the Properties and Liberties of every Person on this Island were at their disposal, and under their dominion."³²³ Balcarres' letters to the crown's aide, however, exaggerated the situation at hand. By Balcarres' own count, the Trelawney Maroons numbered only 660 persons, well below even the total population of the island's two mulatto fighting units, yet their reputation as fierce warriors and their perceived willingness to lead an island-wide revolt fueled the governor's anti-French fears beyond reason.

Although the war actually took the form of a small community uprising, the appearance of French involvement and alliances among Maroons in Jamaica's Second

³¹⁹ P.R.O. CO 140/84, John Thorp to Council, 25 July 1795.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid; and P.R.O. WO 1/92, Reid to Trelawney Maroons, 11 August 1795.

³²² P.R.O. WO 1/92, Balcarres to Portland, 25 August 1795.

³²³ Ibid.

Maroon War marked this as a signal event to the rest of the empire.³²⁴ Rumors of French designs to take over the Caribbean permeated the imperial government, streaming in from beyond the Caribbean as well. In September of 1795, the Jamaican Assembly heard testimony that implicated several "coloured" French merchants of scheming to assist in "the leap of Liberty" to Jamaica.³²⁵ Based in New York and Philadelphia, these Frenchmen traveled to and from the Caribbean – including Jamaica – to deliver plans and "orders" while allegedly directing the organization of slaves, "Negroes," and Maroons in revolt. The Assembly's investigation into the affairs of these black Frenchmen reveal the scope of the Maroons' manipulation of British fears. John Graham attested that "the Maroons expected to gain a great deal by their Battle, if Commenced whilst the French were at War with the English in Saint Domingo."³²⁶ Such testimony caused Balcarres to comment: "I...trembled for...the French I have no doubt possessed a Golden Key by which they had access everywhere," including Jamaica as well as America.³²⁷ Indeed, this explicit connection between the Haitian Revolution and the Second Maroon War proved most troublesome for the governor.³²⁸

On 4 October 1795, Balcarres acted steadfastly to quash what he imagined as the impending French inspired revolution on his island. The governor ordered the "Multitudes of French People...shipped off not for America...but to St. Domingo," which struck "immense fears" among the Frenchmen on the island.³²⁹ Balcarres took command, proudly writing to his superiors at Whitehall that "I have pushed out of the

³²⁴ P.R.O. CO 140/84, Portland to Balcarres, 25 August 1795.

³²⁵ P.R.O. CO 140/84, 22 September 1795, Council Minutes of the Jamaica Assembly.

³²⁶ Ibid. Council Minutes, Extract from the Examination of John Graham, 27 August 1795.

³²⁷ P.R.O. WO 1/92, Balcarres to Portland, 29 August 1795

³²⁸ P.R.O. WO 1/92, Balcarres Private Notes, 25 August 1795.

³²⁹ P.R.O. WO 1/92, Balcarres to Portland, 4 October 1795.

Island above one thousand of the greatest Scoundrels in the Universe...Most of them Frenchmen of colours, and a Multitude of French Negroes."³³⁰ At the same time, the governor declared Martial Law on the island, enabling the most drastic of measures to be taken in the quelling of this rebellion.

Under martial law, the fear of revolution nurtured by the Trelawney Maroons became an obstacle to achieving their goals.³³¹ The revolt had grown beyond the concerns of Trelawney Town, because it now involved fundamental concerns of the empire, drawing the attention of Whitehall, the king and officials from around the realm. Just months after the conflict began, Montague James led the Maroons in a series of brokered peace deals when faced with thousands of troops on the island, reports of ambushes by Spanish war dogs in the Cockpit Country, and the encircling of Trelawney Town by at least ten militia units and dragoon encampments.³³² By 26 March 1796, Balcarres had "the satisfaction to inform" Whitehall "of the termination of the Maroon War" as a signed peace deal was brokered. Thus, a content governor reported to the island's assembly, as well as the Duke of Portland, that "the most perfect internal tranquility [was] restored to the Island: the Slaves on every Plantation are obedient,

³³⁰ P.R.O. WO 1/92, October 1795, Balcarres to Portland. Balcarres also issued a Proclamation offering a reward for the heads of all Maroons in rebellion.

³³¹ It is unclear how many casualties resulted from the Second Maroon War. The conflict was composed of small-scale, guerilla style confrontations between British troops and the Trelawney Maroons. There is no evidence these clashes resulted in more than a handful of casualties per episode. Furthermore, there are no reports of a noticeable decline in Trelawney Town's population of nearly 600. See, Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, chapter 7, p. 209-249; and War Office Records, grouping 1/92.

³³² *Ibid.* Balcarres to Portland, 28 December 1795. In this letter Balcarres announced that he had begun the importation of Spanish war dogs from Cuba. He informs Whitehall that the dogs' ferocity was incomparable, tearing one man to pieces "in a minute." Balcarres' deemed the dogs most effective against the Maroons, particularly when attended by a "little black boy" and it was "this little animal" that led the dogs on their ambushes against Maroons. P.R.O. CO 700/Jamaica #24, Map of Several Positions taken by the Troops under the Command of Earl of Balcarres.

contente [sic], and happy."³³³ A new calm swept over white Jamaica as the rebels were apprehended.

The Trelawney Maroons switched strategies against seemingly insurmountable odds. Faced with a growing contingent of British troops and crafty tactics by the governor, surrender appeared to be the only option. Governor Balcarres had previously demonstrated his willingness to use extreme measures (in removing the French residents of the island under martial law) and ruthlessly approached to destroy perceived threats to his island. Reluctantly, Montague James and his fellow Maroons took to "their Knees" to "beg His Majesty's Pardon."³³⁴ The Maroons had attempted to capitalize on the chaos caused in the Atlantic world by Toussaint L'Overture and his followers, yet their efforts bore no fruit. The oath of allegiance to His Majesty seemed their only way out of a dire situation.³³⁵

Prior to the Second Maroon War, a strange kind of peace existed between the Maroons and their white co-islanders. Sporadic violence had erupted, but, for the most part, the Maroons encountered supportive superintendents, often able to use the terms of the treaty to their advantage when seeking redress for problems of which the

³³³ P.R.O. WO 1/92, Balcarres to Portland, 26 March 1796.

³³⁴ P.R.O. WO 1/92, Contract between Montague James and George Walpole, 21 December 1795. Although some scholars of the Maroons view the revolt in 1795 as ending in a stalemate, their perceptions of the outcome seem – admittedly – tainted by modern-day Maroons' oral histories that describe a war in which the most powerful empire in the world could not defeat their ancestors. For example, see Lockett pages 6-8.

³³⁵ For an analysis of cultural meanings of oath taking procedures, see Kenneth Bilby, "Swearing by the Past, Swearing to the Future: Sacred Oaths, Alliances, and Treaties among the Guianese and Jamaican Maroons," in *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Autumn 1997), 655-689. Native Americans often found that taking the oath of allegiance, or a similar pledge, offered strategic advantages during times of war as well as in cases of cultural assimilation and adaptation. See Ian K. Steel, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994; Colin G. Calloway, *New World for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997; and Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

superintendent could not help. The atmosphere on the island changed, however, in 1794 and 1795. White Jamaicans encountered one particularly assertive Maroon community in Trelawney Town, who became more aggressive in attempts to fix their community's ills. It became clear to the Trelawney Maroons those previously amicable relations with the old guard of imperial agents and governors were unimportant to the new crop of officials. Under the old guard, the Maroon communities developed comfortably on the margins in between black and white societies. Trelawney Town was able to work out diplomatic relationships that provided them with a high level of autonomy with little sacrifice in return. By agreeing to hunt down other runaway slaves as well as to limit raids of plantations, the Trelawney Maroons carved out a largely autonomous existence on the island. Trelawney Town formed on the margins of Jamaican society, developing its own socio-cultural traditions apart from Britons, freed and enslaved blacks.

Jamaica's new batch of officials brought with them strong anti-French ideology, anxieties about a neighboring revolution, and racial and cultural conceptions of blacks and Maroons that deemed them as untrustworthy, violent men. Because of their Akan and Coromantee heritage, whites in Jamaica believed the Trelawney Maroons to be particularly violent and untrustworthy. Trelawney Town embraced these perceptions of their warrior culture.³³⁶ Cultural activities – such as burial practices, non-Christian religious beliefs and polygamy – reinforced British views of them as an uncivilized, brutish people. Dramatic change for the Trelawney Maroons came with their willingness to submerge themselves in a larger imperial conflict. The timing of the Second Maroon War – during the French and Haitian Revolutions – placed the imperial spotlight squarely

³³⁶ One example is the indiscriminate killing captives during the rebellion.

on the Trelawney Maroons, more than any other Maroon community in the British Atlantic.

By the spring of 1796, circumstances had changed in Trelawney Town. After their defeat in 1796, the Trelawney contingent "humbly offered ourselves to serve His Majesty as Soldiers in any of His Governments to defend and protect the same as dutyfull [sic] and loyal subjects."³³⁷ The Maroons relinquished their demands as well as their independence.³³⁸ Still, because of their cultural norms of risk-taking and defiance, as well as their long practice of negotiating with the British, the Maroons were able to affect their future once again, even in the face of disaster. The Second Maroon War would not be the last time the Trelawney Town Maroons tried to seize control of their own destiny.

The Trelawney Maroons were sent to Port Royal where, in April 1796, they were corralled on to the H.M.S. *Dover*.³³⁹ With the support of the Duke of Portland and Whitehall, Balcarres decided to send the Maroons off the island. Debate surfaced about whether to send the Maroons to Nova Scotia or Sierra Leone, a place one official remarked served not as "transportation much less a banishment to that dreary, barren and

³³⁷ P.R.O. CO 137/96, Second Maroon Petition.

³³⁸ The Trelawney Maroons took the oath of Loyalty and were then guaranteed a pardon for the rebellion. See Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, p. 240; and *Journal of the Assembly of Jamaica*, March 21, 1796.

³³⁹ Balcarres' and other white officials' ruthlessness reached new heights at the conclusion of the conflict. The Governor held "the Treaty signed by Major General Walpole on the one part, Montague James, the Chief of the Maroons, on the other part, and ratified by me absolutely as nothing." The Jamaican Assembly supported Balcarres' intentions, suggesting that "the extirpation of the Trelawney Maroons" commence. Even General Walpole, a man some historians suggest sympathetic to the Maroons, advised Balcarres to resettle the Trelawney Town contingent in the lowlands of the island, where they would have "access to spirits" which "will soon decrease their numbers, and destroy that hardy constitution." Ideas about the fate of the Maroons abounded with the goal of each being to remove the rebellious community – in some capacity – from the island. P.R.O. CO 137/96, Balcarres to Portland, 30 January 1796 and Campbell, p.237-239.

inhospitable spot, to which Death by the hands of the Executioner is Mercy."³⁴⁰ Soon, the Jamaican Assembly, Balcarres and the ship's captain agreed to send the Maroons to a more favorable destination, Halifax, Nova Scotia. This decision, however, was made without the approval of Whitehall, nor in consultation with the Maroons. Nevertheless, on May 1, 1796, an *Act of Deportation* passed the Assembly, removing any roadblock to transporting the Trelawney Town Maroons.

Faced with such ominous prospects, the Trelawney Maroons petitioned the island's agents. The Maroons knew of the possibility of removal, given the untrustworthiness of the governor, demanding the "Sincerity of their Repentance" be taken into account and to allow them to "prove themselves faithful subjects" in order to avoid removal from the island.³⁴¹ The Maroons' oath of allegiance to the crown illustrates perhaps their most profound transformation. In a distinct reversal, the Maroons went from being rebels against Jamaican officials and indeed the empire, to willing soldiers of the crown. One must consider, however, that the Maroons revolted against a hostile and inattentive island government, not the king himself. The Maroons never expressed discontent with the king or the empire.³⁴² Rather, their energies were focused on the island's officials whose intent to limit their freedom became clear.

³⁴⁰ As quoted in Campbell, *Maroons of Jamaica*. P. 241.

³⁴¹ P.R.O. CO 137/96, Petition to Balcarres.

³⁴² An interesting parallel to the Maroons' focus on local officials, as opposed to the King, can be found in the Mohegan Indians' petition to King George II in protest of Connecticut's colonial government. Connecticut appointed of an unsatisfactory man, Ben Uncas, as Sachem to their tribe, drawing outrage from the Mohegans. See, Mohegan Indians of Connecticut to King George II, 1738, *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society V*, in Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Major Problems in American Colonial History*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000. p. 375.

A "Wretched Country:" Nova Scotia and Beyond

Faced with a demanding new environment, the exiled Trelawney Maroons found Nova Scotia unsuitable for long-term residence. Several factors played into their dissatisfaction with the province: the brutally cold weather, poor farmland and Governor John Wentworth's insistence on converting the Maroons into acceptable British subjects. The Trelawney Maroons proved once more that they would not stand idly by while others made decisions about their future. The Maroons embarked on a legal campaign to be removed again, this time from Nova Scotia to *any* warmer region of the British empire. They continued a tradition begun in Jamaica, actively engaging British officials to redress their complaints while challenging – even while playing to – accepted racial and social constructions. By the 1790s, Nova Scotia had become an important military and commercial center in the empire, with refugees from the American Revolution streaming in. The Black Loyalists from the American Revolution had established a black presence in the province, yet it was the Jamaican Maroons who directly challenged the racial and cultural order of Nova Scotia. Exiled for their bold actions in Jamaica, the Maroons continued to test the boundaries of their place in British society by petitioning local officials, and later, the British Parliament, in order to have their demands met, while also rebuffing attempts by Britons to civilize and Christianize them.

The Maroons arrived in Nova Scotia in July 1796, greeted by a flotilla of small vessels with Prince Edward aboard the lead craft. Now “smartly dressed” guardians of the empire, the Maroons’ demonstrated resilience in a province with which they had little familiarity.³⁴³ The Jamaican planter William Dawes Quarrell accompanied the Maroons,

³⁴³ Robin W. Winks, *The Black in Canada: A History*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997. p. 81.

but, more importantly, he held an imperial bill of credit issued by Balcarres to pay for their initial supplies in the province. The *Halifax Weekly Chronicle* and the *Halifax Journal* noted their arrival and thus over 500 Maroons were off-loaded and introduced to summer in Halifax – which must have felt like winter in Jamaica.³⁴⁴

For a man who had only learned of the soon-to-arrive émigrés while they were already under sail, Governor Wentworth seemed an inviting host.³⁴⁵ The Maroons were given three thousand acres in Preston, a few miles from Halifax, on which to farm and construct a town after having lived for a short time in temporary wooden shelters near the Citadel.³⁴⁶ It soon became apparent, however, that the Maroons were a project to Wentworth: a small black community on which he could test his solution to the question of black assimilation into British society. Unlike Balcarres, who – surrounded by the revolutionary fervor of the Caribbean – decided the best solution to the ‘problem’ of the Trelawney Maroons was to remove them to a different region of the empire, Wentworth pushed for the community to integrate in Nova Scotian society. Perhaps drawing on past attempts by Nova Scotian authorities to assimilate Acadians, the governor offered a measured dose of British civility to the Maroons to implore these ‘wild savages’ to

³⁴⁴ *Halifax Weekly Chronicle*, 23 July 1796; and the *Halifax Journal*, 21 July 1796. Indeed, correspondence between British officials described the Maroons’ complaints about the cool summers – by Caribbean standards – in Nova Scotia. Some officials commented that Maroons were not happy unless the thermometer read at least 90 degrees.

³⁴⁵ Indeed, provincial officials did not know the Maroons had been deported to Nova Scotia until they were already en route. P.R.O. CO 217/67, Portland to Wentworth, 15 July 1796.

³⁴⁶ For more details, see Lennox O’Riley Picart, “The Trelawney Maroons and Sir John Wentworth: The Struggle to Maintain Their Culture, 1796-1800,” in *Collections of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society*, Vol 44, (1996). 165-188.

change their ways.³⁴⁷ Wentworth quickly appointed a court of law at Preston, consisting of three Maroons and one commissary, to create order in the new settlement.

Even in Nova Scotia, the Maroons found themselves immersed in anti-French attitudes. Now in a foreign land, the Maroons were not in a position to use anti-French sentiment to their advantage as they had in Jamaica. Rather, the Maroons set to their assigned tasks, immediately guarding and working at Citadel Hill (erected for this most recent war with France) and gaining the praise of His Royal Highness Prince Edward. Prince Edward reflected British racial attitudes, stating: "It is but justice to them to say, that they conduct themselves in the most orderly and obedient manner."³⁴⁸ Perhaps more importantly, he noted, "that whatever may have been their former errors, they now seem fully determined to merit His Majesty's forgiveness."³⁴⁹ The Prince reiterated his belief in the sincerity of the Maroons' allegiance. Edward's words also reassured Balcarres, who came under fire from various parts of the Royal government for his hastiness to deport the Maroons.³⁵⁰ Now, Balcarres turned his efforts back toward protecting his island from what he believed were newly impending French attacks.³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Rumors circulated about the Maroons, with many whispers describing them as wild and savage. Undoubtedly, these rumors emanated from Jamaica and other popular conceptions of Coromantee and Akan warriors spread by British racial ideology. Also, Governor Wentworth believed the most effective way to assimilate the Maroons was by dealing with them as a group, as opposed to dispersing them in small groups throughout the British empire. For more, see Picart, "The Trelawney Maroons and Sir John Wentworth: The Struggle to Maintain Their Culture, 1796-1800," 174.

³⁴⁸ P.R.O. CO 217/71, Prince Edward to Portland, 15 August 1796, as cited in Mavis Campbell, *Nova Scotia and the Fighting Maroons: A Documentary History*. Williamsburg, Va.: William and Mary College, 1990. Also, in "The Trelawney Maroons and Sir John Wentworth: The Struggle to Maintain Their Culture, 1796-1800," Picart suggest that the Maroons may not have been let off their transport had they not agreed to work at the Citadel, p. 172.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Balcarres spent much of 1796 and 1797 defending his decision to the Duke of Portland, stating that "The Humanity of the Measure, and not its Severity, was another cause...[because if] those people relanded, [they] must have remained in rigorous Imprisonment." Balcarres continued,

The Trelawney Maroons agreed to help build the citadel and they volunteered to fight alongside Nova Scotians after learning of a planned French attack on the province. Ironically, one observer commented that he was "impressed with the[ir] hatred to the French."³⁵² Promises that they would be paid equal to their white counterparts – nine pence per diem – may have also motivated the Maroons to stand guard.³⁵³ Yet, the Maroons' swapped identities and allegiances. Instead of playing into perceptions of them as a rebellious runaway slave population, the Maroons temporarily cooperated with the British by offering inexpensive labor. Their actions must be seen as a method of survival. In a foreign land, with nights growing increasingly cold, and with the threat of an invading force, the Maroons attempted to satisfy their hosts by helping them defend the port.

The Maroons soon became problematic for their hosts. Governor John Wentworth reported "their former habits" of lawlessness and indolence "led to severe punishments."³⁵⁴ Yet, the governor suspended any cruel punishments against the Maroons in light of cultural differences, preferring them "to be instructed in our religion, and to have their children taught to read and [write]."³⁵⁵ In response, the Maroons expressed their desire to comply and to learn, agreeing to have their children taught to

arguing that his actions focused on the "preservation of Jamaica." WO 1/92, Balcarres to Portland, 1 October, 1796.

³⁵¹ P.R.O. WO 1/92 Balcarres to Portland, 15 April 1796.

³⁵² P.R.O. CO 217/67: Digby Militia, Blacks in the Militia, as reprinted in Campbell, *Fighting Maroons*, p.28.

³⁵³ Picart, p. 172.

³⁵⁴ Wentworth spoke of the Maroons' lack of "obedience to the Laws" in Jamaica as illustrated by their rebellion, but also by the absence of an acceptable legal system in their former residence of Trelawney Town. He proposed the Maroons adhere to a court system similar to Nova Scotia's to ensure "the good that they might expect from adopting the same" methods as "whitemen." P.R.O. CO 217/76 Wentworth to Portland, 20 September 1796, as reprinted in Campbell, *Fighting Maroons*, p. 21-23.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

read and write – the mark of civilization to Britons. This satisfied Wentworth because he believed that the “poor, benighted ‘heathens’ were in a condition of massive cultural deprivation, which the gospel alone could remedy.”³⁵⁶ By agreeing to have their children schooled the Maroons’ deflected the governor’s watchful eye, drawing his attention away from their mocking of church. Moreover, the Maroons had learned how to use the British legal system to attain redress for their grievances. Having literate children meant the next generation of Maroons could petition officials on their own, without the aid of a white interpreter.

Ice inspired them more than Christian ideology, however, when the Maroons encountered one of the longest winters on record in Nova Scotia during their first year in the province.³⁵⁷ That winter, the Trelawney Maroons regained a sense of urgency to rescue themselves from conditions they claimed unsuitable to their constitutions. Despite the governor’s letters back to Whitehall reporting a well-adjusted Maroon community, the Jamaicans suffered in the cold weather.³⁵⁸ Although Balcarres and Wentworth had supplied the Maroons with warm wool clothing for use during the cold weather, the governor’s own words suggested otherwise: “The Maroons have passed through the longest and most rigorous winter...which they artfully express still more than they feel,

³⁵⁶ As quoted in Picart, “the Trelawney Maroons and Sir John Wentworth: The Struggle to Maintain Their Culture, 1796-1800.” p. 173.

³⁵⁷ P.R.O. CO 217/68, Wentworth to Portland, 21 April 1797.

³⁵⁸ See P.R.O. CO 217/68, letters from Wentworth to Portland dated 29 October and 21 December 1796, reprinted in Campbell, *Fighting Maroons*, p. 33-35. Scholars have typically emphasized Wentworth and others’ influence on the Maroons’ wanting to leave the province, refuting the role of the climate in their removal. In reading the documents closely, however, it is clear that the Maroons were truly miserable in the cold winters. When combined with their ability and intent to utilize British racial and cultural stereotypes to their advantage, the so-called “ice thesis” becomes more plausible. My conclusion does not suggest that the Maroons’ bodies could not deal with the climate change; rather, that they simply *did not want* to adapt to the cold environment.

with a view to secure more comforts and exemption from labor."³⁵⁹ Later, in May, the Maroons became irrational and unruly in the eyes of the governor. Wentworth, perhaps frustrated by Jamaica's insufficient funding of the Maroons' stay in Nova Scotia, disclosed that the Maroons "have not yet overcome the apprehensions caused by the extreme rigorous and unusually long winter."³⁶⁰ They regularly petitioned "to have the Poor distressed Maroons removed from this severe cold place to some warmer part of the Globe,"³⁶¹ which frustrated Wentworth in his attempts to 'civilize' them. These papers expressed the voice of the Maroon community, reflecting concerns over their ability to deal with "a Country so severely cold, and so different in every Production, from Our native Climate, that Our Existence, even should it be prolonged, must be attended with the utmost misery and Wretchedness."³⁶² The Maroons wondered how they would survive the icy climes. Illness spread, and several Maroons lost their toes to the cold.³⁶³

Adding to their miserable condition was the frontal assault on Maroons' culture and identity orchestrated by the governor. Wentworth compelled the Maroons to attend church services on a regular basis despite their blatant contempt for Christian meetings. Some fell asleep in church while others played games. Furthermore, Wentworth and the Maroons continually fought over the issue of monogamy. The Maroons had long

³⁵⁹ P.R.O. CO 217/68 Wentworth to Portland, 21 April, 1797. Also, A "Memorandum of the Sundry Articles required to be imported from England for the use of the Maroons" provides a record of supplies suitable for the climate. For example, "25 dozen worsted wool caps, 25 dozen wool mittens, 100 pair large duffil [sic] blankets, 150 blue duffil great Coats," and other warm pieces of clothing were ordered and delivered. See, "Provisions for Settlement," CO 217/67

³⁶⁰ Governor Wentworth noted several times over the course of 1796, 1797 and 1798 that Jamaica's funding of the Maroons proved insufficient. P.R.O. CO 217/68, Wentworth to Portland, 7 May 1797.

³⁶¹ P.R.O. CO 217/67, Maroon Petition to Portland, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 4 November 1797.

³⁶² P.R.O. CO 217/69, The humble Petition of the Unfortunate Maroons.

³⁶³ For more details, see Robin Winks, *The Blacks In Canada: A History*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997. P. 84-85.

practiced polygamy, but Wentworth objected, citing adherence to Christian values as the true path to assimilation and civility. The Maroons refused to change their ways, citing their own religious beliefs – and perhaps Wentworth’s hypocrisy in taking a Maroon mistress – over Christian doctrine, continuing the practice of polygamy and retaining other cultural practices seen as uncivilized by the governor.³⁶⁴

The harsh climate in Nova Scotia and confrontations with a relentless governor intensified Maroon encounters with callous, powerful whites. Alexander Howe took over supervision of Preston upon the departure of one Maroon superintendent. Howe proved cruel in his use of the Maroons as a virtual captive labor force, demanding they work for miniscule pay while laboring on mundane and difficult tasks, such as digging cellars and making bricks. Additionally, whenever the Maroons wished to venture beyond the Preston, they were required to ask Howe for a pass that granted them travel to Halifax.³⁶⁵ Given their background as free people in Jamaica, such strict regulations must have made the Preston settlement feel smaller than its three thousand acres. Once free people now found themselves under virtual house arrest.

Unsatisfied with these conditions, the Maroons took matters into their own hands. In the summer of 1797, they asked Governor Wentworth to inform Whitehall of their desire to be transported to a warmer climate in the service of His Majesty.³⁶⁶ They expressed displeasure more openly and assertively, demanding Governor Wentworth

³⁶⁴ Wentworth fathered a child with his mistress in 1803, yet that didn’t stop him from criticizing the Maroons’ religious beliefs, burial practices and other cultural practices. For more detailed information on this struggle between Wentworth and the Maroons over these issues, see Picart, “the Trelawney Maroons and Sir John Wentworth: The Struggle to Maintain Their Culture, 1796-1800.”

³⁶⁵ Winks, *The Blacks In Canada*. P. 85.

³⁶⁶ P.R.O. CO 217/68, Wentworth to Portland, 2 June 1797, reprinted in Campbell, *Fighting Maroons*, p. 38-40.

send a doctor to check on the group's health. After examining the Maroons, Doctor John Oxley reported them "as healthy as any Sett [sic] of people on earth."³⁶⁷ During the next four months, provincial officials in Nova Scotia observed the Maroons, wondered about other Africans' ability to withstand cold climates, and worried about the spread of sickness in the Maroon community.

The governor genuinely considered the Maroons' grievances. Governors the Maroons previously encountered in Jamaica also took their grievances seriously. After over fifty years of dealings with the British imperial government, the Maroons knew which channels to work.³⁶⁸ Wentworth was also influenced by criticism streaming in from London. Whitehall became concerned about the cost of settling the Maroons in Nova Scotia and openly questioned how Wentworth handled the financial demands of this small band of Jamaicans. Soon, imperial officials debated whether to remove the Maroons from Nova Scotia, compelled in part by a loud chorus of black voices who urged transporting them to Africa.

The Maroons did not wait for local officials to decide their fate, however. Ever since arriving in Nova Scotia, they had maintained contact with influential British officials. In correspondence with General Walpole, who remained in Jamaica, and in conversations with W.D. Quarrell, the Maroons repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction

³⁶⁷ P.R.O. CO 217/68, Dr. Oxley's Report on Maroon Health, 31 May 1797; in Campbell, *Fighting Maroons*, p. 40.

³⁶⁸ The Maroons quickly learned who mattered in British provincial governments, as illustrated by their actions in Jamaica where they worked up the political ladder until reaching the Governor and the island's Assembly. In Nova Scotia, the Maroons' relationship with Governor Wentworth (which included, for some fifty members of the community, living at his residence) aided their petition being sent to the British House of Commons.

with Nova Scotia.³⁶⁹ They sent a petition to Jamaican officials in which they claimed that their race prohibited their continued stay in the cold weather of Nova Scotia, asking to be "removed to some Warmer Climate, where we may be enabled by Our Industry."³⁷⁰ The Maroons wanted to resume their masculine duties "to maintain Our Wives and Children, and relieve them from those Sufferings to which in this Country we see no end."³⁷¹ Such claims of racial and cultural differences enabled the Maroons to regain some level of input in their future. Would these claims prove effective?

By June 1798, the Maroons had worn out their welcome in Nova Scotia by refusing to work until they were assured that transport to a warmer climate lay on the horizon. Locals became frustrated with their work stoppages, reporting that they had returned to their old ways of indolence, "Cockfighting and Gaming."³⁷² These work stoppages exacerbated officials who noted, "It is...to be regretted that they are so much encouraged in an adherence to their former savage idle customs, and repugnance to civilized [sic] labor."³⁷³ Furthermore, one suicide seemed to reveal to officials how supporters of the Maroons, as well as the Maroons themselves, manipulated incidents to advance their desire to leave the province: "Williams, a Maroon, quarreled with his wife

³⁶⁹ P.R.O. CO 217/68, Dr. Oxley's Report on Maroon Health, 31 May 1797 and Campbell, *Fighting Maroons*, p. 51-63.

³⁷⁰ P.R.O. CO 217/69, Maroon Address to WD Quarrell, 10 April 1797, *Ibid.* p.54. In this document, the Maroons argued that their "complexion" was unsuitable for the cold climate. Gender roles and identity become important points of contention between Wentworth and the Maroons. At this point, it is difficult to ascertain whether the Maroons found Wentworth's criticism on polygamy as an attack on their masculinity; or, whether they viewed monogamous men as feminine or less manly. What is clear is that the Maroons believed the climate in Nova Scotia, the poor farmland and the community's state of illness prevented traditional gender roles from being fulfilled.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² P.R.O. CO 217/69, Moody to Wentworth, 12 June 1798.

³⁷³ P.R.O. CO 217/69, Wentworth to Portland, 24 April 1798.

for a week and finally cut his own throat 'in a fit of passion.'"³⁷⁴ The Maroons' agents argued, "he did it as an act of refusal to live in Nova Scotia."³⁷⁵ The suicide also highlighted the increasing pressures within the Maroon community to conform to Christian ideals of civility.³⁷⁶ In considering Jamaican and Nova Scotian officials' observations of Maroon gender identity, it might seem odd that a Maroon man could slice his throat over a fight with his wife. However, the Maroons were used to gender roles of a more egalitarian nature, according to traditional Akan culture, which opposed the male dominated ideal held by Christians.³⁷⁷ Local officials were likely correct in their assumption that the man's act was a protest.

The Maroons then increased pressure on white officials by stating that they would restart their work only *if* they received equal pay to white people.³⁷⁸ Clearly troubled by these bold claims for parity, local officials wondered who put such ideas in the minds of the Maroons. Wentworth, among others, speculated about more insidious reasons behind some sympathetic Britons' support of the group, revealing suspicions between imperial rivals. One official accused a superintendent, Captain Orchterlony, of presenting Jamaica as some sort of "paradise," as opposed to Nova Scotia being "The Devil's Country, a Hell of a Country" where the inhabitants are "a set of Rogues, a pack of Rascals, the greatest Villains upon Earth."³⁷⁹ A deeper intra-imperial conflict between the provinces – and

³⁷⁴ P.R.O. CO 217/69, Document 57, Chamberland to Wentworth, 20 June 1798. Campbell, *Fighting Maroons*, p.75.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ The Maroons' unpredictable behavior embittered local officials, which was further enhanced by their numerous petitions and perceived disobedience.

³⁷⁷ For a more through discussion of Akan gender identity, see Gomez, p. 88-90. Approximately 151 Maroon men, 177 women, and 222 children lived in Nova Scotia at this time. See CO 217/74, "Receipt of Maroons by Sheriff, Halifax, Nova Scotia 7 August 1800."

³⁷⁸ P.R.O. CO 217/69, Document 53, Howe to Wentworth, 8 June 1798. Ibid. p.71-73.

³⁷⁹ P.R.O. CO 217/69, Document 57, Chamberland to Wentworth, 20 June 1798. Ibid. P. 76.

their officials – existed, and the Maroons had fanned these rivalries when they began to assert their egalitarian claims.³⁸⁰

By 1798, the Maroons were shaking up the socio-political order of the province, petitioning the Duke of Portland himself. Their claims reverberated deeply throughout the British Atlantic world. The Maroons' assertions caused officials like Wentworth, Chamberland, Dr. Oxley, and others to debate the merits of freely educating these alleged indolent people, of providing accommodations beyond the Jamaican assembly's willingness to pay, and of caring for a group who refused to work. For their part, the Maroons pushed the bounds of accepted racial and social hierarchies by demanding equal pay to whites in a province that, on the surface, seemed far removed from Britain's increasingly popular abolition movement.³⁸¹ The Maroons challenged Britons to consider the ways in which they dealt with free blacks. William Dawes, a Maroon superintendent, believed the most suitable way to integrate the Maroons into British society was to disperse them in the same manner the Acadians had been in 1755.³⁸² The Maroons, as the petitions demonstrate, preferred to remain together as a community – even if on the margins of empire.

In a letter from Governor Wentworth, the extent to which the Maroons caused friction in Nova Scotia became clear. Wentworth noted that the Maroons had been "wickedly taught, perpetually to complain," asserting that "the stoutest of [their]

³⁸⁰ The Maroons drew on an egalitarian tradition from their Akan backgrounds. See Gomez, p. 108-113.

³⁸¹ For a discussion on how judges exerted abolitionist pressures on Nova Scotian society, see Barry Cahill, "Slavery and the Judges of Loyalist Nova Scotia," in *University of New Brunswick Law Journal*. Vol. 43 (1994), p. 73-135.

³⁸² Dawes argued that widely dispersing the Maroons in small groups into the larger white community would reduce the risk of any further trouble from the group while also facilitating assimilation into British society.

Labourers in this province...will complain that the Weather is too Cold in Midsummer, when the Thermometer stands at 86 or 90."³⁸³ The Maroons wore on their hosts with their insistence that the climate was unsuitable for their habitation. In one of their last petitions, they continued to use the language of race to sell their case, stating that their deportation to Nova Scotia resulted, in part, from the exaggeration of their situation in Jamaica, which "vied with nature to blacken the Maroon beyond his native hue."³⁸⁴ In this case, their claims went before the House of Commons in the British Parliament. It worked. At the beginning of January, the Court of Sierra Leone Directors accepted the Maroons into their colony at the request of Parliament. After months of debate about where to resettle them – whether on a coastal island or some other location in the new colony – the directors determined it was time for the Maroons to return to Africa, the land of their ancestors.³⁸⁵

With Sierra Leone in reach, the Maroons continued to voice their opinion as to how they should be used in the new colony. The Directors of Sierra Leone proposed, upon much consideration and input from Governor Wentworth, Lord Portland, and others to supply the Maroons with farming implements and to give them land. Wentworth, however, insidiously proposed sending the Maroons to Georgia to incite rebellion in the United States. The Maroons avoided this fate, instead agreeing to farm and serve as a police force in Sierra Leone.³⁸⁶ In making this decision, the Maroons opted to return to

³⁸³ P.R.O. CO 217/70, Wentworth to Portland, 30 May 1799.

³⁸⁴ P.R.O. CO 217/70, Document 64, Maroon Petition to the House of Commons of Great Britain. Reprinted in Campbell, p. 91.

³⁸⁵ P.R.O. CO 217/70, Documents 66-80.

³⁸⁶ The Maroons acted to suppress the rebellion of previously settled Black Loyalists in Sierra Leone, partly because it appeared to them that refusal to do so would threaten their removal from Nova Scotia. Also, it should be noted, policing other persons of African descent was a role the Maroons had previously accepted – and, according to British officials, successfully conducted –

their place in between black and white society, once again policing other blacks in the British Atlantic world.

The nature of life on the margins of empire proved elusive for many involved, including white officials. After learning of the delay of the transport *Asia* in picking up the Maroons to bring them to Sierra Leone, Wentworth lamented to his friend Richard Molesworth, Esq. that these “deluded and deceived people” were forced to leave Nova Scotia, in part because they had “reduced the Medical department to a measure inadequate” for a province of Great Britain, but also because they had found the region too difficult in which to live.³⁸⁷ On one level Wentworth had failed in not managing the situation well, alluding to his difficulties in straightening out funding and other political issues with Jamaica and London. On another level, Wentworth was bothered by the Maroons’ “willingness to embark” to Sierra Leone “at a moment’s notice,” feeling that he had completed his duty in providing them with work, food and shelter.³⁸⁸ Still, Wentworth understood he had failed in fashioning the Maroons into his ideal of civility. Wishing them well, Wentworth reinforced the complexities characterizing governance in an ever-growing British Atlantic empire.

Exiled to Africa

Nearly 1,000 Black Loyalists had set sail for Sierra Leone from Nova Scotia eight years earlier in January 1792. Over 3,000 blacks who fought for Great Britain during the

back in Jamaica. P.R.O. CO 217/70, Wentworth to Portland, 30 May 1799; Campbell, *Back to Africa*, p. iv-x11.

³⁸⁷ Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, RG 1 vol. 52 pp. 377-9. Wentworth to Molesworth, 15 January 1800.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

American Revolution led a wave of 30,000 immigrant loyalists to the maritime province after 1783.³⁸⁹ Unable to acclimate to Nova Scotia, and aggravated by white Nova Scotian's unwillingness to pay them a fair wage for work, a third of the Black Loyalists decided to resettle in the newly created British colony for free blacks in West Africa. Lured in part by a promise of free land (twenty for acres per man, ten for his wife, and five for each child), no rent, and a favorable government, the "refugee Negroes" thought optimistically of their chances for a better life in Africa.³⁹⁰ William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, and William Fothergill co-founded the colony and were charged with forming the government that promised "civil, military, personal, and commercial rights and duties of Blacks and Whites, shall be the same."³⁹¹

The Black Loyalists arrived in the tropical climate of Sierra Leone in 1792 during the rainy season – a difficult time of year lasting from May to December – which amplified the challenges of planting a new colony. Greeted by disease, overpriced goods, a restrictive white controlled government, and low pay, the Black Loyalists struggled to produce enough food to survive. The settlers helped establish the port of Freetown, a village of 300 houses and, more importantly, three wharfs. Of the 1200 inhabitants of Freetown, only thirty were Europeans, while approximately 300 native Africans served as day laborers.³⁹² Their difficulties were further compounded by the French sacking of the

³⁸⁹ See, Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves, and the American Revolution*. New York: Ecco, 2006; and Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.

³⁹⁰ "Advertisement for the settlement of black Nova Scotians in Sierra Leone," 2 August 1791, Commissioner of Public Records, RG 1 vol. 419 no. 1, Nova Scotia National Archives and Records Management.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² 15 shopkeepers, 25 fishermen, 15 shipmasters, 15 seamen, 4 schoolmasters, and approximately 600 "petty farmers" were among the residents of Freetown in 1794. See, "The Britannic

colony, losing £52,000 sterling in what turned out to be the first of many attacks on the colony by these longtime rivals.

Conditions for the Black Loyalists worsened quickly in the first year of settlement. A joint venture with the Foulains, a group of native African peoples who lived inland from Freetown, failed to establish a viable trading and commercial outpost. These multiple setbacks frustrated the Loyalists.³⁹³ Two black delegates were sent to England in 1793 to negotiate for better conditions in the colony, but a revolt occurred almost immediately when the delegates returned empty-handed, increasing tension between whites and blacks that would result in numerous uprisings during the next seven years.³⁹⁴ By 1803/04, the British government began to consider disbanding the colony because it seemed much more trouble than it was worth; they eventually realized, however, that the Black Loyalists and Jamaican Maroons “could not, in good faith be entirely abandoned.”³⁹⁵

On 11 September 1800, driven by westerlies in the transport *Asia*, 551 Trelawney Maroons settled in for a long journey to Africa’s western coast in Sierra Leone. Twenty-five Maroons died, one of whom committed suicide, on the *Asia*. Just five weeks from their port of origin, Halifax, and in the midst of their second removal in four years, onboard provisions began to dwindle. The Maroons’ overseer, Captain George Ross, noted that “the poor unfortunate Maroons” were rather quiet for being hungry, yet “if you [the Maroons] did complain, it plainly appears you complained *not* [sic] without

Magazine; or entertaining repository of heroic adventures.” Vol. 12. London: Champante & Whitrow, 1794-1807. p.63 (vol. 12).

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ “Memoirs of the Life of Boston King,” in *The Methodist Magazine*, (April 1798). p. 264.

³⁹⁵ “The Britannic Magazine,” p. 65.

cause.”³⁹⁶ The hunger signaled change for the Maroons. Nearing Africa, the continent represented the conclusion to their four-year journey from one of the most feared rebel groups in the British empire to loyal servants of the crown.

Less than a month later, the Trelawney Maroons arrived in Sierra Leone, poised to assume their new duties. Ross noted that “Montague,” an older and respected leader of the Maroons, informed the colony’s Governor Ludlam “that they had come here not for sunny” weather “but for good – they like King George and the white Man well.”³⁹⁷ Indeed, the Maroons came to Africa to police the volatile and rowdy population of Black Loyalists and England’s poor blacks who were resettled in the new colony. Thus, Montague James exclaimed to the Governor, “if them settler don’t like King George nor this Government,” then “only let Maroon see them.”³⁹⁸ And with that brief exchange, the Jamaican Maroons were offloaded from the *Asia* in small groups of 30, 60 or 70 and dispatched to Thompson Bay, the Lots of Cowper, and Thornton Hill to quash the rebellious black “Rascals.”³⁹⁹

At 3pm, on 1 October 1800, just a day after their arrival in Africa, some seventy Maroons were organized into parties to attack key strongholds of the colony’s uprising. On their way, the Maroons quickly proved their worth in a “scuffle with a party of

³⁹⁶ Indeed, twenty-five Maroons died on board, while one committed suicide. As quoted in Mavis Campbell, *Back to Africa: George Ross and the Maroons, from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1993. Page 8.

³⁹⁷ Such ceremonial exchanges resulted from the suggestion by British officials that all Maroons be given papers that set forth the exact conditions of their resettlement in Sierra Leone. According to John Gray, an official familiar with the uprisings in Sierra Leone, Black Loyalists revolted because they claimed some conditions of their own resettlement were not honored by British officials. See, Wink, p. 93-94.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid. Page 16.

Rascals,” killing two and taking two prisoners.⁴⁰⁰ The resettled Black Loyalists rebelled against Thomas Clarkson’s Sierra Leone Company in 1800 when promised lands failed to materialize. By 2 October, as many as 150 Maroons participated in an attack on the rebel held Buckle’s Bridge that yielded 30 captives. Most of the African-Americans were saved by a raging tornado that crashed down on the scene. Impressed by their effectiveness against the Black Loyalists, colonial officials “praised the Maroons” after the raid on the rebel stronghold “for a set of the finest Fellows and the best Bushmen ever was.”⁴⁰¹ The Maroons had arrived with a flourish making their presence known in this rugged territory inhabited by “Allegators” in the rivers and “on the land...Snakes.”⁴⁰² Indeed, the Maroons were so motivated to show their allegiance that they mistakenly shot two native Africans who worked for the governor, believing they were “game,” like those “Rascal” African-Americans.⁴⁰³

By November of 1800, the Maroons seemed to be settling in to their new life in Africa. A thousand acres had been granted to them near Granville Town, all the while they continued to impress British officials with their willingness to support the crown against the rebels. Many of the Trelawney Maroons opted to farm on lands provided by the colonial government. Still, life in Africa was difficult. Some Maroons died in the fighting with the Black Loyalists, some perished of disease, while others found white

⁴⁰⁰ As reprinted in Campbell, *Back to Africa*, a published edition of Captain George Ross’ diary. P. 17. Also, for more on the rebellion, see Walker, *The Black Loyalists*, p. 218-235.

⁴⁰¹ Thomas Clarkson to John Clarkson, 28 August 1791, Clarkson Papers. See Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, p. 65.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Campbell, *Back to Africa*, p. 18.

merchants and officials less than honest in their dealings.⁴⁰⁴ The challenges of maintaining freedom on the margins of empire in Africa were remarkably similar as those in Jamaica and Nova Scotia. The Maroons encountered inconsistent government policy, and unfriendly and untrustworthy white and black neighbors – all while maintaining their role as enforcers amongst the black population. In Africa, as in the wider Atlantic, the Maroons existed in between white and black societies, not fully trusted by either racial group.

Britons were frustrated by the Maroons' inability to act as a beacon to the "Rascals" of the new colony. Back in Nova Scotia, Governor Wentworth wrote a friend, revealing that he hoped the Maroons would serve as the "instruments conveying the light and knowledge they have acquired into the perilous Region they are going."⁴⁰⁵ Once in the rough lands of West Africa, it became clear that the Maroons would have little opportunity to convey the Christian knowledge Nova Scotian officials believed they had gained. Instead, the Maroons taught a different kind of lesson, one that instructed the local black population about the tenuous nature of freedom on the margins of the Atlantic world. Even free black communities had to work within parameters outside of their control. British officials considered blacks – especially those from America – unruly, uncivilized, and difficult to control. For white authorities it seemed that it was only a matter of time until they became violent. The Maroons offered a way to control the Black Loyalists and future violence authorities thought likely to occur.

⁴⁰⁴ Ross' journal makes note of merchants who overcharged the Maroons for goods. The Governor even decided to charge the Maroons 80 pounds for a ton of rice for which he usually charged white colonists 64 pounds.

⁴⁰⁵ Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, RG 1 vol. 52 pp. 377-9. Wentworth to Molesworth, 15 January 1800.

Once in Sierra Leone, the Maroons assumed their duties – duties they considered different from those envisioned by white British officials. The Chairman of the Sierra Leone Company, Henry Thornton, agreed to incorporate the Maroons into the colony because they could “civilize Africa and...lessen the evils of the slave trade.”⁴⁰⁶ However, the Maroons were in the colony for their own purposes, to retain their close-knit community – and its socio-political space in the empire – that had formed in Jamaica during the eighteenth-century. To the Maroons’ advantage, Sierra Leone existed on the physical margins of the British empire, providing the Maroons with more room in which to maneuver.

The Maroons seized the moment to regain their place between black and white societies in two manners. First, the Maroons immediately began to hunt down fugitives from the Sierra Leone Company authorities, as well as rebellious and rowdy blacks. Within these activities, the Maroons defined themselves against other diasporic Africans – the Black Loyalists – while also informing local native Africans of their ethnic and social differences. Indeed, in referring to other blacks in the colony as “Rascals” and “game,” the Maroons created a racial other that was rooted in traditional African concepts of ethnic difference. Second, their policing duties also separated them from other blacks in white’s minds, perhaps deeming them more trustworthy than the rebellious Black Loyalists. Yet, their encounters with unfair labor practices and price gouging demonstrated that they were in a situation similar to that in Nova Scotia. This time, however, they managed to carve out economic niches. Hand crafts and other small trades were under the control of the Maroons, providing them with a distinct advantage over

⁴⁰⁶ As quoted in Picart, p.180.

native Africans who filled the hard labor jobs for less money than the Maroons demanded.⁴⁰⁷

Yet, the Maroons' faced unexpected challenges in Sierra Leone. Previously underpaid native Africans began to compete with the Maroons for trade jobs, forcing many Maroons out-of-business.⁴⁰⁸ Furthermore, the Maroons' cohesion as a single social unit began to loosen as more and more Maroons converted to Christianity, motivating some to drop other cultural traditions, such as polygamy.⁴⁰⁹ Some thirty-plus years after their arrival in Sierra Leone -- with the hope and promise it represented -- the Maroons found another threat to their socio-cultural autonomy. As social pressures mounted, individuals turned away from their heritage, abandoning traditional links to their Jamaican identity. Others resisted, turning once again to legal redress in petitioning the crown in 1836. In a move designed to save their community and racial and cultural heritage, the Maroons requested a third removal, this time back to Jamaica. Britain granted the Maroons request, yet the onus for financing the voyage fell onto the Maroons' own shoulders. Meanwhile, in light of the recent emancipation of slaves, Jamaican planters desperately needed workers and, learning of the island's needs, the Maroons determined it was time to leave Africa. By 1841, 90% of the remaining Maroons -- some 591 -- returned to Jamaica.⁴¹⁰ The Maroons saw opportunity. Many had not been to Jamaica in forty years; but for others, it was their first time in the Caribbean. For all, returning to Jamaica represented a chance to revive Trelawney Maroon culture.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 181.

⁴⁰⁸ Native Africans took on apprenticeships in the 1820s and 1830s, learning small trades that the Maroons had long dominated. See Picart, p. 181-182.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid. p.182.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid. p.182.

The Palestinian exile Edward Said contends that “Exile is predicated on the existence of, love for, and a real bond with one’s native place...the universal truth of exile is not that one has lost that love or home, but that inherent in each is an unexpected, unwelcome loss.”⁴¹¹ The Maroons grasped this universal truth of exile. Upon landing in Sierra Leone, the Trelawney Maroons kept some of their cultural traditions and they fully intended to begin afresh in this new African colony. Yet, as they disembarked from H.M.S. *Asia*, it became clear to the Trelawney Maroons that they were no longer that autonomous nation who had once lived in the Cockpit Country of Jamaica. Rather, these Maroons had been transformed into servants of His Majesty's newest African colony, divided and sent to hot spots around the territory. The Trelawney Maroons faced the grim truth in Jamaica that preserving their distinct ethnic and racial identities within the empire proved far more difficult after successive removals.

Too much had changed, and the Trelawney Maroons had positioned themselves on the wrong side of the Atlantic World's power structure. Dropped off in Sierra Leone on the outskirts of Great Britain's newest, most “barren” colony, the Maroons had relinquished many of their cultural traditions by their third decade in Africa. Upon returning to Jamaica, the Maroons were no longer the fierce warriors of the Second Maroon War. Instead, they were laborers who operated within the black community, within Jamaica’s sugar economy. Their travels in the British empire and their experiences at sea in the black Atlantic diaspora, robbed them of their distinct place in

⁴¹¹ Edward W. Said. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf, 1993.

between black and white culture. Jamaica was no longer the home the Maroons fondly remembered as they froze in Nova Scotia and learned trades in Africa.

Anthropologists and other scholars have painted a portrait of the Maroons as a proud people who warmly recall their victories against the then most powerful empire on earth. Even though the Trelawney Maroons eventually were absorbed into the fabric of the British empire, their legacy persists in twenty-first century Jamaica where Maroons proudly retain an oral history of the 1795 rebellion. Furthermore, scholars must also see that the Maroons offer a glimpse into the realities of marginalized people in the Atlantic World. Although some slaves, free blacks, and Indians effectively negotiated identities that enabled them to participate on a significant level in the Anglo-American Atlantic, most marginalized peoples did not. Regardless, this would not prevent future generations from reconnecting with their ancestors' achievements.

Most marginalized peoples remained on the periphery and in the shadows of empire. Even free communities, such as the Trelawney Maroons, negotiated identities according to available options that were always limited by forces beyond their control. Sometimes they seized inter- and intra-imperial conflicts to advance their own goals, at other times they relied on their ability to convince compassionate individuals of their plight. Regardless, direct control over their fate remained elusive as they attempted to move between two worlds.

The Maroons' story of removal has implications for modern exiles and others forcibly dispersed from their homes. As contemporary novels, memoirs and essays on exile suggest, the removed person or group often experiences an endless quest to return home. Writing from current exiles reflects on how the idea of home – and a homeland –

enables refugees to cope with the condition in which they find themselves.⁴¹² As one modern exile writes, “the fate of the wanderer” becomes that of a person “who can never shake off his sense of alienation from his new – that is, acquired – home.”⁴¹³ The Maroons experienced this same fate, always seeking a new home in which they could feel that they belonged. Perhaps it is the idea of a homeland that the Maroons carried with them that reveals the most. Throughout their forced migrations, the Maroons often referred to themselves as West Indians and to Jamaica as their home, a place where health and community flourished.

Yet, when they finally returned to the island – some forty years later – Caribbean society had changed. Great Britain’s Abolition of Slavery Act passed in 1833, launching a plan of gradual emancipation through an apprenticeship system until full emancipation occurred in 1838. The act spawned a worker shortage on the island’s vast plantations. Furthermore, much of the tillable land in the Cockpit Country had been taken over. Balcarres and other authorities who once feared the Trelawney Maroons because of their Akan and Coromantee heritage no longer resided on the island. And, finally, the Haitian Revolution was long over, further alleviating anxieties of a French led black revolt against white Britons. With no land, the Trelawney Maroons returned to the larger group of Maroons who had once refused to aid them in their war with Great Britain. The idea of home for the exile is one that they can never return to, even if they find themselves

⁴¹² A few examples are: Clive Doucet, *Notes from Exile: On Being Acadian*. Ottawa: Mcllelland and Stewart, 1999 and Edward W. Said’s work that examines, in part, *The Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 200.

⁴¹³ Edward W. Said, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966.

back in the land of their ancestors. The Trelawney Maroons experienced this loss of home, confronting a Jamaica that, like themselves, had changed irrevocably since the eighteenth-century.

PART II: THE AMERICAN EVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

Removal developed into an effective tool of social control for local British officials throughout the eighteenth century. As the American Revolution neared in the 1770s, one key event would spark another transformation in the policy of removal throughout the British Atlantic world. The Somerset case of 1772 effectively freed all slaves living within England proper. London, Bristol, and other urban centers soon found themselves with an increase in urban poor. Tens of thousands of white poor and convicted criminals had already been transported to the American colonies such as Georgia and Virginia earlier in the century; now, Britain's political and business leaders turned to a similar solution to deal with newly free blacks.

Schemes to transport England's free blacks to Africa quickly emerged, but as quickly ran into obstacles. To begin with, free blacks had not committed crimes. Considering the financial costs involved, the British government proved sluggish in lending support to the various plans. News of the Somerset case reached American slaves within a year and almost as quickly, metropolitan supporters of the transportation schemes to colonize Africa searched throughout the Atlantic empire for support, including in America. Fearing large-scale desertions by their slaves, and with a rapidly increasing free black population, Americans readily adopted the idea of African colonization. Pioneered by prominent men such as Thomas Jefferson and William Thornton, colonization also found early favor amongst free blacks. Indeed, the idea of

colonization proved seductive for a downtrodden people of color who realized the beneficiaries of the American Revolution would not include them.

Americans adopted the concept of removal based on conversations with British supporters of colonization, transforming it into an explicitly racialized policy. Although Britons used removal to deal with problematic racial and ethnic groups, Americans took the concept of removal one step further, transforming it into colonization to rid the nation of non-whites and especially free blacks. Unlike the British use of removal, and unlike Indian Removal, which transplanted Native Americans within the territories of the United States, colonization sought the deportation of blacks *beyond* the boundaries of the new nation. Many white Americans viewed Native Americans as being able to assimilate into American society; most whites were not convinced of the same for blacks. Britons typically removed groups within the realm, affecting a social reordering of its colonies, but in the hands of white Americans, supporters of this expanded form of removal, colonization, dismissed the idea of resettling free blacks within the territories of the United States. Who, they asked, would want to live in a state or territory next to an all-black state or territory? With an eye toward future continental expansion, colonization focused outside the boundaries of the United States.

At no time did white Americans suggest colonization for racial groups other than blacks. Recent studies have chronicled the rise of a white republic in nineteenth-century America by focusing on the working class; yet, the construction of such a republic began earlier in the late eighteenth century, and at a much higher level in society.⁴¹⁴ Mathew

⁴¹⁴ These studies examine how working-class whites defined their place in American society against blacks, or as not slaves, in an effort to become enfranchised. Some recent work examining the conceptualization and construction of whiteness includes, Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century*

Frye Jacobson correctly asserts that the concept of whiteness – the organic manner in which whites defined themselves and what it meant to not be black – in America was rooted in the nation’s founding, embodied by the Naturalization Act of 1790 that allotted citizenship to “all free white persons” who had lived in the United States for one year.⁴¹⁵ The focus on class and immigration by scholars of whiteness, however, overlooks the role of removal and colonization in the construction of a white republic.

Moreover, colonization would simultaneously remake the African diaspora, rerouting dispersed persons of African descent around white nations. In elite whites’ minds increasing numbers of free blacks in England and the United States demonstrated the need for a new conception of the Atlantic world, one where whites would not face competition for jobs from free blacks.⁴¹⁶ This was an Atlantic world where being white meant largely unrestricted movement across national borders, immigration, and access to citizenship and protection from forced migration. Blacks experienced the opposite: mass dispersion that necessitated the idealization of a symbolic home, facilitating a process of changing identities based on race.

As much as removal created diasporas in the British Atlantic empire, the efforts of elite whites in the Atlantic world to create colonies on which to remove free blacks reflected their intent to build a United States where only enslaved blacks would be allowed to remain. Elite whites like Thomas Jefferson, Henry Clay, and others

America. New York: Verso, 1990; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. New York: Verso, 1991; and Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

⁴¹⁵ Mathew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998. p. 22.

⁴¹⁶ This debate served as a precursor to future debates about the expansion of slavery in the new territories of the United States in the 1850s. See, Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

understood that colonization, if successfully carried out, would facilitate the emergence of a white American republic void of black participation and competition for working-class immigrants. These elite men intended for colonization to remake and reshape an African diaspora originally created by their ancestors, the architects of the Atlantic slave trade.

-- CHAPTER FOUR --

“JUSTICE...ON ONE SCALE, AND SELF-PRESERVATION ON THE OTHER:”
ATLANTIC CONVERSATIONS ON COLONIZATION, 1769-1826

In his widely read *Notes on the State of Virginia*, published in 1785, Thomas Jefferson proposed a solution to what he foresaw as the coming problem of emancipation. Jefferson turned to history for guidance. “Among the Romans,” he wrote, “emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master.”⁴¹⁷ Jefferson continued, “But with us a second [effort] is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture.”⁴¹⁸ Historians often point to these words as Jefferson’s only – or, at least, most important – thought on the topic of removal and colonization of African-Americans. Jefferson himself, replying to James Heaton’s request for more information on the matter of emancipation and colonization just months before his death in 1826, seemed to concur. With his trademark humility, and an ever-present playful arrogance, Jefferson responded, “my sentiments have been 40 years before the public. Had I repeated them 40 times, they would only have become the more stale and thread-bare.”⁴¹⁹ Jefferson was referring to

⁴¹⁷ Thomas Jefferson. *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martins Press, 2002. p.181. As will be discussed later in this chapter, issues surround the publication date of the text, but for the sake of clarity, I will refer to this edition of the text unless otherwise noted.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ *Thomas Jefferson’s Letter of 20 May 1826 to James Heaton on the Abolition of Slavery*, ed. Walter Muir Whitehall. Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Gardner Library, 1967. p. 11-12.

his well-known statements in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, but in fact the issue appears many times in his other writings.

Many scholars have examined Jefferson's thinking on race, Native Americans and Indian removal, but few have examined in detail one key question: to what extent did Jefferson influence future efforts regarding African colonization in the United States and the Atlantic world?⁴²⁰ Jefferson has been erroneously credited with originating the colonization movement in America.⁴²¹ Jefferson, however, was not even among the first in the Atlantic world to recommend removal of the free black population from contact with whites.

Jefferson's thinking on the issue was greatly influenced by other humanitarian, and highly racialized, efforts throughout the British Atlantic world in the eighteenth-century. The writings of white West Indians, such as William Thornton, the British abolitionist Granville Sharp, Rhode Island reverend Samuel Hopkins, and British naturalist Henry Smeathman, among others, persuaded prominent Britons and American colonists to support the idea of colonization. For these men, colonization offered a variety of solutions to particular problems: restitution and a fresh start for the enslaved,

⁴²⁰ For example, Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1999 and Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*. New York: Viking, 2001.

⁴²¹ See P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. New York: Octagon Books, 1980 and Richard West, *Back to Africa: A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970. Furthermore, most 19th-century historians who chronicled the colonization movement trace the heritage of the American Colonization Society back to Jefferson and his contemporaries. Few, however, do little more than mention the simultaneous development of the colonization movement in Great Britain *and* the American colonies. Douglas R. Egerton, one of a more recent group of scholars, overlooks the deeper roots of the American Colonization Society. The most widely read and accepted literature on the topic focuses almost exclusively on Charles Mercer, Reverend Finley and the debate over whom founded the A.C.S. rather than looking for any ties to colonization plans of the 18th century. See, Egerton, "Its Origin Is Not A Little Curious: A New Look At The American Colonization Society," in *The Journal of the Early Republic*. Vol. 5, No. 4 (Winter 1985), 463-480.

soothing the guilt and Christian consciousness of the enslavers, or other whites. Initially, Thomas Jefferson supported colonization to save whites from God's retribution and slaves' retaliation. Over the years, his views evolved from visualizing colonization as a way to elude race wars, to a vehicle for the betterment of Africans, and as a method to expand American cultural values. Yet, even though Jefferson was far from the first to articulate these ideas, his adoption of, and conviction in, colonization proved pivotal to the development of the movement in the United States.

The men involved in discussions of African colonization represent a truly Atlantic circulation of ideas in virtually every sense of the term. These men originated from around the Atlantic, from Europe to the Americas, with most living in various colonies or cities on both sides of the ocean. Adding to this Atlantic identity is their participation in a trans-oceanic discussion about emancipation and removal. Suggestions for removal and colonization — from location, to the necessity of it, to its moral purpose — emanated from the West Indies, France, Rhode Island, Boston, London, Bristol, Virginia, West Africa and a plethora of other places throughout the Atlantic. Finally, what makes removal and colonization such an Atlantic phenomenon is the difficulty in ascertaining from where the idea originated. Can the American colonies lay sole claim to the idea? What about historians and Londoners such as Edward Long? Was Anthony Benezet the first to invoke colonization as a solution to emancipation? The answer is not simple because the “idea” grew from a long precedent — set by numerous examples — of the transportation and removal of unwanted peoples in the British Atlantic empire.

Jefferson's colonization plan enabled Americans — and Britons — to imagine their societies free of unwanted manumitted blacks. Legal distinctions between races surfaced

with increasing regularity during the eighteenth century; but it was the growth of the free black population around the Atlantic world, and the United States in particular, beginning in the 1770s that most worried whites.⁴²² Removing these free blacks from the United States or England offered a potentially effective tool, according to Anglo-American authorities and elites, to make their ideas real. Support for colonization illustrated the extent to which founding citizens of the United States believed in the need to separate the races physically, as well as psychologically, into distinct nations built on similar values, but divided by an ocean.

Jefferson and other supporters of colonization envisioned a vastly different Africa, one inhabited by Christian African-Americans and newly converted natives rather than “heathens.” The opportunity to enlighten and civilize Africa through black missionaries, commerce, free labor and, most importantly, the spread of Christianity over pagan and Muslim populations propelled the efforts of a few visionary men to form the American Colonization Society (and similar state-level organizations throughout the United States) in 1816. Yet, lurking behind the public persona of colonization remained a very Jeffersonian ideal: spreading American values – trade, commerce, Christianity, and democracy. This mix of racism and imperial mission transformed the practices that had comprised British removal policy into something new and uniquely American. Although Americans kept the goal of social control and reorganization, under Jefferson’s intellectual leadership removal became colonization: a tool that promised the growth of a

⁴²² For a more thorough discussion of how laws codified separate racial identity in the eighteenth century, see Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*. New York: Verso, 1994.

white republican empire on the western side of the Atlantic, with a black colonial extension on the other side.⁴²³

Discussions about the creation of colonies for freed slaves surfaced throughout state and colonial legislatures, within federal government offices, in the popular press and in literature of the early republic. In 1816, the American Colonization Society embarked on a seemingly voluntary mission to settle Liberia, but many critics of the plan argued that it was a thinly veiled attempt by whites to remove the volatile black population out of the United States. Indeed, members of Philadelphia's free black community claimed that colonization would result in horrors similar to those of the middle passage, with "parents...torn from their children – husbands from their wives – brothers from brothers."⁴²⁴ Colonization would, if successful, satisfy Jefferson's calls to disperse the black population to foreign parts, and enable the dominant white culture in America to address fears of insurrection. Moreover, some colonization schemes incorporated Jefferson's vision of a continental wide American dominion.

⁴²³ Jefferson's racial ideology is as complex and seemingly contradictory as his views on many other issues. Since the intent of this chapter is to focus on Jefferson's role in the Atlantic world's colonization movement, it is more important to focus on his discussion of race and slavery in the context of emancipation and colonization. What may seem as contradictory views presented by Jefferson at various times, instead reflect his nuanced racial perspectives: because one sees slavery as immoral does not necessitate the consideration of blacks as equals. Moreover, it is important to remember that Jefferson always wrote for his intended audience, whether individuals or, as can be seen with *Notes on the State of Virginia*, entire nations. There are several monographs about Jefferson that do a fine job of discussing his racial views in greater detail, see: Roger Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow: The Founding Fathers and the Dilemma of Black Patriotism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001; John Chester Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery*. London: The Free Press, 1977; Peter S. Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000 (especially Chapter 5); Joseph J. Ellis, *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997; and Gary Wills, "Negro President:" *Jefferson and the Slave Power*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003.

⁴²⁴ "Address to the free people of colour," in *Minutes of Special Meeting of the Fifteenth American Convention*, p.i-ii. For more, see Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. p.196-200.

By answering several key questions – how extensively Jefferson thought and wrote about removal, how much influence the practice of removal by British officials had on his thinking, who supported his calls for African-American colonization, how his ideas regarding African colonization changed from the American Revolution to his death, and to what extent his writing on the topic set the socio-political parameters of the discussion concerning removal and colonization for future generations – it becomes apparent that Jefferson’s role in the American colonization movement marks a pivotal moment in U.S. history. Drawing from ideas originating in the British Atlantic world, Jefferson set the tone for the debate over emancipation. From the late 1760s until his death in 1826, Jefferson served as the intellectual guru of American colonization. Most colonizationists approached Jefferson or at least cited his support of colonization as a way to legitimate the movement. Even after gaining federal funding and critical public support in 1816, the American Colonization Society continued to refer to Jefferson’s writings on the topic in order to strengthen their cause.⁴²⁵

One man’s voice rang out loudly during the early stages of the American colonization movement, offering guidance for a diverse cross-section of the social and political spectrum. As one contemporary of the movement noted, “It is curious to see how an idea thrown out by a great mind [Jefferson’s], goes on revolving in the world, setting other minds to work and from the contact receiving new directions and impulses, until it expands into a scheme of policy deeply affecting the fate not merely of

⁴²⁵ For more on colonization, see P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. New York: Octagon Books, 1980; Richard West, *Back to Africa: A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970; Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Institution: A History of the American Colonization Society*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005; and Claude Andrew Clegg, *The Price of Liberty: African-Americans and the Making of Liberia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

individuals but of continents and races of men.”⁴²⁶ Indeed, Jefferson’s plan brought together slaveholders, free African-Americans, Britons, West Indians, Evangelicals, and Ladies’ Groups in an effort to accomplish a singular goal – colonization – despite the often radically different agendas of each group.

American Slaveholders, British Philanthropists

Assessing Thomas Jefferson’s role in the growth and expansion of the colonization movement begins by answering another, more complex question: where did Jefferson get his idea for the removal and colonization of free blacks? Most scholars suggest that Jefferson first argued for colonization in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. However, it is clear that Jefferson first conceived of the idea as early as 1769, almost two decades prior to the publication of *Notes*. In that year, Jefferson along with a senior representative, Colonel Richard Bland, proposed a variation on the colonization scheme to the Virginia Assembly, suggesting that freed slaves be expatriated from the territory. The bill, seconded by a young and perhaps naïve Thomas Jefferson who “was more spared in the debate,” caused Bland to be “denounced as an enemy of his country” and “treated with the grossest indecorum.”⁴²⁷ The two politicians’ argument for the bill seems to have been based on moral grounds. It is not completely clear why the sponsors proposed this bill, but is apparent that the Virginia proposal drew on colonial

⁴²⁶ Reverend Philip J. Slaughter, *The Virginian History of African Colonization*. Richmond: MacFarlane & Fergusson, 1855. p.1.

⁴²⁷ 25 August 1814, Jefferson to Edward Coles, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Volume IX*. ed. Ford. p.478.

precedents.⁴²⁸ Indeed, removal had an even more deeply rooted history in the American colonies, drawing on a long history of transporting freed slaves and other troublesome persons outside the boundaries of the provinces.

In 1691 the Virginia Assembly required all slave-owners to remove newly freed slaves from the colony within six months of manumission or face a fine of £10, which would then be used to transport the freed slaves.⁴²⁹ Legislators intended the 1691 law to reduce the risk of violence against slave-owners by their former slaves. Similar manumission laws existed in other colonies, with South Carolina's legislature stipulating in 1712 that those slaves not removed within six months of becoming free, could be re-enslaved through public auction.⁴³⁰ Based on past experiences, colonial legislatures understood the need to keep potentially violent manumitted populations separate.⁴³¹

Individuals also began to call for the removal of freed slaves. In 1715, John Hepburn's anti-slavery tract, *The American defence of the Christian golden rule, or An essay to prove the unlawfulness of making slaves of men*, endorsed emancipation as a way to avoid God's "Vengeance upon us [slaveholders]," while also correcting the "Sin" of

⁴²⁸ Many scholars believe it exemplifies Jefferson's life-long belief that slaves should be freed. For a detailed discussion of this bill – and what little is known about it – see, William Peden, ed. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, p.286-287. Also, for more on Jefferson's early work against slavery as a young lawyer, Miller, *The Wolf By the Ears*, "Slavery and the Declaration of Independence," p.1-11.

⁴²⁹ William W. Hennings, *Statutes at Large; being a collection of all the laws of Virginia from the first session of the legislature in 1619*. Vol. 3. Richmond: 1819-1823, p.87.

⁴³⁰ *The Statutes at Large of South Carolina, Containing the Acts from 1838*, Vol. 7, Columbia: A.H. Pemberton State Printer, 1840.

⁴³¹ Colonial anxieties were enhanced by numerous examples of black violence, including a group of some 80 blacks who were among the last to admit defeat at the end of Bacon's Rebellion. See, Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. p.9-10.

extracting blacks from Africa.⁴³² For Hepburn, “Negroes” must be “set free” so “that they may be sent to their own Country” to avoid the Divine consequences of having forced Africans to migrate to the Americas.⁴³³ Often, individual tracts were infused with religious language that applied moral arguments to the issue of slavery. By mid-century, anti-slavery tracts based on religious appeals appeared all over the British Atlantic empire. Removal went hand-in-hand with washing clean the sins of slavery. Removing former slaves eliminated the embodiment of America’s sinfulness because those people in bondage had become part of the sin.

Several other laws used removal to control potentially problematic populations throughout the British colonies in North America. Pennsylvania, Virginia and South Carolina each had laws that allowed owners of condemned slaves to transport them outside of the respective colony in exchange for their life. On the surface this seems like a surprisingly progressive policy for the period, but many colonial legislators believed that the prospect of transportation would actually decrease a slave’s desire for freedom, or for committing a crime. One reason is that many slaves were deported to the West Indies and other disease-ridden environments where certain death awaited.

These manumission laws were part of larger legal constructs designed to control the slave population while offering a false semblance of hope to those in bondage. The slaveholders assured themselves that freedom could be given only if the slaves could curb their violent behavior, while presenting it in such a way that few enslaved persons would want it. The Transportation Act in 1718 – which gave English judges the ability to

⁴³² John Hepburn, *The American defence of the Christian golden rule, or An essay to prove the unlawfulness of making slaves of men. By him who loves the freedom of souls and bodies of all men.* New York: 1715. p. 33. Evans # 1678.

⁴³³ Ibid.

sentence criminals to be transported to the colonies as indentures – reflected similar legal constructs, offering removal to foreign lands versus the traditional punishment of hanging.

As the British empire grew in the early eighteenth-century, policy focused on controlling problematic peoples. The Transportation Act put into motion a stream of some 50,000 convicts individually removed from Britain and Ireland before the start of the American Revolution.⁴³⁴ Transportation and removal began to transform the British Atlantic world by the 1740s.⁴³⁵ Instead of focusing on small groups of Indians, free blacks or other troublesome people, British officials began to remove thousands of people at one time.

Jefferson's colonization scheme built on – or at least acted in conjunction with – British removal policy developed throughout the eighteenth century. British policy directed that officials could justifiably remove populations who threatened the peace, stability and trade of the British Atlantic empire. By the 1770s, the policy took on a new form. London, the seat of the empire, found increasing numbers of poor blacks on its streets. A public awareness of their presence grew, magnifying concern for the safety of

⁴³⁴ Convicts were also removed to Australia and the West Indies. See Bruce Kercher, "Perish or Prosper: The Law and Convict Transportation, 1700-1850," in *Law and History Review*, (Fall 2003).

⁴³⁵ The 1730s and 1740s emerge as a busy time for proponents of large and small-scale acts of removal. James Oglethorpe's founding of Georgia in 1732 – based in part on the Enlightenment humanitarian ideal of social improvement – removed the "worthy poor" of England to America where they could begin anew. Also, the New York Conspiracy Trials not only represented the worst fears of white colonists regarding black violence, but those conspirators who avoided the death sentence were removed from the colony to the West Indies. See, Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005; and Francis John McConnell, *Evangelicals, Revolutionists and Idealists: Six English Contributors to American Thought and Action*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1972.

whites (and to a lesser extent, blacks) in the city.⁴³⁶ The small-scale removal of freed slaves and blacks previously authorized by colonial legislatures began to more closely resemble the larger efforts aimed at the Acadians. Metropolitan Britons now envisioned the resettlement of several thousand blacks from the British Isles themselves.

Granville Sharp and Lord Mansfield, two men who argued extensively for emancipating black slaves, led humanitarians' growing calls for the colonization of the poor blacks that emerged from metropolitan England in the 1770s. Until the Somerset case in 1772, which freed all slaves living in England, removal had been aimed at controlling white, Indian or criminal populations who already proved, in one form or another, that they were problematic.⁴³⁷ Deportation to less volatile and strategically important areas of the British empire seemed the proper penalty.⁴³⁸

As the population of Africans increased in the British Atlantic world, removal became more racialized. Edward Long, writing in the early 1770s just after the Somerset case, argued explicitly about the perceived dangers of having free blacks in England while also allowing emigration from the West Indies. Reflecting growing fears among England's city dwellers about the influx of blacks on to their streets, Long's remarks echoed deep anxieties amongst whites. First, Long launched an assault on another

⁴³⁶ For more on how Londoners identified the black body as an "empty icon of fashion and socio-sexual corruption," see Catherine Molineux, "Hogarth's Fashionable Slaves: Moral Corruption in Eighteenth-Century London," in *ELH*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (Summer 2005), 495-520. Also, Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina's *Black London: Life Before Emancipation*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995, thoroughly examines the appearance of blacks in the daily lives of Londoners in art by analyzing artwork and writings that chart the activities of both destitute and elite blacks in the city. Also see Richard West, *Back to Africa*.

⁴³⁷ Under the auspices of the Transportation Act of 1718.

⁴³⁸ For more on the transatlantic impact of the Somerset case, see Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, *Black London: Life Before Emancipation*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995. p.133 and Steven M. Wise, *Though the Heavens May Fall: The Landmark Trial That Led to the End of Slavery*. Cambridge, Ma: Da Capo Press, 2005.

perceived problem in England's cities, the morals and manners of "the lower class of women in England."⁴³⁹ He saw English women as being "remarkably fond of the blacks, for reasons too brutal to mention; they would connect themselves with horses and asses, if the laws permitted them."⁴⁴⁰ What most bothered Long, however, was not immoral women but the threat to the masculinity of proper city folk posed by newly freed black men and their relations with white women.⁴⁴¹

The perceived problem of blacks in metropolitan London went well beyond interracial sex and focused especially on its racial consequences. Edward Long echoed sentiments brewing in America, and publicly voiced a decade later by Thomas Jefferson, that "By these ladies they [black men] generally have a numerous brood."⁴⁴² "Thus in the course of a few generations more," he wrote, "the English blood will become so contaminated by the mixture" that it "may spread so extensively, as even to reach the middle, and then higher orders of people, till the whole nation resembles the *Portuguese* and *Moriscos* in complexion of skin and baseness of mind."⁴⁴³ "The public good of this kingdom," according to Long, "requires that some restraint should be laid on the unnatural increase of *blacks* into it."⁴⁴⁴ Although Long does not mention colonization as a solution to the 'problem,' pamphlets like his hardened support for the removal of free

⁴³⁹ *Candid Reflections Upon the Judgement lately awarded by the Court of King's Bench in Westminster-Hall, On what is commonly called the Negroe-cause*. London: T. Lowndes, 1771. p.47 and West, *Back to Africa*. p.13.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴¹ William Hogarth's play, *The Analysis of Beauty*, written in 1753, also comments negatively on the relationship between "lust, bondage, and sin" that "Britons also associated with black slaves." His social criticism would last throughout the eighteenth-century, taking on deeper meaning as an influx of free blacks arrived in the 1770s and 1780s. See, Molineux, "Hogarth's Fashionable Slaves," p. 496.

⁴⁴² *Candid Reflections Upon the Judgement lately awarded by the Court of King's Bench in Westminster-Hall*, p.47.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

blacks from Liverpool, Bristol, London and other English cities. Even Long's sharp language paled in comparison to writings by Americans in the early nineteenth century.

By 1772, concerns thoroughly rooted in racial ideology dominated British arguments for removal. The Somerset decision, in which the Right Honorable William, Lord Mansfield, granted James Somerset his freedom, marked what "was the beginning of the end of slavery" in Great Britain and America.⁴⁴⁵ More importantly, it reminded the growing abolition movement in England and the slaveholders in America, that emancipation seemed to lurk just on the horizon. As a result, men on both sides of the Atlantic began to write extensively about the prospect of widespread emancipation and its consequences for both blacks and whites.

Central to the conversation was the role of colonization in ridding England and America of growing freed black populations that, according to dominant racial ideology, could not live peacefully side-by-side with whites. Among the contributing authors were Granville Sharp, Henry Smeathman, Anthony Benezet, Doctor James Fothergill, Doctor Richard Price, Ferdinando Fairfax, St. George Tucker, Henry Thornton, and Thomas Jefferson. Indeed, few tracts on abolition from 1772 to the American Civil War resisted the opportunity to comment on the removal and colonization of freed blacks as the solution to the dilemma of emancipation.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ Steven M. Wise, *Though the Heavens May Fall: The Landmark Trial that Led to the End of Human Slavery*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2005. P. ix.

⁴⁴⁶ Selected examples are: Leonard Bacon, *Review of Pamphlets on Slavery and Colonization*, New Haven: A.H. Maltby, 1833; Alexander Archibald, *A History of Colonization on the western Coast of Africa*, Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1846; Sylvestris (presumed to be St. George Tucker), *Reflections, on the Cession of Louisiana to the United States, by Sylvestris*, Washington: Samuel Harrison Smith, 1803; and John Parrish, *Remarks on the Slavery of the Black People: Addressed to the Citizens of the United States, particularly those who are in legislative or executive stations in the general or state governments: and also to such individuals as hold them in bondage*, Philadelphia: Kimber, Conrad & Sons, 1806.

Even though the colonization of Sierra Leone by British philanthropists did not begin in earnest until the 1790s, metropolitan Britons took the lead on the issue, discussing the idea as early as 1771. Scottish law professor John Millar and the French politician Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours advanced arguments against slavery and in favor of free labor to grow sugar in the West Indies.⁴⁴⁷ Another well-known thinker and botanist, James Fothergill, agreed with these arguments, further suggesting that if some settlements along the West African coast were made, then crops could be harvested more cheaply – and humanely – by free African workers. Importantly, Fothergill and his supporters, among them Granville Sharp, argued that such a system of labor would “civilize” the Africans and Europeans by freeing both from the inhumanity of slavery.⁴⁴⁸ Europeans would no longer depend entirely on slave-grown rice, cotton and tobacco – a circumstance that would distinguish them from Americans.

Anthony Benezet led early calls in America for removal and colonization of freed slaves. A London educated French Huguenot who emigrated to Philadelphia and joined the Society of Friends in the 1730s, Benezet was a vocal and highly respected advocate of emancipation to counter the degrading moral effects of slavery on whites. In 1773, he wrote Fothergill, in England, “in time Providence would gradually work for the release of those whose... situation would fit them for freedom.” Benezet advocated emancipation

⁴⁴⁷ See John Millar, *Observations concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society*, 1771; and Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours, “Observations sur L’Esclavages des Negres,” in *Ephemerides du Citoyen, ou Bibliotheque Raisonees des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, vol. 6, 1771, pages 178-246.

⁴⁴⁸ In Stephen J. Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London’s Blacks and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement, 1786-1791*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994. Pages 4-8.

for Africans *fit* to be free, much like his counterparts in America during the 1770s.⁴⁴⁹ Foreseeing potential problems with vast numbers of slaves suddenly freed in America, Benezet proposed utilizing the land “from the west side of the Alleghany mountains to the Mississippi, on a breadth of four or five hundred miles” because it “would afford a suitable and beneficial means of settlement for many of them among the white people.”⁴⁵⁰ For Benezet, the benefits of such a plan were obvious because it “would in all probability be as profitable [to] the negroes as to the new settlers.”⁴⁵¹ Emancipation seemed most likely if mutual benefits could be worked out.

Not content to propose such an idea to a metropolitan Englishman, Benezet forwarded his plan to fellow Philadelphian Benjamin Franklin “in order to make him acquainted with what passes here on this momentous concern.”⁴⁵² Franklin failed to act, but this transatlantic correspondence was significant: it occurred during the formative stages of plans to settle Sierra Leone by a group of philanthropists known as the Saints.⁴⁵³ The Englishman Fothergill served as a key leader of this group, although he died just seven years after this letter from Benezet, too soon to see the chartering of the Sierra Leone Company. Yet, its clear that men on both sides of the Atlantic were communicating not only about their anti-slavery views, but also about plans to rid the settled portions of the empire of freed blacks.

⁴⁴⁹ Benezet’s emphasis on only learned Africans’ ability to be free citizens reflects the revolutionary decade’s political discussions on liberty, citizenship and independence.

⁴⁵⁰ 28 April 1773, Anthony Benezet to James Fothergill, Robert Vaux, ed. *Memoir of the Life of Anthony Benezet*. Philadelphia: James P. Parke, 1817. p.30-31.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ See Richard West, *Back to Africa: A History of Sierra Leone*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970.

Benezet knew the importance of gaining support for emancipation from across the Atlantic. Throughout the 1770s, he wrote Queen Charlotte, the wife of George III,⁴⁵⁴ Abbé Raynal, Granville Sharp, and the Queens of Portugal and France regarding the need to abolish the slave trade. Simultaneously, Benezet worked to gain support amongst the political and ideological leaders of the independence movement in America. Many of these same men were also powerful slaveholders whom Benezet knew were important figures to lure to his side of the moral argument.

Benezet called to the attention of members of the Continental Congress that “dispositions have been manifested by *individuals*, to emancipate their negroes, provided they can be conveyed to those states were [sic] *freedom is not an empty sound*.”⁴⁵⁵ Understanding the difficulty of convincing prosperous slaveholders to manumit the foundation of their wealth, Benezet referred to unnamed members of the planter elite who backed liberty for blacks. He baited Congress, “if sincere desires be cultivated to wipe from the nation a stain so foul...Let laws be enacted providing for the gradual and final abolition of slavery, fitting the younger generation of slaves for freedom and settlement.”⁴⁵⁶ Sentiments depicting the shame of slavery on this nation founded on liberty highlighted Benezet’s argument. This same argument, that slavery represented a counterpoint to American liberty, would fuel the abolitionists’ cause some 50 years later.

⁴⁵⁴ It should be noted that some historians argue that Queen Charlotte was black or at least descended from the so-called black branch of the Portuguese Royal Family. Some of the evidence is based on the “Negroid” appearance of her in portraits painted by her contemporaries and a physician’s report of her “true mulatto face.” For more, see “Racial Disaster in the U.K.: Pushkin’s Blood Flows in the Veins of Future Kings of England,” in *The Sunday Times* (London), June 6, 1999. p.11.

⁴⁵⁵ Vaux, ed. *Memoirs of the Life of Anthony Benezet*, pages 56-59.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Speaking out against slavery itself was not enough. He appealed to a growing sense of whiteness, a unity among whites that maintained blacks simply did not belong in the new republic. The Franco-American Quaker proposed colonization “either in some section of the country within jurisdiction of the United States, the climate and situation of which may be suited to their character, or make arrangements for conveying them to the land whence their fathers were treacherously and inhumanly estrange.”⁴⁵⁷ Benezet’s proposal reflected the dilemma of colonizationists: where could slaves be resettled that would not impede the construction of America as a white republic but also prove suitable for blacks’ constitutions? Benezet began to shift Americans’ focus away from colonizing Africa toward, perhaps, removal to unsettled lands west of the Alleghany Mountains. Such prospects later gained support as devotees of colonization pondered a range of places in which to found a colony.

Henry Smeathman was another key member of an expanding coalition of elite, educated whites who favored colonization in the Atlantic world. A protégé of Fothergill’s, Smeathman went to Sierra Leone in 1771 to investigate the continent’s insects and came away with ideas about the possibility of setting up a colony of freed blacks. Although his reports were favorable, the movement lost steam when Fothergill died in 1780. But Master Termites – as Smeathman was called for his extensive scientific inquiries on the bug – persisted. He described Africa as a place where “Nature animates every embryo of life” and a place where opportunity for profit awaited the adventuresome.⁴⁵⁸ Smeathman gained widespread support among British and American

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. p.59.

⁴⁵⁸ Braidwood, p. 7. It should also be noted that in 1785 Smeathman had argued against the House of Commons’ plans to settle a prison colony in West Africa. He forcefully argued to the appointed committee, warning that of 200 prisoners landed, “one hundred would die in less than a

abolitionists for his idea to colonize the West Coast of Africa with freed blacks, but he found little interest from investors – the key to putting any such scheme into motion.

In 1783, on the verge of bankruptcy, Smeathman traveled to Paris to contact Benjamin Franklin about his idea. Franklin responded positively, but suggested that Smeathman sail to Boston where he would find support for his scheme without a doubt.⁴⁵⁹ “Alas!” Smeathman commented, “I cannot carry my poor brat a-begging from continent to continent on uncertainties.”⁴⁶⁰ In Paris for peace negotiations at this time, Franklin and Jefferson were both exposed to British and French intellectuals’ and philanthropists’ calls for resettling blacks in Africa. Smeathman and other prominent supporters of colonization remained in Paris for the next few years to indulge in their passion for the new trend of ballooning. In these circles of elite white men – politicians, humanitarians, balloonists – the idea of colonization gained intellectual, if not financial, support. At the same time, Smeathman’s plans for colonization were published in *The New Jerusalem Magazine*, a journal of the small, but influential religious group known as the Swedenborgians, who would later attempt to land a colony of freed blacks in West Africa.⁴⁶¹ Through these contacts and the distribution of published pamphlets and

month and that there would not be two people alive in less than 6 months.” It seems clear that Smeathman believed his ticket to wealth lay in the foundation of a free (labor) colony of blacks in Sierra Leone, regardless if it meant contradicting himself in front of the House. As quoted in West, *Back to Africa*, p.22.

⁴⁵⁹ Evidence suggests Franklin was referring to the black fraternal organizations in Boston and Rhode Island. Led by Prince Hall, among others, these groups were the earliest black organizations to advocate removal to Africa. They referred to it as emigration – a voluntary effort if conceived of, planned, and organized by blacks themselves – while enlisting white patrons such as Samuel Hopkins and William Thornton to provide financial backing. For more, see chapter 5 and *The Proceedings of the Free African Union Society and the African Benevolent Society, Newport, Rhode Island, 1780-1824*, ed. William H. Robinson. Providence: The Urban League of Rhode Island, 1976, “Introduction.”

⁴⁶⁰ 16 June 1784, Smeathman to Lettsom, in Pettigrew, *Memoirs of Lettsom*, p.270-276.

⁴⁶¹ Carl Bernard Wadstrom, the Swedenborgian’s leader, published the *Plan for a Free Community at Sierra Leone Upon the Coast of Africa, Under the Protection of Great Britain*;

journals, Americans learned of and began to more seriously discuss the colonization of free blacks.

Trade also drove Smeathman's plan. He believed that the fertile West Coast of Africa could offer England many of the goods it sought from the newly independent United States, as well as the Far East, including rice, tobacco and cotton. In serious debt by 1786, Smeathman intended to start a cotton plantation from which he could regain his riches, or at least pay off his research debts. Finally, Master Termites found support from a London alms association, Committee for the Black Poor, who hoped to rid themselves of the increasing costs of supporting the Poor Black Hospitable. Smeathman argued that "My plan would inevitably tend to emancipate and civilize every year, some thousands of slaves, to dry up one great source of that diabolical commerce," the slave trade.⁴⁶² Rather than focus on small-scale resettlement, Smeathman imagined a large number of slaves becoming free – through trade and fair labor – in West Africa. By mid summer 1786, however, the botanist fell ill and died, and so too, it seemed, did his plan of a settlement in Sierra Leone.

The idea had already spread across the Atlantic through the conduit of elite whites' networks. Americans were considering colonization schemes as early as the 1770s. Along with Benezet, Reverend Samuel Hopkins of Rhode Island, an avid critic of slavery, believed that manumitting slaves could work in tandem with Christianizing – and colonizing – Africa. Hopkins proposed sending two blacks from his own parish to Africa as missionaries. Hopkins found support from the future president of Yale, Dr. Ezra Stiles. The Reverend and Stiles believed that Africa was due to be enlightened by the

with An Invitation to All Persons desirous of Partaking the Benefits thereof. London: T. & J. Egerton, Military Library, Whitehall, 1792.

⁴⁶² Smeathman to Knowles, 1783, in *New Jerusalem Magazine*, 1790. P.280.

very men who visited upon the continent “that unhallowed Commerce of traffic in the Souls of Men.”⁴⁶³ In 13 August 1773, Hopkins and Stiles sent a circular to churches in Massachusetts and Connecticut in an effort to raise awareness of, as well as money for, their ideas.

The Reverend Hopkins hired tutors to teach the missionaries theology and basic academic skills with which, he believed, they could begin the process of “enlightening” what he saw as a pagan continent. Hopkins preached that “a number of blacks should return to Africa, and settle there; that a number, who have been under the most serious impressions of religion, should lead the way... improv[ing] all opportunity to teach the Africans the doctrines and duties of Christianity.”⁴⁶⁴ A few particularly good examples of learned blacks should be sent to Africa “to treat with some of the nations there, and request of them lands, proper and sufficient for them and as many as shall go with them to settle upon.”⁴⁶⁵ Naively, Hopkins “presumed the land would be freely given,” and “that such a settlement would not only be for the benefit of those who shall return to their native country, but it would be [a] most likely and powerful means of putting a stop to the slave trade.”⁴⁶⁶ Nevertheless, first among their goals remained “increasing Christian knowledge among those heathens.”⁴⁶⁷ For them, the colonization of Africa began with missionaries, not agriculture or trade, but part of the intended effect was the same: to remove freed blacks from America. Increasingly, elements of evangelicalism began to penetrate the language of removal.

⁴⁶³ Franklin B. Dexter, ed. *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D, President of Yale College*. New York: 1901. 363-366.

⁴⁶⁴ Samuel Hopkins, *The Works of Samuel Hopkins*. Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Company, 1852. p.139.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

What motivated the humanitarian movement in the British Atlantic world to colonize freed blacks has been, in part erroneously, identified as philanthropy. The many emancipation tracts published in England during the 1770s make it clear that Granville Sharp and others believed they were facilitating the “civilization” of freed blacks by teaching them to be self-sufficient. Notions of commercial gain also entered into their arguments. Sierra Leone would be a terrific trading partner for those wise enough to invest in the founding of the colony. However, another, more insidious element of English abolitionists’ arguments must be considered. England’s urbanization came at a price. England had, for many years prior, transported its “worthy” poor to the American colonies; now, colonization emerged as the best method of ridding English cities of increasing numbers of free blacks. Africa, a continent that remained geographically isolated from more economic and socially important colonies, as well as the United Kingdom itself, emerged as the ideal place where removed blacks could blossom as self-sufficient laborers.

Both British philanthropists and American slaveholders proved morally ambivalent about seeking a solution to what they perceived as the ‘problem’ of a large population of free blacks. Increasing cross-cultural contact struggled against ideas of racial purity and harmony. As stories of black men and their white female companions circulated, and as Black Loyalists refugees from the American revolution began to marry English women, anxiety over racial intermixture compelled white men to develop plans to resettle free blacks in Africa.⁴⁶⁸ These ideas crossed the Atlantic, gaining strength as broader groups of people were exposed to them. The Atlantic World’s intellectual elite –

⁴⁶⁸ Upwards of 70% of women who sailed for Sierra Leone in 1786 with the Black Loyalists were whites married to blacks. See Cassandra Pybus, “Black Refugees of the American Revolution,” unpublished paper, 28 March 2006, p.15.

scientists, ministers, and politicians – propelled the ideology of colonization from port to port, sharing ideas and news.

Notes on the State of Virginia

Perhaps no single publication exemplifies how quickly ideas regarding colonization circulated the Atlantic that Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Jefferson wrote it at a time when discussions of colonization schemes permeated the Atlantic world. European endorsement of colonization influenced Jefferson's plans for gradual emancipation followed by removal. Colonization schemes were part of the intellectual cross-fertilization through which the elite of the Atlantic world influenced each other. Indeed, the bulk of *Notes* was revised toward the conclusion of America's War for Independence while Jefferson was in Paris, after he had encountered supporters of colonization such as Du Pont de Nemours, Sharp, Wilberforce, and others. The library of Thomas Jefferson demonstrates that he had read work by some of the leading advocates of colonization in the Atlantic, while sometimes facing harsh criticism from abolitionists at home and abroad.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ For example, Jefferson had works by Emanuel Swedenborg, the founder of the Swedenborgians, Anthony Benezet, James Ramsay, Condorcet, among others. See E. Millicent Sowerby, *Catalogue of the Library of Thomas Jefferson*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983. Thank you to Thomas Baughn, a fellow at the Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies, for providing me with a revised database regarding Jefferson's personal library. *Notes on the State of Virginia* was also published at a time when Jefferson received major criticism from his French intellectual counterparts regarding the ownership of his own personal slaves. Jefferson wrestled with the issues of race, slavery, colonization and emancipation in an environment in which he was under direct assault over the contradiction inherent of American liberty.

In what is perhaps his second most famous work behind the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson addressed key issues emerging in post-war America. Although Jefferson claims *Notes on the State of Virginia* was written in 1781, it is widely known that he extensively revised the manuscript until 1784 with perhaps as much as 2/3 of the final draft added *after* 1781. The book began as a response to queries sent by the secretary of the French legation to the United States, François de Barbé-Marbois. Such queries were typical of diplomatic agents who attempted to gain an understanding of their environs by learning about the vegetation, minerals, wildlife and customs of the local people. Indeed, 13 sets of 22 such queries were sent out, one to each new state. Barbé-Marbois received more than what he bargained for from those sent to Virginia. Jefferson addressed more than the 22 simple queries advanced by the Frenchman, commenting on free trade, freedom of religion, even forming opposition to Abbé Raynal's commonly accepted argument that the American social and cultural environment had degenerative effects on humans.⁴⁷⁰

Notes provides a glimpse into the power of Jefferson's opinion while also illuminating the founder's cunning and gift for publicity. Jefferson vehemently argued against the publication of his response to the queries, fearing their controversial nature in the United States, instead choosing to have the manuscript published in France in 1785 (with a date of 1782 imprinted on it). Jefferson paid for the first 200 copies out of his own pocket, and publishing *Notes* abroad saved him money. Releasing the work in France accomplished another goal: it targeted an educated and wealthy elite whose

⁴⁷⁰ For a more detailed account, see Dorothy Medlin, "Thomas Jefferson, Andre Morellet, and the French Version of Notes on the State of Virginia," in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Jan. 1978), 85-99.

Enlightenment ideals of humanitarianism made them perfect receptacles for his ideas regarding emancipation and removing free blacks to foreign parts of the Atlantic world.

The question remains: why have it published at all if, as Jefferson believed, “the terms in which I speak of slavery...will revolt the minds of our countrymen...and thus do more harm than good.”⁴⁷¹ Jefferson wondered aloud as to whether or not he should distribute copies to classes at William and Mary, one of America’s training ground for the future elite. Fellow Virginian and close friend, James Madison, wisely recommended Jefferson provide copies to the college’s library, preventing “some narrow minded parents” from being upset by the content of the books assigned to their children.⁴⁷² Lending further suspicion to Jefferson’s public apprehension regarding the publication of *Notes* is his detailed correction of the printer’s proof sheets. Both of these concerns also point to Jefferson’s knowledge of the importance, even if controversial, of the publication of his stance on race, slavery, and blacks’ place in a white American republic.

The multiple letters to friends chronicling his worst fears – a poorly translated, poorly received book – suggest Jefferson intended his ideas to shake the foundation of his fledgling nation’s economic and social structure. Indeed, just two years after the supposed tightly controlled publication and distribution of *Notes* in France, the book made its debut in America. In making this transatlantic journey, the brisk-selling *Notes* profoundly impacted the colonization movement. Jefferson’s allegedly private document became public. *Notes* became the epicenter of the debate, receiving direct challenges from advocates of emancipation, as well as praise from supporters of colonization.

⁴⁷¹ 17 June 1785, Jefferson to Madison, *Jefferson Papers*, VIII, p.227-234.

⁴⁷² Madison to Jefferson, *Jefferson Papers*, Vol. IX, p.38.

Jefferson first mentioned slaves in Query VIII, where he included a sketch of the African population along with other demographic information. But it is not until Query XIV, more than half-way into the text, under the “Laws” heading that he discussed slaves and slavery in detail. Jefferson recalled his activities in proposing a bill for the emancipation of slaves. He contended in this section that successful emancipation was contingent upon newly freed slaves being “brought up, at the public expence, to tillage, arts or sciences, according to their geniuses,” until females reached eighteen years and males twenty-one, “when they should be colonized to such a place as the circumstances of the time should render most proper.”⁴⁷³ A simple colonization scheme it is not. Jefferson continued, “sending them [freed slaves] out with arms, implements of household and of handicraft arts, seeds, pairs of the useful domestic animals...to declare them a free and independent people.”⁴⁷⁴ Compared to previous plans for colonization bandied about the Atlantic, none held such a radical idea as *arming* former slaves. Jefferson’s proposal to resettle freed slaves with the necessary tools for survival kept the spirit of earlier calls for removal by noting the importance of a prosperous agricultural community. Yet, offering protection not only by the grace of the United States government, but by their own hands themselves, moved beyond any plan from Benezet, Smeathman, Hopkins or members of the Saints.

Jefferson seemed unsatisfied with previous colonization schemes, adding another key component to his proposal. The United States should, he argued, “at the same time” send vessels to “other parts of the world for an equal number of white inhabitants; to

⁴⁷³ Peden, ed. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, p. 137-138.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

induce whom to migrate hither.”⁴⁷⁵ The scheme incorporated a solution to the significant problem of losing a major percentage of the workforce. These white immigrants would also provide a large number of potential settlers to help subdue Indian territories, while fostering a major spike in white – and for Jefferson, presumably civilized – citizens. Of the 3,929,214 people in the United States in 1790, 19% were black with 8% of this population free (59,527).⁴⁷⁶ Besides Jefferson understanding the impact of losing hundreds of thousands of slaves and free blacks on the American economy, he also foresaw the complexities of colonization. Moving 59,527 free persons of color – not including 700,000 slaves – would prove a remarkable feat for any nation, never mind the United States’ and its small navy.

Query XIV is perhaps the most important section of *Notes* because it marks the point at which Jefferson rejected any possibility of freed slaves remaining within the United States. Jefferson contended that because of slavery and “the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will us [blacks and whites] into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end but in the extermination of the one race or the other.”⁴⁷⁷ By the end of the query, Jefferson explained in detail why he believed in the inferiority of blacks. Only after proving this point beyond a doubt, in his mind at least, could he move on.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. p.138.

⁴⁷⁶ The 1790 US Census counted 3,929,214 persons, of whom it is estimated 757,208 were persons of color. Of these 757,208 people, approximately 8% were free blacks (59,527) and 92% were enslaved (697,681). This data must be seen as imperfect for a variety of reasons, including the biases of individual census workers and the likelihood of incomplete data collection due to poor maps and transportation. For more on the imperfect nature of census taking and detailed statistics, see Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, “Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States.” Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2002. (Table 1).

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

Ideas on racial amalgamation and intermixture in the eighteenth century have drawn less attention from historians than those from the nineteenth century. Jefferson's meditations on the topic, however, have been well documented and analyzed by scholars. In short, Jefferson approved of Native American-white racial amalgamation because of what he saw as Indians' greater intellectual and physical capacities. Jefferson synthesized his thoughts on the topic in purely racial terms, asking "Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of colour in the one." Late eighteenth-century America was familiar with the potential for Indian-white mixing to yield children who appeared white. Indeed, Massachusetts and other states had several Indian plantations and towns in which interracial marriage and families existed within regular white society.⁴⁷⁸ Conversely, Jefferson referenced Africans' blackness as an "eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances," revealing "that immovable veil of black, which covers all the emotions of the other race."⁴⁷⁹ He continued to discuss the various physical attributes that, for him, designated Africans as more animalistic than whites or Indians in their physical forms and function. Add to this his view that Africans' lacked emotional complexity, and Jefferson remained convinced that blacks could not be civilized enough to live within white America. He did, however, consider the possibility that free blacks could live in their own free society.

Because of these sentiments in Query XIV, Jefferson's *Notes* proved to be a powerful influence on the transatlantic conversation on the removal and colonization of blacks. Jefferson advocated emancipation, but he also proposed a plan to improve blacks condition through colonization. More importantly, he demonstrated how white society

⁴⁷⁸ See Daniel R. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

⁴⁷⁹ Peden, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, p. 138-139.

itself would benefit from colonization by removing the supposedly corrupting presence of blacks. Though initially intended to answer a few simple queries posed by a French minister, *Notes* became a publicity machine for whites who wanted to reshape the Atlantic world by removing free blacks from established society in America. Debates and events in America, England and France were to have a dramatic impact on West Africa within a few decades.

William Thornton: A Friend of Colonization

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, played an instrumental role in advancing the cause of emancipation and its counterpart, colonization. Quakers led the colonization movement through the late 1780s and into the 1790s. William Thornton, a Quaker friend of Fothergill and his protégés, argued extensively in support of colonization at the same time that Jefferson's *Notes* became widely available. Thornton inherited a group of slaves in 1785. The planter, an itinerant West Indian who called the island of Tortola home, saw a chance to act on the humanitarian ideals he supported. Thornton's plan to free his slaves and resettle them on lands somewhere in the West Indies, however, was rejected by local British authorities who were familiar with the effect a free black population could have on nearby slaves. For example, the Maroons in Jamaica often raided nearby plantations sometimes killing whites, slaves, and free mulattoes in the process.

Undaunted by criticism of his plan by the island's assembly, Thornton began to discuss much larger colonization schemes that included his own slaves. He wrote to John

Coakley Lettsom, biographer of the late James Fothergill and supporter of the Sierra Leone colonization proposal. Adding his support to the idea of colonizing the West Coast of Africa, Thornton stated: "I am firmly persuaded that the abolition of slavery would be the most easily effected by making a settlement there; and I see very few difficulties in undertaking it, that cannot be easily surmounted."⁴⁸⁰ Yet, even a planter could not simply declare his slaves free and resettle them. Thornton encountered resistance from his local government who refused to give the planter permission to provide emancipated slaves farmland on Tortola. Frustrated, Thornton remarked, "prejudices absorbed by a West Indian education, and which by the continued habit of slavery, are now becoming shackles to the mind."⁴⁸¹ Thornton refused to let these shackles prevent him from carrying out the plan.

Thornton challenged Jefferson's conclusions in *Notes*. Thornton informed Lettsom, "I have been now amongst the negroes, and should have no doubt at all but that their minds would be more easily attuned to virtue than is commonly supposed by the generality of mankind." Thornton differed from Jefferson on the intellectual potential of blacks, whom he believed were "unfortunate in difference of color," but not, as Jefferson supposed, "of faculty."⁴⁸² In his mind, blacks were well capable of dealing with the demands of liberty and citizenship in a free society. In the midst of multiple Atlantic revolutions based on the spirit of liberty, William Thornton saw blacks as equals in a way that Jefferson never did.

⁴⁸⁰ C.M. Harris, ed. *Papers of William Thornton, Volume One: 1781-1802*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995. p. 14.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸² Jefferson, *Notes*. P. 143.

Still, Thornton saw colonization as an opportunity for *learned* Africans to carry their knowledge to Africa. The West Indian planter theorized that African slaves had gained knowledge that would make individuals a “respected, not a despised member of society” in Africa.⁴⁸³ Much like Samuel Hopkins’ belief that more civilized Africans from America could help spread the gospel to Africa, Thornton also believed removed freedmen “might, by carrying over the arts and manufactures of the islands, serve his country essentially, and teach them inhumanity of such practices as tend to deprive fellow creatures of their liberty and subject them to the horrid of slavery he has late tasted the bitterness.”⁴⁸⁴ Such notions differed dramatically from Jefferson, who described blacks as having “inferior” reason and “scarcely found capable of comprehending the investigations of Euclid,” even after comparing them with whites on the level stage of America, as opposed to their existence in the wilds of Africa.⁴⁸⁵

By 1787, Thornton drew up extensive plans in his *General Outline of a Settlement on the Tooth or Ivory Coast of Africa*. Although never published, the work provided the foundation for a speaking tour in New England and his letters to and from various supporters of the Sierra Leone project. Thornton, unlike many of the founders of the Sierra Leone Company, envisioned a settlement in Sierra Leone supported by the three Atlantic powers – Great Britain, the “States of America,” and France – with the most to gain from emancipation, removal and colonization. Thornton is often credited with being interested in the economic benefits of colonization as opposed to the strictly philanthropic aspects other Friends lauded. Nevertheless, he perceived the settlement of Sierra Leone

⁴⁸³ *Papers of William Thornton*, p. 18.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁵ In fact, Jefferson believed that it would be “unfair” to compare Africans in Africa to their less degraded counterparts in America. *Notes*, p. 139.

as an opportunity for the potentially troublemaking freed slaves of America, the West Indies and England to find “what infinity of happiness shall be theirs when delivered from bondage and call[ed] unto Christ!”⁴⁸⁶ For Thornton, West Africa represented an ideal combination of his interests in emancipation: morality, commerce and spreading the gospel.

Thornton seemed aware of the supposed benefits offered by colonization – such as avoiding racial amalgamation and potential race wars – but he directed his attention to issues he believed were important to free blacks. Instead, he emphasized national identity in his proposal, working with the Free African Union Society in Newport, Rhode Island from 1787 to 1791 in conjunction with Reverend Hopkins. The Union Society comprised, by some accounts, 2,000 blacks willing to go to West Africa under the belief that Sierra Leone was to be an independent nation – not a colony of Great Britain. There, they believed, blacks could build their own democracy based on free labor. Although Thornton’s large network of powerful and wealthy friends approved of his ideas, he could not convince them to provide financial support. Thornton’s own finances were not capable of outfitting such a large group. By the early 1790s, he seemed to give up on colonization after garnering only moral and not financial support from groups like *Les Amis des Noirs* and others around the Atlantic. Although past scholars have attributed his disappearance from the high profile networks of colonizationists to his marriage in 1790, Thornton remained in contact with black supporters of emigration in Rhode Island.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁶ *Papers of William Thornton*, p.18.

⁴⁸⁷ For more, see, Gaillard Hunt, “William Thornton and Negro Colonization,” in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Vol. 30, New Series (April-October) 1920. pages 40-43. The author implies that Thornton’s marriage rid him of the impulse to do humanitarian deeds. More details on Thornton’s interaction with the Free African Union Society of Newport, Rhode Island are available in chapter 5.

During Thornton's attempts to implement his colonization scheme, Reverend Samuel Hopkins again lent his vocal support to the movement. Upon learning of the landing of free black colonists in Sierra Leone in 1787, Hopkins feverishly wrote Granville Sharp to congratulate him on executing a plan of colonization. In 1789, Sharp replied to Hopkins laudatory letter, discouraged by the news of deaths caused by conflict between the settlement and native Africans. Even so, Sharp invited Hopkins to send whatever settlers "willing to submit to the terms of the Regulations and the English government," who will be given free land in this "Province of Freedom."⁴⁸⁸ Despite Sharp's initial cautionary words, Hopkins was encouraged. He began to write to several of his wealthy and influential friends to report the good news.

American independence forced Hopkins to reconsider his vision of colonization. In 1787, he engaged public audiences, arguing, "righteousness and benevolence dictate" that colonization remain the "best way that can be taken to compensate the blacks, both in America and Africa, for the injuries they have received by the slave trade and slavery."⁴⁸⁹ Furthermore, the minister believed, much like Jefferson in *Notes on the State of Virginia*, that colonization represented the best hope in maintaining a strong white republic. "The advantages of it to the public and to individuals are well considered and realized" because colonization "will gradually draw off all the blacks in New England, and even in the Middle and Southern States, as fast as they can be set free."⁴⁹⁰ This had several advantages, according to Hopkins, including the "nation" being "delivered from that which, in view of every discerning man, is a great calamity, and inconsistent with the

⁴⁸⁸ 25 July 1789, Granville Sharp to Reverend Samuel Hopkins, in *The Works of Samuel Hopkins*, p.142.

⁴⁸⁹ Park, *Works of Samuel Hopkins*, Vol. I, p. 146.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

good of society, and is now really a great injury to most of the white inhabitants, especially in the Southern States.”⁴⁹¹ Hopkins realized the publicly stated values of America’s revolutionaries were inconsistent with their actions. The choice seemed obvious to him: remove the glaring contradiction to this new nation founded on liberty and place them in a location far away from the settled Euro-American areas of the Atlantic.

After the war ended, Hopkins saw reasons for colonization beyond the missionary ideals he espoused in the 1770s. For Hopkins, the ramifications of independence included finding new sources of products typically found in the British empire. Colonization offered the solution to the problem of finding new trading partners because “the increase and flourishing of such a plantation of free peoples in Africa, where all the tropical fruits and productions, and the articles which we fetch from the West Indies, may be raised in great abundance.”⁴⁹² News of Sharp’s and Great Britain’s apparent failure in Sierra Leone offered an opportunity, for if “a commerce may take place, and be maintained, between those [free African-American] settlements and the United States of America, which will be of very great and increasing advantage of both.”⁴⁹³ Perhaps America’s former slaves could provide alternative trade partners to the West Indies. It seemed a promising prospect given the sheer numbers of free men and women that would be made available as the result of emancipation.

Hopkins and his supporters also remained focused on the free blacks’ mission of Christianizing native Africans. The colonists’ own welfare and personal goals were less important. Interests of the state and society seemed secondary to these heavily

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

evangelical colonizationists. A member of the Connecticut Society for emancipating the slaves wrote to Hopkins, “I wish...the affair of making a settlement of blacks in Africa, to civilize the nations there, and propagate Christianity among them.”⁴⁹⁴ In a 1793 sermon, Hopkins continued the evangelical call, “that those who have embraced the Gospel...return to Africa, and spread the light of the gospel in that now dark part of the world, and propagate those arts and science which shall recover them from that ignorance and barbarity which now prevail.” In doing so, “all this past and present evil, which Africans have suffered by the slave trade and the slavery to which so many of them have been reduced, may be the occasion of an overbalancing good.”⁴⁹⁵ While wiping away the sins of nation, evangelical blacks could spread Christianity amongst a growing Muslim population in Africa.

As momentum for the founding of Sierra Leone gained speed in Great Britain, a handful of American revolutionaries, such as Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and others, supported calls for the removal of freed blacks from the United States. Yet, it was in Virginia, the largest slaveholding state, where the greatest voices in support for colonization arose. Antislavery sentiment in Virginia did not ripen slowly as some scholars suggest; rather Virginia took center stage in the debate on emancipation.⁴⁹⁶ As a result, Virginia led the burgeoning national conversation on colonization as early as the late 1780s.

⁴⁹⁴ 30 August 1791, Dr. Hart to reverend Samuel Hopkins, in *The Works of Samuel Hopkins*, p. 144.

⁴⁹⁵ Reverend Samuel Hopkins, *A Discourse upon the Slave Trade, and the Slavery of the Africans; delivered in the Baptist Meeting-house at Providence, before the Providence Society for Abolishing the Slave Trade, & c. at their Annual Meeting, on May 17, 1793*. Providence: J. Carter, 1793.

⁴⁹⁶ For an alternative argument that views Virginia’s participation in the abolition movement as slow to develop, see Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*. p. 2.

Virginia, a center of slavery in the new republic with 292,627 slaves in 1790, had profound interest in curbing the potential problems of emancipation.⁴⁹⁷ In 1779, Thomas Jefferson authored *A Bill Concerning Slaves*, which called for all newly emancipated slaves to “depart the commonwealth within one year thereafter,” or else be subject to prosecution.⁴⁹⁸ Jefferson’s bill did not reach beyond localized debate on the floor of the Virginia Legislature. *Notes on the State of Virginia* did reach a national audience, sparking an increased level of public discourse on colonization. Jefferson’s publication ushered in calls from around the Atlantic for the colonization of freed blacks. Whether or not the authors directly mentioned *Notes*, it is apparent that the cross-fertilization of ideas yielded a robust discussion of the merits and logistics of repatriating blacks back to Africa – ideas popularized by Jefferson’s writing.

In October 1786, a new law passed in Virginia that commented on the parameters of citizenship in the Commonwealth. Historians have focused on the law’s relevance to the limits and definition of citizenship; yet, the law is significant for another reason.⁴⁹⁹ In Section VI of the law, any citizen of the Commonwealth “shall” be able to “declare that he relinquishes the character of a citizen, and shall depart out of this commonwealth” and “be considered as having exercised his right of expatriation, and shall thenceforth be

⁴⁹⁷ Virginia was the largest slaveholding state (with Maryland, North and South Carolina each having over 100,000 slaves) listed on the 1790 census. Approximately 12,899 free blacks lived in Virginia in 1790, making it the state with the largest free black population. See “Historical Census Browser,” Geospatial and Statistical Data Center University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia. 2005.

⁴⁹⁸ Philip S. Foner, *Basic Writings of Thomas Jefferson*. New York: Wiley Book Company, 1944. p. 28.

⁴⁹⁹ For more on the limits of citizenship in the early republic, see Douglas Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Making of the American Union*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press (forthcoming).

deemed no citizen.”⁵⁰⁰ The Commonwealth’s legal recognition of expatriation opened the door for later discussions that Jefferson and others were to have on colonization. Throughout the next 40 years, Jefferson often refers to colonized slaves as “expatriates,” signifying their complete withdrawal – legally, socially, and politically – from the United States.⁵⁰¹ Becoming a legally recognized expatriate not only rid the Commonwealth of certain individuals, but it also allowed the government to determine who could legally reenter and reside in the dominion.

After both the French and English publications of *Notes* gained popularity, Jefferson moved toward making colonization a reality. In 1789, Jefferson informed Edward Bancroft of a development in his thinking on colonization. Jefferson revealed plans to emancipate some of his slaves after he returned from France, which included resettling “as many Germans as I have grown slaves,” and “I will settle them and my slaves, on farms of 50 acres each, intermingled, and place all on the footing of the Metayers of Europe.”⁵⁰² Jefferson believed “their Children shall be brought up, as others are, in habits of property and foresight, & I have no doubt but that they will be good citizens.”⁵⁰³ Although it appears that Jefferson revised his thinking from previous statements about the inferiority of blacks and their incapability of reason, he stays true to his main argument in *Notes* that “the improvement of the blacks in body and mind, in the

⁵⁰⁰ See, William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large, Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*. Richmond: George Cochran, 1823. P. 263.

⁵⁰¹ The term *expatriate* refers to the political, social and psychological separation of an individual from their national origin. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

⁵⁰² Jefferson to Dr. Bancroft, 27 January 1789, in Joyce Appleby and Terence Ball, eds., *Jefferson: Political Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. P. 483.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

first instance of their mixture with whites, has been observed by every one.”⁵⁰⁴ Indeed, this new colonization plan was based on whites and blacks living interracially. What made the idea of such a community possible is that it would not exist in America, where Jefferson believed the only possible result of such a settlement would be a race war. America, he determined, would be strongest as a white republic.

Then Secretary of State, Jefferson’s thoughts on emancipation and colonization dominated those of his fellow Virginians. But by the 1790s, other Virginians lent their voices to the cause, including James Madison who openly supported William Thornton’s work with the Free African Union Society. Before publication of *Notes*, only a few materials published in America featured colonization as a solution to the problem of emancipation; yet, in the decade or so after the publication of *Notes*, numerous pamphlets, dissertations, and various other treatises incorporate Jefferson’s call for colonizing freed blacks. By the 1790s, leading Virginian planters were convinced of the demise of slavery. Some Virginians, like Jefferson, “tremble[d] for” their “country” when they “reflect[ed] that God is just;” while others, like George Tucker, simply believed the institution was “doomed for destruction in the immediate future,” which many believed to be imminent.⁵⁰⁵

In the December 1790 issue of *American Museum, or Universal Magazine*, Ferdinando Fairfax, a protégé of George Washington, argued that slavery needed to be

⁵⁰⁴ Peden, ed. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, p.141.

⁵⁰⁵ First quote is from *Notes*, p. 163; second quote is from Robert Colin McLean, *George Tucker: Moral Philosopher and Man of Letters*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961. p. 176. For more on popular opinions about the future of slavery in the United States, see Miller, *Wolf By the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery*; Onuf, *Jefferson’s Empire: The Language of American Nationhood*; Andrew Levy, *The First Emancipator: The Forgotten Story of Robert Carter, The Founding Father Who Freed His Slaves*. New York: Random House, 2005; and Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and “Race” in New England, 1780-1860*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

abolished. He agreed with Jefferson that blacks and whites could not live together after general emancipation occurred, citing “insurmountable” differences that would “endanger the peace of society,”⁵⁰⁶ and although intermarriage seemed a tangible way to assimilate freed blacks, the idea remained too “repugnant to the general feelings” of society.⁵⁰⁷ For Fairfax, the only viable option after emancipation seemed to be colonization. Fairfax suggested that Congress buy land in Africa in order to set up a colony to which free blacks could be removed to a distance from this country.⁵⁰⁸ Removed blacks would not only encounter their “native climate,” but also to Christianize the continent’s “rude race of men.”⁵⁰⁹ Like those before him, Fairfax saw civilizing opportunities in colonization. Fairfax also asserted that embarking on trade with such a colony would repay the United States government for their expenses, making the idea a profitable in economic as well as social means.

Avoiding a State of War

The specter of race wars infused debates over colonization in the early republic. In 1796, St. George Tucker, a law professor at the College of William and Mary, argued that “all men are by nature equally free and independent,” possessing “life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property.”⁵¹⁰ Tucker’s argument reflected his awareness of the Haitian Revolution and the probability of the “calamities” to “spread

⁵⁰⁶ Ferdinando Fairfax, “Plea for liberating the negroes within the United States,” in *American Museum, or Universal Magazine*, VIII (December 1790), 285-287.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Mc Lean, p. 178.

like a contagion” to other slaveholding regions on his side of the Atlantic.⁵¹¹ The potential for bloodshed in the name of emancipation paled in comparison to the horrors of what could happen *after* emancipation, as imagined by Virginia’s planter elite. Humanitarianism and evangelicalism motivated early discussions of colonization, but now, as emancipation seemed inevitable, Virginians vigorously debated how to best avoid becoming “victims” of newly freed men.

In just a year after Tucker’s *Dissertation*, Jefferson engaged the judge in debate, working out preliminary logistics of his own plan. Well aware of Tucker’s criticism that he “could not have weighed the difficulties and expense of an attempt to colonize 300,000 persons,” Jefferson considered the alternatives.⁵¹² In a letter to Tucker, Jefferson asked: “Could we procure lands beyond the limits of the U.S. to form a receptacle for these people?”⁵¹³ A discouraged Jefferson continued, surmising that three factors would prevent the less costly wide-scale resettlement of freed blacks on the North American continent. First, why would the holders of these lands – Spain, Great Britain, and the Indian nations – wish to relieve the United States of their slaves? Second, according to popular racial ideology and theories of the period, it remained open to question whether or not Africans could survive in the colder and snowier climates of the Midwest and Canada. Finally, and more central to Jefferson’s republican ideals, “it is impossible not to look forward to distant times, when our rapid multiplication will expand itself beyond those limits and cover the whole northern, if not southern continent, with a people speaking the same language” and without “either blot or mixture on that surface.”⁵¹⁴ The

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 179.

⁵¹² Staudenraus, p. 3.

⁵¹³ Jefferson to St. George Tucker, 28 August 1797, in *Jefferson: Political Writings*, p. 488.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

practicality of the plan seemed lost as Jefferson imagined America's pale future.⁵¹⁵ Although Jefferson understood local resettlement to be cheaper, he also knew the limits of American social and political concerns regarding free blacks.

Still, colonization appeared to represent the only option – beyond racial mixing – for the peaceful emancipation of hundreds of thousands of slaves. Jefferson persisted, suggesting a location outside of the United States but not as distant as Africa. He remarked to Tucker that “The West Indies offer a more probable & practicable retreat for them [freed slaves].”⁵¹⁶ Indeed, the West Indies appeared to be ideal, offering a suitable climate, fewer Europeans to resist the idea and the promising black republic of Haiti.⁵¹⁷ Although Jefferson feared the spread of the Haitian Revolution to the enslaved population of mainland North America, he also thought optimistically about the potential example the nation offered free blacks to be removed from the United States.

A champion of self-government, Jefferson thought Haiti “the most promising portion of them [islands],” because “blacks are established into a sovereignty *de facto*, and have organized themselves under regular laws & government.”⁵¹⁸ Jefferson wanted to remove freed slaves into a situation where they could self-govern and become an

⁵¹⁵ In a 4 March 1815 letter to Francis C. Gray, Jefferson worked out mathematical equations depicting the process through which blacks became mulattoes. Even though “its is understood in natural history that a fourth cross of one race of animals with another gives an issue equivalent for all sensible purposes to the original blood,” a mulatto cannot pass for white because the “principle of law, *partus sequitur ventrem*” makes freedom dependent on the mother's legal status. See, *the Complete Jefferson: Containing His Major Writings, Published and Unpublished, Except His Letters*. Saul K. Padover, ed. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969. p. 1023.

⁵¹⁶ Jefferson to Tucker, 28 August 1797, in *Jefferson: Political Writings*, p.488.

⁵¹⁷ For more on the relationship between Jefferson and the Haitian Republic, see “Tim Matthewson, “Jefferson and Haiti,” in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 61, No. 2, (May 1995), 209-248; and Peter S. Onuf, “To Declare Them Free and Independent People: Race, Slavery and National Identity in Jefferson's Thought,” in *The Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (Spring 1998), 1-46.

⁵¹⁸ Jefferson to Tucker, 28 August 1797, in *Jefferson: Political Writings*, p. 488.

independent nation in the image of the American republic. Besides, he reasoned, Haiti's military and diplomatic weakness was evident in the face of "our relative strength," making any future threat from the black republic highly unlikely.⁵¹⁹ Jefferson then concluded, "Nature seemed to have formed these islands to be a receptacle" as the perfect place for "the blacks transplanted into this hemisphere."⁵²⁰

Jefferson offered his services to Tucker and the Legislature of Virginia in 1797 as Secretary of State. If the Commonwealth decided to pursue colonization, he would immediately contact whatever foreign powers necessary. Jefferson also suggested to Tucker, a key member of the legislature, that "Africa would offer a last & undoubted resort, if all others more desirable should fail us."⁵²¹ Supporters of African colonization retracted slightly, deeming it feasible only if the logistically easier option of removal somewhere in the Americas remained. Otherwise, the plan likely would have to be abandoned. Nevertheless, the option of resettlement in Africa remained in Thomas Jefferson's mind – an option also embraced by French and British colonizationists that had begun with the founding of Sierra Leone in 1787.

By the end of the 1790s, Virginia planters settled on colonization as the best option to alleviate their concerns regarding emancipation. They determined the possibility of racial amalgamation and assimilation by blacks to be reserved only for those freedmen and women who proved exceptional. Thomas Jefferson and several other planters believed that most blacks were not able to rise to the level of white civilization even if a program to educate free men and women in the arts and sciences were established. To prove his point, Jefferson argued, "the improvement of the blacks in

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Ibid. p. 489.

body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by every one, and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition in life.”⁵²² Nevertheless, “many [blacks] have been brought up to the handicraft arts, and from that circumstance have always been associated with whites.”⁵²³ “Some have been liberally educated, and all have lived in countries where the arts and sciences are cultivated to a considerable degree,” but, Jefferson contended, “never yet could I find a black had uttered a thought above the level of plain narration.”⁵²⁴ According to Jefferson, blacks could not be remade into proper, responsible citizens of an American republic.

Jefferson held high praise for men like Benjamin Banneker, whom French physiocratic friends used to illustrate that blacks’ perceived intellectual shortcomings were due to the degraded conditions of slavery. Physiocrats argued against the theory that simple genetic or natural qualities caused blacks’ perceived inferiority. However, Jefferson consistently argued that men like Banneker were not representative of all freedmen. Thirty years later, Jefferson seemed annoyed by the numerous letters he received pointing to Banneker as an example of the potential for blacks’ intellectual capacities and suitability for assimilation. Jefferson alluded that Banneker wrote his noteworthy almanacs with help from a white man, adding, “I have a long letter from Banneker, which shows him to have had a mind of very common stature indeed.”⁵²⁵ Besides, he noted, “Their amalgamation with the other color produces a degradation to

⁵²² This is from a comparison of blacks and Indians in which Jefferson demonstrates, in his mind, the superiority of Indians’ intellectual abilities. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. Pedan, p.140.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Jefferson to Joel Barlow, 1809, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Volume IX.*, ed. Ford. p.261.

which no lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character can innocently consent.”⁵²⁶

In an early draft of his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson generalized about this evidence, referring to inconsistency and ambiguity. He characterized the “compositions published under” the name of Phyllis Wheatley as “below the dignity of criticism.”⁵²⁷ Jefferson harbored doubts that blacks could rise to the level of whites in the arts. Yet, somewhat optimistically, Jefferson wrote to Banneker, “Nobody wishes more than I do to see such proofs [sic] as you exhibit, that nature has given our black brethren, talents equal to those of other colors of men.”⁵²⁸ Unconvinced, Jefferson expressed his view “that the appearance of a want of [talents] is owing merely to the degraded condition of their existence, both in Africa and America.”⁵²⁹ Nevertheless, in Jefferson’s mind blacks remained the least civilized and least likely to assimilate of all peoples of color.

Jefferson brushed aside Henri Gregoire’s *An Enquiry Concerning the Intellectual and Moral Faculties, and Literature of Negroes*, as well as others’ suggestions that blacks could indeed rise up to the level of white civilization. “Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches of poetry,” he continued, “among the Blacks there is misery enough, god knows, but no poetry.”⁵³⁰ The reason, in Jefferson’s mind, remained rooted in the animalistic qualities he believed plagued African-Americans. “Love,” he wrote, “is the peculiar rostrum of the poet,” and blacks’ “love is ardent,” but “it tickles the

⁵²⁶ Jefferson to Edward Coles, 1814. Ibid. p. 478.

⁵²⁷ Thomas Jefferson Papers, manuscript “Notes on the State of Virginia,” at Massachusetts Historical Society. p.85.

⁵²⁸ 30 August 1791, Jefferson to Banneker, as quoted in Peden, ed. *Notes on the State of Virginia*, p.287.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ “Notes on the State of Virginia,” manuscript, p. 85.

senses only.”⁵³¹ Jefferson believed blacks lacked the higher faculties of art and reason, making assimilation and intermixture in the United States undesirable. He argued, much as Edward Long had argued in 1770s London, that racial intermixture would dilute the superior qualities of whites. The solution for him, therefore, was to remove the majority of those persons who could only water down the intellectual and moral faculties of whites if left to share one nation.

The colonization movement gained valuable momentum *and* authority after two key events in 1800: Gabriel’s rebellion and the election of Jefferson to the presidency. Perhaps inspired by the Haitian Revolution, Gabriel Prosser, a slave in Henrico County, Virginia, led a revolt against local plantations owners with the intention of marching on the state capitol in Richmond. Prosser, along with twenty of his fellow conspirators, was executed less than two months later in October. The event confirmed whites’ fears that slaves – whose population had grown since 1790 from 697,681 to 893,602 – were willing and able to revolt against their owners.⁵³²

A flurry of correspondence flowed between then Governor of Virginia James Monroe and his fellow Virginian in the nation’s capitol shortly after Gabriel’s execution. Clearly aware of the power Jefferson now held as the newly elected president of the United States in 1800, and its potential benefit to the colonization movement, Monroe consulted Jefferson on the possibility of purchasing “lands without the limits of this [Virginia] State to which persons obnoxious to the laws or dangerous to the peace of

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² The increase of the slave population was a steady 28%, while the free black population jumped 46%, from 59,527 to 108,435 over a ten year period. Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, “Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States.” Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2002. (Table 1).

society be removed.”⁵³³ The Governor of Virginia and the General Assembly were motivated by both immediate and future concerns. Monroe referred to Gabriel’s Rebellion as having “produced” this resolution; yet, he also notified Jefferson of another intention of the legislative body: “the resolution is deemed...to involve in it the condition of those people, the embarrassment they have already occasioned us” and the “extreme difficulty in remedying it” without the use of removal.⁵³⁴ Indeed, Monroe informed Jefferson of the grander plan of the assembly to colonize a large population of freed men, not just those who rebelled.

Jefferson took the letter under consideration for five months in part because of the “importance of the subject,” but also because of the demands placed upon him by the position of president.⁵³⁵ Secretary of State James Madison may have urged the president to act with more speed, however, after receiving word that the French planned to remove “Negroes and people of Color” from “St. Domingo and other French Colonies” to nearby Louisiana and Florida, territories not yet within the United States.⁵³⁶ Regardless, the president had no objections to the Virginia Assembly’s idea of purchasing lands on which to colonize a large population of freed blacks. In fact, he revisited a previous suggestion citing the Ohio country as a possible site, only to reason that it might well be too expensive or that other states in the Union could object to what ostensibly would be a black territory applying for statehood in the future. With slavery still legal in the South,

⁵³³ Monroe to Jefferson, 15 June 1801, in Slaughter, *Virginian History of African Colonization*. p. 2.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Jefferson to Monroe, 24 November 1801, in Slaughter, *Virginian History of African Colonization*, p.3.

⁵³⁶ Rufus King to Secretary of State (James Madison), 2 March 1802, in *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, Comprising His Letters, Private and Official, His Public Documents, and His Speeches. Volume IV, 1801-1806*. Charles R. King, ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1971. p. 77-78.

would it “be desirable to the State of Virginia itself, or to other States, especially those...in its vicinity,” to have a state comprised mostly of freedmen?⁵³⁷ Such considerations compelled Jefferson to focus his colonization efforts on lands external to the United States, but the question remained where?

Familiar with Britain’s colony in Sierra Leone, Thomas Jefferson contacted the United States’ Minister to Great Britain, Rufus King. King was charged with trying to work out a deal in which freed blacks from the United States could settle in the African colony. Citing Gabriel’s rebellion and the Haitian Revolution, Jefferson worried about the manner in which rebellious blacks were typically dealt with. Executions, he argued, could only “excite sensibility in the public mind,” so an alternative was sought by both he and the Virginia Assembly.⁵³⁸ Over the course of the year since Monroe’s letter to the president, both Jefferson and the assembly became convinced that Africa offered “the most desirable receptacle” for freed men and women.⁵³⁹ Jefferson unenthusiastically proposed negotiating with “the natives, on some part of the coast, to obtain a settlement, and, by establishing an African company, combine with it commercial operations, which might not only reimburse expenses but procure profit also.”⁵⁴⁰ Ever concerned about security in his own republic, Jefferson realized that such a colony on the West Coast of Africa would lay exposed. Shortly after the settlement of Sierra Leone, French frigates bombarded the colony. What would prevent them or any other foreign power from doing the same to an American colony in the same vicinity?

⁵³⁷ Jefferson to Monroe, 24 November 1801, in Slaughter, *Virginian History of African Colonization*, p. 3.

⁵³⁸ Jefferson to Rufus King, 12 July 1802, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Volume VIII, 1801-1806*. New York: GP Putnam’s Sons, 1897. p. 161-162.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

Expense also proved a concern for the president. With a colony already established in Sierra Leone, Jefferson wanted King to contact appropriate officials in Great Britain to propose “incorporating our emigrants with theirs, to make one stronger rather than two weak colonies.”⁵⁴¹ The idea was to share the colony and its expense. Jefferson proposed other ways, via King, that Great Britain and the United States could fray the massive costs associated with colonizing tens of thousand of blacks. Perhaps they could subscribe to a system of light indenture “as the Germans and others who come to this country [the US]” do by “giving their labor for a certain time to some one who will pay their passage” to Sierra Leone. When coupled with the masters of vessels being “permitted to carry articles of commerce from this country and take back others from that, which might yield a mercantile profit sufficient to cover the expenses of the voyage, a serious difficulty would be removed.”⁵⁴² The obstacle of expense had already derailed several plans to colonize West Africa as early as the 1780s when Henry Smeathman attempted to settle a colony on the continent. It seemed that Jefferson also found it difficult to raise the appropriate funds to carry out his scheme.

Jefferson revealed his intimate knowledge of the settlement and its recent problems, reminding King of a group of former slave-hunting Jamaican Maroons who had recently been resettled in Sierra Leone to quell violence at the hands of Black Loyalists. Jefferson wanted King to calm his British counterparts fears of violence if more free American blacks were added to the colony. He reasoned that allowing American emigrants would be “desirable because the blacks settled at Sierra Leone,

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Jefferson to Rufus King, 13 July 1802, in *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, Comprising His Letters, Private and Official, His Public Documents, and His Speeches. Volume IV, 1801-1806*. Charles R. King, ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1971. p. 172.

having chiefly gone from these states [in particular, Virginia, at the hands of Lord Dunmore's Proclamation],” would receive “their acquaintances and relations.”⁵⁴³ Such an effort, Jefferson argued, would be humanitarian by reuniting long lost families and by aiding the Maroons' efforts to calm some of the recent violence. Yet, Jefferson's main concern remained avoiding violence between the whites and blacks in America.

The timing could not have been worse. Rufus King met with resistance from the start of negotiations with his counterparts in London. Jefferson's belief that more freed blacks from America might help resolve the violence plaguing the colony convinced no one in Whitehall. Furthermore, the Sierra Leone Company seemed to be running out of funds because of the disruptions in trade caused by the revolts, as well as the cost of in putting down the violence. More importantly, “in no event should they be willing to receive more of these people from the United States, as it was exactly that portion of settlers” – and not the urban poor from London, they noted – “which, by their idleness and turbulence, had kept the settlement in constant danger of dissolution.”⁵⁴⁴ It was the Maroons from Jamaica, a non-Christian group, who were “more industrious and orderly than the others,” who “supported the authority of the government and its laws,” and not the indolent blacks from America.⁵⁴⁵ The future of this British colony of freed, civilized and virtuously laboring blacks in Africa seemed bleak.

The failed attempt to land colonists in Sierra Leone could have been the end of American colonization efforts. Yet, Jefferson continued to discuss colonization with many of his counterparts in government. Correspondence between the Virginia

⁵⁴³ Jefferson to Rufus King, 12 July 1802, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Volume VIII, 1801-1806*. New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1897. p. 161-162.

⁵⁴⁴ Jefferson to John Lynch, 21 January 1811, in Slaughter, *Virginian History of African Colonization*, p. 1239-1240.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

Assembly, Governor Monroe, and President Jefferson increased on the matter in the years immediately following Gabriel's Rebellion. In 1802, the Virginia Assembly resolved to pursue the purchase of lands in Africa or South America for the removal of treasonous African-Americans as well as those newly freed blacks willing to emigrate. The Colonization Society, as the Assembly referred to the organization in charge of buying said lands, awaited word from Jefferson on the feasibility of Africa.⁵⁴⁶ If the response was positive, the assembly would follow Jefferson's lead and purchase the lands.

Just as Jefferson asked King to open negotiations with Great Britain regarding Sierra Leone, the Tucker family again publicly vocalized their support for colonization of freed blacks. Under the pseudonym Sylvestris, George Tucker pointed to the recent purchase of the Louisiana Territories as an ideal place on which to plant a settlement. Besides the purchase being a "good bargain" financially for the United States, Sylvestris suggested that the lands offer a place for the expansion of America's population. At first Tucker focused on the growing immigrant population in America's eastern urban areas as prime candidates for immigration west. But he soon cast his attention on Native Americans and free blacks. Tucker reasoned that Indians would – or, at least should – be willing to exchange their lands in the east with those now available west of the Mississippi River. This alone could open millions of acres in the east (he guessed about 3 million) for settlement by European immigrants.

Tucker continued, "Of the same nature, though of less practical aspect, is another Utopian idea, which I presume to suggest to genuine friends of freedom."⁵⁴⁷ Tucker

⁵⁴⁶ Not the *American Colonization Society*. Slaughter, *Virginian History of African Colonization*, p. 4-5.

⁵⁴⁷ Sylvestris, *Reflections, on the Cession of Louisiana to the United States, by Sylvestris*. Washington, DC: Samuel Harrison Smith, 1803.

believed “the southern parts of Louisiana bordering upon the Gulph of Mexico lie under a climate more favourable for the African constitution than any part of the United States.”⁵⁴⁸ If abolition happened in Virginia, “we may colonize those unhappy people, whom our ancestors have brought in chains from their native country, and we continue to hold in bondage.”⁵⁴⁹ Tucker proposed that those already emancipated and those “delinquents, whose lives may be forfeited to the considerations of self-preservation, may be banished for attempts to regain their native freedom.”⁵⁵⁰ Countering Jefferson’s concerns, he asserted that “the distance of that part of Louisiana from the United States might recommend it as a place of exile, also for other criminals. -- There they might form settlements, and perhaps repent, and become useful members of society among each other: but I am not more sanguine upon this subject, than the former...Time and experiment may enable us to judge better.”⁵⁵¹ Mixed in with his utopian ideal are elements of previous colonization plans, notably those of Benezet and Thornton.

Virginia’s House of Delegates resolved to abandon their plans to purchase lands in Louisiana. They seemed to agree with Jefferson that it “may hereafter become dangerous to the public safety.”⁵⁵² Other options remained. President Jefferson had recently assured members of the House that “I will keep it [African colonization] under my constant attention, and omit no occasion which may occur in giving it effect.”⁵⁵³ With memories of Gabriel’s Rebellion still fresh, the majority of Virginia planters wanted freedmen as far away from the commonwealth as possible, rather than chance future

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Slaughter, *Virginian History of African Colonization*, p.6.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

violence as the country expanded. Given Jefferson's belief that the United States could one day encompass the entirety of the North American continent, Africa offered an alternative to resettling blacks on lands integral to the future of American expansion. Furthermore, Jefferson, aware of the Maroons' effect on the freed black population of Sierra Leone, saw the precedent set by Britain's removal policy. The Maroon, he noted, "were more industrious and orderly than the others [resettled Black Loyalists from America], and supported the authority of the government and its laws."⁵⁵⁴ Britain had funneled free blacks to Africa, not to other, more valuable territories within their empire. Given Jefferson's respect for British foreign policy, he reasoned that America should follow suit with its larger and potentially more dangerous African population.

As Madison's presidency began, and the War of 1812 took center stage in the minds of Americans, the "Sage of Monticello" remained focused on colonization. In 1811, Jefferson continued his support for the African project: "Having long ago made up my mind on this subject, I have no hesitation in saying that I have ever thought *that the most desirable measures which could be adopted for* [sic] gradually drawing off this part of our population."⁵⁵⁵ Yet, Jefferson's tone began to change in retirement. Africa, he argued, would be "most advantageous for themselves" because "going from a country possessing all the useful arts, they might be the means of transplanting them among the inhabitants of Africa" and "would thus carry back to the country of their origin the *seeds of civilization* [italics mine]."⁵⁵⁶ Jefferson adopted the humanitarian and missionary elements advanced by other early supporters of colonization who were motivated by the

⁵⁵⁴ Jefferson to John Lynch, 21 January 1811, in Slaughter, *Virginian History of African Colonization*, p. 1239-1240.

⁵⁵⁵ Jefferson to Lynd, 21 January 1811, in Slaughter, *Virginian History of African Colonization*, p.

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⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

goals to spread the gospel and alleviate the suffering of the poor. Colonization, in Jefferson's mind, was no longer simply a way to avoid race wars or the assimilation of an unwanted racial group.

The tone of the colonization movement in general began to evolved from an idea drawing support mostly from the planter elite, to a concern of the national government. Jefferson lamented that as president he tried to negotiate a deal with Portugal to settle free blacks in South America, presumably Brazil, but that "proved abortive."⁵⁵⁷ Adding that "*I shall be willing to do any thing I can to give it [colonization] effect and safety,*" but "I am" just a "private individual, and can only use endeavors with individuals."⁵⁵⁸ Jefferson suggested "the *National Government* can address themselves at once to those of Europe...and will unquestionably be ready to exert its influence with those nations."⁵⁵⁹ With Jefferson's approval, the movement had begun to spread into a national phenomenon.

Merchants such as Paul Cuffe transported volunteer freedmen to Sierra Leone in 1814, and by 1816 the American Colonization Society was founded in Washington, DC. The A.C.S. marked the arrival of the movement on the national scene, moving it to the center of the debate on slavery and emancipation. In part, the A.C.S. wanted to Christianize and civilize Africa, set up trade with the continent, and establish a free black nation, which later became Liberia. Under Jefferson's auspices, several national

⁵⁵⁷ Slaughter, *Virginian History of African Colonization*, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

politicians lent their names to the founding documents of the society, including Henry Clay and James Monroe.⁵⁶⁰

Two idealistic and self-proclaimed righteous men were instrumental in the founding of the American Colonization Society. Robert Finley, a white pastor from New Jersey, sympathized with America's free blacks. His well-known search for a moral improvement group to join – preferably one aimed at helping African-Americans – led him towards the colonization movement previously promoted by Thomas Jefferson. Finley confided to a friend, “The longer I live to see the wretchedness of men, the more I admire the virtue of those who devise, and with patience labour to execute, plans for relief of the wretched.”⁵⁶¹ He continued, “the state of *free blacks* has very much occupied my mind” because “Their number increases greatly, and their wretchedness too, as appears to me.”⁵⁶² Moreover, “Every thing connected with their conditions, including their colour, is against them; nor is there much prospect that their state can ever be greatly meliorated, while they shall continue among us.”⁵⁶³ Reverend Finley, like many abolitionists and colonizationists, was frustrated by the failures of the movement thus far:

Could not the rich and benevolent devise means to form a colony on some part of the coast of Africa, similar to the one at Sierra Leone, which might gradually induce free blacks to go and settle, devising for them the means

⁵⁶⁰ For more on the American Colonization Society, see Staudenraus, *The American Colonization Society* for the period to the Civil War, and Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005, for the full span of the Society's existence.

⁵⁶¹ Finley continues, stating his reasons for support of colonization schemes: “Could they be sent back to Africa, a threefold benefit would arise. We should be cleared of them. We should send to Africa, a population partly civilized and Christianized for its benefit. And our blacks themselves, would be put in a better situation. Think much upon this subject, and then please write me when you have leave.” 14 February 1815, Robert Finley from Basking Ridge, NJ, as quoted in Mathew Carey, *Letters on the Colonization Society and Its Probable Results*. Philadelphia: L. Johnson, 1832. p.5.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

*of getting there, and of protection and support till they were established?*⁵⁶⁴

Meanwhile, in the early winter of 1816, Charles Fenton Mercer concluded the colonization movement was not making progress.⁵⁶⁵ While Mercer socialized one evening, a friend criticized Jefferson's colonization scheme. Philip Doddridge, an attorney and congressman from Pennsylvania known for his anti-Jeffersonian Federalist views, blamed the former President for ignoring the Virginia Assembly's inquiries about colonizing their free black population. Mercer, inspired by the boisterous Doddridge and emboldened by drink, left the session with the goal of correcting Jefferson's failure.⁵⁶⁶

Several prominent white men met in Washington, DC in the winter of 1816/17 to discuss forming their own colonization focused advocacy group. Charles F. Mercer, Robert Finley, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and others met in the recently torched city to organize the American Colonization Society. Washington was chosen as the site for the headquarters of the Society because of its proximity to Congress and, therefore, federal funding.⁵⁶⁷ The men who gathered had varying agendas. They traveled to the nation's capitol to answer Robert Finley's protest against how little had been accomplished toward reaching Thomas Jefferson's goal of removing blacks from America.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁵ There is a debate among scholars regarding who – either Charles F. Mercer or Robert Finley – was the principle founder of the American Colonization Society. For our purposes here it is counterproductive and unnecessary to take sides on the debate. The Society was founded in Washington, DC by several men whose goals were numerous, but centered on removing free blacks from America. For more on the debate, see: Douglas Egerton, “‘Its Origin Is Not A Little Curious:’ A New Look at the American Colonization Society,” in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol.5, No.4 (Winter 1985), 463-480; Staudenraus, *American Colonization Movement*, p. 15-30; and Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, p.6-7.

⁵⁶⁶ Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution*, p.13.

⁵⁶⁷ Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution*, p.10-15 and Staudenraus, p. 18-20.

Members of the new organization refused to name the abolition of slavery as the goal of the Society. The Society's published goal was to colonize "Free People of Color" and not to emancipate the slaves. The nuanced wording was aimed at protecting the Society's potentially lucrative pipeline of funding from Congress, which was composed of so many influential Virginians and Southerners. The weekend before Christmas, Washington's main political newspaper, the *Daily National Intelligencer*, reported in a news brief that described the meeting, "It is scarcely necessary to add, that all connection with this proposition [colonization] with the emancipation of the slaves, present or future, is explicitly disclaimed."⁵⁶⁸ The brief writer added tactfully, "No vested rights of any party are proposed to be in the least affected by it, unless beneficially."⁵⁶⁹ A day later the paper published an account of the proceedings, noting that Henry Clay, the presiding chairman, reiterated the colonization society's unwillingness to attack the institution of slavery itself. Clay left out the possibility of discussion on the question of emancipation, remarking "that he hoped, in their deliberations, they would be guided by that moderation, politeness and deference for the opinion of each other, which were essential to any useful result."⁵⁷⁰ Regardless, the Society immediately embarked on anti-slavery activities, pushing through Congress the Slave Trade Act of 1819, which called for the repatriation of illegally traded slaves (those imported after the 1808 abolition of the transatlantic slave-trade) back to Africa.

With federal funding in hand, the A.C.S. launched missions to West Africa to find suitable lands for resettlement. In 1818, the Society appointed Ebenezer Burgess to lead a reconnaissance and diplomatic mission to scout for lands in Africa that would prove

⁵⁶⁸ *Daily National Intelligencer*, Monday, 23 December 1816, Vol. IV, No. 1235.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ *Daily National Intelligencer*, Tuesday, 24 December 1816, Vol. IV, No. 1236.

suitable for the first African-American colony. Burgess seemed unimpressed by British efforts to create a free colony of blacks in Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, he and his crew appeared optimistic about fulfilling their task of finding a piece of land with a harbor suitable for accommodating large ships, with easy inland trade access, and separate from the “European powers.”⁵⁷¹ The crew reported favorably on Banana and Sherbro Islands and, upon returning to America, plans were drawn up to land the first settlement there, just south of Sierra Leone.⁵⁷²

Even after the movement went national with the founding of the A.C.S., a now retired Jefferson continued to fix his attention on what he considered Virginia’s coming problems with freedmen and women by discussing the issue with concerned citizens. Moreover, Jefferson felt a sense of duty to voice his opinion as the “Missouri Question” brought slavery to fore once again. Alarmed by the re-emergence of slavery on the national political scene, Jefferson wrote his friend William Short in 1820, “I have been among the most sanguine in believing that our Union would be of long duration. I now doubt it much.”⁵⁷³ The Missouri question highlighted the depth to which slavery threatened the republic. Jefferson again turned to colonization as one method to bring about the peaceful emancipation of slaves, an event that might save the Union.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷¹ Samuel Swan to Burgess and Mills, 31 March 1818, in “Ebenezer Burgess Papers,” 1818-1828, Massachusetts Historical Society, Box 1.

⁵⁷² This early government sponsored expedition experienced several difficulties. For more, see Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, p.36-58.

⁵⁷³ Jefferson to William Short, 13 April 1820, in Henry S. Randall, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson*. Vol. III. New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858. p. 456.

⁵⁷⁴ By this point, the slave population had more than doubled since the 1790 census to 1,538,022 persons; the free black population quadrupled to 233,634. See, Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, “Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States.” Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2002. (Table 1).

Jared Sparks, editor of the *North American Review*, sent Jefferson a copy of an article on colonization that appeared in the 1824 issue. Sparks asked Jefferson to comment on the article that described the American colony of freed blacks in West Africa. Jefferson expressed hope in the colony's future, but more importantly, he eagerly supported the latest efforts of the American Colonization Society. African colonization emerged as a realistic possibility in 1824, just as the first groups of settlers arrived in Liberia. Despite renewed optimism among the American public, Jefferson wondered if expense would instead block free blacks from settling the coast of Africa.

Jefferson returned to ideas he had advanced earlier in an 1811 letter to John Lynch, presenting colonization as a philanthropic and humanitarian endeavor. He suggested to Sparks that by introducing the "arts of a cultivated life, and the blessings of civilization and science" on native Africans, "we may make to them some retribution for the long course of injuries we have been committing on their population."⁵⁷⁵ For Jefferson, "the colonization society is to be considered as a missionary society."⁵⁷⁶ What began as an attempt to prevent massive bloodshed at the hands of former slaves had now been transformed, at least in Jefferson's mind, into a mission to civilize Africans, affording them "our patronage and protection."⁵⁷⁷ With blacks as a "separate, free and independent people," the building of a white republic could resume.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁵ Jefferson to Jared Sparks, 4 February 1824, in Paul Leicester Ford, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Volume X*. New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1899. p. 288.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

Conclusion: “Deeply affecting the fate...of continents and races of men”⁵⁷⁹

Thomas Jefferson had an enormous impact on the development of the colonization movement in the United States and Atlantic world during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He often downplayed his role in the growth of the movement, claiming shortly before his death that he had not written on the topic much since the publication of *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Perhaps, when considering he wrote over 18,000 letters in his lifetime, any topic on which Jefferson wrote fewer than 100 letters could be considered insignificant by the author himself. However, it is clear that Jefferson’s input on the topic helped propel an old idea on to the center stage of the emancipation debate. Without Jefferson’s support, the idea of removal may have died before the first black American colonists landed in Liberia.

The origination of the idea of African colonization can be found in two hundred years of British policy. In removing the Catholic Acadians and other problematic groups, officials hoped to disperse and assimilate them into the larger British society. If nothing else, the goal was to civilize these rather uncivilized Frenchmen who were willing to intermarry with local Indians. The primary goal of African colonization reflects these ideals. Colonization would relieve the land of the tensions and possibility of violence associated with emancipation. Some American colonizationists wanted the emigrants to act as missionaries for the gospel and others wanted the colonists to teach native Africans the civilized skills of farming, free labor and even reading and writing. All wanted them to live in a society that reflected American values and ideals that included, as one example, the fear of miscegenation.

⁵⁷⁹ Slaughter, *The Virginian History of African Colonization*, p.1.

Although African colonization schemes had already surfaced in London and the Americas, Thomas Jefferson emerged as a public figure around whom various colonization societies around the United States could unite. Well aware of European efforts to colonize Sierra Leone, Jefferson popularized the idea in America and the rest of the Atlantic world with his comments on the topic in *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Initially, Jefferson argued that colonization remained the only way to keep black Americans from killing their former owners once they were emancipated. Gabriel's Rebellion in 1800 seemed to only cement Jefferson's fears that freed slaves would kill their former masters and solidify the need for the construction of a white republic. Yet, Jefferson slowly changed his tone. Convinced emancipation was near and necessary, he spoke of the humanitarian and missionary effects colonization might have on Africa. By the time of his death, Jefferson's philosophy regarding emancipation resembled British humanitarians' ideals of some 50 years earlier.

Most importantly, Jefferson understood the potential Africa held for the expansion of American liberty in the Atlantic world. By helping to build a black republic in West Africa, whites fulfilled their moral duty to spread Christianity and repay those they kept in bondage. Moreover, removing blacks allowed whites to focus on their own white republic, void of the dangers presented by tens of thousands of former slaves living freely among them. Two republics, one black and one white, were built on the same ideals of liberty even if separated by a vast ocean.

PART III: (RE)MAKING THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

INTRODUCTION

The 1780s and 1790s witnessed the formation of several free black fraternal societies in Boston, Providence, Newport, and Philadelphia. These communities adopted cautious support for colonization. In their conversations and debates regarding the merits of colonization, northern free blacks significantly altered the meaning of colonization and its fundamental characteristic: removal. Supporters' references to colonization as emigration rested on the idea that any one who decided to go to Africa must do so on a strictly voluntary basis. Whites and blacks sought different goals as the two races began to share ideas about how to colonize Africa. Blacks resisted forcible migration; whites mandated it.

Elite whites imagined an ideal situation in which virtually no “unworthy” free blacks would remain in the United States after colonization. Some blacks, on the other hand, saw colonization as an opportunity for them to voluntarily return to Africa. Whether born in Africa or the Americas, blacks in the early republic imagined a symbolic home in Africa. In the 1800s-1810s, a new generation of emigrationists led by Paul Cuffe began to view Africa as a land of heathens. Although they did not lose sight of Africa as an ancestral homeland, emigration expanded its reach and was no longer about “returning” to the continent; instead they focused on helping their “brethren” find the light of Christianity, liberal government, free trade, and on finding an end to the now illegal Atlantic slave trade.

By 1816, the founding of the American Colonization Society seemed to end ongoing black emigrationist plans by convincing free persons of color that it represented an attempt by whites to forcibly remove them – even if through mostly non-physical coercion – from the United States. Black fraternal organizations and state conventions united against colonization, which they viewed as a second dispersion of Africans in the diaspora. They preferred instead to develop new emigration schemes on their own terms. Haiti soon became the focus of emigrationists for several reasons, but most importantly for its iconic existence as the lone black republic in the western hemisphere. Creating a strong black nation in its own backyard would be a powerful countermeasure to America’s desire to rid itself of the free black population. Emigration developed into a new form of colonization, one that centered on the black-led spread of enlightenment ideals to persons of African descent throughout the Atlantic world.

Colonization in the United States helped to remake the largest diaspora in the Atlantic. This time, however, the marginalized peoples involved comprised approximately 20% of population in the very nation that refused to extend them full citizenship privileges and the rights of man. Blacks, who were unwilling participants in the African Diaspora, were alienated in their adopted land. The rights of man, as Edmund Burke wrote, “had been defined as “inalienable” because they were supposed to be independent of all governments.”⁵⁸⁰ Furthermore, “all human beings were citizens of some kind of political community; if the laws of their country did not live up to the demands of the Rights of Man, they were expected to change them.”⁵⁸¹ The United States seemed unbending in its refusal to follow Burke’s argument. Accordingly, Burke

⁵⁸⁰ Edmund Burke in Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951. p. 291.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. p.292.

suggested that populations living in a nation without civil rights protection held the legal right to affect change, “by legislation in democratic countries or through revolutionary action in despotisms.”⁵⁸² African-Americans understood their place as a population on the margins. Some blacks sought legal redress for this problem, others advocated more revolutionary measures: migration out of the United States.

As support for emigration increased under the leadership of strong black colonizationists, African-Americans looked abroad, constructing a pan-Atlantic identity. What W. Jeffrey Bolster identifies as “an emerging transnational blackness” that created African identities based on the symbolism of ancestral traditions and place was based in part in the emigration movement. Black sailors served as a “conduit for an emerging sense of transnational blackness,” and the new black-led colonization movement represented the idea of blackness that spread along this pipeline to and from West Africa, Haiti, Central and South America.⁵⁸³

Yet, African-Americans failed to emigrate to Africa in large numbers precisely because of the continent’s symbolic rather than physical importance to their identity. Reality set in when African-Americans arrived on the shores of Sierra Leone and Liberia. The people they encountered were not as much like themselves as they had imagined. African-Americans saw native Africans in established villages and not in the diaspora. These Africans were ethnically, religiously, and culturally different than those black men and women who were returning to the continent. Few were Christian, most were difficult to deal with in land negotiations and diplomacy. Reports sent back to the United States

⁵⁸² Ibid. p.293.

⁵⁸³ Bolster, “An Inner Diaspora,” in *Through a Glass Darkly*, p. 422.

and Great Britain described – after the reader peeled back layers of propaganda – a land that was foreign and, in many ways, hostile to the blacks settlers.

Already marginalized, several thousand African-Americans chose to emigrate to other regions of the Atlantic world, such as Canada, where laws afforded them equal protection. African-Americans turned their attention elsewhere, as well, working to create and build new nations, such as Haiti, that would extend the ideals and promises of the Age of Revolution to members of the African diaspora. In so doing, they demonstrated a willingness to remove themselves for the sake of opportunity and security: African-Americans wanted to help construct new black nations in the Atlantic world that reflected the Christian values they had acquired in the diaspora.

The heterogeneous nature of the African population in the Atlantic world reflected the diversity of the black experience. Wide-ranging experiences among slaves, maritime workers, preachers, educators, and others illustrated why no cohesive emigration movement could result in permanent mass emigration to Africa. Issues such as class and region impacted how African-Americans viewed emigration and other persons of African descent. Blacks in the diaspora were united spiritually in their connection to Africa, but they created identities based on available options in the Atlantic world. Estranged from the African continent, many African-Americans in particular felt tied to their “brethren” in the diaspora, but these bonds could not stop glaring cultural and religious differences from leading to conflict, especially of a religious nature.

Blacks constructed a transnational existence in the Atlantic world aimed at building political and cultural structures to support persons of African descent. Far from a black nationalism, this new transnational unity created a black Atlantic world that

fought the transatlantic slave trade, worked toward abolition in America, and settled new, Christian colonies in Africa. Even when seemingly disconnected and cut off by white racist policies, free blacks in the Atlantic world worked toward a common goal: the extension of civil and human rights to persons of color. A transnational African community gave its members strength to fight an uphill battle against the guardians of America's revolutionary ideals.

Despite these unified goals, blacks occupied a social, psychological and physical space occupied by divergent groups. Travels over the waters of the Atlantic, to and from Africa, exposed diasporic Africans to experiences that distinguished them from their continental brethren. Still African in profound ways culturally and spiritually, they were now a part of an Atlantic system that forced them to adopt fluid identities in order to survive. African-Americans' attempts to construct new black nations in the diaspora made it clear that a particular brand of pan-African unity existed: other blacks were "brethren" so long as they agreed to convert to Christianity and become responsible citizens in a self-governed nation. By the late 1810s, colonization had come full-circle. No longer simply a white-led plan to remove blacks from the United States, African-American imperialists seized colonization. Cloaked behind a veil of evangelical zeal, entrepreneurial zest, and moral righteousness, African-Americans remade the African diaspora after their own image.

Not all African-Americans supported colonization or Paul Cuffe's and others' initiatives to transfer African-American culture to West Africa. Black elites rallied, producing anti-colonization pamphlets, speeches, and founding organizations to fight the colonization movement. Richard Allen and James Forten argued that free blacks are "by

birth entitled to all the rights of freemen” and should enjoy full “participation of the enjoyment of Citizenship.”⁵⁸⁴ Despite the emigration and colonization movement gaining support among blacks during early republic and antebellum periods, many African-Americans opposed the idea.

The evolution of emigration into black-led colonization illustrated the consequences of removal: all removed cultural groups examined in this study created new diasporas. African-Americans, however, were different from other groups studied in this dissertation. Removed once before in the transatlantic slave trade, African-Americans heard whites’ plans for colonization, and they understood immediately that these goals rested on the mass deportation of freemen and women. A second removal, it seemed, awaited. As African-Americans rallied behind emigration petitions and the black-led colonization schemes as a form of resistance to white colonization schemes, they demonstrated that sometimes even the threat of removal proved potent enough to create, or in this case, remake a diaspora. The following chapters illustrate the power of forced migration: even if whites’ colonization schemes resulted in an extremely small percentage of blacks resettling in Africa, the threat of removal motivated African-Americans to act.

⁵⁸⁴ American Colonization Society Papers, in Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, p.188.

-- CHAPTER FIVE --

“TO DISTINGUISH OURSELVES FROM THE WHITE PEOPLE:”
CARVING OUT BLACK SPACES IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1780-1826

In early 1773, four years after Colonel Richard Bland and Thomas Jefferson failed to mandate the transportation of manumitted slaves out of Virginia, four free blacks petitioned the Massachusetts General Assembly. Witnesses to the “divine spirit of *freedom*” that “seems to fire every human breast on this continent,” these former slaves recognized a chance to lobby on “behalf of our fellow slaves in this province.”⁵⁸⁵ In referring to themselves as “*Africans*,” Peter Bestes, Sambo Freeman, Felix Holbrook, and Chester Joie linked themselves to their ancestral homeland, uniting as a racial rather than ethnic group to reach a common goal. The Africans argued that all slaves in Massachusetts should be freed, whereupon “from our joynt [sic] labours” we can “procure money to transport ourselves to some part of the Coast of *Africa*, where we propose a settlement.”⁵⁸⁶

Just a year after the landmark Somerset case in London, and amidst Boston’s deepening revolutionary fervor, these four men seized an opportunity to argue on behalf

⁵⁸⁵ “Petition of Peter Bestes, Sambo Freeman, Felix Holbrook, and Chester Joie, Boston, April 20, 1773,” in *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States. Volume I: From Colonial Times through the Civil War.* ed., Herbert Aptheker. New York: The Citadel Press, 1968. p.7-8. For more on Revolutionary Era petitions, see Thomas J. Davis, “Emancipation Rhetoric, Natural Rights, and Revolutionary New England: A Note on Four Black Petitions in Massachusetts, 1773-1777,” in *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Jun 1989), 248-263.

⁵⁸⁶ “Petition of Peter Bestos, Sambo Freeman, Felix Holbrook, and Chester Joie...” in *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, p.8.

of their right to liberty. They also recognized the key supposition in any attempt to gain widespread emancipation for their fellow slaves: removal. Although genuinely enthusiastic about returning to Africa, Bestes, Holbrook, Freeman, and Joie understood that the powerful white legislature would not consider granting freedom to thousands of slaves unless provisions were made for transporting them to a place from which they could not threaten the peace and stability of the province.

In January 1787, fourteen years later and, by coincidence, the same year of the first American edition of *Notes on the State of Virginia*, over 75 free blacks signed a petition to the General Court in Boston. Cold, poor and nominally free in the new state of Massachusetts, the petitioners accounted for 10% of the free black population in Boston, lobbying for the Court's aid "to return to Africa, our native country, which warm climate is much more natural [and] more comfortable and happy, then we can be in our present situation."⁵⁸⁷ African-Americans themselves questioned their role and place in the future of American society. Although now legally free, they understood the obstacles limiting their access to American liberty. In their minds, as well as in the minds of many whites, removal to Africa remained the only path around these barriers.

Once in Africa, Hall's fellow petitioners could embark on "inlightening" (sic) pagans and Muslims, and develop trade with African-American led communities based

⁵⁸⁷ "Negro Petitions for Freedom," in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th Series, Vol. III (1877), 436-437. In 1790, Boston's free black population numbered 761, with New York's at 1,078, and Philadelphia's nearly 1,420. Horton and Horton, *Hard Road to Freedom*, p.93. Free northern blacks during and shortly after the American Revolution may have been manumitted and not in bondage, yet most occupied the lower spaces of the labor pool. Moreover, stringent racial hierarchy ensured blacks' marginalization in society. Also, see Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975. p.5. William Thornton makes several comments about blacks being better adapted for life in the climate of West Africa in numerous letters held in the Proceedings of the Free African Union Society and the African Benevolent Society of Newport, Rhode Island.

on free labor.⁵⁸⁸ In addition, the petitioners believed emigration would bring together members of the African diaspora, reflecting early thinking about the transatlantic “geographical characteristics...built by that branch [Africans] of the descendants of Noah.”⁵⁸⁹ Free blacks in the early national period of the United States possessed a second, transnational identity rooted in Africa: they were a people simultaneously of America, but not American; of Africa, but not African.

Historians usually consider Olaudah Equiano as the prime example of a black man living a transnational, or pan-Atlantic, existence; whereas, Paul Cuffe is often credited with being the first black nationalist.⁵⁹⁰ Alternatively, past scholarship deals almost exclusively with blacks’ calls for colonization as a prelude to the American colonization movement, as the backdrop to the development of black churches, or as part of larger fraternal movement.⁵⁹¹ This body of scholarship overlooks the larger transatlantic context of the early black emigration movement. Black emigrationists around the Atlantic world stridently called for the removal of free blacks during the era of Equiano’s voyages and at least a decade before Cuffe’s rise to prominence. Blacks in Nova Scotia, Boston, Philadelphia, Newport, London, and other Atlantic communities

⁵⁸⁸ “Petition of Peter Bestos, Sambo Freeman, Felix Holbrook, and Chester Joie...” in *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, p.7-8.

⁵⁸⁹ Edward Wilmot Blyden, *From West Africa to Palestine*. Freetown: 1873. p.112. Blyden became a well-known Liberian Pan-Africanist in the middle of the nineteenth century.

⁵⁹⁰ On Equiano, see Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the Africa: A Biography of a Self-Made Man*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005; for Cuffe, see Lamont D. Thomas, *Rise To Be A People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

⁵⁹¹ There are a few articles and one monograph that address early colonization efforts amongst black leaders in the America, see George E. Brooks, “The Providence African Society’s Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794-1795: Prologue to the African Colonization Movement,” in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol 7, No. 2 (1974), 183-202; the first two chapters of Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975; and Joanna Brooks, “Prince Hall, Freemasonry, and Genealogy,” in *African American Review*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Summer 2000), 197-216.

coveted a symbolic – and often physical – return to the African continent. In so doing, they resisted decades old policy of removing troublesome peoples from the developing Anglo-American Atlantic world.

Blacks' emigrationist appeals were part of a complex process of social, political and cultural reorganization of the Atlantic world. Communities, nations, and empires in the Atlantic world were in a state of flux during the revolutionary era. Blacks understood the opportunities afforded them as society faced certain upheaval and prominent whites called for their removal. Liberty remained the preserve of white men, yet free blacks knew they could exploit changing notions of inclusion and a new egalitarianism infecting religious and philanthropic leaders. Even sympathetic white leaders demonstrated the constraints of American racial ideology, failing to acknowledge their own basic paternalism when including free blacks' input in their schemes.

Reflecting the diverse nature of the African diaspora, blacks around the Atlantic world reacted in a variety of ways to removal and colonization. Members of certain groups – Newport's Free African Union Society, among others – advocated emigration; others pushed to improve conditions in the United States. These organizations were composed of famous blacks, such as Prince Hall, as well as lesser-known ordinary people. From the debate over emigration emerged a clear goal of African fraternal organizations: black leaders advocated emigration as one method to escape slavery and racism in America. They appropriated the ideology of removal that served as the basis for white colonization schemes and made it their own. Emigration became one vehicle through which blacks could attain liberty, removing to their ancestral homeland to construct a free nation. Free blacks in Boston, Newport, and Providence inserted

themselves in the discussions on colonization scholars have previously argued were conducted primarily by prominent white intellectuals, humanitarians, and merchants.

Free African societies formed with increasing frequency across the nation as the nineteenth century neared and as Jefferson's crusade to oust free blacks from the United States grew more popular. Even when free, many blacks – whose population grew at an average rate of 158% from 1790-1800 in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia – felt unsettled, unwanted, and insecure in the United States.⁵⁹² With the American Revolution over, and with the reshuffling of the social order, free blacks understood that “now is the time if ever for us to try to Distinguish ourselves as the More remote we are situated from white people the more we will be respected.”⁵⁹³ They put into motion the words and ideas of white elites. James McKenzie, sailed from Providence to West Africa in 1795 on Brown, Benson, and Ives' ship, *Charlotte*, with the goal of buying land on which free African-Americans could settle. McKenzie served as a black representative of the members of the Free African Union Society of Newport, Rhode Island and affiliated fraternal organizations who were disillusioned with whites' debates about the merits of removing them to Africa. Instead, they resolved to act on their own accord, even if it difficulties lay ahead. This black emigration movement in revolutionary America represented the earliest organized attempts by blacks in the United States to resist white-led colonize efforts, and remake an African diaspora transformed by the Atlantic Slave trade.

⁵⁹² Boston's free black population reached 1,174, New York's increased most quickly to 3,499, and Philadelphia's was the largest at 4,210. Horton and Horton, *Hard Road to Freedom*, p. 93.

⁵⁹³ Bonnar Brown and James McKenzie (African Society) to African Union Society, 15 January 1794, in *African Union Society Records*, p.217-219.

Boston's African Masonic Lodge

Blacks discussed going “back to Africa” from the moment they arrived in the Americas. Africans enslaved in America longed for the idea of their ancestral continent. The resulting sense of exile simmered until the late eighteenth-century when emigrationist urges exploded.⁵⁹⁴ Although physically separated by the Atlantic Ocean from Africa, blacks reconnected with their ancestral lands through spirituality. For some Kongolese, the Atlantic symbolized the Kalunga, a watery divide between the spiritual world and the living world, which could be crossed in death during the soul's journey to Africa. In life, the Atlantic represented the “physical and metaphysical connection to Africa,” a pathway diasporic peoples could travel on to return to the lands from which they were dispersed.⁵⁹⁵ Emigration to Africa represented an opportunity to achieve this goal. Returning to the land of their ancestors fulfilled a spiritual call amongst Africans in America to cross the symbolic divide of the Kulanga. Crossing the Kulanga meant reconnecting with African ancestors, but it also meant operating within the parameters of removal long established by British and American authorities.

Surprisingly, only a handful of newly freed slaves dared to cross the Kulanga and the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Canoes and other watercraft held a significant role in

⁵⁹⁴ As Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D.G. Kelley argue, “dating back at least to Juan Latino in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Ottobah Cuagano and Olaudah Equiano in the eighteenth century, and Jose Manuel Valdez in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, black writers and activists have often defined themselves as part of a larger international community.” See, “Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World,” in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1 Special Issue on the Diaspora (April 2000), p. 13. Also, see Vincent Bakpetu Thompson, *The Making of the African Diaspora in the Americas, 1441-1900*. New York: Longman, Inc. 1987. p. 1-129.

⁵⁹⁵ For more on the relationship between water and spirituality among West Africans, see Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p. 62-67; and Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

African spiritual beliefs. Small boats traditionally carried Africans along the waterways of West Africa for trade and warfare, as well as on spiritual journeys: Africans sung religious hymns in cadence with their oars.⁵⁹⁶ Moreover, coastal African cultures – those same peoples involved in the Atlantic slave trade, whether as slaves or traders of inland captives – used ocean-going canoes from 24-80 feet in length for warfare and exploration, making it possible some Africans in the Americas understood how to navigate ocean waters.⁵⁹⁷ A few men and women did emigrate to Africa on their own volition prior to the American Revolution. In 1735, two free blacks living in Rhode Island returned to Africa after purchasing their freedom and saving money for the trip home to their native Guinea.⁵⁹⁸ Conversely, reports of a black man recently imported from Africa attempting to cross the Atlantic from Maryland in an open boat in 1761 illustrated the intensity of the spiritual call for Africans to return, and its grim consequences.⁵⁹⁹

Those four slaves who notified the Massachusetts colonial administration of their intent to “procure money to transport ourselves to some part of the coast of Africa” in 1773, demonstrated another method Africans used to achieve their goal of emigration.⁶⁰⁰ The petition moved beyond addressing their own individual situations, however, making it known that once there, “we propose a settlement” on which to resettle others facing

⁵⁹⁶ Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. p. 244.

⁵⁹⁷ Robert Smith, “The Canoe in West African History,” in *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1970), p. 518.

⁵⁹⁸ William B. Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1890. P.451-452 (Volume 2).

⁵⁹⁹ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, p.64.

⁶⁰⁰ “Petition of Peter Bestes, Sambo Freeman, Felix Holbrook, and Chester Joie, Boston, April 20, 1773,” in *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, p.7-8.

similar circumstances.⁶⁰¹ Another petition to the Massachusetts General Assembly in 1773 exclaimed: “We have no City! We have no Country!”⁶⁰² Emigration-minded Africans saw little future in America for themselves as free individuals, and as a free community. The establishment of a small free black community in West Africa, they argued, would provide refuge for the petitioners themselves, and potentially for other Africans willing to remove to the continent.

In the midst of the various efforts of these men and women to go to Africa, Freemasonry emerged as the critical organizational tool for the development of black identity in antebellum America.⁶⁰³ Prince Hall became an important figure in the development of black freemasonry during the revolutionary era.⁶⁰⁴ Hall, born in Barbados of a mulatto mother and a British father, became a soap-maker in Boston and leader of the city’s politically and socially active free black population. First denied membership in white Boston’s white Masonic lodges, Hall and other free blacks approached an Irish Lodge of the British Order of Masons stationed in Boston during the 1775 occupation. 15 free blacks were initiated into the African Lodge Number One of Boston in 1784 under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of England. Renumbered in 1787 as Lodge 459, Hall’s African Masonic Lodge provided a central meeting point for free

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² *The Appendix: or some Observations on the expediency of the Petition of Africans, living in Boston, &c, lately presented to the General Assembly of this Province. To which is annexed, the Petition referred to. Likewise, Thoughts on Slavery with a useful extract from the Massachusetts Spy, of January 28 1773, by way of an Address to the Members of the Assembly. By a Lover of Constitutional Liberty.* in *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, p.6

⁶⁰³ See Charles H. Wesley, *Prince Hall: Life and Legacy*. Washington, D.C.: United Supreme Council, Southern Jurisdiction, Prince Hall Affiliation 1977; and Joseph A. Walkes Jr., *Black Square and Compass: 200 Years of Prince Hall Freemasonry*. Richmond: Walkes book Company 1979.

⁶⁰⁴ Like many African-Americans in the early republic, Hall’s background is ambiguous, and evidence excludes certainty regarding a number of facts about his life. For more on the various Prince Halls that surface in the records, see Charles H. Wesley. *Prince Hall: Life and Legacy*. Washington: United Supreme Council, Southern Jurisdiction, Prince Hall Affiliation, 1983.

blacks in the Boston area during the revolutionary war and in the following years of uncertainty.⁶⁰⁵

Hall's affiliation with the Lodge and his merchant shop's advantageous location in the middle of Boston, made him a key figure in public displays by free African-Americans. Hall often attended and organized parades, Negro Election Days, and other activities. Furthermore, the lodge became a mutual aid society for Boston's free blacks; but, the lodge also inspired the founding of other Masonic lodges in Philadelphia and Providence.⁶⁰⁶ Members of the lodges served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, enabling Hall and other black Masons to join white Masons in patriotic activities.⁶⁰⁷

Boston's Lodge 459 provided the setting and the voice to push black discussions of colonization to the forefront of consciousness in northern free black communities.⁶⁰⁸ Black Masons joined Thomas Jefferson's white community of Atlantic elites, many of whom were affiliated with white Masonic lodges themselves, in considering removal and colonization as the best way to facilitate emancipation of the slaves.

⁶⁰⁵ James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton, *Hard Road to Freedom: The Story of African America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001. p. 95.

⁶⁰⁶ Horton and Horton, *Hard Road to Freedom*, p. 95.

⁶⁰⁷ See, Sylvia R. Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999; Sydney Kaplan and Emma Nogrady Kaplan, *Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989; and Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961.

⁶⁰⁸ For more, see Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998; and W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998. The African Lodge would host numerous abolitionists meetings, becoming a place where prominent black abolitionists, such as Maria Stewart, could give public addresses throughout the antebellum period.

Perhaps Hall's interest in removal and colonization for free blacks was piqued after his encounters with a young Paul Cuffe while imprisoned by the British for three months in New York during the revolutionary war. The details of their experience as prisoners in the service of the fledgling United States are unknown. Both men were literate, making it highly likely they were aware of and possibly read pamphlets and propaganda on colonization while imprisoned. Both men were active in New England's free black communities, connecting them to the cultural and spiritual activities that kept Africa central to black identity. Their actions after the captivity experience suggests the impact of that moment: Hall and Cuffe emerged as strong proponents of creating another nation, filled with proud, self-conscious black men with a territory and state of their own.

While Hall actively engaged white Boston through the mouthpiece of the Lodge, other blacks were traveling the Atlantic amidst the disruption of the American Revolution. Some 3,000 Black Loyalists arrived in Nova Scotia, gaining the freedom promised by Lord Dunmore during the war. "Felling concern for the salvation for my countrymen," religious leaders followed, intending to ensure the refugees' spiritual well being in the Nova Scotian cold.⁶⁰⁹ Among these preachers were David George, John Marrant, and Boston King. Initially, the men worked in Nova Scotia, but they soon followed their flock to Africa with the founding of the free black colony of Sierra Leone in 1787. These preachers initiated what scholars have called the "black Zionist impulse"

⁶⁰⁹ John Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black, (Now Going to Preach the Gospel in Nova Scotia) Born in New-York, in North-America*, in *Black Atlantic Writers of the 18th Century: Living in Exodus in England and the Americas*. Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr, eds. New York: St Martin's Press, 1995. p.95.

amongst freemen living in Nova Scotia.⁶¹⁰ Filled with a strict evangelical Christianity based on ideas of predestination and providence, black leaders formed a “covenanted community of believers set against the sinners of the world.”⁶¹¹ Furthermore, “the importance of crisis conversion and other rituals of transfiguration, and the goal of a racial homeland as promised for the black elect in a covenant with God” aided black religious leaders in setting the parameters of colonization among African-Americans.⁶¹² Back in Boston, the preachers’ influence spread among acquaintances – Hall among them – who adopted their language and ideas, using them in a multi-pronged attack on slavery and infringement on their liberty by whites.

One preacher in particular, John Marrant, had a profound effect on Prince Hall and New England’s black emigrationists. Born in America in 1755, Marrant’s travels encapsulated the black Atlantic experience. He was a protégé of the itinerant preachers, especially George Whitefield and John Wesley, whose emphasis on the story of Exodus shaped Marrant’s own preaching. Exodus, a recurring theme in Marrant’s preaching, focused on “freedom from the land of enslavement and pilgrimage through the wilderness” – a theme that the always-traveling Wesley and Whitefield experienced themselves.⁶¹³ After his conversion experience in 1770, Marrant began his travels, preaching Methodism to the so-called Five Civilized Tribes (Creeks, Seminoles, Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws). Impressed by the British Navy during the American Revolution, Marrant traveled to Nova Scotia to evangelize black refugees once

⁶¹⁰ Brooks and Saillant, *Face Zion Forward*, p.13.

⁶¹¹ Brooks and Saillant, *Face Zion Forward*, p.13. These preachers initiated the freed slaves in a Calvinistic religion, instilling visions of an all-powerful God in their followers as opposed to some of the more liberal teachings of later Methodist preachers such as Richard Allen.

⁶¹² *Ibid.* p.14.

⁶¹³ See *Black Atlantic Writers of the 18th Century*. Eds. Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995. “Introduction.”

freed. His popularity in Nova Scotia proved overwhelming: forty men attempted to kill him after finding their wives at his Friday sermon instead of waiting at home for their husbands. Fleeing for his life, Marrant arrived in Boston for a short time until he left for London in 1790.

Marrant's incorporation of Exodus illustrated his awareness of the diasporic nature of the blacks in the Atlantic world. In his *A Sermon Preached* [to the Masonic Lodge] *on the 24th Day of June 1789*, Marrant spoke to members of Prince Hall's order, recalling the African heritage of all Masons.⁶¹⁴ Midway through the speech, Marrant described the "defendants of Abram" who "sojourned in Egypt," awaiting their Exodus.⁶¹⁵ As the occasion neared, "they were trained up to build with stone and brick, in order to make them expert Masons, before they possessed the promised land."⁶¹⁶ Marrant continued, telling the story of Exodus with Moses as the "master" mason. Two years after the African Masonic Lodge played a key role in the petition for removal to Africa to the Massachusetts legislature in 1787, Marrant advocated the idea of returning to Africa for the same reason Moses led his flock in the *Bible*. Freedom awaited those willing to go forth (to Africa) to "build" a Christian population, stone by stone, heathen by heathen. Such sentiments dominated free blacks' thinking on the issue of emigration, with a variety of Protestant sects – Quakers and Methodists in particular – echoing Marrant's imagery.

⁶¹⁴ John Marrant, *A sermon preached on the 24th day of June 1789, being the festival of St. John the Baptist, at the request of the Right Worshipful the Grand Master Prince Hall, and the rest of the brethren of the African Lodge of the Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons in Boston. By the Reverend Brother Marrant, Chaplain.* Boston: Printed and sold [by Thomas and John Fleet] at the Bible and Heart, 1789. p.13-14. Evans Early American Imprints, 1st Series, #21931.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

At the same time Prince Hall's African Masonic Lodge organized Boston's black community, another fraternal organization formed in Newport, Rhode Island on November 10, 1780. Blacks gathered at the home of Abraham Casey to incorporate the Free African Union Society with the express goal of coordinating the growing free African-American community in the area. Regular meetings focused on the election of officers, pooling money for lottery tickets, and providing funeral services. Soon, however, the society confronted larger issues at play in the Atlantic world.⁶¹⁷

In early January 1787, Free African Union Society members initiated their own plans to go to Africa.⁶¹⁸ Anthony Taylor, a representative of the Society, proclaimed "in the name of [the Free African] Union Society" that William Thornton's colonization "plan is agreeable to us."⁶¹⁹ But, Taylor noted that "want of Money" is "the only reason for our troubling our Superiors, petitioning for their assistance."⁶²⁰ Taylor's words were necessarily deferential, reflecting late eighteenth-century American social structures. More important was Taylor's reference to the petition to the Massachusetts General Court signed by himself, Prince Hall, and seventy-three other African-Americans in Boston in January 1787. Taylor's participation in the group effort to lobby the courts illustrated the

⁶¹⁷ For more on the Society's founding and mission, see *The Proceedings of the Free African Union Society and the African Benevolent Society, Newport, Rhode Island, 1780-1824*, ed. William H. Robinson. Providence: The Urban League of Rhode Island, 1976; and Ted Andrews, "Outcasts in a Strange Land?: Emigration, Education, and the Changing Nature of Black Benevolent Societies in Newport, Rhode Island, 1780-1824," PhD Student, University of New Hampshire, Unpublished article, 2005.

⁶¹⁸ According to George E. Brooks, Jr., Thornton "claimed that two thousand freedmen were ready to follow him to West Africa." "The Providence African Society's Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794-1795: Prologue to the African Colonization Movement," in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1974) 183-202.

⁶¹⁹ Anthony Taylor to William Thornton, 24 January 1787, *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society and the African Benevolent Society*, ed. Robinson, p. 16. Although the address of the letter is not evident, it seems clear from proceeding letters that Taylor's correspondence was directed to William Thornton. Moreover, scholars have often presented the signers as being from Boston, yet Taylor's letter to Thornton suggests the petition represented a regional population.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*

mobile nature and fluidity of African-American communities in the late eighteenth century. The 1787 appeal brought together frustrated free blacks from Boston *and* other New England communities. Indeed, several of the petitioners, including Taylor, lived in Newport.

Free blacks resolved to find a place in Africa where settlement could commence. In response to their court appeal, according to longtime colonizationist Reverend Samuel Hopkins, the state “would furnish them with shipping and provisions sufficient to transport them there...with arms sufficient to defend them, and farming utensils sufficient to cultivate their lands.”⁶²¹ The courts ruled in support of the petition, yet finding a suitable location in West Africa proved difficult, and it would eventually prevent the state-sponsored removal of free blacks in the 1780s and 1790s.

Proponents of colonization recognized the court’s ruling in Massachusetts as an opportunity to capitalize on growing support emanating from the state as well as other corners of the Atlantic. The ruling occurred at the same time that Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia* began to widely circulate in America, England and France. Moreover, the idea of a colony in Sierra Leone experienced broader public support in London, Bristol and other British cities during this era. Hopkins understood the court’s ruling could be a watershed moment in the colonization movement, “if all the States in the Union, or most of them, would take the same measure, such a design [colonization] might be soon and easily carried into execution.”⁶²² As it stood, however, “Nothing appears to be wanting but a proper, most reasonable *zeal* [among these other states], in so

⁶²¹ Park, *Works of Samuel Hopkins*, Vol. I, p.147. More about Hopkins’ views can be found in Brooks, “The Providence African Society’s Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme,” p191-193.

⁶²² *Ibid.*

good a cause.”⁶²³ Hopkins remained frustrated by what seemed like the fits and starts of his most prized social movement: the Christianization of Africa.

This petition accomplished more providing seemingly false hope to white colonizationists. Americans were officially on notice that some African-Americans considered Africa their symbolic homeland. African-Americans joined calls for colonization in an effort to find a new space in which to be free. Blacks in the diaspora in the late eighteenth century could simultaneously find roots in their ancestral home, their adopted cities and towns, Freemason lodges, and the interconnected intellectual and social spaces from which ideas about colonization and emigration emerged.

Blacks could not shed the cultural imprint of Africa, a characteristic that would fuel future generations’ spiritual and religious calls to go Africa. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* was widely read, and likely the topic of discussion as free blacks around the Atlantic world learned of the book and its subject.⁶²⁴ A black man who bought himself out of slavery, carving an eventful life out of dire circumstances, Equiano’s tale undoubtedly served as an inspiration to many persons of African descent.⁶²⁵ In his narrative, Equiano notes the many “manners and customs of my country” that have been “implanted in me...and made an impression on my mind.”⁶²⁶ The author views these imprints as critical to the shaping of his identity as an adult, much like free blacks in America saw the symbolic image of

⁶²³ Ibid.

⁶²⁴ “The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself,” *The Classic Slave Narratives*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed. New York: Mentor Books, 1987.

⁶²⁵ For more on the narrative, see *The Classic Slave Narratives*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed. New York: Mentor Books, 1987.

⁶²⁶ “The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself,” in *The Classic Slave Narratives*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. ed, p. 25.

Africa. Equiano's experiences as black man navigating the gray definitions of freedom and enslavement while sailing the Atlantic made him realize that "whether the love of one's country be real or imaginary...I still look back with pleasure on the first scenes of my life" for their simplicity and "pleasure."⁶²⁷ Africans' roots were in Africa, whether born in the Americas, as Equiano may have been, or elsewhere.⁶²⁸

Black and White Cooperation?

Free blacks and whites had a brief history of cooperation on matters specifically aimed at "bettering" Africans in America. In 1787, for example, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones – founders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and representatives of Philadelphia's Free African Society – worked with Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, and other elite whites to raise money to purchase land on which to build a church. Once sufficient funds were acquired, Philadelphia's St. Thomas Protestant Episcopal Church was erected. Whites saw the construction of a black Christian house of worship as a significant demonstration of blacks' potential to integrate into American society. The event was marked by a dinner where race and class roles were temporarily turned upside down: blacks served food to the white construction

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ Vincent Carretta has recently published convincing evidence suggesting Equiano was born in South Carolina and not in Africa. Such evidence further strengthens my assertion that the symbolism of Africa surpassed any physical connections Africans in the diaspora may have held to the continent. See, Carretta, *Equiano the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005; Carretta, "Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa? New Light on and Eighteenth-Century Question of Identity," in *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol. 20 (Dec. 1999), 96-105; and Nell Boyce, "Out of Africa? New Questions about the Origins of a Seminal Slave Narrative," in *U.S. News and World Report*, Vol. 134 (Feb. 10, 2003), 54-55.

workers and whites, in turn, served blacks in a demonstration of good faith in their joint accomplishment.⁶²⁹

Under a similar veil of cooperation, William Thornton, one of the most well known colonizationists in the Atlantic, integrated the Free African Union Society into his plans for settling Africa. Thornton lent moral support and encouraged the Society, in whose midst were some of the petitioners from Prince Hall's appeal, to pursue its goal of emigration to Africa. Seeing himself as a philanthropist and corrector of moral wrongs Thornton assured the skeptical fraternal organization, "There are many benevolent People in this, as well as in other Parts who are interested in your Prosperity; and I doubt not will endeavor to promote your Happiness."⁶³⁰ Continuing, Thornton called on the "Mercy of Heaven" to "in a signal manner, shew [sic] itself in freeing from Bondage many whose cries have long pierced the Hearts of the humane" men such as himself.⁶³¹ Importantly, Thornton acted beyond words of support, notifying the Committee on African Affairs in London of the American group's desire to emigrate to West Africa. At this point, the Committee on African Affairs and the Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor remained steadfast in their work to organize blacks to settle the proposed colony of Sierra Leone. To the list of potential settlers, Thornton added members of the Free African Union Society, integrating them with established networks among white supporters of colonization. Thornton envisioned an interracial cooperation that would help see his plan

⁶²⁹ For more, see Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961. p. 191-194.

⁶³⁰ William Thornton to Elders and Members of the Union Society, 6 March 1787, in *Proceedings*, p. 17. For more on the various committees for the improvement of conditions of blacks in London, see Herzina, *Black London* and Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists*.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*

to fruition, although not necessarily under black leadership. The question remained: could whites and blacks cooperate on this endeavor?

Thornton's enthusiasm affected the Society. By June of 1787, Samuel Stevens, a member of the Free African Union Society and resident of Boston, noted that "we find him [Thornton], we think, a friend of the Blacks, and to the Case we are now upon."⁶³² Convinced that some of Thornton's intentions meshed with their own – the betterment of the black race and the Christianizing of Africa – members of the Union Society called for the sending of circulars to raise money and more volunteers for the joint effort.

But African Union Society members believed that successful emigration demanded self-sufficiency and not reliance on a white benefactor such as Thornton. British emigration tended to be organized around a group of white guardians who would act of behalf of the colonists. In Sierra Leone, for example, these guardians served as political officers, negotiated land deals, and fulfilled their appointed duties to settle a lawful colony of the crown. Contrary to the British method of having a white government control the colony, the Union Society spoke loudly against dependence on whites once money was garnered: "we do not approve of Mr. Thornton's going to settle a place for us; we think it would be better if we could charter a Vessel, and send some of our own Blacks."⁶³³ Indeed, this scheme featured blacks at every stage, from planning to fund raising to transportation to negotiation of property with native Africans. Free blacks welcomed white benefactors for their money, public relations benefits, and spiritual support, but blacks looked within African-American networks to organize and commence

⁶³² Samuel Stevens to Anthony Tiler [Taylor] (on behalf of the Union Society, 1 June 1787, in *Proceedings*, p.17-18.

⁶³³ *Ibid.* p.18.

emigration. This inward gaze threatened the control whites held over the process of colonization and emigration.

Regardless, black fraternal organizations were aware of various plans by whites around the Atlantic World to organize a free colony in West Africa. Blacks communicated amongst each other, as well as with whites, regarding ongoing colonization efforts. Anthony Taylor searched for news from his Boston counterparts about Granville Sharp's attempt to land a colony in Sierra Leone. In October 1787, Taylor anxiously noted that "we are waiting and longing to hear what has been the issue and success of the attempt made in England to make a settlement of Blacks in Affrica [sic]," further "hopeing [sic] this will open the way for us."⁶³⁴ Furthermore, affiliation with Samuel Hopkins and William Thornton enhanced their connection to the broader pan-Atlantic conversations on colonization, improving their ability to share news with other pro-emigration communities. Indeed, black fraternal societies tended to be located in port cities, amplifying their connections to the broader Atlantic world.

By the late 1780s, Salmar Nubia became increasingly vocal and active in Newport's Union Society as secretary of the organization, often co-signing petitions and correspondence along with Samuel Taylor. The West African born slave (possibly in Senegal) reverted to his birth name, Salmar Nubia, from his given name, Jack Mason, after gaining freedom at 20 years old. Adopting his African name was not the only way Nubia remained connected to his ancestral home. He also kept current in his native language, perhaps by adhering to practice sessions similar to ones utilized by other

⁶³⁴ Anthony Taylor & S+N to Samuel Stevens & the African Company of Boston, 4 October 1787, in *Proceedings*, p.18-19. S + N likely stands for Salmar Nubia, the African name of Jack Mason.

Africans in Rhode Island.⁶³⁵ Nubia's adherence to his native language and name suggests a consciously retained connection with the continent – even more so than other freedmen in the region – that was intensified by his African birth. New England fraternal organizations' member lists include several names that appear to be of African origin; or, at least, reflect African naming patterns: Bristol Yamma, Cudgo Brown, and Zingo Stevens.⁶³⁶ While others who used their English names also were recognized by their native African names, such as Quok Walker.⁶³⁷ In light of ongoing efforts to return to Africa, where Walker, Brown, Yamma, and other free blacks in Newport claimed birth origins, such naming patterns suggest the ambiguous place of blacks' in the diaspora. Some free men outwardly expressed their deeper connection with Africa by returning to their full native names.⁶³⁸ Still, other names, such as those comprised of both African and Anglo-American names, were meant to assist in the navigation of white American society.

⁶³⁵ There are numerous ways in which Africans could retain fluency in their birth language. Newport Gardner is reported to have “systematically practiced his mother tongue all his life to retain fluency.” Another method was to speak with Africans from similar ethnic backgrounds. Nubia, for example, came from the Senegal area of West Africa, making it likely he could have encountered other persons familiar with his native language. See, Brooks, “The Providence African Society's Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794-1795,” p. 186.

⁶³⁶ Bristol Yamma and John Quaumino were both chosen by Ezra Stiles and Samuel Hopkins in the early 1770s to head a missionary effort back to Africa. The goal was to educate Yamma and Quaumino at the college level and then send them to West Africa to begin the process of enlightening native Africans with Christian teachings. The American Revolution got in the way, however, with Quaumino reportedly killed in action and Yamma impressed by the British Navy. Newport Gardiner (Occramer Marycoo) and Salmar Nubia were the second two chosen for the mission which never quite materialized because of financial issues. For more, see Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality*, p.7-8.

⁶³⁷ The list of names present at one meeting of the Union Society reveal the extent to which members kept African derivative names: Cubeer Rodman, Quam Bowers, Quash Mowet, Cudgo Hicks, Congo Jenkins, Cudgo Chaloner, and several persons who adopted the surname Prince. Union Society Meeting notes, 28 April 1789, in *Proceedings*, p.53.

⁶³⁸ As many as 1 in 10 slaves in South Carolina and Virginia, according to Philip Morgan retained “symbolic ties to their native country” through naming patterns. See, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. p.454.

Blacks demonstrated their willingness to adapt to the dominant white ethos in other ways. The Free African Union Society of Newport required all members of funeral processions to “dress themselves and appear decent,” or, in other words, dressed after Anglo-American custom, in order “that all Spectators may not have it in their Power to cast such Game contempt, as in times past.”⁶³⁹ Such attention to detail helped ease whites’ perceptions that free Africans in America could not assimilate into white society. Free blacks struck a delicate balance between African and American cultures: they adopted African names, but maintained American standards of dress.

Native Africans and Africans in the Diaspora

The African Union Society’s correspondence reflected the multifaceted nature of African identity in the diaspora. A 1789 proclamation to their brethren, “all the Affricans [sic] in Providence” identified the inescapable biases and imprints Africans gained from their dispersion experience:

We the members of the Union Society in Newport, takeing [sic] into consideration the calamitous state into which we are brought by the righteous hand of God, being strangers and outcasts in a strange land, attended with many disadvantages and evils, with respect to living, which are like to continue on us and our children while we and they live in this Country⁶⁴⁰

The Union Society established an explicit connection with “hundreds if thousands of our brethren who are in abject slavery in the West Indies and the American states,” many of “whom are treated in the most inhumane cruel manner and are sunk down in ignorance,

⁶³⁹ Robinson, *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.xi.

⁶⁴⁰ “To all the Affricans [sic] in Providence, Free African Union Society, 27 July 1789, in *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.19-20.

stupidity and vice.”⁶⁴¹ Although linked together through common experiences, the proclamation delineated the difference between free African-Americans and others members of the diaspora: “considering the unhappy state and circumstances of our brethren, the Nations of Affrica [sic], from who we spring, being in heathenish darkness and sunk down in barbarity,” the time for emigration has arrived.⁶⁴² In so doing, they point to African-Americans’ transatlantic identities derived from Africa, while also distinguishing themselves from less “civilized” persons of color.

Members of the Union Society understood themselves – much like the Jamaican Maroons would in the 1790s – to be a people with no nation or land of their own. Self described outcasts, the proclamation defined the Society’s members as neither slaves nor Africans, who are so “foolish and wicked.”⁶⁴³ Instead, these free blacks retained their connections with Africa while illustrating *décalage*, the manner in which experiences in the diaspora had changed them. Members of the Union Society may have retained fluency in their native tongue, reinvented themselves with African names, and incorporated traditional African burial practices in their Christian ceremonies, but they were no longer thoroughly African. Union Society members were familiar with spiritual concepts such as the Kulanga, but they sang Christian hymns in church and some became ordained ministers. That same “righteous hand of God” that put diasporic Africans in this “calamitous state” served to differentiate them from native Africans; whereas, lacking faith in a Christian God made native Africans “heathens,” not righteous African-Americans.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Ibid.

⁶⁴³ Ibid. p.19.

Yet, these men held little claim to citizenship in the United States. Feeling like strangers and outcasts in the states made them not quite American either; they were in the diaspora. Indicative of the ambiguous nature of black identity in America and the Atlantic world, the Union Society's proclamation called Africa their "own country," but it also identified their African brethren as ignorant and full of "stupidity" so as to "sell one another into slavery."⁶⁴⁴ Blacks in America were caught between two worlds centered on slavery and greed, littered with treacherous and insidious people whose emigration schemes could land now free blacks back into bondage. Resettlement in Africa exposed African-Americans to active slave-traders in the region. In response, they created a transnational existence that viewed Africa *and* America as both homelands and "strange land[s]."⁶⁴⁵

All of New England had only begun to emancipate its slaves by 1789, and the members of the Union Society made it clear that blacks simply were not free.⁶⁴⁶ They preferred to return to Africa where "they may be more happy than they can be here" and to "promote the best good for our brethren in that country."⁶⁴⁷ The Union Society members looked to God for their guidance. They believed that His "righteous hand" would lead them to salvation. But for those willing to change and adapt to the pressures of America's racial hierarchy that meant remaining in Boston, Newport, and elsewhere in the United States.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁶ For the development of racial ideology in New England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see, Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and Race in New England, 1780-1860*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998; and Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1942.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

Free blacks demanding to go Africa, however, sought a home that no longer existed. Still, even African-Americans who saw Africa as the promise of the future carried with them cultural imprints that shaped their return to and interaction with the peoples of Africa.⁶⁴⁸ Salmar Nubia's journey to Africa illustrates how difficult it was for a former slave to return to their ancestral homeland. Arriving in Africa late in life, Nubia quickly succumbed to the biological changes Africans experienced in the diaspora: disease and fever took the life of the man within just a few months. That he claimed to have been born in Africa further illustrated the extent of *décalage*; his physical return to Africa led to his death that, in a fusion of Christian and African spiritual beliefs, may have represented his rebirth.

By late 1789, Newport's African Union Society began to reach out to other fraternal organizations, attempting to ascertain their level of interest in joining the emigration movement. They implored their Philadelphia brethren to form a Union Society, sending along details about the laws and organizational structure of the group, and informing the Philadelphia group of Newport's goals. The correspondence conveyed the Union Society's evangelical calls "to God for the pardon of our sins, and that we would, of his great mercy, deliver us and our brethren and the nations of Africa from the sins and misery in which we and they are now involved."⁶⁴⁹ The letter continued, "and pour down his holy spirit upon us and cause us and them to become wise, virtuous Christian People."⁶⁵⁰ This evangelical zeal invoked Christian symbolism and language in order to spread emigration ideas to a broader black community. The Union Society

⁶⁴⁸ See, Nemata Amelia Blyden, *West Indians in West Africa, 1808-1880: The African Diaspora in Reverse*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000.

⁶⁴⁹ Union Society to Henry Stewart, 1 September 1789, in *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.24.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p.24-25.

appropriated Christianity to strengthen their position. By calling on God “in his wise and good providence, [to] open a safe and prosperous way for our returning to Africa,” the Union Society helped transformed the colonization schemes of whites into emigration and missionary efforts for the benefit of blacks.⁶⁵¹

The efforts of Newport’s Union Society to connect with other groups in the United States also demonstrated the changing nature of free black male identity. Taylor called on Philadelphia’s blacks to join Newport’s black community in spreading Christianity across the black Atlantic world. For Taylor, “the Father of mercies” would not only “bless all the nation who enjoy the Gospel,” but also those black men who “may soon...preach to all Nations in Africa, and the light of it be spread over all the World.”⁶⁵² In a short letter, Taylor mentions God at least ten times, while invoking the gospel and other Christian teachings in each sentence. This infusion of religious zealotry enabled blacks to resist whites’ intentions of forcibly removing blacks from America, but it also provided the foundations of black male identity. Black men created an evangelical community and identity that transcended individual group affiliation and national borders. Infused with a missionary zeal, black men resisted white control through Christian spirituality; ironically whites often saw blacks’ conversion to Christianity as a sign of assimilation.

Other groups of freemen, some already members of fraternal organizations, voiced their support of the Union Society and its emigration plans. Prince Hall, who focused his own efforts on improving the education of black children in Boston, wrote Anthony Taylor, informing him of his approval: “May God prosper you in this and all

⁶⁵¹ Ibid.

⁶⁵² Ibid. p.25.

your undertakings for the good of your African brethren.”⁶⁵³ Hall separated himself from the likes of Taylor, but he supported fellow free black Americans and emigrationist “brethren.” The Union Society’s plans to return to Africa were popular in northern black communities after the American Revolution. Even those free men and women who did not intend to emigrate to Africa offered their support, while hundreds volunteered to be among the first colonists to arrive in West Africa aboard an American transport.

Returning to Black and White Cooperation

Regardless of attempts to the contrary, blacks could not resist being entangled in the web of white colonization. William Thornton and Reverend Samuel Hopkins advocated African colonization well before the topic gained a wider audience in America. As early as 1773, Hopkins attempted to raise enough money to send two educated black missionaries to West Africa to begin what he saw as a long-term process of Christianizing the African race. Thornton believed in such missionary ideals, but he also believed it was his duty as a West Indian planter to lead the way in the morally-directed emancipation of slaves. The pervasiveness of the ideology of removal and colonization, the developed networks of white supporters of colonization, and the resources of wealthy whites forced blacks to incorporate them into their emigrationist agenda.

For Thornton, manumission was an empty moral act without some plan to secure the welfare of newly freed slaves. Thornton believed colonization was the answer and he traveled the Atlantic searching for support for his scheme, a “justice” that “will grant thee

⁶⁵³ Prince Hall to African Union Society, 16 September 1789, in *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.25-26.

a Laurel, which will not fade while Liberty is the enjoyment of Man.”⁶⁵⁴ Thornton understood the potential of the Union Societies of Rhode Island. He contacted his expanded network of like-minded organizations and individuals throughout the Atlantic in late 1789 to expound on the virtues of his new found associates in America. Thornton solicited money and political support for his colonization plans from major anti-slavery groups, such as the *Societe des Amis des Noirs*, and well-known individual abolitionists such as the Englishman Thomas Clarkson. The Union Society of Newport, in particular, seemed to have invigorated Thornton in the cause and he utilized the group for a public relations coup in his travels throughout the Atlantic aimed at gaining financial support for his colonization scheme.

While commenting on the perseverance of emigration-minded blacks in Newport, Thornton unintentionally validated Union Society members’ suspicions of the his intentions when they had been introduced two years earlier via correspondence. Although Union Society members “find him, we think, a friend to the Blacks,”⁶⁵⁵ Thornton’s paternalism and derogatory comments often made them reconsider. When offering praise, Thornton allowed his perception of blacks’ intellectual feebleness to show: “I am exceedingly happy that none of the difficulties which have arisen and which might have overwhelmed [and] even expanded [their] mind[s]” slowed their plans for emigration.⁶⁵⁶ Despite his extensive travels and solicitations for donations, Thornton had

⁶⁵⁴ William Thornton to Joseph Clark, 13 November 1789, in *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.31.

⁶⁵⁵ Samuel Stevens to Anthony Tiler (Taylor), 1 June 1787, in *Proceedings*, p.17. Furthermore, Samuel Hopkins, who traditionally scholars have portrayed as a partner of Thornton’s, suggested the man was “too flighty and unsteady” to have an important role in the colonization of blacks. *Works of Samuel Hopkins*, ed. Park, Vol I. p.139.

⁶⁵⁶ William Thornton to Thomas Clarkson, 13 November 1789, in *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.31.

little success in raising the appropriate funds. Even so, Thornton remained involved throughout the 1790s.

William Thornton's assistance to American blacks began to wane by September 1790. Citing the complexities of Granville Sharp's laws that governed new colonists in Sierra Leone, Thornton's enthusiasm developed into criticism of London's newest outpost, and its government. Frustrated, Thornton remained "resolved to stand forward myself and take a few chosen virtuous and resolute Blacks at our own expense."⁶⁵⁷ As the year wore on and it became clear that little funding was available for such a plan, Thornton conceded the scheme was too expensive. Instead of espousing grand plans to resettle members of the Union Society, Thornton now "beg[ged] to be kindly remembered to Anthony T[a]ylor, Solyman and other Members of the Union Society of Rhode Island, to the Blacks of Providence, and to Prince Hall and the Blacks of Massachusetts, to whom, and to thyself, I wish present and eternal Happiness."⁶⁵⁸ Thornton returned to his parents' home in Tortola aggravated by the undue expense and difficulties of colonization. He returned to the Caribbean having failed in what he believed were his paternalistic duties to his own slaves and other blacks in the Atlantic.

At the same time Thornton contacted Rhode Island's Union Societies, his name fades from the correspondence of prominent white supporters of colonization. Thornton redirected his attention to blacks' emigration schemes because whites seemed mired in discussion and planning, rather than action. In 1791, Thornton notified the Union Society that although "I have become...a Married Man...neither the most amiable and affectionate of Wives...have any effect in staying my Soul in any part of the World

⁶⁵⁷ William Thornton to Samuel Hopkins, 29 September 1790, in *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.33-34.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

except Africa.”⁶⁵⁹ As evidence to the contrary, he informed the Society that he has “purchased a few cannon” and “I have a prospect of being supplied with...all kinds of Arms.”⁶⁶⁰ Unwilling to let go of his involvement in the Society’s plans to land blacks in Africa, Thornton volunteered his own and a friend’s services if needed. Even while in the West Indies, he remained connected to the emigration movement of free northern blacks.

Tellingly, the Society does not seem to have returned correspondence, nor did they request Thornton’s help after this 1791 letter. Perhaps their tolerance of the white man’s paternalistic benevolence had finally reached an end. Yet, the Society did recognize the potential benefit of having the support of a man with Thornton’s social and economic status. The Union Society planned to publish Thornton’s letters in the gazettes of New England and Philadelphia at the end of 1791, “in order that they may bring numbers to join us throughout and other States.”⁶⁶¹ Although disillusioned by Thornton’s paternal benevolence, the Society understood having wealthy white friends would increase their lean coffers.⁶⁶² As a result, the Society believed it might in fact reach its goal of landing a ship of black émigrés in West Africa.

⁶⁵⁹ William Thornton to Anthony Taylor (and Samuel Hopkins), 13 January 1791, in *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.36.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ Boston Smith to Caesar Lyndon (Union Society), 19 December 1791, in *Proceedings*, p.39.

⁶⁶² Further examples of how blacks worked within the confines of a bi-furcated America, see W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail*. Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1998. p. 68-103; and Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. p. 248-292.

James McKenzie's Miserable Adventure

The second colony at Sierra Leone proved far more successful by 1793 than the first attempt by British philanthropists. Now under Royal Charter and having taken the form of a joint-stock company, Sierra Leone became a beacon to which African-Americans looked when considering emigration. Reports streamed in of much improved living conditions and of a larger population, which seemed to ensure a second sacking by the French unlikely.⁶⁶³ The optimistic news from Sierra Leone inspired Samuel Hopkins, a man always ready to exalt the virtues of colonization.

Hopkins, whose zeal for colonization periodically resurfaced after 1773, echoed the Union Society's and other black fraternal organizations' excitement over the news from Sierra Leone. Hopkins launched new sermons that reiterated much of what he had argued previously, but this time he was more explicit about his calls for colonization. The minister cited Hall's African Masonic Lodge petition to the Massachusetts legislature in 1787 as an example of a successful colonization scheme.

According to Hopkins, in response to the 1787 petition, the state government stood ready to "furnish shipping and provisions sufficient to transport them [free blacks] there [Africa]" once a suitable place in West Africa was found.⁶⁶⁴ Even though it did not result in any actual colonization, Hopkins was encouraged by the prospect, "if all such States in the Union, or most of them, would take the same measure, such a design might be soon and easily carried into execution."⁶⁶⁵ Numerous volunteers willing to make the

⁶⁶³ See Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963. Although it is over 40 years old, Fyfe's work remains the seminal account of the conception, founding and continuation of Sierra Leone through nineteenth century.

⁶⁶⁴ *Works of Samuel Hopkins*, Park, ed. Vol I, p.147, as reprinted in Brooks, "The Providence African Society's Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794-1795," p.191.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

trip to Africa, including Bristol Yamma and Newport Gardner, emerged from Hopkins' audiences.⁶⁶⁶ Hopkins' plan dissipated as finding a passage came to naught, but other schemes quickly arose from the decidedly optimistic reports of continued success in Sierra Leone. The King of Denmark offered to sponsor a colony in West Africa, yet the idea was scrapped after the paternalistic Hopkins took it upon himself to interview the king's two representatives. Upon closer inspection, Hopkins deemed the mission unlikely to succeed and he withdrew his support, imploring blacks not to participate.

Black emigration and colonization efforts, like whites' efforts, suffered from chronic under-funding. The momentum of the movement appeared to fade until the Anglo-French Wars, beginning in 1793 during the French Revolution, began to open trade opportunities between America and West Africa. These opportunities came at a critical moment in the development of African emigration schemes. Whites like Thomas Jefferson and St. George Tucker were mired in the intellectual and logistical details of founding a colony in Africa, while others such as Hopkins seemed unusually critical when opportunities arose for transporting settlers across the Atlantic. Black desires to go to Africa remained potent, as evidenced by the multiple volunteers for the Reverend Hopkin's plans. The main problem for African-Americans remained their lack of access to transports without whites' involvement. The solution lay in making voyages profitable for white merchants who owned the ships capable of carrying settlers to across the Atlantic.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁶ See Brooks, "The Providence African Society's Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794-1795," p.191-192.

⁶⁶⁷ Brooks, "The Providence African Society's Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794-1795." p.192.

Ships were places of relative liberty for blacks in the early republic, yet almost no African-Americans owned ships.⁶⁶⁸ Although Paul Cuffe, a successful black merchant from Massachusetts, had acquired three ships, *Mary*, *Hannah*, and *Ranger* from 1793-1796, he remained occupied by developing his entrepreneurial enterprises. Into this void stepped wealthy shipping agents Brown, Benson and Ives.⁶⁶⁹ The firm was owned by Nicholas Brown, Jr., George Benson and Thomas P. Ives and was connected with the dominant, abolitionist Brown family of Providence. Interested in exploiting new shipping opportunities in Africa, Nicholas Brown, Jr. convinced his partners to allow a representative from the Providence African Society to sail aboard the *Charlotte*.

In early 1794, the African Union Society agreed to recruit members to join the African Society of Providence's scheme. They planned to send James McKenzie aboard the *Charlotte* to explore the requirements for landing a colony in West Africa. By the early 1790s, James McKenzie had emerged as a key black figure in the emigration movement.⁶⁷⁰ McKenzie's signature appeared on much of the correspondence between the various African fraternal organizations in Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Providence, and Boston. James McKenzie became more than an officer of the African Society of Providence in November 1794. The aspirations of free blacks in New England rested on

⁶⁶⁸ See W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks*; and Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2000.

⁶⁶⁹ Brown Family Papers, Brown, Benson and Ives, Merchant Memorandum Books, Providence, Rhode Island, 1792-1796, folders 6-8; and Brown Family Papers, Brown, Benson and Ives, Merchant Records, Providence, Rhode Island, 1794-1795, folder 5.

⁶⁷⁰ A James McKenzie is listed in the Seamen's Protection Certificate Registry Database, but it is difficult to determine if it is the same James McKenzie that sailed aboard *Charlotte*. He is listed as 33 years old in 1817, when the certificate was issued, which would make him 21 in 1795. His stature and position in the Union Society seem above someone of such youth. Adding to the difficulties is that the first certificates were issued in 1796, one year after the 1795 voyage, making no governmental records available to verify his age. See, Seamen's Protection Certificate Registry Database, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, Ct. Electronic Database.

McKenzie's shoulders as the fraternal organizations charged him with traveling to West Africa to negotiate for lands on which American blacks could resettle. With support from white organizations, such as the Providence Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, black fraternal groups launched McKenzie on the first voyage partly organized by white American supporters of emigration. The results were disheartening for hundreds of African-Americans. This signal event dramatically impacted the momentum of the emigration movement amongst blacks.

Society members from Boston, Philadelphia, and Newport agreed to dispatch "how many men shall be sufficient to send to such part of the coast of Africa as may be thought proper for us to settle on."⁶⁷¹ Both Providence and Newport intended to send more men because of their central role in hatching the emigration plans. The two societies focused their efforts on raising volunteers among members with families as well as single men, demonstrating their long-term commitment to the colony. Moreover, they understood the importance of landing more than a handful of men of God in West Africa. Family units increased the chance of success by providing natural population increases along with whatever new emigrants would arrive in the colony each year.

Rhode Island's two most powerful black fraternal organizations joined resources in their attempt to create a colony of free African-Americans in West Africa. It seemed that in 1794 "God who did promise the children of Israel that he 'will gather them from the North country and all the country wherein they have been scattered and will carry them to their native country'" honored the faith of Rhode Island's free blacks.⁶⁷² Their

⁶⁷¹ African Society in Providence to Brethren of the African Union Society in Newport, 25 February 1794, in *Proceeding of the Free African Union Society s*, p.45.

⁶⁷² African Union Society to Brethren of the African Society in Providence, 13 February 1794, in *Proceedings*, p.45.

deliverance came in the middle of an icy, cold, and rain-swept coastal New England winter. In early 1794, the Union Society members in Newport notified the Providence organization of having found suitable delegates, led by Newport Gardner, to accompany James McKenzie on his inaugural trip to West Africa. Wide-scale emigration appeared to be imminent as reflected by the increasing levels of excitement in the societies' correspondence.⁶⁷³

Politics, greed and racial prejudice thwarted the plans of the Societies in Providence and Newport. The investors and captain of the ship fought over the importance of trade versus McKenzie's mission, causing multiple problems during the venture. The captain proved intolerant when Brown suggested McKenzie be given leeway in conducting his ambassadorial business in West Africa. Instead, the captain wanted to remain focused on commerce, which included staying on a strict schedule that would undoubtedly be interrupted by McKenzie's escapades. The captain "observe[d] that one of my companions," in reference to McKenzie, "is a poor miserable creature and promises to be of no service to our voyage."⁶⁷⁴ Moreover, the captain was suspicious of McKenzie, "that Man," he grumbled, "would put an enemy into his Mouth to Steal away his Brains."⁶⁷⁵ These conflicts resurfaced throughout the voyage of the *Charlotte*.

In December 1794, James McKenzie sailed as the societies' lone representative to Sierra Leone as the second mate aboard the *Charlotte*, with little more than instructions to negotiate for the opportunity to land free African-Americans in the colony. Reassured by Granville Sharp's proposal to provide "equal lots of land given gratis to all

⁶⁷³ Robinson, *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.45-48.

⁶⁷⁴ Brown Family Papers, Brown, Benson and Ives, Logs from the Voyages of the ship *Charlotte*, 1794-1795, folder 6-8.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

& every Householder that will or shall arrive within the space of six years” from the founding of the colony, McKenzie viewed his sharply reduced mission with optimism.⁶⁷⁶ McKenzie faced conspiratorial forces beyond his control, however, in the form of the ship’s captain as well as the colony’s Governor Zachary Macaulay. Simultaneously accused by Captain Benson of sidelining the vessel’s trade mission with his own business, and of being misled by Sharp’s letter, McKenzie found his goal of settling black Americans in West Africa rapidly disintegrating. In the end, Sierra Leone’s council only agreed to accept twelve families for settlement, sending McKenzie on his way with far less positive news than he desired.⁶⁷⁷

Upon returning to America, stipulations in the new agreement with Sierra Leone that allowed whites to intercede compounded the failure of McKenzie’s mission to lay the foundations for a large-scale emigration. Sierra Leone’s council, for instance, determined it necessary that the head of each household receive a letter of endorsement of character from Samuel Hopkins. This proved costly for the proposed emigrationists. Hopkins failed to provide such letters, frustrating the families ready to leave for Africa, while casting further shadows on McKenzie’s mission. When emigration seemed close to being a reality, Hopkins made the decision to intervene – or, in this case, do nothing – causing the failure of the scheme. Perhaps Hopkins balked because blacks were at the helm of this particular emigration scheme. Furthermore, McKenzie’s trip was sponsored by a trading company interested in opening the so-called legitimate trade with West Africa, rather than under the sponsorship of a church or religious organization. Although

⁶⁷⁶ Council Meeting, 21 February 1795, C.O. 270/3, PRO, Kew, England, UK. Brooks, “The Providence African Society’s Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794-1795,” p.196.

⁶⁷⁷ Brooks, “The Providence African Society’s Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794-1795,” p.194-197.

a part of the scheme included evangelizing among native Africans, the free African societies' other intentions suggests discord with Hopkins' main goal to spread Christianity to the continent.

Yet, Sierra Leone's white Governor Zachary Macaulay and Council had the most influence in preventing American blacks from settling in the colony, which was, ironically, already populated mostly by men and women freed by Lord Dunmore's Proclamation during the American Revolution. In a letter to Hopkins, Macaulay – born in Jamaica in 1768, governor of Sierra Leone from 1793-1799, and co-founder of Anti-Slavery Society in 1823 – contended “There is...[an] evil...which we fear may prevail among those...which we wish to guard against with more care than ever.”⁶⁷⁸ The Governor continued, that the “Age of Reason may have pervaded even this class of men” and that the “introduction of one such unbeliever into a colony founded for the express purposes of spreading among the heathen the knowledge of a Savior, might prove an evil beyond all calculation.”⁶⁷⁹ The Governor left Hopkins with a chance to rebuke him on this point, yet the Reverend chose to remain silent. Perhaps both feared the possibility of expanded colonization scheme accidentally allowing non-Christians to return to Africa. Perhaps Hopkins wanted greater control – and thus greater recognition by the general public – over the scheme. Still, both men's refusal to give blacks the benefit of the doubt stalled members of the societies of Newport and Providence attempts to settle in Africa.

Blacks once again faced a roadblock to emigration. First denied funding by the state of Massachusetts in 1787, blacks were now prohibited from emigrating in large numbers because whites believed their interest in colonization was, ironically, not

⁶⁷⁸ *Works of Samuel Hopkins*, Park, ed. Vol. I, p.150-151.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

sufficiently religious to deal with the “heathens” in Africa. Such accusations must have proved crushing to the men of the fraternal societies of New England, men whose stated goal was to spread the gospel to Africa. Such barriers reflected not only the difficulties African-Americans faced in launching a widespread emigration movement, but also the misconceptions throughout the Atlantic world about their behavior, religious beliefs, and overall level of “civility.”

The black emigration movement waned after 1796, with group efforts to plan and implement removal non-existent until opposition formed against the founding of the American Colonization Society in 1816/17. Individuals, however, did not stop emigrating to Africa. Boston King, a Black Loyalist and Methodist preacher, traveled extensively in the Atlantic world in an effort to bring forth his evangelical message to persons of African descent. Born in South Carolina in 1760, King’s *Memoirs of the Life of Boston King* represent a slightly unusual slave narrative because he claims to have come from a patriarchal family structure, an unusual characteristic for an eighteenth-century American slave family.⁶⁸⁰ Married in 1780, King worked as a shipwright before his conversion experience. Afterwards, he became one of several black itinerant preachers in the Atlantic that included John Marrant and Moses Wilkinson.⁶⁸¹ Thanks in part to a timely bout with the smallpox, King avoided capture by American troops during the revolutionary war who passed him by for fear of catching the disease.

⁶⁸⁰ For more on slave narratives and family structures, see Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., eds. *The Slave’s Narratives*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. 1985.

⁶⁸¹ Winks, *The Blacks in Canada*, p.56-57.

He was one of the approximately 3,000 former American slaves transported to Nova Scotia shortly after the war's end.⁶⁸² Included in King's company were other black preachers who followed the Black Loyalists to Sierra Leone to ensure their religious needs were served, but also to missionize amongst native Africans. Many of the Black Loyalists transported to Africa encountered rampant disease; King's wife was no exception and she died within a month of arrival. King, as he had his entire life, also experienced many bouts of illness while in Africa, but he was usually able to recover and recommence his preaching.

King's *Memoir* noted that his time in Africa revealed to him the difference between blacks from America and native Africans whom they lived amongst. African-Americans such as King, and particularly those persons born in America, began to note with increasing frequency the "evil habits" displayed by the "poor Africans."⁶⁸³ King became intimate with local Africans in Sierra Leone, accepting 20 "scholars," or children, to whom he taught the alphabet and "the Lord's Prayer." To King, as well as his fellow Black Loyalists in Sierra Leone who referred to themselves as "Nova Scotians," the only way native Africans could rise to an acceptable level of civility would be if the "Lord visits them in some extraordinary manner."⁶⁸⁴ Indeed, King became so concerned about rescuing native Africans from their perceived darkness that he petitioned to return to England for up to three years schooling so "that I might be better qualified to teach the

⁶⁸² For more on King's life, see "Memoirs of the Life of Boston King, A Black Preachers, Written by Himself, during his Residence at Kingswood School," in *The Methodist Magazine*, (March-June 1798), 105-265; and P.R. Blakely, "Boston King: A Negro Loyalist who Sought Refuge in Nova Scotia," in *Dalhousie Review* Vol. 48 (1968-1969), 347-356.

⁶⁸³ King, *Memoirs*, p.263-264.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 263-264.

natives” of Africa.⁶⁸⁵ King’s narrative concludes shortly after his voyage to Bristol’s Kingswood School in 1794.

Boston King’s narrative is notable for its omission of the Black Loyalists’ revolt during his time in Sierra Leone; but, it may be his brief comments upon arriving on the Thames, back from his short stay in Africa, that prove most revealing. Having seen native Africans as “evil,” and perhaps shocked by the actions of his fellow “Nova Scotians” during their rather brutal rebellion against the Sierra Leone Company in 1793, King commented, “I considered myself...among a wise and judicious people, who were greatly my superiors in knowledge and understanding.”⁶⁸⁶ Even though “I had suffered greatly from the cruelty and injustice of the Whites...I found a more cordial love to the White People than I had ever experienced before.”⁶⁸⁷ King left little doubt that his trip to Africa had exposed him to what he perceived as the lowest level of civilization possible. A “return” for King involved going back to civilization – England – for a respite before embarking on the massive challenge of converting Muslim and pagan Africans. King, Marrant, and their fellow Sierra Leone missionaries would toil alone in Africa for years before another black American arrived in 1811 to, in theory, assume their roles: a Quaker named Paul Cuffe.

Prince Hall’s African Masonic Lodge ushered in an early era of emigration inspired, organized, and led by free blacks in America. The Free African Union Society,

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 264.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

James McKenzie, white benefactors such as William Thornton and Samuel Hopkins, along with abolitionist societies joined together, attempting to resettle free blacks willing to go to Africa. Emigration represented opportunity for blacks to build a free nation populated, governed and sustained by a community of educated Christian blacks. Many obstacles prevented the end results matching the visions of black leaders. James McKenzie's failed venture marked the collapse of black fraternal organizations' objective of wide-scale emigration to Africa for free blacks. A combination of years of frustration in collecting necessary funds, intervening whites who seemed to sabotage blacks' efforts, and a general refocusing of the Union Society's goals temporarily halted efforts to found a colony. It also seemed to signal the end of an outward gaze by African-Americans who looked to Africa for spiritual guidance. Neither of these conclusions proved to be completely true.

Free blacks worked throughout the 1780s and 1790s to implement emigration to Africa for their "brethren" across America, England, and the West Indies; or, any person of African descent living in these "strange lands."⁶⁸⁸ They sought to distinguish themselves from white people, and to carve out a space of their own in the Atlantic world. When initial efforts were unsuccessful, individuals kept the idea at the forefront. Published memoirs and narratives record the efforts of black preachers like Boston King to link African-Americans with Africans, to fully convert both groups to Christianity and to teach them all to read and write. These early resettlements efforts, whether simply discussions by blacks in Newport, Providence, and Philadelphia, or actual "Nova

⁶⁸⁸ "To all the Affricans [sic] in Providence, Free African Union Society, 27 July 1789, in *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, p.19.

Scotian” settlements in Sierra Leone, focused on spreading Christianity and civility to Africa and unifying blacks in the diaspora.

Free blacks would begin to realize in the 1780s and 1790s that regardless of their roots, birth-place, or symbolic connection to Africa as a homeland, emigrating to Africa proved difficult at best. Blacks’ schemes, petitions, and vocal support of emigration announced their intention to go to Africa to Christianize the continent and to fight the slave trade from its point of origin despite the difficulties that lay ahead. Even when those few free blacks did settle in Africa, their “brethren” seemed “evil,” not like themselves or their Anglo-Americanized customs. Cracks seemed to be forming in the supposed unity of blacks in the diaspora.

Free blacks living in America’s seaports during the revolutionary era were determined to wrestle control over colonization from whites, even if it meant they were unable to actually set foot in Africa. Union Societies’ input into the popular schemes of Jefferson, Thornton, Hopkins and others transformed colonization into emigration, a voluntary act to go to Africa. After McKenzie’s voyage failed, however, it seemed whites held sway over blacks’ removal once again. It took over a decade before blacks would regain control.

-- CHAPTER SIX --

PAUL CUFFE AND THE REMAKING OF BLACKNESS IN THE ATLANTIC
WORLD, 1808-1817

On 3 March 1817, Paul Cuffe wrote his esteemed friend James Forten, a wealthy black sailmaker and powerful force in the free African Institute of Philadelphia.⁶⁸⁹ Longtime associates in the fight for blacks' rights, Forten and Cuffe periodically exchanged thoughts on a variety of issues. On this late winter day, sick and nearing the end of his life, Cuffe shared his frustration with the inaction of free African-Americans regarding emigration to Africa. "I have been asked the question again and again concerning Colonization of the free People [sic] of Colour," Cuffe noted, "but it is quite useless to give thee my opinion on the Subject."⁶⁹⁰ Much as Thomas Jefferson had become the guru of colonization among white supporters, Cuffe served as the symbolic founder of the black emigration movement in the United States. Although Prince Hall, James McKenzie and others had organized emigration efforts decades earlier, Cuffe was

⁶⁸⁹ I would like to thank Paul Cyr of the New Bedford Free Library Special Collections for his invaluable assistance in locating key documents, and for sharing his vast knowledge of the abolitionist community in early nineteenth-century New Bedford.

⁶⁹⁰ Paul Cuffe to James Forten, 1 March 1817, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, "Letter Book of Paul Cuffe," Box 1, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts. A moderate percentage of the letters contained in the Paul Cuffe Papers have been reprinted in various collections, the most comprehensive being: *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808-1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil."* Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, ed. Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996. For more on Forten, see Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

the most famous and well-connected black emigrationist of the early national period. He became a public figure around whom blacks could rally.

In his final years, Cuffe grew impatient with younger free blacks who seemed to spend more time asking for his advice and planning emigration schemes than actually executing them. Cuffe was discouraged. He advised Forten, “if the free people of Colour would exert themselves more and more in industry and honesty, it would be a great help towards the liberateing [sic] of those who Still remain in Bondage.”⁶⁹¹ Used to being a man of action, Cuffe’s illness, advancing years, and shrinking assets imprisoned him in his Westport, Massachusetts home, making him especially critical toward his younger protégés. Just as Jefferson did in a similar exchange of letters, Cuffe questioned the need to repeat his well-known thoughts on the topic because his sickly body would not allow him to captain another voyage across the Atlantic to land more free black colonists in Africa. Cuffe could not resist providing his friend with the details of his emigration scheme: to create two colonies, one in the United States and one in Africa, enabling “the Sons and daughters of the race of Africa” to “stretch forth their arms to God, and unite.”⁶⁹²

The final years of Paul Cuffe’s life captured the complexities of black identity in the Atlantic world. Cuffe, who led what scholars refer to as the first back to Africa movement, has been viewed by historians Lamont Thomas, Sheldon Harris, and Floyd Miller as an Anglophile, a man keen on developing a three-way trade between Africa, England, and the United States, or as a Quaker missionary.⁶⁹³ Yet, Cuffe, a famous half-

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Paul Cuffe has been described in a variety of ways, but usually as the founder of the first black nationalist movement in the United States. Scholars took an interest in Cuffe at the beginning of

black, half-Indian merchant of modest wealth, was more complex than these characterizations. His intention to resettle free African-Americans in Sierra Leone was motivated by a desire to unify Africans in the diaspora through the promotion of pan-Atlantic black identity – an idea based on a seemingly paradoxical Jeffersonian-like belief in spreading American values to Africa’s “heathens.” Paul Cuffe emerged as America’s first black imperialist, shaping colonization from a concept based on removal to one rooted in the transference of culture and industry through voluntary migration.

After a reconnoiter of Sierra Leone in 1811, Paul Cuffe’s initial goal to establish beneficial trade relations with Britain’s colony changed dramatically. The favorable reports describing a fledgling although civilized capital, Freetown, proved false. Cuffe saw drunkenness, itinerancy amongst the young male workforce, no agricultural production, and an indifferent white British leadership. As a result, his strategy to colonize West Africa with black Americans began to incorporate the Jeffersonian ideal that African-Americans could help “improve” and “civilize” native Africans by teaching them core American values: Christianity, free labor, education, and participatory government. For Cuffe and most other African-American supporters of colonization, pan-Atlantic blackness could exist only if Africans in the diaspora were willing to subscribe to America’s “civilizing” influence.

the twentieth century, with Henry Noble Sherwood’s notable biography, “Paul Cuffe” in *Journal of Negro History*, Vo. 8 (April 1923, 153-229. Other scholarship on Cuffe includes Lamont D. Thomas, *Rise To Be A People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986; Sheldon H. Harris, *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972; and Rhett S. Jones’ “Introduction” in Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe’s Logs and Letters, 1808-1817: A Black Quaker’s “Voice from within the Veil.”* Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1996. Cuffe also appears briefly in scholarship on African-American history, including but not limited to: Lamin Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of West Africa*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Cuffe adapted other ideas long associated primarily with Thomas Jefferson, but he turned them to rather different ends. In 1814, after his return from Sierra Leone, this cultured, elite black man encountered deep-seated racism during his travels along the East Coast to raise support and money for his colonization scheme. He became frustrated by the value-system that, on the one hand, celebrated his ability to amass a modest fortune, while refusing him travel accommodations equal to whites. The captain had traveled the Atlantic, often attaining celebrity-status in England, and lamenting America's bi-furcated society where a black man seemed to be under suspicion at all times.

Just as Jefferson had long argued that colonization would facilitate the construction of a white American republic, Cuffe sought the emigration of African-Americans to unite them with their African brethren. In Africa, he believed, black Americans had the chance to build a free black nation. Upon arriving in Sierra Leone in 1815 with an anemic "cargo" of 38 free African-Americans, he encountered a multi-ethnic population that reinforced his earlier observation that fundamental differences between Africans and black Americans existed. Frustrated by the state of the colony, Cuffe became deeply devoted to the emigrationist cause. He believed that sober, civil, and industrious black Americans were the key to improving the colony's chances for success. Cuffe's inability to overlook ethnic differences, however, revealed subaltern fractures in his vision of a pan-Atlantic blackness. Although "brethren," not all blacks in the diaspora were equal.

An Enterprising Young Man⁶⁹⁴

Born in 1759 at Cuttyhunk, an Elizabeth Island in Massachusetts' Buzzards Bay, Paul Cuffe came of age during the American Revolution. His father was Ashanti, taken from Africa's Gold Coast to bondage in Massachusetts where, after diligence, "great industry and economy," he bought his freedom to marry a Wampanoag Indian woman named Ruth.⁶⁹⁵ Young Cuffe lived on the family farm, but he soon left in order to take to the sea, sailing on his first whaling voyage as a sixteen year-old deck hand in 1773, two years after his father had died.⁶⁹⁶ He was likely at sea when the local assembly in Massachusetts voted to stop trading with England, an event that would change the young man's life in unforeseen ways.

Nearing the end of his teenage years, Paul Cuffe developed a knack for exploiting economic opportunities few others considered. Coastal trade from the mainland to the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard was cut during the American Revolution in 1778, isolating the islands from much needed supply chains. Living in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, near New Bedford, Paul and his brother David built an open boat in which to deliver goods to the islanders. Bandits trolling Buzzard's Bay caught the two and soon David left his younger brother's side, choosing the security of the family farm.

⁶⁹⁴ Cuffe has provided ample material for writers of children's books, young adult literature, and journalists. Cuffe is usually portrayed in a heroic manner because of his ability to overcome racism and other obstacles, see: William Loren Katz, *Proudly Red and Black: Stories of African and Native Americans*. New York: Atheneum Books, 1993; and Arthur Diamond, *Paul Cuffe*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989.

⁶⁹⁵ William Allen, *Life of William Allen, with selections from his correspondence*. Philadelphia: H. Longstreth, 1847. p. 110.

⁶⁹⁶ For more on New Englanders' relationship with the land and the sea, see Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fisherman: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1994. p.143-328.

Paul resumed his nighttime treks across the bay, eluding the British patrols long enough to profit from his daring.⁶⁹⁷

Young Cuffe's political canniness also surfaced during the American Revolution. Cuffe protested vigorously when taxed without voting rights. Both Paul and his older brother John emphasized their Native American and African ancestry with varying degrees of importance. As Paul Cuffe became more involved in the colonization movement, his African heritage took on more significance in public. However, in their youth Paul and John claimed both Native American and African ancestry in numerous petitions they wrote to Massachusetts, arguing that *both* attributes garnered them tax-exempt status under the American Revolutionary mantra of no taxation without representation. In a 1780 petition to Bristol County Massachusetts' court, brothers Paul and John identified themselves as "Indian men" who "by law not the subjects of taxation for any estate."⁶⁹⁸ The two young men were taken to prison to be released only after having paid their taxes. The Massachusetts courts soon released from jail due to a writ of habeas corpus the "Indian" men – as the state also referred to them – in 1781.

Their ability to self-identify as Indian in certain situations, and as African in others, illustrated the complex process of social and racial change taking place in revolutionary era Massachusetts. State officials gradually re-defined Indians as "mustee," then "Negro," and finally "Black" during the early national period in southern New England.⁶⁹⁹ Legally, such racial redefinitions transformed men like Paul Cuffe from

⁶⁹⁷ For more, see, Rosalind Cobb Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808-1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil."* Washington: Howard University Press, 1996. p.48-49.

⁶⁹⁸ Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," p.163-164.

⁶⁹⁹ Carter G. Woodson "The Relations of Negroes and Indians in Massachusetts," in *Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Jan. 1920), p.46.

Indian to the subordinate black identity.⁷⁰⁰ Although Indians of the region were “written off the record” in this legal context, many mixed-race peoples existed in a cultural duality that was of Indian and African background.⁷⁰¹ Paul Cuffe would emerge from his “mustee” heritage as a black man based on his own terms and not the opinion of a local court. Conversely, his brother Paul married an Indian woman, choosing to live in an Indian community in the commonwealth.⁷⁰² Two brothers from the same biological parents fashioned two separate, but not entirely different, racial identities.

Eventually, the Massachusetts’ court ruled that enfranchisement resided with the individual town and a hefty bill for three years of back taxes awaited the Cuffe family, although an out-of-court settlement reduced the debt.⁷⁰³ Nevertheless, the war-torn teenage years of Paul Cuffe shaped his adult life in two ways: he realized the potential of undertaking trade routes few others desired and he learned that a black man could challenge the status quo in the American legal system. Cuffe quickly grew his own personal wealth by taking advantage of the limited freedom a black man could gain from a life at sea.⁷⁰⁴

⁷⁰⁰ Ruth Wallis Herndon and Ella Wilcox Sekatau “The Right to a Name: The Narragansett People and Rhode Island Officials in the Revolutionary Era,” *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850*. New York: Routledge, 2000. p. 426-428. As early as 1719, South Carolina’s governor made it law that “all those ‘not entirely Indian’” would be counted as black. For more, see Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1974, p. 152; and Horton and Horton, *Hard Road to Freedom*, p. 47.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² For more Massachusetts’ Indians racial and cultural identity, see Jean M. O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997; and Daniel Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

⁷⁰³ Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe’s Logs and Letters*, p.49.

⁷⁰⁴ According to W. Jeffrey Bolster, “ships were a pipeline to freedom and refuge for slaves on the lam,” *Black Jacks*, p. 4. For more on Cuffe’s confrontation with the white world of water-based trade, see Sherwood, “Paul Cuffe,” in *Journal of Negro History*, P.156-161.

Self taught, Cuffe devoted considerable time to the basics such as reading and writing. The young man realized the direction of his adult life depended on his ability to garner information and process it efficiently. Three brief lessons on the art and science of navigation seemed to invigorate Cuffe. At the conclusion of the revolutionary war, Cuffe recommenced his coastal trade operation, but this time with a larger 18-ton decked vessel. He set sail from his home in Westport in search of cod; Cuffe's inaugural fishing voyage provided his first real profit. Seeing the potential for the fishing industry, Cuffe employed his brother-in-law, who made several trips up the coast to the rich waters off Newfoundland. Now, with his own ship and his relative's 20-ton boat, Cuffe's profits enabled him to purchase another vessel, the *Mary*, and its crew into his burgeoning maritime business.⁷⁰⁵

Soon after acquiring the *Mary*, Cuffe expanded his business, entering the fiercely competitive whaling industry in 1793. A difficult industry, whaling demanded that captain and crew be at sea for months in search of the valuable mammals.⁷⁰⁶ For the black Cuffe and his crew on the *Mary*, whaling would prove to be an even more challenging enterprise. As they arrived in the waters off Newfoundland in late summer 1793, Cuffe was amidst four other whaling vessels. The usual convention in early nineteenth-century whaling called for cooperation amongst ships, but the *Mary's* black captain was not well-received by the other white skippers. Demonstrating the perseverance that marked Cuffe's teenage years, the captain ordered his crew of ten to go

⁷⁰⁵ Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," p. 157.

⁷⁰⁶ For descriptions of New England's whaling industry, see Thomas Jefferson, *Observations on the Whale-Fishery*, France: Jacques-Gabriel Clousier, 1788, Early American Imprints, 1st Series, Evans# 21345; Alexander Starbuck, *History of America's Whale Fishery, from its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876*. New Jersey: Castle, 1989; and Edouard A. Stackpole, *The Sea-Hunters: The New England Whalemen during Two Centuries, 1635-1835*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1953.

it alone. Cuffe himself harpooned two whales. Seeing *Mary's* success, the other ships began to cooperate in the hunt. In the end, Cuffe's crew managed six whales in total.⁷⁰⁷

Excited by his haul, Cuffe sailed for Philadelphia where he used his profits to buy the hardware to build a new, 69-ton vessel, *Ranger*. Launched in 1795, the same year James McKenzie boarded the white-owned *Charlotte* for Sierra Leone, the vessel allowed Cuffe to diversify his business interests by taking on cargo such as corn and other dry goods. Yet, the *Ranger* would serve as a platform of sorts for Cuffe. He often noted how blacks and whites in the seaports he visited "were filled with astonishment and alarm. A vessel owned and commanded by [a] black man...was unprecedented and surprising."⁷⁰⁸ Port masters and customs house officers predictably met the arrival of the black captain with increased scrutiny; but, upon finding Cuffe's papers legitimate, they had little recourse to stop his trading activities.⁷⁰⁹ His ships provided him with a vehicle to rise out of the ambiguous legal status of blacks in Massachusetts. He was now captain of a medium-sized vessel that gained notoriety wherever it – and its commander – traveled.

Paul Cuffe built a multi-ship mercantile enterprise that led him around the western hemisphere in search of new whaling and economic opportunities. Cuffe represented black independence and commercial prowess; but he proved to be more than a shrewd businessman. Cuffe – derived from his father's African name Kofi – came to embrace a strong sense of African identity throughout his adult life even as he became financially successful in white America.⁷¹⁰ By the time of his first trip to Sierra Leone in 1811, Cuffe believed that the emigration of free American blacks to West Africa offered

⁷⁰⁷ Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," p.156-157.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid. p.158.

⁷⁰⁹ Allen, *Life of William Allen*, p. 111.

⁷¹⁰ Harris, *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return*. p.33-35.

redemption to the continent, liberty for persons of color, and the chance to open trade ties with a growing free population on the coast of Africa.⁷¹¹ This mixture of ideals served Cuffe well in future endeavors.

Paul Cuffe approached his thirties just as the popular emigration movement in Newport, Rhode Island spread to other parts of southern New England. In 1787, many of Newport's black residents moved to nearby Providence, Rhode Island and New Bedford, Massachusetts, fleeing an "acutely depressed" period for the city.⁷¹² Enthusiasm for emigration must have traveled with them on their way to these cities, and it is likely that the docks of Newport served as the most direct avenue of influence on Cuffe's thinking about emigration. Banister's wharf and the Free African Union Society were in the same neighborhood, making it likely Cuffe heard the rumblings of black emigrationists. Furthermore, Cuffe conducted business at Banister's wharf, the same place where William Thornton disembarked on his way to the Union Society to discuss plans for colonizing Africa. The two Quakers undoubtedly knew of each other and possibly met through mutual Friends like the wealthy abolitionist Rotch family, members of whom Cuffe knew from the New Bedford based whaling industry.⁷¹³

The role of the Friends in the Union Society and the black emigration movement of the 1780s and 1790s assured deeper connections between Paul Cuffe and other

⁷¹¹ For more on the life of Paul Cuffe, see the seminal biography by Lamont D. Thomas, *Rise To Be A People: A Biography of Paul Cuffe*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986 and the lengthy study by Henry Noble Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe" in *Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 8 (April 1923), 153-229.

⁷¹² Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1807-1817*, p.56.

⁷¹³ William Rotch was fond of retelling the story of his first dinner with Paul Cuffe. Cuffe and his wife reportedly made dinner for Rotch and three friends, but they only set four place settings on the table. The self-described noble Rotch refused to eat until his hosts set themselves a place at the table with the white men. For more on the Rotch family, see John M. Bullard, *The Rotches*. Milford, NH: The Cabinet Press, 1947.

prominent advocates – both black and white – of colonization. Henry Smeathman’s *Substance of Black Settlement to be Made Near Sierra Leone* and other similar tracts passed through the hands of many Union Society members and Friends, perhaps making its way to Cuffe.⁷¹⁴ By the first full decade of American independence, Cuffe’s growing merchant business took him throughout the ports of New England and the rest of the Atlantic. He traveled the same routes as the ideas for colonization and emigration, crossing paths with key supporters of the schemes. These influences shaped the man Cuffe became in the 1810s.

Cuffe’s Quaker leanings exposed him further to loud abolitionist calls, a key element of Quaker beliefs. In letters to other Quakers, Cuffe expressed his desire to help liberate “my Brethren the afferican Race,” but he considered himself too “febel.”⁷¹⁵ Cuffe recognized his uniqueness in the black diaspora, however, noting that “blessed be to god I am what I am,” the owner and part-owner of several large transport ships, and “that god...Lay upon me to make an Instermert of me for that Service.”⁷¹⁶ Cuffe seemed to know in 1808 that he would soon take on a larger role in the abolitionist and colonization movements in the Atlantic world. Furthermore, he agreed with Quaker abolitionist theories that suggested abolishing the transatlantic slave trade would be the most effective way of liberating slaves. The only way to accomplish this goal, Cuffe believed, was to go to Africa and strike at the heart of the trade.

⁷¹⁴ See the correspondence of the Free African Union Society of Newport, in *The Proceedings of the Free African Union Society and The African Benevolent Society*, ed. William H. Robinson, Providence: The Urban League of Rhode Island, 1976, p.21-50.

⁷¹⁵ Cuffe to James Pemberton, 14 September 1808, Paul Cuffe Papers 1759-1817, Box 1. New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts. It is not clear what feebleness Cuffe refers to in this letter. Perhaps he was ill at the time, but it could also be that his business ventures had been tiresome and stressful, striking at his enthusiasm for abolitionist activities.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

A primary component of Cuffe's abolitionist views rested on the assimilation model. Until his return to America in 1814, Cuffe believed strongly in "promoting the civilization of the Blacks in their own country with a view to draw them off the wild habits of life to which they have been accustomed."⁷¹⁷ In so doing, Africans would understand the moral depravity of the slave-trade and discontinue the practice, thereby cutting off the source of slaves to the United States. Once the source had been shut down, Cuffe, reasoned, slavery would end and America would adopt more respectable forms of labor.⁷¹⁸ Then, Cuffe predicted blacks would prove themselves worthy of citizenship by their actions in Sierra Leone, demonstrating their ability to prosper in that black nation, and then potentially in the white nations of the Atlantic.

Zachary Macauley's Ideal Man

A black man succeeded in doing what Jefferson and Rufus King failed to accomplish. Just a decade after Jefferson sent King to England to negotiate the colonization of African-Americans in Sierra Leone, Cuffe negotiated a deal with Governor Zachary Macauley to allow free blacks from America to settle in the African colony. Cuffe envisioned African-Americans playing a key role in the development of industry, agriculture, and trade in Britain's colony. Furthermore, the mission to Christianize West Africans would commence in earnest once free African-Americans began to emigrate.

⁷¹⁷ 8 September 1808, in Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," p.169.

⁷¹⁸ For more on Cuffe's theories of abolition, see Harris, *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return*, p.13-50.

Long known for his emigrationist views amongst Quaker and lay supporters of colonization, Cuffe seemed an obvious choice to lead an expedition to settle free African-Americans. By 1808, the same year the United States abolished the transatlantic slave trade, the opportunity emerged to enlist Cuffe and others in the attempt to increase the black Christian population of Sierra Leone. James Pemberton of Philadelphia and other Quakers contacted Cuffe with a new scheme of colonization.⁷¹⁹

Pemberton, a man well connected with Sierra Leone's government, believed the entrepreneurial Cuffe fit the plans of British moral organizations that were trying to strengthen the fledgling colony. Prominent men like James Pemberton – a member of Pennsylvania Assembly and the Pennsylvania Society for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage – moved in the same circles as other high profile supporters of colonization, including Benjamin Franklin, James Fothergill, William Thornton and the London "Saints." It is highly likely that Paul Cuffe's name surfaced in abolitionist meetings throughout the Atlantic world because abolitionists constantly sought examples of "enlightened" and "civilized" blacks.⁷²⁰

Pemberton respected Cuffe's accomplishments as a black man in a white man's nation. He wrote Cuffe, telling him of his associates in London who "have with this laudable view formed an Association and raised a considerable sum of money to engage persons of sobriety," a key trait of any good Quaker, "and other necessary qualifications

⁷¹⁹ James Pemberton and Paul Cuffe knew each other as a result of having mutual friends in the Rotch Family. A well-known Quaker family, the Rotches served as one of many hubs of abolitionist thought in the Quaker community. For more this prominent family, see Joseph L. McDevitt, *The House of Rotch: Massachusetts Whaling Merchants, 1734-1828*. New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1986.

⁷²⁰ For more on these men and Jefferson's correspondence, see Chapter 3 and Sydney V. James, *A People Among Peoples*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963 and Wiggins, *Paul Cuffe's Letters and Logs, 1808-1817*, p.92-93 (notes).

to go over to Africa to instruct them in the art of Agriculture and other proper employments.” Whilst there, “they may be readily effected to great advantage if the Natives can be gradually brought to a right disposition to change their former course of living.” Pemberton referred optimistically to precedent, noting that Americans, and Quakers in particular, “[have] in some degree promoted with a favourable prospect of further success among Indian natives of this Country [America].”⁷²¹ Cuffe seemed perfect for such a plan, partly because of his success in business and trade, which took him around the Atlantic, bringing him into contact with a variety of people and cultures.

Other reasons suggested Cuffe would do well in charge of any colonization scheme. Cuffe’s family experienced the very “success” Anglo-Americans had in Christianizing Native Americans and Africans and, as a result, he became a well-known and respected practicing Quaker.⁷²² Cuffe offered a unique perspective borne from experiences that eluded men like William Thornton, Henry Smeathman, Samuel Hopkins, the Swedenborgians or any other white Atlantic elites. Furthermore, Cuffe was attracted to the idea of leading an expedition across the Atlantic to help “civilize” Africa. To men like Sierra Leone’s former governor Zachary Macauley, Cuffe seemed the ideal candidate: a religious man not distracted by reason. Too many whites had been scared off the project by its costs and complicated logistics, but Cuffe seemed motivated by a missionary zeal and a belief in the higher, moral purpose to colonizing Sierra Leone.

⁷²¹ James Pemberton to Paul Cuffe, 8 June 1808, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, Microfilm, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts. One of Pemberton’s acquaintances in London, William Allen, spoke highly of the “African,” noting that Cuffe exemplified the fact that “mere possession of knowledge will not enable a person to change his rank or situation in society, unless he employs that knowledge to the benefit of the community.” Based on Pemberton’s reports, Allen believed Cuffe could be the man to resurrect the fledgling colony. *Life of William Allen*, p.86.

⁷²² See, James, *A People Among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Pemberton praised Cuffe's potential in leading free African-Americans to the colony with Macauley. In June 1808, Pemberton informed Cuffe that "Zack Macawly [sic]," as he called him, "said that, if Capt'n [sic] Cuffe should incline to make a voyage to Sierra Leone" that "he will take care that he shall there receive every encouragement which its Governor can afford." Macauley, no longer Governor of Sierra Leone, remained a powerful figure in abolitionist circles as secretary of the newly founded African Institution of London. The new society's influence and standing would be increased if Macauley could convince a man of Cuffe's ethical and moral stature, as well as celebrity, to invest in Sierra Leone – an investment composed of money and humans. Moreover, Pemberton noted that the "important views" of the African Institution "would be much advanced if any Free black people from your Continent [America] of good conduct [and] religious principle could be induced to offer their personal assistance."⁷²³ For his part, the 49 year-old Cuffe seemed reserved about heading such a voyage, noting that he felt "Wornout in hard Service," both to the community and his religion.⁷²⁴ Yet he did not completely turn down Pemberton's suggestion, choosing to leave the door open for potential inclusion in the scheme at a later date.

Pemberton replied almost immediately to Cuffe's hedging. In a lengthy letter, he informed Cuffe of "new evidence" that should convince him to sign on to the project. The new evidence consisted of pleas to Cuffe's pride, noting that members of the African Institution included worthy men, even the King's nephew, and that such men "are earnestly attentive to pursue the laudable object of promoting the civilization of Blacks in

⁷²³ Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters*, p.78.

⁷²⁴ Paul Cuffe to James Pemberton, 14 September 1808, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, Microfilm Roll 1, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

their own Country.”⁷²⁵ Furthermore, Pemberton argued that a successful mission appeared to be entirely possible, given the plan was “nearly similar to that which Friends are engaged for Civilization of the Indians on the borders of these American States.”⁷²⁶ Perhaps Pemberton struck a nerve with Cuffe. As a Christianized half-Indian, the successful Cuffe understood how prosperous “civilized” Indians could be. He based much of his abolitionist beliefs on the idea that blacks could indeed assimilate into American society, as many Americans believed to be the case with Indians. Equating the improvement of Africa to the civilizing of Native Americans for a second time proved to be a master-stroke on Pemberton’s part, perhaps finally convincing Cuffe to join the African Institute’s endeavors.⁷²⁷

In June 1809, eight months later, the Quaker sea captain notified John James and Alexander Wilson of his decision to undertake the expedition. The length of time was the result of several factors that included the need to attend to Cuffe’s ongoing business affairs, the consideration of the impact such a major endeavor might have on Cuffe’s family, and the death of the elderly James Pemberton. Even Pemberton’s death that year failed to decrease the Institute’s optimism once Cuffe joined the group. Citing his intention “for some years” to “make a voyage to Sierra Leone in order to inspect the

⁷²⁵ James Pemberton to Paul Cuffe, 17 September 1808, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, Microfilm Roll 1, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts. Pemberton presents a case to Cuffe that suggests the African Institution would be upset with any answer except an unequivocal yes from the noted sea captain.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ There was long history of Christian, including Quaker, missionary work amongst Native Americans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See, Daniel K. Richter, “Believing That Many of the Red People Suffer Much for Want of Food:’ Hunting, Agriculture and a Quaker Construction of Indianness in the Early Republic,” in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol.19, No. 4 Special Issue on the Racial Consciousness and Nation-Building in the Early Republic (Winter 199), 601-628; and Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

situation of the country,” Cuffe also noted his desire to help native Africans “become an enlightened people” in the “true light of Christianity,” and as “I am of the African race I feel myself interested for them.”⁷²⁸ The spirit of Cuffe’s agreement seemed to fall in line with the intentions of the London based African Institution. Such rhetoric must have warmed the spirits of Macaulay too who, just a decade previously, believed colonization by black Americans to be a risky venture.

Yet, a potentially major miscommunication between the African Institution and Cuffe lay buried in the correspondence amongst the white men who solicited his aid. Cuffe referred to his “talents” – his business and entrepreneurial leadership – that he offered the settlement, skills developed in Massachusetts and best suited for commercial trade *from America to Africa* and back again. Proponents of Cuffe, however, believed he intended to “migrate” to Sierra Leone because “many beneficial effects to his Countrymen might” accompany his “removal thither.”⁷²⁹ Perhaps misled by prominent racial ideology – even amongst abolitionists – that portrayed blacks as simple-minded and less inclined to use reason as a guide, members of the African Institution simplified the motivating factors behind Cuffe’s interest in Sierra Leone. They assumed that he was led by a yearning to return to the continent of his father’s birth to live with and enlighten his “brethren.” Cuffe felt a sense of responsibility to his Quaker beliefs to show other Africans the light of Christianity, but he also saw Massachusetts as the hub of his commercial enterprises. For Cuffe, a sensible and shrewd businessman, uprooting what had taken years to build seemed nothing short of madness: removing himself across the

⁷²⁸ Paul Cuffe to John James and Alexander Wilson, 10 June 1809, in Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, Microfilm, Roll 1, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

⁷²⁹ Zachary Macaulay to William Dillwyn, 29 August 1809, in Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe’s Logs and Letters, 1808-1817*, p.84

Atlantic had the potential to restrict the hard-earned freedom he thought he had won in America.

Cuffe firmly believed in Christianizing Africa and in providing refuge for thousands of free African-Americans living in a racially restrictive United States. He also understood the financial incentives involved in opening trade with West Africa.⁷³⁰ Spreading Christianity was just one of Cuffe's goals. Cuffe's agreement with the African Institution may have been in part about the "opening of intercourse" with his "brethren in Africa," but such intentions did not concern those whites involved.⁷³¹ Regardless, the African Institution saw Cuffe's involvement as a legitimating force because he was a successful black sea captain, entrepreneur, merchant, and faithful Friend.

The First Voyage to Sierra Leone

In late December 1810, Paul Cuffe set sail for Sierra Leone with a black crew aboard the brig, *Traveller*. The bark held only eight blacks and one white apprentice seaman who were encouraged by flattering reports of local conditions from former inhabitants of the colony. After a reasonably uneventful 58-day crossing in April 1811,

⁷³⁰ Some discussion centered on the potential limitations on Cuffe's commercial endeavors caused by the Non-Intercourse Act of 1809. Jefferson's Act prohibited trade between the United States, Great Britain and France, which theoretically included the British colony of Sierra Leone. The Act had already slowed some of the correspondence between London, Philadelphia and Massachusetts, annoying the Londoners who were trying to quickly inject some much needed energy in to Sierra Leone. Concerns that "the American Non Intercourse Act stands at present in the way of a commercial adventure to a British settlement" proved misguided, given Cuffe's enthusiasm for the project. Zachary Macaulay William Dillwyn, 29 August 1809 and James & Wilson to William Dillwyn, 16 June 1810, in Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808-1817*, p.84 & 87.

⁷³¹ Alexander Wilson to William Dillwyn, 21 June 1809, in Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808-1817*, p. 81.

Cuffe scanned Sierra Leone, unsure of what and who awaited him in Africa. Partly an ethnographic trip, and partly a means of assessing the viability of trade and whaling in Africa, Cuffe was impressed with some things encountered in the colony and not by others.

Cuffe's stay lasted a few months, during which time he gained important insights about the colony and its inhabitants. A systematic thinker, he immediately took a census of people living under the guardianship of a "Civilized power [Great Britain]."⁷³² Reprinted below exactly as it appeared in Cuffe's published account of the trip, the census meticulously recorded the ethnic composition of the residents of Sierra Leone. The easily recognizable differences between ethnic groups suggest a highly stratified or segregated community based on black ethnic origins. Furthermore, the ethnic groups described in the table reflect what best can be described as black Atlantic ethnicities. Of the four black groups listed, two – Nova Scotians and Maroons – were collections of West African ethnic groups united by their experiences in the Atlantic. Cuffe's census recorded the essence of the transnational black Atlantic experience by noting the changing composition of African ethnicities. It also revealed how an elite black man envisioned differences of class within the black Atlantic community.⁷³³

⁷³² Paul Cuffe, *A Brief Account of the Settlement and Present Situation of the Colony of Sierra Leone, in Africa*. New York: Samuel Wood, 1812. p. 1.

⁷³³ In this context, "class" is defined as the social and economic relations between persons of color in the African Diaspora. Cuffe must be considered an elite, or genteel, black man because of his wealth, education, religious character, and, perhaps most importantly, as a captain. Influencing my definition of class in the early republic period, see, Seth Rockman, "Class and the History of Working People in the Early Republic," in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Winter 2005), 527-535.

	Men	Women	Children	Total
Europeans	22	4	2	28
Nova Scotians	188	295	499	982
Maroons	165	195	447	807
Africans	20	43	37	100
Crue Men	601			601
			Total Pop.	2518

According to Cuffe’s census, whites represented just 4% of the population, making this truly a settlement of persons of color. Most of these whites, however, were involved in government affairs on various levels, reflecting the “Civilized power” that oversaw the colony. Cuffe viewed England in a similar manner as Boston King did a decade earlier: a nation of intellectuals and morally upstanding men whose presence in Sierra Leone could only aid in the advancement of its black residents. These white elites oversaw a stratified community of blacks where common laborers, such as the Crue Men and “Africans,” literally occupied the lower columns on Cuffe’s chart. Meanwhile, the semi-skilled and skilled Nova Scotians and Maroons represented the mid-level social and economic group.

The “civilized power” proved multi-layered for Cuffe, though. Beyond the white government, Cuffe noted that 7-8 schools were built, existing churches were well attended, and that 5 courts of law had been organized. For a black man who had worked within the institutions of white America – schools, Christian churches, and the power of the courts – such “Civilized power” remained central to the long-term success of any free black settlement. This framework for a lawful, educated, and Christian colony satisfied

Cuffe who optimistically reported that residents “generally...encourage new settlers for the purpose of cultivating the land, or engaging in commercial enterprise.”⁷³⁴ Met with petitions by the inhabitants of Sierra Leone that called for “foreign brethren” to migrate from America and Britain to the colony, Cuffe realized that his goal of opening trade with Africa was a distinct possibility. He seemed willing to overlook reports that an educated black Englishman “got some[what] unsteady; fe[eling] inclined to return among his old comrades” in England.⁷³⁵ Teachers and ministers were the foundation of any attempt to build a successful colony, much less to “civilize” Africa; even a handful deserting the mission alluded to instability that could make it even more difficult to establish a free nation.

Although optimistic about the potential of Sierra Leone to become a self-supporting black nation, the habits of the resettled Black Loyalists (or, Nova Scotians) concerned Cuffe. The Quaker viewed these former slaves with disdain. Despite their desire to “establish commerce in Sierra Leone,” “it appears that there is not so much industry as would be but...the people of the colony are very fond of the spirituous

⁷³⁴ Cuffe, *A Brief Account...of the Colony of Sierra Leone*, p.5. Crue men were from a specific group of Africans hired for their skills in building and labor. They were not from the immediate area surrounding the colony and thus were considered separate from native Africans. The Crue (also known as Kru or Grebo) served as itinerant workers for British traders and officials. Some scholars trace their relationship with the British to 1799, lasting throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These skilled and unskilled laborers generally hailed from present day Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ghana, but Crue leaders were willing to recruit workers from virtually anywhere along the West African coast. Workers often arrived in canoes holding for or six men, traveling along the coast until reaching the designated work zone. See, Jane Martin, “Krumen “Down the Coast:” Liberian Migrants on the West African Coast in the 19th and 20th Centuries,” in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*. Vol. 18, No. 3 (1995), 401-423; and Esu Biyi, “The Kru and Related Peoples of West Africa, Part I,” in *The Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vo. 29, No. 113 (October 1929), 71-77.

⁷³⁵ Cuffe to William Allen, 24 April 1811, reprinted in full in Sheldon H. Harris, “An American’s Impression of Sierra Leone in 1811,” in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (January 1962). p. 41.

liquors.”⁷³⁶ Their drunkenness caused the “industry on their farms [to be] much neglected;” meanwhile, “their young men are too fond of leaving the colony” to become “seamen for other people.”⁷³⁷ The itinerancy of the core of the colony – industrious young men – made it difficult to build a stable long-term economic and physical infrastructure. Cuffe turned to commerce as a method of moral improvement because it “might have this good tendency of keeping the young men at home, and in some future day qualify them to become managers of themselves.”⁷³⁸ Commerce allowed Cuffe to rise from an agrarian background to become perhaps America’s wealthiest black man, certainly, he reasoned, it could help establish some semblance of order in the rowdy multi-ethnic milieu of Sierra Leone.

Nearly twenty-five years after the first group arrived in Sierra Leone, the Nova Scotians still lived in wood-framed grass huts that looked primitive to Cuffe. Even though Cuffe saw “no reason why they may not become a nation to be numbered among the historians’ nations of the world,” issues of class and ethnic difference colored the sea-captain’s observations.⁷³⁹ The task was clear: the Nova Scotians must become “thus qualified to carry commerce” by becoming sober and staying in the colony to establish ties with American and British merchants.⁷⁴⁰ No colony in the Americas, Cuffe inferred, had flourished with drunken settlers. Indeed, only upstanding black men like himself – dry, Christian, and morally sound – could succeed in an Atlantic system where blacks typically worked for white captains. Furthermore, the Nova Scotians must settle down,

⁷³⁶ Cuffe to William Allen, 22 April 1811, reprinted in full in Sheldon H. Harris, “An American’s Impression of Sierra Leone in 1811,” in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (January 1962, p. 39.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ Ibid.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

“introducing trade for the natives” to help “prepare their minds for the reception of better things, etc.”⁷⁴¹ As he set sail for England, before returning to America, disappointment in the state of the colony surfaced. The Quaker lamented, “I am in the hopes some sober families may find their way to Sierra Leone;” otherwise, the “civilization of Africa” may prove elusive.⁷⁴²

Cuffe seemed perplexed by the native Africans he encountered on trips upriver and inland. Impressed by inland tribes’ ability to “acknowledge by words, the existence of a Deity,” Cuffe also remarked that “so accustomed are they to wars and slavery that...it would be a difficult task to convince them of the impropriety [of these] pernicious practices.” Stopping the slave trade would not be easy. Furthermore, the Muslims encountered by Cuffe only hindered his larger goal of abolishing slavery and the slave trade in West Africa. Muslims favored the enslavement of non-Muslim Africans, according to Cuffe, proving that the Islamic “education had taken too firm hold of their minds to admit much effect from reason” the subject of abolishing slavery.⁷⁴³ Cuffe believed their banning alcohol in the community illustrated Muslims’ strong commitment to morality. Still, with a hint of frustration, Cuffe determined the Muslim tribes unsupportive and unfriendly in building a free black, Christian colony.

Upon leaving Sierra Leone in 1811, Paul Cuffe left an Address “To my scattered brethren and fellow countrymen at Sierra Leone.” In it, he said, “Come...let us walk together in the light of the Lord” because “in so doing you will find a living hope which

⁷⁴¹ Ibid. p. 39-40.

⁷⁴² Cuffe to William Allen, 24 April 1811, reprinted in full in Sheldon H. Harris, “An American’s Impression of Sierra Leone in 1811,” in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (January 1962). p. 40.

⁷⁴³ Cuffe, *A Brief Account...of the Colony of Sierra Leone*, p. 7-8. Cuffe made a few trips inland to gather information about the peoples surrounding the coastal settlements of Sierra Leone. I am unsure of how much Cuffe would have known about the tribes in West Africa before his voyage.

will be as an anchor to the soul and a support under afflictions.”⁷⁴⁴ The idea was admirable, but Cuffe himself realized that he was hardly African after this first visit to Sierra Leone. Infighting, politics and a lack of funding, coupled with disease and warfare with native Africans soured Cuffe’s goal to “civilize” Africa.

In Cuffe’s mind, hard work lay ahead: native Africans, Nova Scotians, and the Maroons must be converted or, in the case of those already baptized, made humble practicing Christians. Until then, Cuffe’s common use of “brethren” actually signaled a divide in the black Atlantic community. Nearly 40% of Sierra Leone’s population was just a few decades removed from America, but their experiences in the diaspora had changed them, inviting Cuffe’s contempt. They were “brethren,” linked as members of the “African race,” but not yet unified as Cuffe envisioned.

English Celebrity, Downtrodden American

After his initial reconnoiter of Sierra Leone, Cuffe arrived in London in the summer of 1811 to meet the prominent Quaker abolitionist William Allen. Originally, he had no intention of going to England, but Allen and William Wilberforce were anxious to meet the black captain from America. Cuffe was assured that he would be granted permission to sell his cargo in England, where Americans were barred from doing so according to British maritime law.⁷⁴⁵ He saw an opportunity to advance his own vision of how to civilize Africa to members of London’s African Institution. Cuffe’s celebrity

⁷⁴⁴ Paul Cuffe, *A Brief Account of the Settlement and Present Situation of the Colony of Sierra Leone, in Africa*. New York: Samuel Wood, 1812. p.8.

⁷⁴⁵ *Life of William Allen*, p. 100-110.

had reached England already as people lined the docks of Liverpool awaiting the arrival of the *Traveller* from Sierra Leone in mid-July 1811.

The *Traveller's* entrance into Liverpool's harbor that summer reinforced the "two-ness" of being black in the Atlantic world. Cuffe brought his crew to England to meet with the leadership of the African Institution in order to plan the most effective method of colonizing Sierra Leone with free African-Americans; yet, the press-gang arrived at the moment *Traveller* docked, taking two of Cuffe's men. Aaron Richards, an African apprentice Cuffe had taken on in Sierra Leone, was also impressed. Cuffe seemed little surprised by the press-gang's action, commonly aimed at both blacks and whites during the War of 1812, but the Richards case bothered him. He went immediately to "get the two men first mentioned, but they would not let Aaron go," perhaps because Richards had no recourse as an African lacking a Seaman's Protection Certificate.⁷⁴⁶ Irritated, Cuffe enlisted the aid of Wilberforce and Allen, who worked their legal connections to have Richards returned to Cuffe.⁷⁴⁷ The Richards situation notwithstanding, Cuffe found England to be a welcoming environment.

Still, another seemingly innocuous event that occurred in Liverpool revealed the web entangling even successful black man like Cuffe. One day after *Traveller* arrived in

⁷⁴⁶ It is likely the two unnamed crewmen immediately freed by the British held Seamen's Protection Certificates issued by the United States. The law issuing these documents was first passed 28 May 1796, with renewals prior to Cuffe's voyage as recent as 1809. "Extract from an act, for the relief and protection of American seamen," in *Early American Imprints*, Evans #47979, American Antiquarian Society. As W. Jeffrey Bolster notes, Seamen's Protection Certificates issued to blacks conferred citizenship – a temporary status meant only to protect the sailors from British press gangs. See, "'To Feel Like A Man: Black Seamen in the Northern States, 1800-1860," in *Journal of American History*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (March 1990), p.1175. For more on the political ramifications of impressments, see Bradford Perkins, *Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805-1812*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963.

⁷⁴⁷ "Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*," 12-13 July 1811, in Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters*, p, 133.

port, the *Alpha* docked nearby. Cuffe was co-owner of the ship, which began to off-load its cargo of 532 bales of cotton into the warehouses of Quaker merchant agents William and Richard Rathbone. The cargo had been loaded in New Orleans, an emerging center of trade for products and agriculture produced by slave labor. Ironically, the celebrated Cuffe, a symbol of success and freedom in America, built his shipping business on, at least in part, the transportation of slave-grown cotton.⁷⁴⁸

While in England Cuffe received a warm welcome from Friend William Allen and abolitionists such as Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce and the former governor of Sierra Leone, Zachary Macauley – all with intense interest in seeing the colony succeed. The men aided Cuffe by informing the Board of Trade, an arm of Lords of His Majesty’s Privy Council, that he was an honorable man of good intentions and to not interfere with his return to Sierra Leone and subsequent trip to America. They admittedly had to “put all springs in play” to protect Cuffe, but in so doing they demonstrated a high degree of respect for the American.⁷⁴⁹

Cuffe dined with the men, who led him on a tour of London, and asked him for his thoughts on the viability of Sierra Leone becoming a prosperous free black colony. Clearly not intending to move to Sierra Leone, as the African Institution wished, he spoke to Allen optimistically about the potential for the colony. Cuffe reported to Allen that Sierra Leone seemed to be “a Country [sic] of fertility” suitable for growing sugar cane and other agricultural products. Moreover, “I am in hopes that Some Sober familieys [sic] may find their Way to Sierra Leone more Especialy if the Whale fishery Can be

⁷⁴⁸ “Notes,” Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe’s Logs and Letters*, p.153.

⁷⁴⁹ Based on an account of Cuffe’s time in England by William Allen in *Life of William Allen*, p.103.

Established.”⁷⁵⁰ The entrepreneurial Cuffe knew business opportunity and this, it seemed to him, would anchor any attempts to settle West Africa. Cuffe’s responses excited the men, especially Allen, who noted, “I have not been disappointed in the information” provided by him.⁷⁵¹

Cuffe seemed relaxed in England, strolling various cities’ streets and remarking on the unique character of the bridges in London. What most interested the Massachusetts native were the West Indian docks and three miles of shipping tiers that lined the river Thames. Cuffe was “Exceeding[ly] gratif[ied]” by the sight.⁷⁵² His log for the visit to England is remarkable for what he omits: there is no mention of racism or hatred displayed toward Cuffe or his men. Moreover, he became a celebrity in England. Upon his arrival Liverpool, *The Times*, of London, and other newspapers ran serials chronicling the black captain’s comings and goings. Cuffe experienced an early version of the British public’s well-documented thirst for celebrity news. Unfortunately for Cuffe, such a reception did not await his return to America. Indeed, from his departure in 1810 until his return in 1812, the region’s largest newspaper, the *New-Bedford Mercury*, ran one detailed story on his activities abroad.⁷⁵³

⁷⁵⁰ Paul Cuffe to William Allen, 24 April 1811, in Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe’s Logs and Letters, 1808-1817*, p.120-121.

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

⁷⁵² 26 February 1811, Remarks onboard the Brig *Traveller*, in Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe’s Logs and Letters, 1808-1817*, p.148.

⁷⁵³ *New-Bedford Mercury*, October 18, 1811. p.3. The largest newspaper in southeastern Massachusetts during this era, the *Mercury* did report on Cuffe’s departures from port-to-port and it published a letter to the captain from the New York Colonization Society sent to him during the trip; the American public lacked the intense public interests in his daily activities apparent in England. For more on his celebrity, see Lamont D. Thomas, “An African Captain Along Liverpool’s Docks: Paul Cuffe’s Atlantic Presence,” conference paper, Liverpool and the Transatlantic Slavery, Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire and National Museums Liverpool, October 13-15, 2005.

Cuffe returned to America after a brief stop to offload supplies and goods in Sierra Leone, ready to lead as many free blacks to the colony as were willing to accompany him. Cuffe's plans hit a snag when the U.S. government seized his cargo in accordance with the Non-Intercourse Act of 1809. The self-made man left for Washington to personally protest the act and to seek freedom for his cargo. Aided by prominent white friends Thomas Arnold and the Brown family of Providence, Rhode Island, Cuffe won the right to his cargo in part because he convinced President James Madison, a longtime supporter of colonization, of the "laudable" nature of his voyage to Sierra Leone.⁷⁵⁴ Cuffe's belief in the need for emigration to Africa by America's free blacks was hardened by the racist attitudes and ill treatment he received throughout the eastern corridor on his travels home from Washington.⁷⁵⁵

Cuffe returned to America deeply committed to the emigration cause, convinced African-Americans could aid their "brethren" in Africa. After years at sea, however, Cuffe felt like a stranger in his own land. He had been well received in Sierra Leone. His stature was above reproach in England. Yet, in white America, he was just another black man. On his travels from Washington to Westport, Cuffe stopped in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York to enlist the aid of black abolition societies. His ideas were met with enthusiasm as he addressed. Cuffe pronounced the "Epistle of the Society of Sierra Leone" to his audiences in which he called for the liberation of blacks, for them to

⁷⁵⁴ Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," p.184. Madison was a long-time supporter of African colonization so it is not surprising that he would find the nature of Cuffe's business important and commendable.

⁷⁵⁵ In his journal Cuffe reflected on the cruel social climate blacks faced in America, where he was refused service with white patrons in taverns and expected to perform service duties because of his race. Cuffe found England to be much more tolerant of blacks than America, where whites reportedly lined the wharf awaiting the arrival of the famous Paul Cuffe and his black crew. See Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," p.184-186 and Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808-1817*, chapter 3.

“enjoy liberty that God granted unto all his faithful Saints.”⁷⁵⁶ Cuffe’s return marked his arrival as perhaps the preeminent figure on the black emigrationist community.

But, Cuffe confronted the everyday realities of racism in America. In many whites’ minds, Cuffe was still that young teenager the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had legally written off the record. While traveling from Washington to Baltimore a white man demanded Cuffe “come away from the Seat.”⁷⁵⁷ Given that “I was no Starter and Set Still,” the white man took his seat beside “me but Shew much Evel Contempt.”⁷⁵⁸ For the rest of the journey aboard the steamer Cuffe was peppered with comments from the man who “openly accosted me.”⁷⁵⁹ The abuse did not cease onboard the ship. Once in Baltimore, “they utterly Refused to take me in at the tavern or to git me a Dinner unless I Would go Back among the Servants.”⁷⁶⁰ Cuffe maintained, “I Refused not as I thought myself better then the Servants but from the nature of the Cause thought it not advisable.”⁷⁶¹ Cuffe was deeply hurt by the treatment he received throughout his travels back to Massachusetts. These experiences weighed heavily on Cuffe throughout his remaining years.

Going (for) Broke

In light of his recent experiences, Paul Cuffe appeared particularly motivated to embark on another trip (to be his last) to Africa, leading a group of free black settlers

⁷⁵⁶ For more, see Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad*, p.93; and Wiggins, *Paul Cuffe’s Logs and Letters*, p.180-181.

⁷⁵⁷ 3 May 1812, Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe’s Logs and Letters*, p. 213.

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶¹ *Ibid.*

from America to Sierra Leone. Cuffe saw the Nova Scotians settled in West Africa as likely unable to construct the colony he envisioned. In just a few generations removed from America, they had been corrupted by their experiences in Africa. The Nova Scotians' exposure to native African religion – which included pagans “who “adore the new moon” and Muslims who, Cuffe noted, wrote in a strange manner “from the right to left” – revived a missionary zeal in the Quaker.⁷⁶² Whereas the first voyage to Sierra Leone in 1810/11 focused on ascertaining the viability of three-way commerce with Africa, Europe, and America, a second voyage would further “promote the improvement and civilization of the Africans.”⁷⁶³ Cuffe planned to bring with him aboard the black-crewed *Traveller* men of industry and labor who could cultivate the land, producing tobacco or rice for export. Aaron Richards, the African apprentice impressed in England, represented just such a man. Cuffe taught Richards the art and science of navigation, hoping that it would ignite a passion for the sea as it had in Cuffe as a teenager. He intended for Richards to bring the knowledge he gained in the diaspora back to Sierra Leone to teach the Kru men and other native Africans.

Curiously, two copies of a letter from Thomas Jefferson to an elderly John Lynch appear in Cuffe's personal possessions at this same time.⁷⁶⁴ In the well-circulated letter,

⁷⁶² Cuffe to William Allen, 22 April 1811, reprinted in full in Sheldon H. Harris, “An American's Impression of Sierra Leone in 1811,” in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (January 1962), p. 39.

⁷⁶³ *To the president, senate, and house of representatives of the United States of America*, 15 February 1813, reprinted in *The National Intelligencer from Niles Weekly Register*, 22 January 1814, p.338-339. Reprinted in full in Harris, *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return*, p. 183.

⁷⁶⁴ It is difficult to determine exactly when these Cuffe gained possession of this letter, but the letter – as was the case with much of Jefferson's writing on the topic – was widely distributed amongst supporters of colonization. It is highly likely Cuffe first learned of the letter in 1812, upon his return from Africa. The two copies are contained in Box 3, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Jefferson wrote to Lynch, a Virginia entrepreneur and founder of the city of Lynchburg on the James River:

Going from a country possessing all the useful arts, they [African-Americans] might be the means of transplanting them among the inhabitants of Africa, and would thus carry back to the country of their origin the seeds of civilization which might render their sojournment and sufferings here a blessing in the end to that country.⁷⁶⁵

Jefferson summarized the sentiments that Cuffe would begin to advocate in his efforts to develop a plan for colonization; Cuffe used similar words in the not-too-distant future to advocate African-American emigration to Africa. In possessing of two copies of the letter suggest the importance Cuffe assigned to them. Did these letters serve as a guide or outline for Cuffe's developing colonization scheme? The letters reflected a transformation in Cuffe's thinking on emigration that began after his initial landing in Sierra Leone, and continued during his discussions with the African Institution in London, further stimulated by his egregious encounters with American racism after his return. As Cuffe himself noted in Sierra Leone, Africans were in need of a civilizing influence. Jefferson's words strengthened his conviction and desire to embark on a plan to accomplish this goal. And, Cuffe determined, who better to "carry back to the country of their origins" the seeds of civilization than African-Americans. Since returning from Sierra Leone in 1812, Cuffe began to turn from an emigrationist to a colonizationist with an imperialistic agenda.

In 1814, Paul Cuffe expanded his plan to send colonists to Sierra Leone.⁷⁶⁶ In a memorial written in June 1813, but heard on the floor of Congress on 7 January 1814,

⁷⁶⁵ Jefferson to John Lynch, 21 January 1811, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, Box 3, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

⁷⁶⁶ In 1813, Pennsylvania's legislature proposed a bill that infuriated men Cuffe, Forten, and other black Quakers. The bill aimed to quell white Pennsylvanians' growing concerns over a growing

Cuffe asked for financial support from the United States government for his colonization scheme.⁷⁶⁷ Cuffe's finances had suffered greatly from his last voyage to Sierra Leone. Left with a single ship, the *Traveller*, he was determined to return to Sierra Leone with a load of colonists on a larger, 200-250 ton ship. As part of a two-pronged approach, Cuffe sought aid from the United States government and the African Institution in London. Both sources failed to materialize.

Cuffe's memorial served as the first public record of his transformation from emigrationist to a Jeffersonian-like supporter of colonization. Cuffe asked Congress for "the patronage of the Government of the United States, in affording the aid in the execution of a plan, which may...ultimately prove beneficial to his brethren of the African race within their native climate."⁷⁶⁸ He continued, restating his support for the civilizing of Africa and the accomplishment of his final goal, stopping the slave trade, but he revealed a new side of his thinking on how to accomplish the multi-faceted plan. Cuffe asked Congress to fund the trip "to keep up an intercourse with the free people of colour in the United States," in the "expectation that some persons of reputation be sufficiently interested to visit Africa, and endeavor to promote habits of industry, sobriety, and

post-war free black population by requiring black immigrants into the state to register with local authorities. If they failed to do so, they faced possible removal from the Quaker state. Forten penned a "Series of Letters by a Man of Colour" in protest at approximately the same time Cuffe wrote his memorial to Congress *asking* for removal. The writings of these Friends do not represent contradictory ideas. Forten saw the bill as having the potential to rob blacks of one of few free places in which to live; whereas, Cuffe asked Congress for financial support for his emigration in part to build a colony in West Africa where blacks could live in freedom. Nevertheless, the Pennsylvania legislature's bill must have provided Cuffe with further motivation to find funding for his scheme. See, *Pamphlets of Protest: An Anthology of Early African-American Protest Literature, 1790-1860*. Richard Newman, Patrick Rael, and Philip Lapsansky, eds. New York: Routledge, 2001. p.66-72.

⁷⁶⁷ "Memorial of Paul Cuffe," *Annals of Congress*, 13th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 861-862.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 861.

frugality of the natives of that country.”⁷⁶⁹ This pathway between the United States and Sierra Leone, a colony of wartime foe Great Britain, would act as a conduit for the exchange of goods, ideas, and free people of color in the diaspora.

Cuffe’s vision emphasized the positive impact as being mostly one-sided: the civilizing influence of African-Americans on their “brethren.” The memorial made it clear that the colonists were not the same as Prince Hall’s “Affricans” from the 1787 petition. Rather, Cuffe’s memorial and his use of the term “brethren” made a cultural and racial link between African-Americans like Cuffe and native Africans, but it also made clear the distinction between the two groups. African-Americans’ mission in Cuffe’s mind was to improve the condition of the sometimes uncivilized and often immoral Nova Scotians, Maroons, and native Africans in Sierra Leone. In building a sawmill, for example, the population could rebuild and improve their dwellings, transforming them from straw huts to solidly built wood structures. In providing wagons, African-Americans could show native Africans a new method of transporting goods, relieving them of having to carry heavy items on their heads. Cuffe’s colonists would remake the culture of Sierra Leone in physical, as well as philosophical and religious, ways. They were not “returning” to their birth continent like many of Hall’s fellow petitioners had envisioned; Cuffe’s men intended to carve out a new, more enlightened space for black people in the Atlantic world.

Although Cuffe foresaw a mostly one-way trade from America to Africa, he understood that, in order for Sierra Leone to survive as a colony of free blacks, it must provide the United States and other white Atlantic nations with valuable manufactures and produce. Rice, cotton, coffee, and tobacco seemed most likely to succeed in the

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid.

colony's climate. More importantly, these crops were often in high demand on the market.⁷⁷⁰ At the very least, he reasoned, vessels returning from Sierra Leone could carry enough legitimate cargo produced in the colony to pay for the voyage.⁷⁷¹ Thomas Jefferson had long supported incorporating trade to pay for the expense of colonization and in this way Cuffe's and Virginian's ideas overlapped.

Although lacking the level of funding and state-sponsored support Cuffe wanted, the return trip to Africa commenced in 1815. Cuffe carried onboard the usual provisions for the 38 passengers and a few crew, but the *Traveller* also held commodities – such as sperm soap, several hogshead of tobacco, candles, flour glass – that he intended to sell for profit.⁷⁷² The passengers included 18 men and 20 women and children who were mostly laborers traveling to Africa to acquire land on which to farm. Cuffe described these men as “Industrus” and “hard working.”⁷⁷³ Importantly, they were also primarily Methodists, including a preacher named Perry Locke, who were acquainted with and committed to Cuffe's desire to instill Christian values on the native population.

Arriving in Sierra Leone in February 1816, Cuffe met with a cool reception. He had been critical of Sierra Leone's white government since learning of mismanagement and corruption upon his return to America a few years prior. Now, it seemed his words originally intended for a Quaker audience had reached Sierra Leone's white government.

⁷⁷⁰ Charles Collins to Paul Cuffe, 11 August 1815, in Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters*, p. 373.

⁷⁷¹ “Memorial of Paul Cuffe,” *Annals of Congress*, 13th Cong., 2nd Sess. p. 861.

⁷⁷² A hogshead was a wooden barrel used for storing and aging tobacco, often measuring 60-65 gallons in capacity.

⁷⁷³ Cuffe to William Allen, 1 April 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, “Letter Book of Paul Cuffe,” Box 1, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

This, coupled with hefty duties assessed to his cargo, forced Cuffe to return to America after just two months in port.⁷⁷⁴

At the same time, Cuffe began to correspond with numerous supporters of the colonization movement in the United States. Cuffe revealed a final shift in his thinking on Sierra Leone in the correspondence, highlighting a slightly altered philosophy that now advocated the removal of emancipated slaves from American society. Indeed, Cuffe's thinking incorporated the heart of Jeffersonian colonization schemes: that newly freed blacks must live separately from whites, while spreading American virtue, liberty, and ideals to foreign parts of the Atlantic world.

At home in Westport in the summer of 1816, alone with his Pequot wife Ruth and tending to his crops, Cuffe emerged as one of the chief counselors, or sage, of the colonization movement. Jefferson served as another. He was now the most knowledgeable man in America regarding Sierra Leone, making his advice invaluable to the founding members of the American Colonization Society. Cuffe returned to the idea that colonizing West Africa was the only way to stop the slave trade, but now he began to argue, much like the American Colonization Society would later in the year, that widespread emancipation in America depended on removal. "It appears that many [slaveholders] are willing to manimit their Slaves," Cuffe wrote Samuel J. Mills, one of the founders of the American Colonization Society, "if Thay could Do it on Safe

⁷⁷⁴ For more on Cuffe's time in Sierra Leone from February 3 to April 4, 1816, see Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters*, p.399-412; and Lamin Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of West Africa*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999. p.90-98.

Ground.”⁷⁷⁵ He reasoned that removing these manumitted slaves ensured the ground to be safe.

Cuffe’s African “brethren” were different than African-Americans on many levels – class, religion, and education – but his main objective remained emancipation of all blacks in the diaspora. “Why not,” he asked, “provide the means to effectually [sic] Abolish the Slave Trade and free their Slaves and colonyze them either in America or in Africa or in both places?”⁷⁷⁶ Once accomplished, perhaps all blacks in the diaspora could be incorporated into the Atlantic system dominated by whites and their powerful nations. Cuffe was steadfast in his belief that schooling, religious instruction, and free labor would advance the colonists in Sierra Leone to the point of respectable civility. Furthermore, he contended that free blacks could live anywhere in the Atlantic, separate from whites, provided they subscribe to the American values that served as the springboard to Cuffe’s own success.

His ardent emigrationist mission opened Cuffe to criticism. Yet, white leaders of the newly founded American Colonization Society sought Cuffe’s advice repeatedly on how to launch an effective colonization program. Cuffe responded in kind, offering, “I believe if thare could be Mercantile Correspondence opened between the African race in America and Africa it would have good tandency to keep open the Communication and bring them acquainted with Each other.” Passage could then be obtained by blacks who “wishd to visit that Country.”⁷⁷⁷ Cuffe was still talking about emigration for free blacks; whereas it soon became clear the American Colonization Society intended to remove

⁷⁷⁵ Cuffe to Samuel J. Mills, 6 August 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, Microfilm, Roll 2, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

⁷⁷⁶ Cuffe to Samuel C. Aiken, 7 August 1816, Paul Cuffe Papers, 1759-1817, Microfilm, Roll 2, New Bedford Free Library, Special Collections, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

blacks from America – a key difference in philosophy the captain could not resolve before his death.

Despite having ferried several black families to Sierra Leone aboard the *Traveller*, by the end of 1816 Cuffe sensed that whites' anxieties over racial mixture and a large free black population prohibited his vision of a free and commercially viable Sierra Leone from coming to fruition.⁷⁷⁸ Cuffe's vision now focused less on creating a unified black Atlantic community than on freeing America's slaves, removing them to Africa, and stopping the illegal slave trade conducted by ships originating from Charleston, South Carolina and other ports in the United States. Blacks in the diaspora were too diverse and different from one another to simply unite; they must first focus on gaining freedom, sobriety, subscribing to Christian religious values, and developing free labor systems to provide goods for the Atlantic marketplace. After these values were learned, Cuffe maintained, blacks could then begin to think about uniting under God's hand and becoming "acquainted" with each other.

Paul Cuffe also grew frustrated by his fellow black emigrationists. They seemed content to let whites wrestle control of the emigration movement. Cuffe's emigration scheme became colonization at the hands of whites. Unable to fund his scheme and losing support to the A.C.S., Cuffe died in 1817 at the age of 58 without seeing a successful, large-scale black led emigration movement materialize.

⁷⁷⁸ Ironically, Sierra Leone's Governor MacCarthy was of Jacobite descent, having joined the British Army during the French Revolution. MacCarthy's great-grandfather is reported to have fled England with James II. Harris, *Paul Cuffe*, p. 190.

Paul Cuffe imagined the African diaspora in a very different way than Prince Hall, James McKenzie, and other free black men had before him. A simple turn of phrase, from Hall's "Affricans" to Cuffe's "brethren," reveals a significant difference in their perceptions of other blacks in the diaspora. Black emigrationists in the 1770s-1790s were men who envisioned a "return" to Africa, the continent where as many as 10% of free blacks in America had been born. Cuffe, however, imagined the colonization of Africa conducted by educated, industrious, and religiously committed free black American families. Blacks would not "return" to Africa in the real or symbolic manner that Hall and his contemporaries advocated; rather, blacks would instruct native Africans on civil ways of living that echoed the values of Cuffe and other Americans, whether black or white. Instead, the focus was on emancipation and making blacks in the diaspora resemble Africans-Americans.

Later, Cuffe's experiences in America would convince him that his quest to "civilize" Africa must be accompanied by the option of mass emigration for African-Americans. Even the venerable Paul Cuffe faced racial barriers around every corner. If a black man could not rise above a racist society through one of the most American of endeavors, capitalist enterprise, then what hope lay ahead for average blacks? The conundrum angered Cuffe, causing him to consider the Jeffersonian contention that blacks and whites could not live side-by-side in the United States. His childhood, and his adult success had made him think otherwise; now, he realized the truth. Established free blacks like himself could remain in America to fight for emancipation, but "the slumbering world seemeth awakened, and making many inquiries where people of color

may be colonized were a general manumission to take place.”⁷⁷⁹ Cuffe contended they must be removed, as Jefferson also argued, for the peace and stability of the United States and long-term welfare of the former slaves.

An imagined pan-Atlantic blackness motivated African-Americans to transform emigration into a new kind of colonization, just as whiteness compelled Americans’ support for colonization. Cuffe and other blacks envisioned an African-American nation in West Africa, void of black Muslims and pagans, and linked via trade to the civilized white nations of the Atlantic world. Ironically, the black nationalism Cuffe is credited with founding did not exist in his era and in black-led colonization schemes in the early nineteenth century because profound differences divided the black Atlantic community. Slaves, Nova Scotians, and the Maroons all had the right to be free, as blacks did, but Cuffe argued they must be schooled on the virtuous manners, customs, and practices of Americans.

⁷⁷⁹ Cuffe to William Gibbon, 16 January 1817. Numerous other letters written by Cuffe and his associates in late 1816 and early 1817 discussed removing newly manumitted slaves to Africa, and remote parts of America because it seemed unlikely to Cuffe that all free slaves could be transported across the Atlantic. See Harris, *Paul Cuffe: Black Americans and the African Return*, “Letters,” p.220-262.

-- CHAPTER SEVEN --

“THE RECEPTACLE OF BLACKS TRANSPORTED HERE:”
AFRICAN-AMERICAN EMIGRATION IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1816-1860

Prince Saunders, an “agent of the Haytian government,” and protégé of Paul Cuffe, published the *Haytian Papers* in London in 1816. The American born Saunders intended for the meticulously edited collection of translated state papers, letters, and an excerpt from the *Royal Gazette of Hayti* to “evinced the ameliorated and much improved condition of all classes of society in that new and truly interesting empire.”⁷⁸⁰ The publication was in effect an announcement to an Atlantic world, or “Universe,” shaken by the Haitian Revolution: a “new people” had arisen, composed of blacks, mulattoes, and Indians. Black men had built a kingdom by throwing off the shackles of colonial rule and slavery.⁷⁸¹

Most people in the Atlantic world had access to recent news and were familiar with what had happened in Haiti. Saunders wanted that story amended. The documents he published were “written by those of the King’s Secretaries whose names they bear,

⁷⁸⁰ Prince Sanders, Esq. *Haytian Papers: A Collection of the Very Interesting Proclamations, and Other Official Documents; Together with Some Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Kingdom of Hayti*. Westport, Ct.: Negro Universities Press, 1969 (original 1816), p.i.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.* p.215 & 147. I am not aware of any book-length studies of Prince Saunders. He is the subject of one journal article, and he periodically appears in larger studies of African-American history and literature (especially in a paragraph or two biographical sketch before a reprint of *Haytian Papers* excerpts). See, Arthur O. White, “Prince Saunders: An Instance of Social Mobility Among Antebellum New England Blacks,” in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.60, No.4 (Oct. 1975), 525-536; and James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton, *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Community and Protest Among Northern Free Blacks, 1700-1860*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

and [who] are all black men, or men of colour.”⁷⁸² These documents told blacks’ side of the story, revealing what really happened during the revolution. Still, the *Haitian Papers* was more than a historical corrective; it was a concrete example of the level of civilization, education, and culture Haitians had attained in the years since the revolution. The collections of documents would prove how similar Haiti was to the newly formed United States, a self-proclaimed stronghold of Enlightenment thinking, while illustrating how “we have carried our views further” by forming a kingdom.⁷⁸³ They were a people in control of their own fate, rejecting the United States’ federal model in favor of a newly crowned king at the helm.⁷⁸⁴

The black kingdom that lay just beyond the borders of the United States represented a way out of American racial oppression. Blacks looked to Haiti as a symbol of successful black resistance, making it an alternative to emigrating to Africa or remaining in bifurcated America. In turn, Haitians promoted their kingdom (initially founded as a republic) as a nation constructed for persons of African and Indian descent, willing to accept colonists. Moreover, as Haiti emerged from the revolution, white American politicians recognized the potentially dangerous influence this new symbol of freedom might have on the black population of the United States. As a result, they argued explicitly against strengthening the nation by removing former slaves from the United States.

Haiti was but one place of refuge considered by blacks during this new era of black-led colonization beginning in 1816. Building on models erected by earlier

⁷⁸² Ibid. p.iii.

⁷⁸³ Ibid. p.147.

⁷⁸⁴ For more on Haiti after the revolution, see Mimi Sheller, *Democracy after Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000.

generations of black emigrationists, Prince Saunders, John Russwurm, and Martin Delany looked abroad to Haiti, Canada, Sierra Leone, and Liberia in their search for freedom. Each imagined a different kind of emigration than their predecessors. Although most blacks in the antebellum period were born in the United States, African-Americans remained on the margins of society. These three men believed they knew how to attain this liberty while, at the same time, bettering all blacks in the Atlantic world. Each man advocated a version of black-led colonization similar to Paul Cuffe's imperialistic vision.

What "bettering" their brethren actually meant varied considerably. Saunders, Russwurm, and Delany offered opinions that mixed some degree of Christian evangelicalism, core Enlightenment ideals, and an African-American centered pan-Atlantic black identity. Emigrating blacks often confronted a reality that differed from their romantic notions of starting fresh in a new land. Saunders, Russwurm, and Delany were no exception. Each of these men were highly educated, devout and idealistic Christians. Each man traveled extensively in the Atlantic world, searching for the most advantageous place to settle émigrés. Each man experienced a different level of *décalage*: the African brethren that each spoke of were not like themselves. Passion not reason motivated their emigration schemes. Suddenly confronted by religious others in their travels, they heeded the call to evangelize their "pagan" brethren.⁷⁸⁵

Black emigration changed radically, resembling colonization with an emphasis on cultural imperialism more than a movement to return to their ancestral homeland. This type of colonization was not a forcible removal at the hands of white government

⁷⁸⁵ For more on Christianity and the formation of black identity, see Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002; and Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

officials; rather, it was African-Americans' attempt to remake the black diaspora in the Atlantic world. Black emigration leaders wanted to refashion West Africa and Haiti according to the principles and values they were born with and acquired as Americans: civility, Christianity, education, land ownership, and free labor. They were, in essence, creating an African-American as opposed to African centered diaspora. These next generations of black emigrationist leaders worked to spread American influence further than any white politician had previously conceived, and construct a black community based on African-Americans' experiences in the Atlantic world.

The Cause

Born in Connecticut in 1775, and baptized in Vermont in 1784, Prince Saunders epitomized New England's antebellum educated free black men.⁷⁸⁶ Dartmouth trained, Saunders traveled extensively to teach school to black children in Connecticut and Boston, concurrently becoming active in the emigration movement. Saunders became known for his advocacy of black education, even convincing some wealthy whites to donate several thousand dollars to his schoolhouse on Nigger Hill, a free black neighborhood in Boston.⁷⁸⁷

Already an advocate for African colonization, Saunders connected himself with America's preeminent emigrationist by wedding into the Cuffe family in 1815. In late

⁷⁸⁶ Saunders' name is spelled with or without the letter "u." Often, in print, the letter "u" is dropped, but on his signed letters, it is included. I have taken the liberty to use the spelling he used with his own pen. Also, for more on antebellum blacks in New England, see Adelaide M. Cromwell, *The Other Brahmins: Boston's Black Upper Class, 1750-1950*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994.

⁷⁸⁷ See, Arthur O. White, "Prince Saunders: An Instance of Social Mobility Among Antebellum New England Blacks," in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.60, No.4 (Oct. 1975), p.527.

March of that year, he wrote Cuffe from Boston in support of the captain's Sierra Leone voyage: "If I can make an arrangement to go with you to Africa I should like it." He continued, "there are several families who are very desirous to go to Africa to live" and "they wish me to request you to write particularly when you shall probably be ready to go, on what conditions you will carry them, &c. &c."⁷⁸⁸ Citing his doctor's orders to "go to sea for my health," Saunders' letter reveals another motivation. He believed the time had come, "when men every where shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; and when men every where shall become affectionately united in contributing to the welfare improvement and happiness of their brethren."⁷⁸⁹ Although the language seemed generically addressed to whites and blacks, Saunders' reference to the spear indicated the men he spoke of – as he called them, the "candid enquirer after the truth" – resided in Africa.⁷⁹⁰

That same year, as Cuffe sailed to Sierra Leone, Saunders crossed the Atlantic to meet with William Wilberforce and other members of the African Institution in London. There he gained the favor of Great Britain's elite in part by not correcting the popular assumption that he was descended from African Royalty. So enamored with Saunders were London's elite that the "Countess of Cork could not have a party without his highness Prince Saunders."⁷⁹¹ He also proved to be an important counsel to the African Institution and its director, Thomas Clarkson, backing Cuffe's assertion to the organization that more schools must be built in Sierra Leone to ensure the proper

⁷⁸⁸ Saunders to Cuffe, 21 March 1815, in Wiggins, *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters*, p.336.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁹¹ Charles Robert Leslie, an "English socialite" reportedly uttered these words. Ibid. p.526.

education of its residents. In 1816, Saunders agreed to become a liaison between Great Britain and Haiti, which led to the publication of the *Haytian Papers* in that same year.

White Americans considered Haiti a possible location on which to remove freedmen and women since the early 1790s. Fears about the impact of Haitian independence on American blacks reverberated throughout the political elite, however, making concerns over the proximity of Haiti too great to ignore, and causing white colonizationists to look across the Atlantic for more remote regions to plant a settlement.⁷⁹² Even as whites abandoned the possibility of Haiti as a receptacle for free blacks, Prince Saunders revived the idea. Saunders wanted to ensure that all peoples of the Atlantic world were cognizant of this new black kingdom in the heart of the European colonial world; but he also wanted all persons of African descent to know the opportunities Haiti extended to them.

Saunders became a key figure in the black emigration movement with the publication of the *Haytian Papers*. He shared Cuffe's frustrations with racial prejudices in America, but he took his own route in efforts to relieve free blacks from their oppression. By 1816, the same year the American Colonization Society was founded, Saunders had become friends with Haitian Emperor Henry Christophe. Experiences in Haiti changed his views toward emigration in a dramatic fashion.

As much as Cuffe saw the need to civilize Africa, Saunders believed Haiti to be a beacon of liberty for blacks. In what he viewed as a truly revolutionary mix of old world European political values and new world American-inspired social values, Saunders

⁷⁹² Scholars have examined the relationship between the United States and Haiti in several contexts, with considerations of race, slavery and diplomatic exchange dominating most of the texts. See, Chris Dixon, *African Americans and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000.

touted Haiti as a civilized bastion of black independence, organized under the “liberal principles of the Government.”⁷⁹³ These principles were administered by strong black men, such as King Christophe, who sought to rid Haiti of a racial hierarchy based on degrees of whiteness. Appropriately, Saunders seemed keyed into the blackness of Haiti and its leaders, noting with “great satisfaction” Christophe’s dark African features and sophisticated air.⁷⁹⁴ “History informs us,” Saunders quoted the emperor, “that all nations, prior to their civilization, were sunk in the darkness of barbarism: it is only after the lapse of a considerable time that they civilize themselves.” He contended this process was expedited by the revolution and because “we have sought from abroad for learned professors and skilful artists.”⁷⁹⁵ Together, with *Code Henri*, consisting of the “Laws Respecting the Culture,” Saunders foresaw the construction of a country for blacks in the diaspora, and in particular African-Americans, who wanted to partake in the genesis of this new black kingdom on the eastern side of the Atlantic world.

Saunders’ *Haytian Papers* kept Haiti at the forefront of African-American emigrationist thought at a time whites tried to convince them to go to Africa. He continued to travel the Atlantic as a personal courier for Christophe and as a civil ambassador for Haiti. In 1818, Saunders spoke at the meeting of the Pennsylvania Augustine Society, an organization formed by James Forten to educate blacks in Philadelphia. On the surface, the speech simply advocated his belief in the “blessings of instruction” to blacks. It also served to advance his support for Haiti by revealing the willingness of Haiti to accept any free black from the United States with enough

⁷⁹³ Saunders, *Haytian Papers*, p.i.

⁷⁹⁴ White, “Prince Saunders,” p.528.

⁷⁹⁵ Saunders, *Haytian Papers*, p.206-207.

education and skilled labor to help build a middle class.⁷⁹⁶ While in Philadelphia, Saunders published the American edition of the *Haytian Papers*, again calling on free black Americans to emigrate to the kingdom.⁷⁹⁷

While Saunders traveled in support of Haitian independence, King Christophe and the African Institute's white leader Thomas Clarkson discussed the possible benefits of resettling America's free black population in the kingdom. The Londoner informed Christophe of a plan advanced by Philadelphia's free blacks at the Triennial Convention in 1818.⁷⁹⁸ Clarkson supported the idea, erroneously telling Christophe that some 200,000 free blacks resided in the "different parts of the United States."⁷⁹⁹ More importantly, he more accurately noted, "they live chiefly by their industry, and many of them have acquired property" and there "can be no doubt that such an immigration, if it consisted of persons of character, would very much add to your population."⁸⁰⁰ At first, Clarkson appealed to Christophe's political needs, knowing the crown was being threatened by a rebel group led by a mulatto named Jean Pierre Boyer. The increase of peoples "of course" would add to the "security of your Dominions."⁸⁰¹ But, there is another manner in which Americans could aid in stabilizing the fledgling kingdom. "If the American Government were to apply to you on this subject," Clarkson added, "you

⁷⁹⁶ Prince Saunders, *An Address; delivered at Bethel Church, Philadelphia; on the 30th of September, 1818. Before the Pennsylvania Augustine Society, for the Education of People of Colour*. Philadelphia: J. Rakestraw, 1818. p.1.

⁷⁹⁷ Thomas Clarkson informed King Henry that he had heard from a friend that Saunders worked diligently "to excite a more lively concern for the promotion of the best interests, the improvements, the definite independence, and happiness of the Haytian People" by imploring free African-Americans to emigrate. 20 February 1819, Clarkson to Henry, *Christophe Henry and Thomas Clarkson: A Correspondence*. Earl Leslie Griggs and Clifford H. Prator, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952. p.125.

⁷⁹⁸ Delegates from abolition organizations from around the United States met at this annual congress. *Christophe and Clarkson*, ed. Griggs and Prator, p.68.

⁷⁹⁹ Clarkson to King Henry, 20 February 1819, in *Christophe and Clarkson*, p.124.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid.

might stipulate to receive [free blacks] *provided the American Government would purchase the Spanish part of the Island and cede it to you.*⁸⁰² If agreed upon, such a land acquisition would allow the king to keep out French intruders and sympathetic rebels.

Clarkson's reports to Christophe were not wholly accurate. In early 1817, Finley met with key Philadelphia black leaders, James Forten and Richard Allen at Absalom Jones' home. Finley sought approval by black leaders for the newly founded American Society for Colonizing Free People of Colour and he received it expressly from all three men. Forten pointed to Haiti and "declared it as his opinion that their people could not always be detained in their oppressive situation" in America. Furthermore, if the Society created a colony in West Africa, then "their people [blacks] would become a great nation" on the eastern side of the Atlantic.⁸⁰³ With strong separatist urges, Forten agreed in principle with the Society's designs for colonization. Allen agreed, considering "the present plan of colonization as holding out great advantages for the blacks who are now young."⁸⁰⁴

Allen and Forten reflected, shortly after their meeting with Finley, on the unlikely result of agreement with their flock in Philadelphia. Forten informed Paul Cuffee that he, Allen and Jones "agreed to remain silent [on their support of colonization], as the people here both the white and colour [sic] are decidedly against the measure."⁸⁰⁵ This

⁸⁰² Ibid.

⁸⁰³ As reprinted in Isaac Van Arsdale Brown, *Biography of Robert Finley*. Philadelphia: 1819. p.88, 102. Also reprinted in William Lloyd Garrison "Introduction," *Thoughts on African Colonization*, ed..William Loren Katz. New York: Arno Press, 1968. P.vii.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁵ James Forten to Paul Cuffee, 25 January, 1817, Paul Cuffee Papers. As quoted in William Lloyd Garrison "Introduction," *Thoughts on African Colonization*, ed..William Loren Katz. New York: Arno Press, 1968. P.viii..

account differed from Thomas Clarkson's report to King Christophe. Frustrated by this lack of support, Forten remarked, "they will never become a people until they com[e] out from amongst the white people."⁸⁰⁶ For the sake of unity, however, Forten intended to remain quiet on the matter "except as to my opinion which I freely give when asked."⁸⁰⁷ All three men experienced a dramatic turn of sentiment later that year. After convening an anti-colonization convention in the summer of 1817, Forten signed an address issued on behalf of the convention that criticized and condemned African colonization.⁸⁰⁸ This address later formed a key component in William Lloyd Garrison's highly acclaimed *Thoughts on African Colonization*.

Forten's address also reveals the changing nature of African-Americans' discussions regarding colonization. Their views were constantly changing, sometimes exhibiting a seemingly uniform consensus on the issue, while at other times illustrating a variety of opinions and perspectives held within the African-American population. The topic proved so complex politically, socially, and emotionally, that even pillars of African-American communities were apt to change their minds about the matter.

Regardless of African-Americans' cautious support for Haitian emigration, Christophe and Clarkson remained optimistic. Besides, there were additional reasons the presence of African-Americans could benefit the kingdom – advantages that were too powerful to ignore. Black Americans faced "the unhappy distinction between black and white, which originated in the execrable Slave Trade" and "they are looked upon in a

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ For more on Forten's stance against immigration to Africa, see Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. p.209-220.

degraded light.”⁸⁰⁹ Haiti offered them freedom, an escape from this condition. Perhaps most importantly to Christophe, these immigrants would arrive with moderate wealth of “50 to 2 to 3000 dollars!” Moreover, Clarkson noted, “they would form that middle class in society which is the connecting medium between the rich and the poor and which is the great cause of prosperity in Europe.”⁸¹⁰ The king had made several proclamations regarding the importance of forming a middle class, as Saunders noted in the *Haytian Papers*, and Clarkson tapped into this core element of the Haitian government’s ideology.

Black emigration appeared to be a viable method to form an instant middle class, beneficial to the kingdom in deflecting potential rebellions and uprisings, and demonstrating Haitian society’s likeness to the United States and Europe. The idea intrigued Christophe, who was also keeping track of his “African brothers’...progress toward civilization” in Sierra Leone.⁸¹¹ After further reflection on the topic King Henry was convinced. He advised Clarkson, “I would welcome the envoys of the Convention [of abolitionists], not only because of your recommendation, but also because they are friends of the Cause.”⁸¹² Furthermore, “I shall adopt to facilitate the immigration of the unfortunate descendants of the Africans and to help them to become established in their new home.”⁸¹³ With the support of the African king, free black emigration to Haiti seemed to be a done deal by the end of 1819.

⁸⁰⁹ 28 June 1819, Clarkson to King Henry, in *Christophe and Clarkson*, eds. Griggs & Prator, p.141.

⁸¹⁰ 28 September 1819, Clarkson to King Henry, in *Christophe and Clarkson*, eds. Griggs & Prator, p.162.

⁸¹¹ 29 July 1819, King Henry to Clarkson, in *Christophe and Clarkson*, eds. Griggs & Prator, p.150.

⁸¹² 20 November 1819, King Henry to Clarkson, in *Christophe and Clarkson*, eds. Griggs & Prator, p.165.

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*

Prince Saunders soon became mired in the politics of the kingdom, but he remained a key player in America's black emigration scene. In 1820, the mulatto rebel leader Jean Pierre Boyer overthrew Christophe, now a victim of a stroke. The timing could not have been worse. Christophe had recently endorsed Saunders' emigration plan, providing \$25,000 and a transport for the cause.⁸¹⁴ The events in Haiti meant, at least for a short time, the end of the Haitian government's and Prince Saunders' active promotion of the kingdom as a receptacle for black émigrés.

As a result of Saunders early advocacy of Haitian emigration, the option of fleeing the United States for the kingdom remained. Like his predecessor, Jean Pierre Boyer found the potential benefits of African-American emigration too great to overlook. By 1824, Saunders and Jonathan Granville, a Haitian envoy appointed by Boyer to travel to the United States to raise support for emigration, had persuaded over two hundred African-Americans to sail for the West Indies. Their promotional efforts were so successful that by 1830, at least eight and perhaps as many as thirteen thousand free African-Americans set foot in Haiti.⁸¹⁵ The conditions were not as they had imagined, however, with several thousand émigrés returning to the United States. The Haitian government reacted with disappointment, contending the African-Americans had not lived up to their promises to farm the land provided them. Although not the successful permanent mass emigration scheme Saunders meant to stimulate with the *Haitian Papers*, the movement of peoples to Haiti during the 1820s illustrated the receptive nature of blacks to emigrate somewhere other than Africa.

⁸¹⁴ 14 July 1821, Saunders to Clarkson, in *Christophe and Clarkson*, eds. Griggs & Prator, p. 226; and White, "Prince Saunders," p.533.

⁸¹⁵ Horton and Horton, *Hard Road to Freedom*, p.132.

At the same time Saunders traveled the Atlantic drumming up support for his plans, two protégés of Paul Cuffe worked with the American Colonization Society to land colonists in Africa. In 1820, the *Elizabeth* set sail from Philadelphia for Sherbro Island, near Sierra Leone, with ninety African-American immigrants prepared to establish the region's first American colony. Among those onboard the ship was Daniel Coker, an African-American preacher. Coker, along with John Kizell illustrated the impact of early black emigration movements on the American Colonization Society. Kizell, a "native of Africa," became an important liaison between the A.C.S. and local Africans in Sierra Leone, building some 20 huts in preparation for the first colonists.⁸¹⁶ He was educated in America and "returned to his own country" where he "built a house of worship, and is himself a preacher of the gospel among the natives."⁸¹⁷ He became a zealous friend and guide" to Mills and Burgess on their expedition in 1818.⁸¹⁸ Both Coker and Kizell were old friends and supporters of Paul Cuffe, who some Society members believed had laid the foundation for the A.C.S. with his previous voyages to Sierra Leone.⁸¹⁹ Even after Cuffe's death, they remained committed to the colonization movement. Yet, Coker and Kizell were two very different men who would be pitted against one another in the battle for control over the first settlement. Both played an integral role in the settling this next generation of African-American colonists in West Africa.⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁶ . See, "Journal of Daniel Coker," Switzerland: Kraus Reprint, 1970. p.6.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid.

⁸¹⁹ In his Eulogy for Paul Cuffe in 1817, Peter Williams referred to Cuffe's founding of "The Friendly Society of Sierra Leone" on his first voyage to the colony as the first organization whose purpose was to promote the settling of free blacks in Africa. See "Third Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing Free People of Colour of the United States," in *The Annual Reports of the American Society for the Colonizing of Free People of Colour of the United States, Volumes 1-10, 1818-1827*. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1979. p.115-116.

⁸²⁰ For more on their relationship, see Staudenraus *The African Colonization Movement*, p.59-65.

Even while many free blacks condemned the American Colonization Society, Coker joined the group. Daniel Coker saw opportunity for his “brethren” in Africa.⁸²¹ Coker’s vision of colonization was the focus of his journal, published in Baltimore in 1820 as an advertisement for the A.C.S., where he noted that “thousands and thousands of souls here [Africa] [need] to be converted from Paganism and Mahometism [sic] to the religion of Jesus.”⁸²² Coker was the first African-American A.C.S. agent to land in Sherbro and he made it clear that thousands more should join the organization and follow him “where darkness has covered the minds of this people.”⁸²³ He believed it was the job of African-Americans in particular to embrace their brethren and to enlighten them, regardless of which Christian faith they practice in America. Coker urged the readers of the journal, “sell out...and come...you may do much better than you can possibly do in America, and not work half so hard.”⁸²⁴ Spiritual and financial prosperity, according to Coker, awaited African-Americans brave enough to venture across the Atlantic.

Even as the American Colonization Society appropriated the positive public perception and support of men like Coker, blacks refused to let whites completely control the movement. Coker, Kizell, and others volunteered to travel to West Africa, hoping to significantly influence the decision-making by the board of the A.C.S. Coker’s journal became an important piece of propaganda for A.C.S. officials, but it also represented Coker’s attempt to shape the goals of the Society. Coker’s evangelicalism struck a stunning contrast to Clay’s desire to rid the United States of free blacks. Rather than

⁸²¹ On 29 March 1820, Coker wrote an address “To all my dear African Brethren in America, I send these few lines – greetings.” See, “Journal of Daniel Coker,” Switzerland: Kraus Reprint, 1970. p.42.

⁸²² Ibid.

⁸²³ Ibid. p.43.

⁸²⁴ Ibid. p.44.

framing the goals of the Society with racist rhetoric, Coker appealed to blacks' Christian and racial conscience: a mission to enlighten their brethren, one that may convince larger numbers of African-Americans to emigrate.

John Russwurm

Another black advocate for emigration to Haiti emerged from an elite northern college in the 1820s. Educated in Quebec from the age of eight, John Brown Russwurm was born in Port Antonio, Jamaica of a white planter from Virginia and black mother who was his slave. After his schooling in Quebec, he moved to Maine to live with his recently wedded father. Once in Maine, and shortly after his father's death, Russwurm's stepmother sent him to Hebron Academy before he enrolled at Bowdoin College.⁸²⁵ John Russwurm had emigrationist tendencies in his youth, telling a southern relative that "brighter prospects" awaited him in Haiti.⁸²⁶

John Russwurm addressed a crowd gathered for Bowdoin College's 1826 graduating class. Russwurm would grow comfortable in this position as a leader of men. In speaking to the Bowdoin crowd, Russwurm commented on the "Conditions and Prospects of Hayti," presenting the black republic as a beacon of hope for persons of African descent in America. Russwurm espoused his abolitionist beliefs to those

⁸²⁵ John Brown Russwurm Collection, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections and Archives, Bowdoin College Library. For more on the understudied Russwurm, see Amos Jones Beyan, *African-American Settlements in West Africa: John Brown Russwurm and the American Civilizing Efforts*. New York: Palgrave, 2005.

⁸²⁶ Jno. B. Russwurm to Col. Jno. S. Russwurm, John Brown Russwurm Collection, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections and Archives, Bowdoin College Library. Also reprinted in Philip S. Foner. "John Browne Russwurm, A Document," in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.54, No.4 (Oct. 1969), p.394.

gathered, stating that “Knowledge follows revolutions and travels over the globe” and once a “principle of liberty is implanted in his breast,” then “all efforts to stifle it are as fruitless as would be the attempt to extinguish the fires of Etna.”⁸²⁷ Russwurm saw a chance to raise Haiti’s profile in the abolitionist struggle to the center of white consciousness in a newly anointed state whose population proved overwhelmingly white. The audience responded positively, with the *Eastern Argus*, a Portland based newspaper, running a descriptive, laudatory – though paternalistic -- review of the speech a few days later. It was “one of most interesting performances” of the graduation.⁸²⁸

Russwurm continued in his speech, invoking language of the American Revolution and various Atlantic revolutions. The graduate spoke of blacks and Haitians recovering liberty, “this previous portion of their indefeasible inheritance,” because although “withheld from him now...the day will arrive, when they must be surrendered.”⁸²⁹ In front of this largely white audience, Russwurm understood the importance of defending Haiti’s ability to survive as an independent republic. Several times throughout his speech, Russwurm declared that Haiti’s former slaves had regained their intelligence despite having been “benumbed” under the weight of bondage. He pointed to their adoption of a republican government, low levels of crime, and insisted that whatever “cruelties” had occurred were due to the “policy pursued by the French

⁸²⁷ John B. Russwurm, “The Conditions and Prospects of Hayti,” an address to the graduating class of Bowdoin College 1826. John Brown Russwurm Collection, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections and Archives, Bowdoin College Library. Box 1, Folder 3. Also, see Philip S. Foner. “John Browne Russwurm, A Document,” in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.54, No.4 (Oct. 1969), p.395.

⁸²⁸ 12 September 1826, *Eastern Argus*. In Philip S. Foner. “John Browne Russwurm, A Document,” in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.54, No.4 (Oct. 1969), p.394..

⁸²⁹ Ibid.

commanders, which compelled them to use retaliatory [sic] measures.”⁸³⁰ Russwurm then elevated his defense of the black republic. “May we not indulge in the pleasing hope, that the Independence of Haiti has laid the foundation of an empire that will rank with the nations of the earth,” looking toward a “time when Hayti treading in the footsteps of her sister republics, shall, like them, exhibit a picture of rapid and unprecedented advance in population, wealth and intelligence.”⁸³¹

In this public forum on that autumn day in Maine, the first black graduate of Bowdoin College proclaimed his brotherhood with fellow blacks throughout the Atlantic world. He focused his words on Haiti, yet he saw the potential for the spread of the ideals of the Haitian Revolution to other enslaved and marginalized black communities in the Atlantic basin. As an educated African-American he identified with the struggle to build and maintain a Christian, republican state in the Caribbean because he understood the way the system worked. Russwurm knew how whites viewed blacks: men and women like Benjamin Banneker and Phyllis Wheatley were the exception. For them, slavery had further degraded blacks, whom whites already believed were inferior, to the point that reaching the level of intelligence of whites – as a whole race – seemed impossible in the short, if not long, term future.

Haiti offered the chance to prove these detractors wrong. There, the “degraded man will rise in his native majesty,” Russwurm contended, “and claim his rights.”⁸³² If a black republic could be built, developed, governed, and maintained by blacks in the same manner that other European empires and the United States were, then how could

⁸³⁰ Ibid.

⁸³¹ Ibid. p.397.

⁸³² John Russwurm, “The Condition and Prospects of Hayti,” in Philip S. Foner, “John Browne Russwurm, A Document,” in *The Journal of Negro History*. Vol.54, No.4 (Oct. 1969), p.395.

arguments against blacks' liberty and intelligence persist? Russwurm told his audience the answer that day in Brunswick, Maine.

Four years later, in 1830, Russwurm landed in Liberia, another site where he believed blacks could exercise their rights to freedom, self-government and self-determination. Shortly after graduating from college, Russwurm joined with other pro-colonizationists to produce *Freedom's Journal*, the first black newspaper in the United States, but by 1830 he found himself sailing across the Atlantic in an attempt to help the nearly 3,000 free and manumitted blacks already living there fulfill the promise of the new African colony.⁸³³ Russwurm was enthusiastic about Liberia, seemingly seduced by the A.C.S.'s annual reports on the progress of the colony. By 1830, Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, had a population of approximately 2,000 freemen who "have kindled a beacon fire" there.⁸³⁴ By the time of Russwurm's arrival, Liberia had at least six schools, a constitution that laid out a plan for civil government, approximately \$60,000 annual trade with the United States, and cattle, sheep, horses and other animals "in abundance."⁸³⁵

In his first letter from Liberia, Russwurm appeared to be enthusiastic about the colony. He found "double the number of houses I expected" as well as "Colonists" who

⁸³³ Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution*, Table 2: "A.C.S. Immigration by Period, 1820-1860." By 1860, only 10,939 people had migrated to Liberia, with 60 % of free blacks from northern states and 72% of manumitted immigrants from the Upper South, and only 52 immigrants arriving from outside the United States. See also Shick, Tom W. *Roll of the Emigrants to the Colony of Liberia Sent by the American Colonization Society from 1820-1843*. Madison, WI: Tom W. Shick, 1973. Madison, WI: Data and Program Library Service, 1973 and 1996; <<http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/Liberia/index.html>>; (08 May 2006); and Shick, Tom W. *Liberian Census Data, 1843*. Madison, WI: Tom W. Shick, 1973. Madison, WI: Data and Program Library Service, 1996; <<http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/Liberia/index.html>>; (08 May 2006).

⁸³⁴ *The Annual Reports of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States, Volumes 11-20, 1828-1836*. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969. "Proceedings of the American Colonization Society an their Fourteenth Annual Meeting," p.iv.

⁸³⁵ *A Few Facts Respecting the American Colonization Society, and the Colony at Liberia*. Washington, DC: Way and Gideon, 1830. p.6-8.

“appear to be thriving – they subsist chiefly by trading with the natives.”⁸³⁶ Perhaps most satisfying to Russwurm was that “all the duties of offices which you can scarcely believe, many fulfill the important duties with much dignity.”⁸³⁷ He continued, “We have here a republic in miniature,” one that operates rather efficiently under present conditions.⁸³⁸ “I long to see young men,” he added, “who are now wasting the best of their days in the United States, flocking to this land as the last asylum to the unfortunate.”⁸³⁹ Opportunities awaited them, he insisted, as long as they were willing to uphold their faith and spread Christianity.

Russwurm confronted challenges to spreading his faith and liberty once in Africa. Haiti’s republic featured a largely Christianized population, even if they were Catholic, but pagans surrounded Liberia. “There is a great field for usefulness here,” commented Russwurm, “and when I look around and behold the Pagan darkness of the land, and aspiration rises to the Heaven that my friend may become a second Brainard or Elliot.”⁸⁴⁰ The settlers’ trading partners provided a beneficial economic exchange, but it soon became clear to Russwurm that Liberia’s emergence as an independent republic in the mold of its Euro-American counterparts depended on the use of the same missionary tactics as seventeenth-century English colonists in America. In the same manner that

⁸³⁶ John B. Russwurm to Edward Jones, 20 March 1830, in *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume II, The United States, 1830-1846*. Ed. C. Peter Ripley. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991. P.71-72.

⁸³⁷ Ibid.

⁸³⁸ Ibid.

⁸³⁹ Ibid. p.72.

⁸⁴⁰ It was not unusual for men who set foot in Liberia to evoke comparisons with 17th century English missionaries in America. Both, they argued, must work to convert the pagan populations that challenged – or potentially challenged – their goals of building permanent settlements. Furthermore, just as the case with Anglo-Indian relations, American-African diplomatic relations were peppered with broken land treaties, trade disputes and periodic raids by both parties in the other. Ibid. p.72.

early English settlers faced Native Americans in a vast wilderness, the African-American settlers of Liberia encountered pagan and Muslim peoples.

The goal remained the same in both cases: to convert the native population to Christianity. The methods – negotiating suspect treaties, periodically breaking such agreements, and the threat of constant violence between the two groups – also proved remarkably similar. For Russwurm and other blacks in Liberia, entrenching Christianity (Methodist and Baptist faiths in particular) in the fabric of the colony to provide “light to those who sat in great darkness!” became the cornerstone of the plan to build an independent black republic.⁸⁴¹

John Russwurm’s enthusiasm waned, and by 1833 he began to criticize the colony’s government. He noted, “I am considered as a character dangerous to the successful operations of the Society” in part due to his editorial leadership at the *Liberian Herald*.⁸⁴² Much of Russwurm’s focus was on improving the problems of the colony, such as “the hospitals” that are “crowded with the sick” because there “is only one physician here, & he is confined to his bed from excessive exertion.”⁸⁴³ He met with strong resistance from the mostly white A.C.S appointed government. The organization had long been producing pamphlets and annual reports that praised the rapid success of the colony; Russwurm’s dissenting voice, A.C.S. agents reasoned, would only cause potential settlers to reconsider their journey. Russwurm stood fast. He asserted that the colony was growing too quickly for its agricultural capacities. Indeed, basic living

⁸⁴¹ See, Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America*. Cornell University Press, 2000.

⁸⁴² Russwurm to Robert Purvis, 12 April 1833, in *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume II, The United States, 1830-1846*. Ed. C. Peter Ripley. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991. p.76.

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*

conditions must be improved in Liberia for the colony to become a beacon of independent Christian blacks.

In 1836, Russwurm became governor of the Maryland-in-Liberia colony. The Maryland-in-Liberia organization was founded in 1831 by frustrated colonizationists in Maryland. John H. B. Latrobe, from a wealthy Pennsylvanian family, became a leading figure in the organization, which settled an alternative colony in Cape Palmas, near Liberia. In becoming governor of the colony, Russwurm believed he could lead Maryland-in-Liberia in the right direction, steering clear of the political corruption of Liberia. In so doing, Russwurm lost much of his religious mission, instead focusing on the day-to-day issues of government, including how to deal with the seemingly constant intertribal warfare on their inland borders.⁸⁴⁴ He died in the colony in 1851, 21 years after he first landed in Africa, having seen improvements in the conditions of African-American settlements but not the full realization of his vision.

A Storm Brews in Cincinnati

The emigration movement gained momentum during the middle to late 1820s.⁸⁴⁵ Black newspapers in particular exemplified the conviction, emotion, and uncertainty on the domestic front in the battle over colonization. *Freedom's Journal*, an abolitionist newspaper published in New York, reprinted current news that often focusing on the

⁸⁴⁴ For more on Maryland-in-Liberia, see Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831-1857*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971.

⁸⁴⁵ See Philip S. Foner, *History of Black Americans: From Africa to the Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975. Also, Miller, *Search for a Black Nationality*; and Arthur O. White, "Prince Saunders: An Instance of Social Mobility Among Antebellum New England Blacks,": in *Journal of Negro History*, No. 60 (1975).

colonization debate. Similarly to other broadsheets of the day, *Freedom's Journal* was composed of reprints from journals throughout the republic, including articles from the *African Repository*, a journal published by the American Colonization Society.⁸⁴⁶ The *African Repository* proved to be full of propaganda that featured positive and optimistic stories of success from the black settlers in Liberia. The editors of *Freedom's Journal* understood the *African Repository's* intent, often taking this into account when editorializing on reprinted material from that particular journal.

Freedom's Journal emerged as an important source of opposition to colonization by the late 1820s. The journal also reveals the extent of ambiguity in African-American opposition to colonization. As the *African Repository* reported on successes in Liberia, *Freedom's Journal* remained consistent in its sympathy for blacks who chose to migrate. "We are always rejoiced to hear of the welfare of our brethren in all quarters of the globe, and we can assure our readers," the editors stated, "that though opposed to the plans of the American Colonization Society, we are pleased to learn their progress in life, and advancement in the different arts and sciences."⁸⁴⁷ From this statement of unity with what were ostensibly defectors from the abolitionist cause in America, the journal continued, "assur[ing] our friends of Liberia" that our views "extend not only to the improvement of our own condition" – implying the Liberia colonists were interested only in their liberty – "but to the ultimate emancipation of our brethren who are in bondage."⁸⁴⁸ And furthermore, "never shall we consent to emigrate from America, until

⁸⁴⁶ Charles A Simmons, *The African-American Press: A History of News Coverage during the National Crises, with Special Reference to Four Black Newspapers, 1827-1865*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co. 1998; and Frankie Hutton, *The Early Black Press in America, 1827 to 1860*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993.

⁸⁴⁷ "Liberian Circular," 25 January 1818. *Freedom's Journal*, (New York).

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

their prior removal from this land of their degradation and suffering.”⁸⁴⁹ Beyond the language of unity lay an urgent sense of abandonment and accusations that Liberian settlers deserted their African-American brethren’s fight for liberty.

As blacks debated the merits of African colonization their attention was diverted from Liberia for a short time while domestic issues demanded immediate attention. Cincinnati’s proximity to the South’s large slave population just over the Ohio River in Kentucky made it particularly vulnerable to fears of insurrection by slaves. In 1828, the *Ohio Monitor* captured growing tensions in the state. The editor of the newspaper cited the rapidly increasing African-American population in calling for the separation of the races, even “though we are as much disturbed with the settlement of black folks amongst us” because it would be for the “mutual benefit of both casts.” White Ohioan, Joseph Watson, proposed in the *Monitor* that one or two towns be constructed in Ohio away from the white population. Here – he surmised one could be named “Africana” – the National Turnpike could pass through the area which already “surrounded by highly cultivated farms, with brick buildings, and is well watered by three springs...an abundance of timber for the purposes of building and fuel, and the soil on the road, is well adapted to the making of brick.”⁸⁵⁰ Whites living in Ohio understood the potential for interracial trouble and they sought a place to settle an independent community.

White Ohioans were suspicious of a free as opposed to an enslaved black population because of its growing lower class immigrant population. The *Monitor* asserted that whites must “prevent...the intermingling of white and coloured servants which has a tendency by false pride on the one hand, and imaginary degradation on the

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁰ “American Colonization.” December 5, 1828, *Freedom’s Journal*. (New York).

other, to destroy the usefulness of both.”⁸⁵¹ In profiling the competitive nature of these two populations – immigrant whites and free blacks – the newspaper connected the two lowest levels of free society in America. Moreover, the editor made sure the general readership understood which group occupied the very lowest rung of the social ladder. A growing cacophony of voices echoed the sentiments of the *Ohio Monitor*, further increasing conflict in the largely unsettled territory.⁸⁵²

In 1829, after a decades-old law was ruled to be still in effect, violence erupted on the streets of the city. An old Black Code called for all free blacks to post a \$500 bond against future violence or antisocial behavior. If freemen failed to post the bond, they were to be deported.⁸⁵³ Due in part to their precarious position in the lower laboring class, free blacks were hardly able to post bond, which resulted in approximately 2,000 men, women and children facing expulsion.⁸⁵⁴ Reports suggest the supporters of state colonization societies and the American Colonization Society spurred local officials to act.

The Code infuriated Ohio’s free blacks. Black leaders in Cincinnati understood the gravity of the situation, noting that “If the act is enforced,” then “we, the poor sons of Aethiopia [sic], must take shelter where we can find it.” For these men and women, it seemed apparent that “we cannot find it [refuge] in America” and that “we must beg [for

⁸⁵¹ “American Colonization.” December 5, 1828, *Freedom’s Journal* (New York).

⁸⁵² For more on the conflict between the white and black laboring class, see David R. Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. London: Verso, 1991.

⁸⁵³ *An Act to Regulate Black and Mulatto Persons*, as reprinted in William Mills and Benjamin Hopkins, “Banishment of the People of Colour from Cincinnati,” in *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol.8, No.3 (July 1923). P.331-333.

⁸⁵⁴ Recent white immigrants sought to remove blacks from Cincinnati for their own reasons, largely to increase the availability of menial jobs. See, *Proceedings of the Black State Conventions, 1840-1865, Volume I: New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio*. Edited by Philip S. Foner, George E. Walker. Philadelphia: temple University Press, 1979. “Introduction.”

it] elsewhere.”⁸⁵⁵ Later in 1829, two men were appointed to search for a suitable place to colonize these free blacks in Canada. Israel Lewis and Thomas Cresap left for Canada to find land on which Cincinnati’s free blacks could remove themselves.

Time expired for free blacks to post bond within thirty days of restitution of his Black Code in Ohio. At the end of November, mobs attacked free blacks and forced them to comply with the law: at least 500 persons of color were deported and sent to colonize Canada, while others begged to be taken out to the commons and shot rather “than send them to Canada to perish with hunger and cold!”⁸⁵⁶ Reports noted that one white man was killed in the rioting, but not how many blacks were injured. In the end, the settlers moved to Lucan, Ontario, an area with upwards of a million acres available for purchase by the black colonists and stewarded by the Canada Company.

After a near disastrous beginning to the Canadian settlement at Wilberforce, Ontario, which found the initial settlers 3,200 acres short of their original agreement of 4,000 acres, residents became hopeful about the future of the community.⁸⁵⁷ Still, they understood that resettlement in Canada meant removal. As one “member of the Settlement” noted, African-Americans “have entered into an association for mutual assistance...for the settlement and comfort of those who may be induced by persecution, &c. to remove thither from the United States, while destitute of the means to support

⁸⁵⁵ William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, *Black Utopia: Negro Communal Experiments in America*. Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963. p.47.

⁸⁵⁶ *The Friend*, 28 November 1829, in “Banishment of the People of Colour from Cincinnati,” p.332.

⁸⁵⁷ Cresap and Lewis, the two men who entered into an agreement to buy 4,000 acres from the Canada Company, overestimated the financial worth of the African-Americans they represented. Without the promised money, a group of Ohio and Indiana Quakers provided the funds for 800 acres, which would at least get the settlement started. For more, see Pease, *Black Utopia*, p.47-49.

themselves and families.”⁸⁵⁸ Moreover, the settlement offered a place of respite for black Americans. “Full confidence,” *The Liberator* reported, “may be placed in those at present selected to manage the public concerns of the settlement,” men of morality “could scarcely render a more acceptable service to the cause of philanthropy, than by assisting, with pecuniary and other means, the persecuted colored man in obtaining a residence there.”⁸⁵⁹ Wilberforce, although a safe refuge for oppressed African-Americans, also represented the site to which the marginalized were driven.

At the same time of the founding of the Wilberforce settlement, David Walker’s *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* and other anti-colonization tracts became increasingly popular. The core of the *Appeal* was its militant anti-slavery message that called on blacks to unite in revolt against slavery. Walker quoted the *Declaration of Independence* to justify his call to arms, startling many whites who read the widely available document. Tracts like Walker’s *Appeal* openly questioned the motives of the “Colonization Plan” espoused by “(Mr. Clay and his slave-holding party) men who are resolved to keep us in eternal wretchedness” and who were “also bent upon sending us to Liberia,” or places outside of the United States.⁸⁶⁰

Walker, born free in North Carolina in the late eighteenth century, strongly disapproved of the A.C.S. Residing in Boston and member of the African Masonic Lodge at the time he wrote the *Appeal*, Walker insisted the true intent of the A.C.S. was the removal of free blacks to prevent them from “intercourse” with slaves, resulting in

⁸⁵⁸ *The Liberator*, May 12, 1832. Pease, *Black Utopia*, p.49.

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁰ David Walker’s “Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World,” in *Let Nobody Turn U.S. Around: Voices of Resistance, Reform, and Renewal, An African American Anthology*. Eds. Manning Marable and Leith Mullings. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000. p.33.

“more obedient slaves.”⁸⁶¹ The *Appeal* quickly reached even the most remote parts of the United States; southerners found slaves in possession of the document causing them to strengthen literacy laws among slaves. Walker’s words were powerful because he reached the black audience he anticipated while adding to whites’ anxiety to the extent that some southern legislatures issued a bounty for his murder.⁸⁶²

Walker is the most well known black critic of the A.C.S. in the late 1820s and early 1830s, yet he was not alone in his convictions. He was only one voice in a growing chorus of voices throughout the Atlantic that openly criticized colonization. Maria Stewart, a black schoolteacher and pamphleteer from Boston, warned whites that colonization would cause “their [white Americans’] forces much weakened by [blacks’] absence,” potentially causing the country’s imperial rivals to attack.⁸⁶³ Such protests illustrated a variety of perspectives, but they all viewed the A.C.S. as another example of whites’ desires to remove free blacks. These numerous pamphlets and the riots in Cincinnati motivated black leaders in the rest of the country, particularly in the North, to convene in 1830 in Philadelphia. The convention, presided over by Richard Allen and attended by forty delegates, determined it necessary to form the National Negro Convention to oppose the spread of militant colonizationists actions. The events in Cincinnati reinforced free blacks’ perception that colonization was a thinly veiled form of removal.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid. p.33-34.

⁸⁶² For more on Walker, see Peter P. Hinks, *To Awaken My Afflicted Brethren: David Walker and the Problem of Antebellum Slave Resistance*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

⁸⁶³ “An Address Delivered at the African Masonic Hall, Boston, February 27, 1833,” in *Pamphlets of Protest*, Newman, Rael, and Lapsansky, eds. p.125-126.

Prominent whites also began to question the morality of colonization from the late 1820s on through the Civil War. William Lloyd Garrison's *Thoughts on African Colonization* remains perhaps the most well-known publication against colonization and the American Colonization Society. Another powerful publication came from the pen of William Jay, John Jay's son. In his critique, Jay took a strictly moral approach – as opposed to Garrison's radical voice – in noting the terrible climate and unfavorable living conditions for those free blacks who chose to settle in Africa. Jay encapsulated the duplicitous nature of the American Colonization Society, observing that “the constitution [of the Society] indeed, forbids the transportation of the free blacks without their consent.”⁸⁶⁴ Yet, he continued, “it is very constitutional to justify and encourage such oppression of them, as shall compel them to seek in the wilds of Africa, a refuge from American cruelty.”⁸⁶⁵ For Jay, the work of a morally upright improvement society should not seek to *remove* a problematic population; rather, they should work to *improve* that group and their future potential. Otherwise, the society simply continued the oppression authorized by the United State Constitution.

Despite arguments to the contrary by white colonizationists, men such as William Lloyd Garrison helped blacks systematically break down the myth of voluntary colonization. Indeed, the New York-State Colonization Society's proclamation – in a rather Jeffersonian vein – that “EMANCIPATION WITHOUT REMOVAL FROM THE COUNTRY IS OUT OF THE QUESTION” and that “THEY CANNOT BE EMANCIPATED AS A PEOPLE, AND REMAIN AMONG US” simply reinforced what many blacks already knew: emigration was preferred because it allowed some choice in

⁸⁶⁴ William Jay, *An Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization, and American Anti-Slavery Societies*. New York: Leavitt, Lord, & Co. 1835. p.15.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid.

the matter of destination.⁸⁶⁶ Falling prey to the colonization societies assured blacks of little to no voice in the process.

Garrison and Jay found friends and supporters in the black community. Many African-Americans echoed their sentiments, arguing that improvement far outweighed any potential colonization efforts offered. Given their position as public representatives for both the radical arm – Garrison – and the more temperate – Jay – of abolitionism, these white men agreeing with their black counterparts added legitimacy to the anti-colonization resistance movement. If the United States could not provide sufficient liberty, African-Americans were willing to emigrate.

The Rise of Martin Delany

After the founding of the Wilberforce settlement, Canada appeared to be a practical option for black emigrationists for several reasons. Canada had a long tradition of accepting refugee slaves, it did not have laws against black enfranchisement, and it possessed a population who accepted blacks. In 1851, Henry Bibb and James Theodore Holly portrayed Canada as a “beacon of hope to slave and a rock of terror to the oppressor.”⁸⁶⁷ Bibb, born a slave in Kentucky in 1815, escaped, was recaptured, and escaped at least two more times eventually settling in Canada and writing *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave*.⁸⁶⁸ Holly was born free in

⁸⁶⁶ William Lloyd Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization*. New York: Arno Press, 1968, reprinted from 1832 edition. p.115.

⁸⁶⁷ *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume II, Canada, 1830-1865*. Ed. C. Peter Ripley. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986. p.33.

⁸⁶⁸ *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave, Written By Himself*. NY: The Author 1849.

Washington, DC in 1829, eventually emigrating to Haiti to serve as Bishop of Episcopal Church until his death in 1911. The two men formed the North American Convention, which, upon meeting in Toronto in 1851, endorsed the idea of creating a land of refugees in Canada as a place from which emigrationist blacks could aid their brethren and the abolitionist cause in the United States.

In 1853, blacks worked to resurrect the North American League – an organization designed to enhance trade ties between the West Indies and mainland blacks – which, upon meeting, publicly called for African-Americans to leave the United States rather than face continued oppression. In its “Report on Emigration,” the North American League cited the blacks’ experiences in the diaspora as a source of strength in fighting the oppressive institutions of the United States. “Emigration, “ stated the League, “is emphatically one of the most important subjects that can engage the attention of an oppressed and denationalized people, as a mean...to accomplish their elevation.”⁸⁶⁹ Although preferring revolution to emigration, the league represented another black voice in support of emigration born outside of the United States. “Every thing that tends to endear the colored man, and make him proud of his a beloved country are denied him,” the league continued, and he is “rendered an out and out alien on the very soil that gave him birth.”⁸⁷⁰ Rather than coming out of conventions held in the United States, or Liberian settlers attempting to sell the colony to its brethren back home in America, the league’s report spoke from outside to the population inside the United States.

⁸⁶⁹ “Report of the Committee on Emigration of the Amherstburg Convention,” 17 June 1853, in *The Black Abolitionist Papers, Volume II, Canada, 1830-1865*. Ed. C. Peter Ripley. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986. p.270-271.

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid.

The league continued by systematically analyzing possible locations for blacks to resettle. Canada seemed viable, holding irrigated lands and navigable streams. Moreover, “No laws prohibit the colored man from availing himself,” educational opportunities were available and, perhaps most importantly, if more blacks settled in Canada “we may do much to counteract the tendency to annexation to the American Union” – always a plus for Canadians.⁸⁷¹ Also considered by the league were the British West Indies, Central and South America and Haiti. “For a systematic combination should go hand in hand with every band of emigrants wheresoever they may go on the continent, uniting them in co-operative efforts with those they leave behind, or who may be scattered throughout its different parts.”⁸⁷² In order for the diasporic brethren to remain connected and unified against the common cause, they must, the league warned, remain in contact with those in the United States. Transnational identities strengthened diasporic blacks against supporters of colonization.

Yet, those in the United States did not necessarily agree with the North American League. Martin Delany, well known for his emigrationist beliefs, and three other delegates from New York and Ohio sent a formal complaint in to the North American Convention that preceded the League in 1851.⁸⁷³ Delany and his fellow delegates argued that “inviting the colored people to leave the northern part of the United States, has done so contrary to the desires and wishes of those of us, from the States, who believe it to be impolitic and contrary to our professed policy in opposing the infamous fugitive slave

⁸⁷¹ Ibid. p.272-273.

⁸⁷² Ibid. p.275.

⁸⁷³ For more on Delany, see, Tunde Adeleke, *Without Regard to Race: The Other Martin Robinson Delany*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2003; and Cyril E. Griffith, *The African Dream: Martin R. Delany and the Emergence of Pan-African Thought*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1973.

laws, and schemes of American colonization.”⁸⁷⁴ Perhaps more than others at the convention, Delany epitomized the potential for conflict between the black abolitionists and emigrationists.

Born to a free seamstress mother and a plantation slave father in 1812 in Charles Town, Virginia, young Martin and his siblings learned read and write at a young age. In violation of Virginia law, the family moved to Pennsylvania to avoid prosecution and continue their schooling. By age 31, he had founded a newspaper, *Mystery*, editing it until 1847 when he joined with Frederick Douglass to co-edit the *North Star*. Delany briefly matriculated at Harvard Medical School, but was dismissed because of his race.⁸⁷⁵ His dismissal occurred at the same time as the Compromise of 1850, which in part strengthened the Fugitive Slave Act, and the two events provoked severe criticism from Delany regarding the intrinsic nature of racism in American Society. As a result, Delany began to consider emigration a justifiable alternative to remaining in the United States.

Unofficially, abolition and emigration were part of the same cause – fighting for equal share of America’s liberty – but important inconsistencies arose periodically. How, for instance, could blacks argue on behalf of emigration to avoid further oppression while fighting for wide-scale emancipation in that system? Could one be effective in the struggle if based abroad in Canada, Haiti or Liberia? “The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States,” written in 1852 by Martin Delany, attempted to answer these questions, among others. Ever the renaissance man, Delany patented a train engine, taught human anatomy, traveled around the country

⁸⁷⁴ *Voice of the Fugitive*, 24 September 1851, p.2. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*. ed. Robert S. Levine. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003. p.188.

⁸⁷⁵ *Martin R. Delany*, ed. Robert S. Levine, p. 1.

lecturing against the Fugitive Slave Law, and was elected mayor of a town in Nicaragua, all while writing the pamphlet over the course of eight months.⁸⁷⁶

Martin Delany issued his treatise on black nationalism that revealed a more complex perspective. Delany frowned on the American Colonization Society and its sibling organizations, but he also pointed to historical trends in emigration – the Exodus of the Jews, European immigration, among others – before suggesting the uniqueness of the situation of blacks in the United States. According to Delany, “to advocate the emigration of the colored people of the United States from their native homes, is a new feature in our history.”⁸⁷⁷ He continued, arguing the activities of the American Colonization Society in settling Liberia proved undesirable for several reasons, the three most important being “*Its geographical position...in a district signally unhealthy,*” the idea’s origination “in a deep laid scheme of slaveholders of the country, to *exterminate* the free colored of the American continent,” and finally, “Liberia is not an Independent Republic: in fact, *it is not* and independent nation at all; but a poor *miserable mockery*” of one.⁸⁷⁸ To Delany, Liberia loomed as a receptacle for misled but well-meaning free blacks who fell into the trap of the slavepower.

In his report, Delany referred to “their native homes,” illustrating the extent black emigrationist beliefs had changed since the days of Prince Hall in the 1780s and 1790s. Africans and African-Americans – those who saw themselves as Americans as well as those who remained tied to their African identity – were active among the black fraternal

⁸⁷⁶ Delany was elected mayor of Greytown, Nicaragua, an enclave of American traders and merchants. It proved to be a volatile and rebellious place in in the 1850s, with the US Navy burning the town in 1854 over disputed taxes.

⁸⁷⁷ “The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States,” in *Martin R. Delany*, p.203.

⁸⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p.204

organizations. Discussions of “native homes” in the context of Delany’s meaning were absent from the revolutionary era. As the decades progressed and the international slave trade slowed to a trickle in Delany’s era, most free blacks had been born in America. This simple fact changed the perspective of free African-Americans. The term “native” had become derogatory, signifying continental Africans’ uncivilized way of life.

Emigration was transformed as the African-American community became more entrenched in American society and, simultaneously, re-evaluated the advantages of removal. Delany’s *Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* illustrated this by comparing the proposed colonization of African-Americans with historical examples of Exodus. Delany argued “That there have been people in all ages under certain circumstances, that may be benefited by emigration,” such as “the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt...the expedition of Dido and her followers from Tyre to Mauritania” and “also in the ever memorable emigration of the Puritans...to the wilderness of the New World.”⁸⁷⁹ Calls for African-American emigration during the 1850s fit well within these historical parameters when examined closely. “To advocate the emigration of the colored people of the United States...is a new feature in our history, and at first view, may be considered objectionable,”⁸⁸⁰ but upon further reflection, it proved advantageous to the oppressed. Emigration represented liberty in some aspects because free blacks – so long as they did not “scheme” to go to “the so called Republic of Liberia”⁸⁸¹ – could choose their place of settlement amongst other persons of African descent. Such a willingness to emigrate reflected how transitory life on the margins could be for African-Americans.

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁸¹ Ibid.

Emigration to Haiti, the West Indies and Central and South America proved a viable alternative in Delany's mind. "There never existed in the policy of any of the nations of Central or South America, an inequality on account of race or color," but more importantly because "this vast number of people, our brethren...are anxiously waiting, and earnestly importuning us to come."⁸⁸² Delany described Central and South Americans as "precisely the same people as ourselves and [they] share the same fate with us," despite having previously mentioned the lack of racial inequality.⁸⁸³ Delany envisioned a pan-African unity. Rather than espousing his belief in nationalism, Delany actually saw multiple communities, across state and national boundaries that would act in a common African unity. Delany's words offered insight into the heterogeneity of the African diaspora: ethnic communities throughout, in this case, the Atlantic world connected by a common racial ancestry and common oppressor.

Shortly after writing his treatise on the fate of African-Americans, Delany commenced his efforts to plant black colonies in Central and South America. His advocacy for colonization to these parts became well known, though he – like other emigrationists before him – found it difficult to raise the appropriate funds for his endeavors. Delany read Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and, seeing its rapid success, believed he could write a novel in order to raise money for colonization. *Blake; or, The Huts of America: A Tale of the Mississippi Valley, the Southern United States, and Cuba.*⁸⁸⁴ Delany eventually traveled to the Niger Valley region of Africa, hoping to find suitable land for building an African-American settlement. Not only did

⁸⁸² Ibid. p.207.

⁸⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁴ The novel starred a revolutionary, Blake, who sought an end to slavery by sparking a massive revolt in the United States. Even in this work, Delany expresses a desire to end slavery and unite two oppressed groups of African descent, one in Cuba and the other in the United States.

the Niger Valley seem more hospitable than the climes of Liberia, but Delany firmly believed that “every people should be the originators of their own designs, the projector of their own schemes, and creators of the events that lead to their destiny – the consummation of their desires.”⁸⁸⁵ The ultimate expression of self-determination would be the founding of an African-American nation in Africa *by* free blacks. Still, Delany eventually returned to the United States to serve in the Union Army once the Civil War erupted – an event that shook the blacks living in the Atlantic world.

James Redpath, a noted American anti-slavery activist, wrote to the President of the Haitian Republic in 1860. In his letter, the “roving editor” – as he named himself for his extensive travels and writing in support of abolition – asked a series of queries “In behalf of blacks, and certain persons of color in the United States, and Canada, who are desirous of emigrating to Hayti.” On the heels of John Brown’s 1859 raid in Virginia and increasing sectional tensions in the United States in the 1860s, Haiti resumed active promotion of itself as an alternative home to thousands of oppressed blacks in America. Hired to write some of this promotional literature, Redpath asked questions that he believed potential settlers would want answers to: could the Haitian government protect the rights of the American immigrants? Is military service compulsory? How much would emigration cost? The Haitian government’s responses were widely circulated in

⁸⁸⁵ “A Project for an Expedition of Adventure, to the Eastern Coast of Africa,” in *Martin R. Delany*. p.320.

Redpath's *Guide to Hayti*, published in Boston by the Haitian Bureau of Emigration in 1861.

The Secretary of State for Haiti, A. Jean Simon, took the lead in replying to Redpath's inquiries by describing Haiti as a tolerant, multi-religious and open society for blacks. "The Government will extend the same protection as the Haytians themselves...for according to the Civil Code of Hayti, every person descended from African or Indian blood, can...become a Haytian after a residence of one year."⁸⁸⁶ Redpath's publication supported Simon's claims that Haiti offered American blacks the chance of free labor and education, while promising equality to all of its citizens. In describing the climate, ecology and the social structure of the country, he ensured the largely Protestant African-American population that the state religion of Haiti – Roman Catholicism – would not demand recognition from evangelical Christians. Indeed, according to Redpath, blacks were free to believe in any religion they liked because Haiti now tolerated the largely Protestant beliefs amongst African-Americans, unlike in the 1820s when approximately 13,000 African-Americans arrived. Besides, Redpath reasoned, any potential conflicts with black Catholics paled in comparison to the barriers they faced from whites in the United States.

James Redpath was at the forefront of renewed interest in Haiti amongst African-Americans. Yet, by the time Redpath's *Guide* was published, thousands of African-Americans had already acted on the calls of Prince Saunders, John Russwurm, and Martin Delany to help build new black Christian nations in the Atlantic world. These

⁸⁸⁶ James Redpath, *Guide to Hayti*. Boston: Haytian Bureau of Emigration, 1861. p. 93-95. Furthermore, Redpath published correspondence in his *Guide to Hayti* with the intention of swelling the nearly 6,000 African-Americans who had already emigrated to the black republic.

men presented ways in which blacks could build independent nations that were separate from, yet intertwined with, white nations of Europe and America.

While blacks contemplated their next move, whites were ready to remove the country of this “greater nuisance than even the slaves themselves.”⁸⁸⁷ Still, blacks did not await their fate. Instead, they organized, planned, and schemed. Some believed migrating to Haiti, Canada, and Liberia would mollify their conditions. Others believed the best course of action was to stay in the United States to fight their oppressors. Even so, events like the Cincinnati riots and banishment, pamphlets like Walker’s *Appeal*, and educated men such as Saunders, Russwurm, and Delany combined to propel the colonization movement into a new era. This time, however, the meaning of colonization radically changed.

The need for Redpath’s *Guide to Hayti* indicated fractures in the supposed pan-African unity developing from African-Americans’ colonization efforts. Thousands of blacks returned to America after brief stays in Haiti. Liberia’s national census in 1843 revealed that of 4,454 colonists the A.C.S. claimed had migrated to the colony since 1820, only 1,736 remained.⁸⁸⁸ The population shrank significantly for a variety of reasons, but primarily because of harsh living conditions, disease, and religious and cultural differences with the settlers’ proclaimed African brethren: 2,198 émigrés died primarily of the fever and malaria; 500 went to Sierra Leone, and 108 returned to the United States – a number that would continue rise in the following decades. Africa turned out to be a much different place than the A.C.S.’s propaganda advertised. Many of the colonists, including Russwurm and Delany, commented in one form or another on

⁸⁸⁷ *African Repository*, Vol. ii p.328. As quoted in Garrison, p.125.

⁸⁸⁸ Only 587 births occurred during this same period in Liberia. See Clegg, *The Price of Liberty*, p.161-162.

host populations and cultural incivility. Such differences wore on African-American settlers.

Rather than looking to Africa for a “return” as Prince Hall and other early republic emigrationists did, this generation saw the potential for African-Americans to spread their particular brand of Africanness throughout the Atlantic world. Mixed with Christian beliefs and the Jeffersonian virtues of free labor and participatory government, African-Americans sought to remake the African diaspora in their own image. The potential for a second dispersion experience at the hands of white-led colonization schemes motivated African-Americans to help form receptacles for any person of African descent to settle and to start anew, provided they promised to live within certain social and political parameters set by the African-Americans evangelical Christian founders. Black leaders took control of colonization, expunging removal; instead, they constructed a new type of colonization with an imperialistic agenda that aimed to enlighten and improve the lives of all person in the Atlantic region of the African diaspora.

-- CHAPTER EIGHT --

LINCOLN AND THE RETURN TO JEFFERSONIAN COLONIZATION, 1860-1865

Once the Civil War commenced Abraham Lincoln renewed calls for the colonization of freedmen and women. Envisioning himself as a colonizationist in the vein of Thomas Jefferson, Lincoln believed that blacks and whites could not live side-by-side peaceably. Unlike in Jefferson's day, however, Lincoln looked around him and saw the financially failing American Colonization Society and an independent black republic in Liberia that faced unrelenting challenges in the form of disease, poverty, slave raiders, and a growing Islamic presence on its borders. The future of Jeffersonian colonization seemed dire.

Public pressure and calls within his own Republican party to deal with the onslaught of European immigrants arriving in the cities of the United States provided Lincoln with different reasons than Jefferson to favor territorial expansion. "If it be said," stated Lincoln in his First Annual Address to Congress in 1861, "that the only legitimate object of acquiring territory is to furnish homes for white men, this measure [colonization] effects that object" because "emigration of colored men leaves additional room for white men remaining or coming here."⁸⁸⁹ "Mr. Jefferson," he continued, "placed the importance of procuring Louisiana more on political and commercial grounds

⁸⁸⁹ 3 December 1861, First Annual Message, in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, VI. ed. James D. Richardson. Washington: Government Print Office, 1897. p.54.

than on providing room for population.”⁸⁹⁰ Partly due to necessity borne from expense and the need for timely action, Lincoln and his counterparts focused their plans for colonization closer to home. In deciding to plant colonies in Haiti, Ecuador and other Latin American territories, Lincoln expected to relieve the United States of a potentially dangerous freed black population for much less money – and much tighter trade and political relations – than if the U.S. pumped even more resources into fledgling Liberia.

Lincoln’s support for colonization did not spring solely from the Civil War nor from the challenges he faced in the presidency. “There is a moral fitness to the idea of returning to Africa her children,” exclaimed Lincoln in an 1852 eulogy of Henry Clay.⁸⁹¹ In a similar manner as Jefferson and Clay himself, Lincoln was drawn to the idea of colonization as a way for white Americans to pardon themselves of the sin of slavery. Slaves’ “ancestors,” Lincoln argued using the language of Clay and Jefferson, “have been torn from her [Africa] by the ruthless hand of fraud and violence.”⁸⁹² In order to free America from the “ruthless hand” of slavery, emancipation must be accompanied by the “restoring [of] a captive people to their long lost fatherland,” which would yield them “bright prospects for the future.”⁸⁹³ “I have said,” continued Lincoln in a speech two years later, “the separation of the races is the only perfect preventive of amalgamation” and “such separation, if ever effected at all, must be effected by Colonization.”⁸⁹⁴ The American Colonization Society echoed these sentiments throughout the 1850s and 1860s,

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁹¹ Eulogy on Henry Clay, State House at Springfield, Illinois, 16 July 1852, in *The Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed A.B. Lapsley, VIII, p.173-174.

⁸⁹² Ibid.

⁸⁹³ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁴ 16 October 1854, response to Stephan A. Douglas, in *Life and Works of Abraham Lincoln II, Early Speeches*. ed. M.M. Miller. New York: Current Literature Publishing Company, 1907. p.74.

further endorsing the Jeffersonian race wars theory as well as the “morality” of colonization.⁸⁹⁵

The foundation that supported Lincoln’s colonization ideology rested on two decidedly eighteenth-century concepts that remained fertile during the tumultuous decades of the 1850s and 1860s. White support for colonization began to wane during this period, forcing Lincoln to ground his pro-colonization argument firmly in the realm of the American moral compass: “let us be brought to believe it is morally right.”⁸⁹⁶ Along with making a case for the strong morality of colonization, Lincoln and his supporters reaffirmed the validity of arguments advanced by Samuel Hopkins, William Thornton and others, in the late 1770s and 1780s. The American Colonization Society offered politicians like Lincoln their support for the “hope and purpose of multiplying Christian settlements on the coast of Africa” to “aid its commerce and other great interests” of America and the West Africa.⁸⁹⁷ Spreading Christianity and American commercial enterprises made colonization an important component of the United States’ rise to prominence in the Atlantic World.

The supposed interdependence of race and climate remained a popular scientific theory amongst white Americans, during the 1850s and 1860s. Similar to Jefferson and other turn of the century supporters of colonization, Lincoln also proposed that

⁸⁹⁵ See “Forty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Colonization Society,” in *American colonization Society Annual Report, Volume 44-53, 1861-1870*. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 (Vol. 45). p. 22. Some colonization members argued that “two free races, between whom amalgamation, by intermarriage, was impossible, could never occupy the same land, in peace, on terms of social and political equality. [sic]”

⁸⁹⁶ 26 June 1857, in Nicolay and Hay, *Speeches, Letters and State Papers, Abraham Lincoln, I*. p. 235.

⁸⁹⁷ “Forty-Fifth Annual Report of the American Colonization Society,” 21 January 1861 in *American Colonization Society Annual Report, Volumes 44-53, 1861-1870*. New York: Negro University Press, 1969. p.14 (Vol 45).

“returning” free blacks to Africa made sense in the Laws of Nature because it is “at the same time favourable to...transfer the African to his native clime.”⁸⁹⁸ Referring to long-held beliefs in the relationship of race and climate, Lincoln attempted to strengthen his argument for colonization by asserting that blacks would be more content and prosperous in the warmth of Africa.

Lincoln’s general tone regarding colonization changed little by the time he became president. In his new position, Lincoln began to consider the genuine possibility of affecting widespread colonization. The president understood that “to carry out the plan of colonization may involve the acquiring of territory.” Looking back at American history, “having practiced the acquisition of territory for nearly sixty years, the question of constitutional power to do so is no longer an open one to us.”⁸⁹⁹ Lincoln knew his power as president would have a profound impact on the struggling colonization movement.

On the 22nd of September 1862, a draft version of Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation appeared in a State Department circular. William H. Seward, Lincoln’s Secretary of State, announced in the circular “that if they will persist in forcing upon the country a choice between the dissolution of this necessary and beneficent Government or a relinquishment of the protection of slavery,” then Lincoln’s selection “is the Union, and not slavery, that must be maintained and preserved.” Lurking behind the valiant message of “immediate or gradual abolishment of slavery within their respective limits” of rebellious states, lay “the effort to colonize persons of African

⁸⁹⁸ 26 June 1857, in Nicolay and Hay, *Speeches, Letters and State Papers, Abraham Lincoln, I.* p. 235.

⁸⁹⁹ 3 December 1861, First Annual Message, in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, VI. ed. James D. Richardson. Washington: Government Print Office, 1897. p.54.

descent with their consent upon this continent or elsewhere.” Provided “the previously obtained consent of the governments [is] existing there,” the efforts to colonize America’s free blacks “will be continued.”⁹⁰⁰ Abraham Lincoln seemed to be fulfilling the beliefs of Thomas Jefferson and countless other colonizationists. As early as the 1760s, numerous slaveholding Americans argued that emancipation could not occur without colonization and now as mass emancipation became a reality, so too did the return to federal government sponsored colonization.⁹⁰¹

In the summer of 1862, the U.S. House Select Committee on Emancipation and Colonization provided Lincoln with nearly \$600,000 to develop colonization schemes.⁹⁰² Not coincidentally, Lincoln signed papers that federally recognized Haiti and Liberia in that same summer, an act intended to facilitate colonization efforts. Pro-colonizationists believed recognition would increase trade and commercial activities, boosting efforts to settle free blacks in these countries.⁹⁰³ With Congress’s support, Lincoln eventually landed a colony at L’Ile à Vache, Haiti shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

On April 16, 1863, the *Ocean Ranger* departed for Haiti with 453 free blacks aboard. Led by self-appointed governor Bernard Kock, a man with a suspect reputation

⁹⁰⁰ “Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation,” 22 September 1862, Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, Washington DC.

⁹⁰¹ Spurred by John Brown’s raid and the Civil War, white public support for colonization gained momentum in the 1860s. Even the adamant abolitionist Henry David Thoreau considered the idea possibly the only way blacks could gain ultimate freedom from white oppression. Michael Meyer, “Thoreau and Black Emigration,” in *American Literature*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (November 1981), 380-396.

⁹⁰² For more on the Congressional debate over emancipation and colonization, see *Congressional Globe*, House of Representatives, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, May 23, 1862, p.171-174. Also, see, James D. Lockett, “Abraham Lincoln and Colonization: An Episode that Ends in Tragedy L’Ile à Vache, Haiti, 1863-1864,” in *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (June 1991), p.431-432.

⁹⁰³ *Congressional Globe*, House of Representatives, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, June 3, 1862, p.252-254.

in Washington, the ship arrived in Haiti with no formal contract between themselves and the Haitian government. Despite ample funding, and improving diplomatic relations with Haiti, the colony at L'Ile à Vache proved a disaster due to severe mismanagement of the colony by Kock. The self-appointed "governor" printed his own currency that he exchanged it with the colonists for \$.49 on the dollar. It seemed a fruitful scheme except it relied on the supposition that blacks were indeed unintelligent. The colonists figured out the scheme in short order, and by July 1863 Kock sought refuge with the American consul from free blacks' threats.⁹⁰⁴

Essentially left alone for the next nine months, and with Haitian troops guarding them, the emigrant African-Americans were unable to develop the cotton fields originally planned. By the time a new representative from Washington arrived in the colony in January 1864, the residents asked to return to the United States. Their desires were granted. Lincoln would also send agents to South and Central America in search of land to acquire for the colonization of newly freed slaves. Lincoln attempted to purchase or utilize lands of the Chiriqui Improvement Company (near Panama and Costa Rica), as well as Ecuador, yet each time the plans fell through due in part to apprehensions by foreign leaders.⁹⁰⁵

Lincoln's failures in Haiti and Central America increased pressure on him to find a way to successfully colonize free blacks. A concerned Kentuckian wrote to Lincoln, asking "will the Government undertake to Colonize the negroes of Kentucky out of the

⁹⁰⁴ For more details on the failure of the colony, see Lockett, "Abraham Lincoln and Colonization," 428-444.

⁹⁰⁵ It seems that few foreign governments were willing to take on a population that US officials deemed too troublesome and violent to live within its own borders. See, Robert L. Gold, "Negro Colonization Schemes in Ecuador, 1861-1864," in *Phylon*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (3rd Quarter, 1969), 306-316; and Paul J. Scheips, "Lincoln and the Chiriqui Colonization Project," in *Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Oct. 1952), 418-453.

state, if the people of Kentucky will emancipate them? I do not ask this question idly: but with the determination to take the stump as an advocate for emancipation if it be answered in the affirmative.”⁹⁰⁶ Such sentiments reflected a renewed sense of urgency associated with colonization in America. With failing colonization schemes and millions of newly freed slaves in the north, white Americans grew impatient.

Black Americans also abandoned colonization schemes in droves. The hardship of constructing new colonies, with little financial support from a war-torn government facing budget deficits and debts lent little optimism to an already financially ill and controversy riddled American Colonization Society.⁹⁰⁷ Coupled with new optimism amongst African-Americans after emancipation, colonization became the forgotten remnant of antebellum America. Although Marcus Garvey and others would assume the leadership of a new back to Africa movement later in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Lincoln’s failure – in a long line of failures over several decades – to effectively colonize free African-Americans did not produce the results generations of Americans had predicted. African-Americans and whites did not become mired in a race war immediately following emancipation; rather, free blacks remained in America to fight for the promises that the American Revolution had failed to deliver.

⁹⁰⁶ Marcellus Mundy to Abraham Lincoln, Thursday, 28 July 1864. The Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress □ Series 1. General Correspondence. 1833-1916. □

⁹⁰⁷ Support amongst white and black Americans declined to such an extent that the American Colonization Society allocated funds for “the Barbados Expedition” in 1865 and 1866. This expedition was intended to find colonists from Barbados who were willing to emigrate to Liberia. See “Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the American Colonization Society,” in *American Colonization Society Annual Report, Volumes 44-53, 1861-1870*. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969. p.7 (Volume 59)

Founded in 1863, Liberia College represented the greatest optimism of the newly independent nation of Liberia, as well as the efforts of the colonization movement since the first poor blacks arrived in neighboring Sierra Leone in 1791. For white and black supporters of the movement the college promised to educate Black Africans and Americans alike in the manner of the finest Western institutions. Edwin C. Howard, a graduate of Boston Latin School, migrated to Monrovia, Liberia specifically to attend the college as a medical student in 1863. Among the first of the college's promising young scholars, he was an enthusiastic young man who represented the foundation of the African republic's future. Living an existence much like any American country doctor of his day, Howard tended to his rounds as part of his training, often responding to the scene of farming accidents and caring for the numerous Liberians – both newly arrived and longtime settlers – who were dealing with disease.⁹⁰⁸

By 1865, just under four years after arriving on Liberian soil, the rugged life and brutal climate wore on Howard. As he awoke each morning, the promises of Liberia seemed to flutter further away. Often, the weather was so warm and the sun so brutally hot that Howard chose to remain inside all day. Furthermore, his fellow Liberians were not as refined as the population of his native Philadelphia, using “severe language” which made him “feel all out of sorts.” Indeed, the urban-reared Howard felt “almost always harassed by unpleasant feelings” that were sparked by his course surroundings. The actions of the new Liberian government – composed of black men endorsed by the American Colonization Society – and its new president, Virginian Stephen Roberts, also

⁹⁰⁸ Edwin C. Howard Journal, DeGrasse-Howard Papers, 1776-1976, Box 1 of 2, Folders 7-9, Massachusetts Historical Society.

lessened any affection he might have for the nation. Howard often commented that Roberts “has exercised but little judgment,” proving “he has surely many things to learn” on a variety of issues affecting the people of the free black nation.⁹⁰⁹

Often, while alone and not attending to his patients in Liberia, Howard was “moved to tears as thoughts of a Home in a Better, Dearer region” came over him. By the summer of 1865, Howard abandoned his call to duty in Liberia, sailing to his native Boston to attend Harvard Medical School. Howard soon graduated from Harvard and he worked for the rest of his life in Philadelphia, winning recognition for developing a new method to deal with smallpox, and also founding America’s first black fraternity (Sigma Pi Phi). Howard’s evacuation from West Africa represented the end of the colonization movement as envisioned by Thomas Jefferson, the American Colonization Society, the African Union Society and thousands of blacks who believed they could start anew in land of their forefathers.⁹¹⁰

Dr. Howard was part of a group of several thousand blacks who returned to the United States, Jamaica and other places from which they originally emigrated to Liberia and other places in the Atlantic. Edwin Howard saw himself as part of a transnational brigade of African-American settlers who dreamed of shaping this independent nation into to a black American republic. For them, living in Liberia was a bold, life-affirming move that spoke as much to their idealized love for Africa as it did their lack of understanding the enormity of the project. African-Americans like Howard helped to construct free black communities throughout the Atlantic world. Some of these men left

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁹¹⁰ Even though the colonization movement survived well into the 20th-century, the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War fundamentally changed the movement from one organized and funded by whites, to a Back-to-Africa group run by African-Americans.

America for good, rising to power in places like Liberia and Haiti. Upon return to America, for example, Howard became a respected member of the medical profession. Howard's success as a medical doctor provided him with an important place in Philadelphia's black community – a level of prominence perhaps unattainable without his experience in Africa. Howard's journey represented a reality check for black Americans who imagined themselves as Africans.

Like so many African-Americans in his era, Edwin C. Howard believed in a higher purpose for himself. Reflecting his convictions were various bits of wisdom inscribed on the front of a card he carried with him in Liberia. Sandwiched between passages from the Scriptures at the center of the card, was a rendering from William Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucretia*:

Be witness ye gods, shall from this moment, I proclaim myself the avenger of the chaste Lucretia's cause. From this moment I declare myself the enemy of Tarquin and his bloody house. Henceforth my life shall be employed in opposition to tyranny, and for the freedom, and happiness of my country.⁹¹¹

Howard saw himself, along with his black Atlantic brethren, as the enemy of Tarquin – or, white racial oppression – and “his bloody house” of slavery, setting out to avenge the chaste Lucretia's cause of abolition. Shakespeare's words captured the complexities of Howard's life, as well as the lives of thousands of persons of African descent in the diaspora. Proving the long-term ineffectiveness of removal and colonization in destroying the unity and morale of the groups it targeted, Howard's “country” consisted of a network of free black communities throughout the African diaspora and Atlantic world.

⁹¹¹ Edwin C. Howard Journal, DeGrasse-Howard Papers, 1776-1976, Box 1 of 2, Folders 7-9, Massachusetts Historical Society.

CONCLUSION

Removal – the forcible displacement of cultural, racial or ethnic groups – developed into a systematic policy used by eighteenth-century officials in the British Atlantic empire. Typically with the empire’s “best” interest in mind, local and imperial officials routinely decided to transport problematic and trouble-making peoples to other less volatile or strategically important seats of the Realm. In applying removal to the Jacobites, Acadians and Jamaican Maroons, British officials disarmed growing tensions that had either previously resulted in rebellions or appeared likely to foment. The result was instantaneous: with the rabble-rousers out of the way, local troubles cooled.

In the United States, where removal was transformed into an awkward plan of colonization, ministerial control was reduced to Congress providing limited funding for a vastly expensive project. Although leading politicians often trumpeted colonization, less than complete government support did not translate into an effective policy. Indeed, the targeted population of colonization, free blacks, largely resisted removal to West Africa or other destinations in the Atlantic world. As free blacks formed organizations to fight white-led colonization efforts, elite whites realized their plan to rid the country of what they deemed an undesirable black population faced a dire future. Instead African-Americans developed their own version of colonization: voluntary emigration to establish black colonies based on liberty throughout the Atlantic world.

The United States government did comprehensively back removal when applied to Native Americans. This was due in part to Native Americans’ unique status in the

United States as a group with historic land claims (considered a significant obstacle to future U.S. territorial expansion). Native Americans' claims held some degree of moral authority that kept them from being removed to lands in some other country or continent. Unlike the other groups in this study, who were either immigrants or descendants of immigrants (both forced and voluntary), North America was the land of Indians' ancestors. Widespread acknowledgment by Euro-Americans of this point created a distinction between Native Americans and the Acadians, Maroons, and African-Americans.⁹¹² Native Americans were removed from their current lands in exchange for lands west of the Mississippi River; the Acadians, Maroons, and African-Americans encountered no such arrangement.

Furthermore, Native Americans differed from other groups in this study because they were thought to be more likely to assimilate than free African-Americans, making their removal – which separated them from their land claims – to territory within the likely future borders of the United States tolerable. In addition, Native Americans were not considered to represent an immediate threat to the stability of the settled regions of the United States, unlike free blacks, in part because of some groups' willingness to conform to American social and political standards. Indian Removal was related to the examples of forced migration discussed in this study, but these key differences made for two distinct types of removal.

A century of removal policy in the Anglo-American Atlantic created diasporas. Scholars of early America and the Atlantic world often use the term “diaspora” in

⁹¹² “Removal of the Indians” in the *North American Review*, Vol. 30, Issue 66, (Jan. 1830), 62-121, provides insight into how Americans, circa 1830, viewed Indians' historic ties to the lands occupied by the United States. The article laments the “diminished” (p.62) population of Indians as a result of U.S. territorial expansion.

association with Africa and Africans. The African diaspora has become a well-received idea that describes the manner in which Africans were dispersed from Africa, forced by slavery and imperialism into all corners of the globe and, particularly, throughout the Atlantic world. Characteristics of the African diaspora include a sense of Africa as a homeland, adapting native cultural practices to the new place of residence under slavery, and extreme racial discrimination.

Yet, removal had a hand in remaking the African diaspora while also creating new diasporas. In short, some ethnic and religious minorities of European descent gained a semi-shared history with Africans in their experiences with British removal policy. Removal, in its variety of forms, impacted the Atlantic world to such an extent that it reorganized and reshaped its social and cultural systems. The most powerful empire in the Atlantic World during the eighteenth century, Great Britain, as well as one of the region's newest nations, the United States, both used removal to control populations. As a result of this policy, a variety of diasporas containing diverse ethnic, religious and racial groups were created.

Although removal in the British Atlantic empire and United States differed in substantial ways, many similarities existed. The British and Americans employed removal to retain or restore cultural and social norms throughout their growing territorial holdings. Often these spaces on the periphery of the British empire and United States, both physically and politically, were contested cultural sites on which Native Americans, Africans and African-Americans, and white ethnic minorities clashed over the limits of social and cultural inclusion. The conflict between imperial and national norms with those groups on the margins emerged, in many cases, as perceived threats to the stability

of the empire or republic. These conflicts also reflected the growing pains of constructing political and social systems in a diverse Atlantic world. Intended to keep peace and order, removal identified racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious others as groups requiring swift and decisive action by white Anglo-American government authorities.

Removal served another purpose in the Atlantic world by opening valuable or useful lands to “proper” stewards. Nova Scotia’s timber, Jamaica’s plantations, and even West Africa’s lands could not be properly exploited without obedient and assimilated populations overseeing their use. Proper stewardship included maximizing the production value of such lands within the social and economic parameters of the dominant culture. In replacing disloyal Acadian loggers with Scots and Englishmen, for example, British officials believed that ensured a steady and uninterrupted supply of the raw materials needed to maintain the empire’s naval dominance.

Key differences between British and American forms of removal emerge from this study. The United States exclusively targeted one racial group for colonization in part because many white Americans believed African-Americans were incapable of assimilating in to the culture of the new republic. Even after the American Revolution, African-Americans effectively became exiled within their own country. Unable to participate in government, nominally free, and generally unwanted by the white population, blacks entered a stateless, marginalized existence beyond that of the Acadians or Scottish Jacobites. Due to the sharply racialized thought that dominated the early Republic and antebellum periods, African-Americans could not blend in nor amalgamate with white Americans. As a result, blacks became an easily identified cultural and racial

other that must be, according to prominent leaders such as James Madison and Henry Clay, removed from American soil to foreign parts.

Still, removal became increasingly racialized in Great Britain at the same time white Americans schemed to rid the country of former slaves. As the case of the Trelawney Maroons' removal demonstrated, by the 1790s Great Britain also considered free black populations more dangerous than other marginalized groups. Fearful of the spread of the Haitian Revolution to its Caribbean holdings, Britain acted quickly to remove the Maroons from Jamaica, believing – much like the Americans were arguing at the same time – in the inherent violent tendencies of blacks. When coupled with the swift and effective efforts to remove free blacks from Nova Scotia and metropolitan Britain to Africa, the Maroons' story illustrated the increasingly racialized nature of British removal policy. Indeed, informed speculation suggest that if faced with a large enslaved population such as the one in America, Britons also would have turned to mass colonization as a way to alleviate potential race wars.

Disconnected groups of African descent throughout the Atlantic attempted to unify after the American Revolution through opposition to removal, colonization, and slavery. The black Atlantic world emerged from the vast African diaspora as free blacks endeavored to form a common African identity that crossed ethnic divisions (as opposed to Jacobites and Acadians, who did not link across ethnic divides to form a larger diaspora). Most blacks in America, Sierra Leone, London, Jamaica, Canada, and Haiti fashioned a shared opposition to removal and colonization. Emigration – or the voluntary removal of free blacks around the Atlantic world – served as a way for free blacks to

carve out spaces in which they could construct individual communities and nations modeled after the ideology of the Age of Atlantic revolutions.

If the American Revolution could not deliver on its promise of liberty, then blacks would unite in places as variegated as Haiti, Canada or West Africa to build societies based on free labor, trade and republican ideals. These communities surfaced throughout the Atlantic world and by the 1860s they provided the physical foundations for a black Atlantic world imagined by free blacks in Massachusetts as early as the 1770s. If stateless and in exile, free persons of African descent were determined not to be subdued by removal, colonization and the racist ideology that drove such efforts. They created their own networks in which to raise money and plan numerous emigration schemes. As these networks expanded, so too did the influence of the black Atlantic community.

Black opposition to colonization and the abolitionist movement were intertwined. Many free African-Americans believed the most effective way to fight slavery would be to fight it from abroad, serving as an example that freedom for blacks could be attained. Others believed the most important way to fight slavery was to transform the West Coast of Africa into a free, Christian African community. By teaching Christian morals and the ideals of liberty, free blacks believed the slave trade from Africa could be halted. At the very least, establishing free black colonies in Africa provided a safe zone for slaves confiscated from illegal slave traders.

The idealism of early free black emigration schemes gave way to the realities of life in the diaspora. As Paul Cuffe, John Russwurm, and Martin Delany encountered their brethren in Africa, they saw a pagan and Muslim land enshrouded in darkness caused by ignorance of the Bible. The brethren they imagined as open receptacles to the

truth of Christianity turned out to be rowdy drunkards, slave traders, or itinerant laborers; they spoke unintelligible languages and lived in straw houses. Rather than “returning” to Africa as Prince Hall advocated, this next generation of black emigrationists wanted to reshape the Africa diaspora in their image. Their brethren must be delivered from such an unenlightened existence, converted and taught the virtuous ways of free labor and moral living.

An imperial agenda lay cloaked behind the language of racial unity advanced by African-American colonizationists. African-Americans created their own particular brand of pan-African unity. Men such as Paul Cuffe and Martin Delany argued that free blacks should conform to key political, social, and cultural principles observed by white nations in the Atlantic world. After all, they argued, these principles enabled men like Cuffe to amass a modest shipping empire. Common racial characteristics merely allowed entrance into the black Atlantic community forming under the auspices of Cuffe, Russwurm, Delany and others, but it did not mean all blacks viewed each other as equals. Upper class and educated blacks did not view their illiterate, poor black Atlantic brethren as equals. Moreover, non-Christian religious diversity in particular would not be tolerated. In the nations and colonies created or settled by black colonizationists – including Saunders’ Haiti, where the guarantee of rights, state protection of cultural practices and religious freedom had been codified – liberty encountered limitations: pagans must convert to Christianity and the illiterate must learn to read and write.

By the time of the American Civil War, what began as a way to alleviate tensions with small groups or to punish petty criminal acts in the British empire had been transformed into numerous failed attempts by Americans to rid their country of its most

unwanted population. Prominent Americans agreed with Thomas Jefferson's theory that a race war would erupt if whites and blacks lived side-by-side in a free republic. As the Emancipation Proclamation freed millions of slaves, white America's worst fears were realized. Lincoln's colonization efforts failed in part because African-Americans fought to maintain their tenuous position in America. African-Americans also looked abroad. Envisioning the construction of black nations built on Enlightenment ideals in the Atlantic world, a few thousand African-Americans voluntarily emigrated to West Africa, Canada, Haiti, and elsewhere. Once they arrived, nearly 50% of the émigrés in some cases encountered that immovable biological barrier to circum-Atlantic movement, disease. Another barrier awaited those who survived: social and cultural bias. When mixed with evangelicalism, this last barrier proved most difficult to cross, confirming that the dispersion experience had changed blacks without exception.

Once in an Atlantic world, ripped from ancestral homelands, removed peoples were no longer the same, culturally and socially, as they were before the dispersion. Spiritual connection to a homeland, as the Acadians, Maroons, and African-Americans discovered did not mean a "return" was imminent. It meant the opposite. Even when the physical return to Acadia, Africa or elsewhere proved a possibility, being in the diaspora had fundamentally changed them, making them appear to be ghosts – as residents of Nova Scotia had described returning Acadians – in their homelands. Removed peoples faced the difficult task of carving out new spaces in a volatile and merciless Atlantic world where few sympathized and no one wanted them within their borders.

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