



King's Research Portal

DOI:

[10.1080/0144039X.2015.1130323](https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2015.1130323)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Ryan, M. (2016). 'A Moral Millstone'? British Humanitarian Governance and the Policy of Liberated African Apprenticeship. *Slavery and abolition*, 37(2), 399-422. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2015.1130323>

Citing this paper

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact librarypure@kcl.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

“A moral millstone”: British humanitarian governance and the policy of liberated African apprenticeship, 1808-1848’

Maeve Ryan

Abstract

Between 1808 and 1848, under the terms of the Abolition Act, thousands of liberated Africans were distributed as apprentices to private citizens in the colony of Sierra Leone. In 1847, Governor Fergusson described apprenticeship, by that date primarily of children, as ‘a moral millstone round the necks’ of the colony’s population. The Liberated African Department in particular was singled out by many contemporary European critics as unable or unwilling to monitor the whereabouts of apprentice children and to police the welfare obligations placed on apprentice-holders. This article explores a policy that was identified with widespread patterns of abuse, neglect and re-enslavement, and considers contemporary critiques in terms of underlying anxieties regarding the efficacy of humanitarian governance and the possibility of a post-slavery world.

Keywords

- Atlantic-world slavery
- Abolition
- Liberated Africans
- Humanitarian governance
- Sierra Leone
- Nineteenth-century British Empire
- West Africa
- British humanitarianism
- Apprenticeship
- Labour history

Introduction

Two strikingly similar murder cases appeared before Sierra Leone's Chief Justice Sir John William Jeffcott in the first six months of 1831. The first was the trial of Kissiah Bacchus, accused of the murder of her liberated African apprentice, a girl of ten years of age whose death had been caused 'by beating her severely, rubbing pepper into her Eyes and otherwise ill using her'.¹ The second was that of a woman named Betsy Harding, whose apprentice child had suffered and died in a similar way. Chief Justice Jeffcott became convinced that 'for a considerable time past, very great and wanton cruelty had been exercised towards the great mass of the Liberated African apprentices by their Masters and Mistresses', and he declared his intent to prosecute more actively any apprentice-holders accused of treating apprentices inhumanely.² He encouraged abused and neglected apprentices to avail of their right under the terms of the 1824 Act to amend and consolidate the Laws relating to the Abolition of the Slave Trade to 'apply to the Judge of the Vice Admiralty' to examine their case and if necessary, fine the master or mistress a maximum of £100 and cancel the indenture.³

Jeffcott appears to have been a somewhat colourful character, associated with both energetic personal advancement and, in later years, career-changing scandal.⁴ Nevertheless, in the eyes of many contemporary European observers, his suspicions regarding the state of liberated African apprenticeship were not without foundation. Virtually from its implementation in 1808 until its official abolition in 1848, the policy of 'apprenticing' or indenting newly arrived liberated Africans to settled inhabitants of the colony of Sierra Leone had a highly controversial reputation. Abuse, exploitation and re-enslavement of apprentices were believed to be endemic amongst both black and white apprentice-holders. The papers of the Liberated African Department contain many documented instances of reported ill-treatment of apprentices, combined with expressions of frustration on the part of the colonial government at its inability to adequately monitor or guarantee their welfare. Furthermore, European observers considered the distribution of indentured labour as having a corrosive effect on the black colonists' work ethic and the moral fabric of society.

In spite of this legacy of criticism, Jeffcott's intervention did not succeed in permanently rendering more transparent the living conditions of apprentices. This may be because, concurrently, Jeffcott also attempted to prove his personal conviction that

the kidnapping and re-enslavement of liberated Africans was also endemic in the colony; after creating some sensation with his allegations, his conclusions were shown to have been in error.⁵ Jeffcott left the colony a short time later in ill-health and returned once, only briefly. When large numbers of apprentices continued to avail of the opportunity Jeffcott had advertised, Governor Findlay dismissed the veracity of most complaints as opportunism and ingratitude, and apprenticeship continued to be regarded as an unavoidable fact of administrative necessity and was sustained for another 17 years, virtually without reform. Even after its official abolition in 1848, it probably persisted in some capacity for a further 15 years.

A critical assessment of the long-running policy of apprenticeship and its multiplicity of possible individual outcomes has significant relevance when considering the social stratification of Sierra Leonean society and the internal dynamics of the Krio community. John Peterson's 1969 *Province of Freedom* continues to be regarded as a major authority on the origins of this community – to a large extent, because of his stated priority to rewrite the traditionally paternalistic, imperialistic narrative of Sierra Leone, and attribute to the recaptive population their own primacy in the creation of a new 'province of freedom' and a pathway to cultural, economic and political pre-eminence.⁶ Peterson argues that lax Liberated African Department monitoring and ineffectual intervention – effectively, an 'administrative void' – created the opportunity for the liberated African population as a whole to lead a more or less autonomous existence.⁷ Yet a consideration of the experiences of the apprentices – adults and children – is curiously absent from Peterson's narrative. Apprenticeship was a policy with a multiplicity of outcomes, of which the 'empowered' new Krio elite was by no means the only one. As has been noted by more recent scholars, liberation in Sierra Leone was a comparatively uncontested process, and therefore the experiences of liberated Africans brought to Sierra Leone differed substantially from many other sites of 'liberation' such as the West Indies and Cape Colony, predominantly because effective resistance on the part of the liberated Africans disrupted British abolitionist visions of populating the colony of Sierra Leone with a 'civilised' and quiescent workforce of grateful, Christianised anti-slavery converts.⁸ This article will argue for caution in assuming too universal or monolithic a 'liberated African experience' of, or opportunity for, such effective resistance. Rather, it will argue that the sustained policy of apprenticeship provoked an unequal spectrum of experiences and outcomes, and should be interpreted

as an important factor in the extreme social hierarchy that developed within Freetown society.⁹ This article seeks to outline how contemporaries perceived, imagined and represented apprentice experiences – from bonds of foster-kinship to isolation, abuse and trafficking.

While ‘liberation’ in Sierra Leone was a comparatively uncontested process, nonetheless, the experiences of Sierra Leone’s apprentices should be regarded within the wide landscape of other apprenticeship structures, including those of the Caribbean, Cape Colony, Cuba, Loanda and Brazil.¹⁰ Therefore, this article seeks to locate the concerns of Jeffcott and his near-contemporaries within the broader picture of imperial concern regarding the treatment of liberated Africans across the Atlantic world, and in particular, the post-1818 surge in demand for detailed empirical knowledge evaluating the effectiveness of humanitarian governance, as explored in recent work by Zoe Laidlaw, and Alan Lester and Fae Dussart.¹¹ Using a variety of contemporary accounts of apprenticeship in Sierra Leone, this article will explore some of the themes and anxieties that can be discerned, and consider why in the context of quite sustained opprobrium, apprenticeship persisted in practice for 40 years, and to what extent this reflects a deep moral compromise inherent in the entire intervention and a defining characteristic of the form of governance that evolved as a result.

The policy of apprenticeship

Under section VII of the 1807 Abolition Act – made operational in March 1808 by two further Orders in Council – the human cargoes of slave ships condemned by British Vice-Admiralty Courts were designated forfeit to the Crown and were liable to ‘disposal’ through enlistment in the army or navy, or if this was not possible, through apprenticeship to ‘reputable’ private individuals.¹² From 1817 to 1862, Britain expanded the reach of its abolition legislation through a series of bilateral treaties with other powers, under which liberated Africans were to be ‘be employed as Servants or free Labourers’ in the territory in which the case was tried.¹³ Although William Wilberforce later suggested that the abolitionists had by ‘overruling necessity’ been forced into ‘acquiescing’ to apprenticeship as a disposal pathway for liberated Africans, in fact the idea was specifically proposed by influential abolitionists, based on a belief that both colonial society and individual liberated slaves would benefit from a labour economy

structured around defined periods of unfree labour.¹⁴ Zachary Macaulay, for example, had ‘always been of the opinion that [...] the most likely means of promoting civilisation in [Sierra Leone] would be by indenting the natives’. He had ‘always looked forward to the event of the Abolition, as removing many objections to that system’.¹⁵ As Padraic Scanlan has argued, the design of a disposal plan for liberated Africans cannot be divorced from the design of the prize money system, an incentive structure aimed at securing the highest possible number of slave ship captures and extracting maximum value from the assets seized – material and human alike.¹⁶

The unsuitability of apprenticeship and enlistment as the only disposal options became quickly apparent, and practice on the ground in Sierra Leone had to evolve to meet the basic human needs of the large numbers of liberated African arrivals. While prize money was at the front and centre of the intervention in its first decade, an unanticipated consequence of its success was the need to build a regularised administration to support the survivors. A special governmental department was founded, first called the Captured Negro Department and later renamed the Liberated African Department.¹⁷ Always an afterthought of abolition, this Department outlived the vigorous profiteering of the wartime prize money boom and, as the suppression campaign changed in character, so too did its practices. Disposal evolved beyond apprenticeship and enlistment to also include arranged marriage, schooling, hospitalisation, resettlement in purpose-built villages, and employment on the public works.

In a significant divergence from policy and practice in the West Indies and elsewhere, by the mid-1820s, ‘apprenticeship’ in Sierra Leone had come to apply specifically to unaccompanied liberated African children. The report of Commissioners Rowan and Wellington indicates that by 1827, the term ‘apprentice’ had come to mean something more akin to ‘involuntary child domestic labourer’. The commissioners found that the majority of apprentices were children under the age of 14, male and female, serving periods of indenture between three and nine years. Most were working as domestics in Freetown. The census of 1833 suggests that of the 20,420 liberated Africans living in the area around Freetown, 7,749 were children and 2,525 were apprentices.¹⁸

In theory, all individual liberated African apprenticeships were to operate on the basis of an indenture document, a contract that was in many respects indicative of the manner in which the entire process and its power relationships were conceived. Executed between government and master without reference to the apprentice, the indenture was endowed with the same legal force ‘as if’ it had been voluntarily entered into by the latter.¹⁹ In exchange, each master or mistress undertook a positive legal obligation to treat the apprentice ‘humanely’ or ‘with humanity’, to provide for basic needs, and to refrain from meting out excessive punishment.²⁰ In practice, however, throughout the period 1808-1848, apprentices were frequently given out without indentures and with little oversight. Rowan and Wellington found that of the 456 liberated Africans recorded to be apprenticed in the colony, only 36 indenture documents were available for inspection.²¹ There is no evidence of any sustained process on the part of successive administrations to muster apprentices and monitor their health and wellbeing. Furthermore, although a comprehensive study remains to be done on all activities of the Vice-Admiralty Court throughout its lifetime – and it is certainly to be hoped that such a study will soon be undertaken – it would appear that Jeffcott’s cases represent rare examples of the court taking a proactive role in enforcing the rights of apprentices and the obligations of indenture-holders.

Treatment of apprentices: official perspectives

In the aftermath of the Bacchus and Harding murder trials, Jeffcott heard the first apprentice complaint at the Vice-Admiralty Court on 5 July 1831. It was the case of William, a liberated African boy apprenticed to an Englishman and a government employee – John Wade Miller, the Surgeon to the Court of Mixed Commission. In reporting the ‘sickening details’ to the governor, Jeffcott expressed ‘no ordinary feelings of pain and disgust’.²² Among the acts of violence described, the court heard how Miller flogged the child ‘over the back and loins’ with a rope, and then rubbed salt in the boy’s wounds. On three other occasions, he held William’s head in a chamber pot full of urine, and on another occasion, he forced into the child’s mouth a dirty sock covered with the secretions from Miller’s infected leg ulcer. One of Miller’s servants, Sybille, testified that he had seen the child flogged ‘many times’ in the past. The defence’s argument was simply that the boy was a thief who had been flogged appropriately, and that he had lied about the other forms of punishment. Chief Justice Jeffcott found in favour of William, ruling that Miller had ‘proved nothing to clear himself’ of the charges, and had inflicted

‘great damage and hurt’ on William. Miller was ordered to pay a fine of £50 and to be imprisoned until such fine be paid. The child’s indenture was cancelled and he was freed.²³

A second case was heard on the same day – that of “‘Quie,” alias Henry’, who accused his master, John O’Connor, and his master’s mother, Judith, of severe physical abuse.²⁴ Like the case of William above, the crux of Quie’s case appears to have been the extreme violence and the torture-like nature of the beatings, rather than the fact of being flogged, which, it was implied, was an acceptable disciplinary measure by an appropriate authority. Under questioning, the young boy explained that he ran away from his master’s house after being beaten. Upon being apprehended by a neighbour and returned to his master’s mother’s home, she and her son bound and flogged the boy ‘with the handle of a Country Hoe over the head and sides’ and a piece of rope. He was then hanged from a door for a time, before being put back out and tied to a tree for the night. He described how he untied himself using his teeth, and crawled away to hide under the piazza of a neighbour’s house, where he remained for two days before he was noticed.

William Fergusson, the West Indian doctor who would in later years become governor of the colony, stated that, at the governor’s request, he had gone ‘to examine a Boy reported as almost flogged to death’.²⁵ He found the child almost unable to open his eyes, and covered in bruises ‘of so severe a nature that he considered [his] life in very great danger’. Several days later, and with the dirt cleaned from his body, Fergusson examined him again, and found his injuries even worse than he had previously thought. He observed marks of ropes round the wrists, ‘double marks, as if the rope had been passed round the wrists twice’. Fergusson dismissed the defence’s argument that the boy’s injuries had come about through an accidental fall. ‘No falling on hoops, slates or sticks could have done the injury to the eyes’, nor could he ‘conceive that a Boy falling from a height of 12 Feet could have marks of Cords’. Rather, ‘such a stick as that produced [as evidence before the court] might have killed the Boy’. He professed that for the first few days, he had had ‘serious doubts’ of the child’s surviving.

Similar to John Wade Miller’s defence in William’s case, the O’Connors claimed that they had flogged Quie because he was a thief. Their neighbour, Thomas Craig, contradicted this assertion, but Thomas Cole, Assistant Superintendent of the Liberated

African Department, supported it. The boy had been brought in for punishment on two occasions: ‘once for running away and the second time for stealing a Bottle and some eggs. He was flogged slightly both times’.²⁶ Quie had previously been accused of stealing pork from the barracks, and that on that occasion, Connor was fined ‘for his neglect in allowing his Apprentice to go about the Town as he liked’. Jeffcott found in favour of the child. He ordered that John O’Connor pay a fine of £10 and be imprisoned until the fine was paid. Judith O’Connor was fined half that amount. Quie’s indenture was cancelled and he was freed.

The sorts of violent, abusive acts of degradation described above appear repeatedly in the writings of colonial administrators, European travellers, missionaries and metropolitan critics of the colony of Sierra Leone. As early as 1808, Governor Thompson reported to Lord Castlereagh the case of an eight year-old girl who bore burn marks on her back and other evidence of abuse by her European master who, when challenged, claimed that he had ‘a right to do as he pleases with his own’ and insisted that the girl belonged to him because he had paid money to ‘redeem’ her.²⁷ *The African Herald* reported in July 1809 that a Nova Scotian woman, Susannah Caulker ‘did beat and evil entreat’ and perpetrate ‘other enormous things’ upon her 12 year-old apprentice girl, including a sexual assault using a mixture of salt and pepper intended to increase the child’s suffering.²⁸ In another case, reported in 1834, it was found that an apprentice girl had lost an eye through the physical violence of her master.²⁹ The surviving letterbooks of the Liberated African Department in the Public Archives of Sierra Leone are peppered with such references.³⁰

In 1826, Secretary of State Lord Bathurst expressed his view that the practice of apprenticeship had already evolved into an interminable state of ‘forced servitude’, calculated to breed frustration and discontent, and a sense amongst the apprentices and the population generally that ‘the Captured Negroes are not free, and independent [...], as the other colonists are’.³¹ The following year, when the explorer Dixon Denham joined the colonial administration as Chief Superintendent of the Liberated African Department, he called the conditions of child apprenticeship ‘a servitude not a jot better than slavery itself’.³² He deplored the poorly conceived retrenchment strategy of Governor Sir Neil Campbell to close the liberated African schools and have the liberated African children distributed as apprentices. Although Denham succeeded in having this

partially reversed, he reflected the following year on the widespread ‘demoralization which had taken place amongst the younger branches of the Liberated Africans’ in the intervening time.³³ It had proved difficult to locate all the children who had been apprenticed and to enforce on their new masters an obligation to send them to school.³⁴ The elder girls, he noted, had left their adopted parents ‘from ill treatment or neglect’ and were ‘now living in a state of prostitution in Freetown, generally with the soldiers’.³⁵

A decade later, Governor Henry Dundas Campbell wrote to Lord Glenelg at the Colonial Office, complaining that the apprenticeship system was

nothing more than Slavery of the worst description. Any person who wanted an apprentice had one by paying 10s. In many cases, the parties receiving the unfortunate children had been but a short time in the Colony themselves.³⁶

He observed that, ‘strange as it may appear to your lordship’, the inhabitants of Freetown who had once been held in slavery themselves were by no means guided by humanitarian, abolitionist feelings.³⁷ Campbell believed that the colonists looked upon the apprentice children ‘in no other light than as Slaves. If you ask one of them, where did you obtain that Apprentice, the answer invariably is, I buy him in King [sic] Yard’.³⁸ As soon as newly liberated Africans were located on their plot of land, Campbell claimed, ‘it is their first object to procure an apprentice who is obliged to do all the hard work or druggery [sic] for his Master; the girls are brought up much in the same way, those in Freetown too generally to prostitution, their Mistresses living by their infamy’.³⁹ Campbell emphasised the social gulf that was growing between young people in the colony, since apprentice children were ‘obliged to do all the menial work’ while ‘the Colony born children [...] being brought up at home in idleness’ looked ‘with the most sovereign contempt on the poor Apprentices’. It would, he claimed, ‘make your heart bleed to see the ill treatment some of these poor creatures receive[d]’ and the Department could do little to affect this; ‘after the child was gone’ from the King’s Yard, he said, ‘you lost sight of it’.⁴⁰

Campbell’s comments attribute responsibility to the colonial government via the Liberated African Department not only for individual experiences and outcomes of apprenticeship, but for the impact the policy had in terms of longer-term social stratification. These anxieties were echoed six years later by William Fergusson – then governor of the colony. The continuing ‘importation’ of liberated Africans and

distribution of apprentices within Sierra Leone was, he argued, ‘a moral millstone round the necks of its people. By placing easily within their reach the means of obtaining gratuitous labour, idleness is engendered [...] as, at length, to become an inveterate habit’.⁴¹ As a result, many of the free-born children of the colony were reaching adulthood ‘not only unaccustomed to labour, but disinclined to it, and actually incapable of working’.⁴² The historian A.B.C. Sibthorpe later regarded the colony’s reliance on apprentice child labour as the ‘beginning of ruin’ to the part of the settled population known as the Nova Scotians.⁴³

European observers’ perspectives

The immediate consequence of Jeffcott’s investigations in 1831 was that apprentice children began to come forward in increasing numbers to lodge official complaints. In May 1833, Governor Findlay reported to the Secretary of State that ‘scarcely a day passes but there occurs from twenty to thirty complaints’. The administration was overwhelmed, and, according to Findlay, the result was that ‘the apprentice generally elopes and frequently falls into the hands of kidnappers who infest the colony’.⁴⁴ Yet Findlay suspected that most of these ‘ungovernable [...] apprentices’ were lying in order to gain their freedom: for example, by selling the clothing their masters had given them and then claiming they had been deprived.⁴⁵

The majority of European observers did not support Findlay’s dismissive opinion of the legitimacy of apprentice complaints. Virtually from its inception in 1808 to its abolition in 1848, the policy of apprenticeship was subjected to sustained criticism in the writings of European residents, travellers and missionaries alike – criticisms that were echoed in metropolitan Britain. In 1816, *The British Critic* reported that apprenticeship ‘as it is termed’ was ‘in reality, a state very little removed from actual slavery’. Comparing ‘the condition of an apprentice in England and Sierra Leone’, the publication found that ‘no two conditions can be more opposite’.⁴⁶ Twenty years later, F. Harrison Rankin, former Liberated African Department employee and author of *The White Man’s Grave*, echoed this evaluation in his widely read travel narrative. ‘Any resident in the colony’, he claimed,

of any colour, may enter the King’s Yard, select a boy or girl, and thereupon tie a string or piece of tape round the neck as a mark of appropriation. He then pays ten shillings; and the passive child becomes his property, under the name of

apprentice, for three years. So little discrimination is exercised with respect to the purchaser, that *domestic* servants are in the habit of buying them, and of employing them in the heavier drudgery of house-work.⁴⁷

‘The whites call the child so purchased from the King’s Yard an apprentice’, claimed Rankin, ‘the blacks uniformly term it a *slave*’. He stated that he could not ‘conceive a system better adapted to favour the slave-trade than that of apprenticeship at Sierra Leone’. Rankin felt that the administration ‘outraged humanity’ by tolerating the ‘prolonged tortures’ inflicted on apprentices by their ‘daadies and maamies, as they are called’.⁴⁸ So long as a master could hold a child ‘without at any time being called upon to account for the child, or ever to produce him’, claimed Rankin, so long would ‘many be induced to transfer their young wards for five pounds each to the Mandingo [slave]merchant’.⁴⁹

Two European writers professed a more mixed view of apprenticeship – both English women of elevated social status. Like Rankin, they were writing for publication in metropolitan Britain. ‘Mary Church’ – believed to be Catherine Temple, daughter of Lieutenant-Governor Octavius Temple – claimed that apprentice children were in high demand because ‘the Liberated Africans seem to think a servant almost necessary. I suppose this habit arises from slavery being so prevalent even amongst themselves, in their native country’.⁵⁰ ‘Church’ remarked that ‘these poor children’ required all the ‘vigilant care and protection from the Government which is afforded them’, although she later implied that such protection was indeed provided. Of ‘the only apprentice I have personally known’, she wrote, ‘I was much pleased with her attachment to her mistress’, a liberated African woman for whom the girl worked. ‘She [the apprentice girl] told me that, “her mammy was good too much,” and that when her apprenticeship was over she should like to live with her’.⁵¹ ‘Church’ also mentioned witnessing ‘the marriage of an apprentice from her master’s house’ during a visit to Wellington village in 1833 or 1834, which she implies was a happy event.⁵²

In the writings of another resident, Elizabeth Melville, wife of the King’s Advocate and Registrar of the Vice-Admiralty Court, later acting lieutenant-governor of the colony, Michael Melville, there is an even stronger distinction between the positive personal anecdotal and the more negative general account of apprenticeship. From 1841, Melville held a succession of liberated African apprentices as domestic servants, yet she

disapproved of children being sent to live with the black inhabitants of the colony.⁵³ Her criticisms rested on three grounds – that apprenticeship ‘to the rudest and most ignorant of their country people’ deprived the children of the opportunity to absorb European habits of ‘civilized life’; that the children were exposed to being abused as domestic slaves; and that the effect of handing out free domestic labour was to stunt the industry of the colony-born children of the older liberated Africans and settlers.⁵⁴ By comparison, in describing her own labours to teach her apprentices reading, writing and needlework, she couched her role as apprentice mistress in terms of a broader imperialist narrative of African ‘improvement’. Melville described the sorrow of her apprentice girl, Fanyah, upon hearing of her mistress’ intention to leave the colony, and the girl’s indignation at being sent to work “‘for black woman’”, and how to mitigate this, Melville ordered two Dutch dolls from England as a gift, along with some pieces of silk, calico and muslin for her patchwork, and some household items Fanyah was fond of: a small japanned candlestick and a tiny enamel saucepan.⁵⁵

A recurring theme in the accounts of the travel writers’ is a sense of suspicion that the baseline instinct of the colony’s settled, black population was to exploit, either through re-selling the apprentices to ‘the Mandingo merchant’, or through abuse as domestic slaves, and that the priority of governance, specifically through the Liberated African Department, ought to be to place a civilising check on such ugly inclinations.⁵⁶

Missionaries’ opinions

Missionary observers echoed the ‘travel’ writers’ observations in different ways. Thomas Coke, the founder of Methodist missions, wrote that in 1811 ‘there [was] scarcely a family throughout the settlement, however poor, that [had] not one of these apprentices, and some [had] as many as twenty’, although his commentary focused not on the actions of the apprentice masters, but on the ingratitude of their charges: that instead of ‘acknowledging the obligation’ to the British government and the colony’s people for freeing them from the ‘horrid grasp of their tyrants [...], some liberated Africans murmur[ed] at their condition, and [thought] themselves treated with cruelty’.⁵⁷

On the other hand, the CMS missionary Samuel Abraham Walker, reflected in 1847 on the great concern long felt by the missionaries for the apprentices: first, because of the ‘notorious’ inability of ‘the greater number’ of their masters and mistresses to fulfil

their contractual duties in relation to education; second, because of the physical vulnerability of the apprentice children, particularly the girls.⁵⁸ Walker quotes another missionary, Mr Young, who reported in June 1833 ‘the painful necessity’ of expelling five persons from communion, including one woman ‘for most cruelly treating her apprentice girl, seventeen years of age, with intent to force her to become the concubine of her own master’, and a second woman for a similar offence. The victim of the former, having endured ‘a most cruel beating’, escaped and was placed under the protection of a constable. Her case prompted other apprentice girls to come forward, supposedly having not known until then that ‘they [were] protected’. Young reported that he had of late undertaken to act on behalf of these individuals, for the masters and mistresses had up to then ‘had much of their own way in such deplorable acts’. ‘It is to be feared’, he continued, ‘that many of those poor apprentice girls fall a sacrifice to the lusts of those who ought to protect them’, and whose fall into vice and sin was not by choice, but ‘through bodily fear’.⁵⁹

Hannah Kilham, the Quaker missionary founder of the Charlotte school and pioneer of teaching children in the languages of the Mende and Yoruba, attributed her decision to open her school to the ‘know[ledge] that grievous neglect and abuses exist with regard to the apprenticing system’. ‘My heart was pained’, she reported, ‘at the thought that the girls [...] might have no resource, but to be put out as apprentices’.⁶⁰ It was true, she said, that there were ‘some persons who conscientiously [took] care of their apprentices’. Yet the Liberated African Department did not ensure this, or protect children against arbitrary acts of violence or abuse. Kilham regarded ‘this branch of the colonial government’ as operating a system that was dangerously close to ‘a perfect slave trade’.⁶¹ The department granted too many masters and mistresses a number of apprentices above what they were able to support, and then failed to enforce the terms of the indenture documents. She believed an unknown number of apprentices were ‘the helpless victims’ of physical and sexual abuse, or of re-enslavement, whose disappearances were explained with excuses such as “‘he went away and died in the bush’”.⁶² ‘In many, many cases’, she said, the victims of this ‘hard bondage’ were never ‘fully heard or attended to’.⁶³ For those who did make their voices heard, she said, ‘there [was] often great difficulty [in acting upon the complaints] from what [was] called insufficiency of evidence’.⁶⁴ Kilham’s suggested remedy was simple: ‘an obligation laid on the masters to have the children instructed in the schools, and thus they would be

kept in view'.⁶⁵ Furthermore, she wished to see regular 'reviews'. Kilham's frustration at the social marginality of the substantial apprentices population is striking. 'If there are in this colony four thousand five hundred apprentices', she wrote, 'surely their welfare and improvement is an object of importance'.⁶⁶

Nova Scotian, Maroon and Liberated African perspectives

No detailed first-hand accounts appear to have survived of Nova Scotian, Maroon or settled liberated African colonists' perspectives on acting as apprentice-holders. Even Sibthorpe's history of Sierra Leone, written in the 1870s, says remarkably little on the subject of apprenticeship, other than to criticise – as noted above – the reliance of more established settlers on the labour of the apprentices.⁶⁷ It is worth noting that, as John Clarkson documented and as James Walker's *The Black Loyalists* explores, prior to emigrating to Sierra Leone, the Nova Scotian settler population had been vulnerable to illegal, highly abusive and slave-like indenture conditions.⁶⁸ If it is true that some patterns of apprentice abuse did occur in Sierra Leone, and, as seems likely, the accounts of Europeans reflect more than anxious imperialist fantasies, it is interesting to reflect upon how prior experience might have shaped the various cultures of ownership and power that developed within the Nova Scotian community, transformed as it was from a position of total subordination to – for a time – one of absolute authority.

Regrettably, there do not appear to exist any first-hand accounts written by liberated African apprentices either while indentured or afterwards. Those few accounts of former slaves, such as that of Samuel Ajayi Crowther, tend to skim over their initial acculturation years in the colony, saying little of the experience.⁶⁹ And although as mentioned above, Governor Findlay referred in 1833 to the Liberated African Department receiving 'twenty to thirty' complaints daily, it does not appear that these cases were investigated or documented in a rigorous fashion by either the Vice-Admiralty Court or the Liberated African Department. Unlike in Brazil, for example, where a large body of petitions of emancipation detailing the recaptives' lives and opinions about their condition were filed in the 1850s and 1860s, at the termination of their service, Sierra Leone's apprentices appear to have been freed without formal procedure.⁷⁰ Nor did the various commissions of investigation into the state of Sierra Leone in the 1820s, 30s and 40s ever question the liberated African apprentices in the kind of systematic fashion done in Tortola, Antigua and the Bahamas, where, as Anita Rupprecht, Roseanne

Adderley and others have explored, the Royal Commission documented rich – albeit heavily mediated – accounts of the conditions of their apprenticeships.⁷¹

As we have seen, most European observers in Sierra Leone documented overwhelmingly negative views of the experiences of liberated African apprentices. However, there were some positive accounts. In the mid-1820s, Commissioners Rowan and Wellington interviewed ‘those residents who had most improved their condition’, a total of 35 liberated Africans and disbanded soldiers who had settled in Freetown and the surrounding villages.⁷² These brief depositions – given by men who had been personally selected, it must be remembered – are not direct accounts of their apprenticeship experiences, but do indicate that some masters fulfilled their obligations to teach their apprentices trade skills and, at the termination of their contracts, the government provided some former apprentices with parcels of land for their own cultivation. Richard Garrett of Freetown, for example, was bound apprentice to a mason called Robert Garrett from 1815 to 1821, and was fed and clothed by his master during this time. At the expiration of his apprenticeship, ‘he worked at his trade on his own account’, and built his a house with a stone cellar ‘on a lot of land given him by the King’.⁷³ In a similar case, Thomas Brown of Freetown was bound apprentice to a mason (also called Thomas Brown) for three years, from whom he learned his trade and, like Garrett, presumably gained his ‘family’ name. He was then granted a lot of land in Liverpool Street, where he built a house and now lived with his wife and three children. He had recently also established a public house.⁷⁴

Several of the men interviewed had been apprenticed to the government rather than to private individuals. Sendawa of Kissy, for example, laboured on the public works for three years and now had his own cassava and rice farm, the surplus of which he sold to his country people in the village and supplied to the Liberated African Department. Samuel Williams of Freetown was apprenticed to the Engineer Department for nine years, the first two of which he spent as a servant in the house of the master mason, and the other seven of which he spent learning the trade of masonry, in which he was now employed on a contractual basis to both government and private individuals. He received a town lot from government seven years previously and had built his own house on it.⁷⁵

Several of the deponents by then held apprentices of their own. Malicow, a sawyer from Hastings village, stated that he had an apprentice boy who had of late become his business partner and ‘shares his profit’.⁷⁶ George Sawyer of Wellington village, had two ‘country lads’ who had he had been feeding since 1824 and would ‘continue to do so until May when he will assist in building their own houses’. John Taylor of Kissy had one apprentice boy who worked with him on his three small farms.⁷⁷

All of the above sources relate to male apprentices. E. Francis White describes a rare documented example of a liberated African woman who rose from apprenticeship status to prominence: Elizabeth Coles, who was apprenticed to the Carrol family of Waterloo as a child. At the termination of her apprenticeship, Coles became housekeeper to Syble Boyle, a leading Aku merchant. With Boyle’s support, she entered into a partnership with Cornelius Crowther, another wealthy merchant, and became provisioner to the garrison and to naval ships. Eventually she bought the Carrol farm where she had served as an apprentice.⁷⁸

It is interesting to note that several of these deponents retained the family name of the people to whom they were indentured. This may be an indication of affection, or a more prosaic desire to remain associated with their host family for reasons of prestige or social integration.⁷⁹ Either way, it indicated an important connection. Taken together, these more positive examples offer at least some counterpoint to the idea that all liberated Africans apprenticed in Sierra Leone experienced lifelong mistreatment or exploitation as second-class citizens. However, in the absence of more such sources, it is difficult to reconstruct fuller pictures of the post-liberation trajectories of individual liberated Africans resettled in Sierra Leone, and to evaluate the relative prevalence of ‘success’ stories. We can only speculate about the lives lived and the relationships forged within a society where full literacy was limited and where day-to-day life was not generally the subject of record. Those few liberated Africans who did document autobiographical details during this period usually did so in the form of ‘liberation’ or ‘freedom narratives’, which are frustratingly silent on the initial process of resettlement and assimilation, instead prioritising narratives of their liberation from the slave ships and subsequent journeys of religious ‘enlightenment’.⁸⁰ We do not even have a clear picture of how many children were living under indenture contracts at any given time, or

the distribution of occupations under which they laboured, although it seems likely that the vast majority were domestic servants and agricultural labourers on small farms.⁸¹

Themes and anxieties in the writings of European observers

Taken together, some important themes can be discerned from the writings of the European commentators discussed above. One is the explicitly racialised representation of ‘civilisation’, where white members of colonial society were portrayed as agents of imperial ‘progress’. Several writers clearly construct being apprenticed to a black family as slave-like, compared to the ‘improving’ experience of apprenticeship to a white family. Excessive cruelty is also explicitly racialised: Assistant Superintendent Cole, in his testimony before Chief Justice Jeffcott in July 1831, remarked that the apprentice boy William’s case against John Wade Miller was not the first in which he had heard of a master using an irritant substance to exacerbate the pain inflicted. He had previously heard on several occasions of ‘the Black People rubbing pepper over their apprentices’ backs after flogging them’, although until the Miller case he had never heard of Europeans doing so.⁸² Indeed this action of rubbing cayenne pepper in the eyes, genitalia or open wounds of a victim has cropped up in other contexts, represented as a traditional African method of weeding out and punishing suspected witches.⁸³ It was also infamous as a punishment by slave owners in the West Indies slave plantations.⁸⁴

Another theme in these writings is an emphasis on the premature sexualisation, sexual exploitation and abuse of young female apprentices, and fears that some were subjected to extreme, even sadistic, sexually violent punishments.⁸⁵ Coerced prostitution is mentioned frequently.⁸⁶ As Barbara Bush, Ann Laura Stoler and others have noted, an emphasis on female vulnerability to the supposedly natural brutality of non-white men was a representative trope frequently repeated in the writings of contemporary Europeans, and in recent times has been subjected to a thorough postcolonialist critique.⁸⁷ One of the earliest published critics of liberated African policy, the judge Robert Thorpe, argued that the colonial government of Sierra Leone had a duty to protect women from such brutality. Responding to an African Institution pamphlet that claimed ‘some of the [liberated African] females’ engaged in immoral conduct – a lapse that the authors claimed would ‘not surprise any one at all conversant with human nature, and especially as it exists in Africa’ – Thorpe launched a blistering attack on the failure of government and worse, its active exploitation of vulnerable women and girls.⁸⁸

He rejected the assertion that these women had engaged voluntarily in sexual activity, arguing that ‘chastity is as carefully preserved in Africa as in Europe’, and was ‘scrupulously attended to’ by African women. The women, he argued, had been

debauched where they ought to have been protected, culpably neglected where they ought to have been instructed, and, on their first landing in the Colony, thrown in to a Barrack where there was a promiscuous intercourse between the sexes day and night!!⁸⁹

Thorpe also suggested that both the governor and the chief superintendent of liberated Africans had been in the habit of forcing liberated African girls into having cohabiting, sexual relationships with them.⁹⁰

Underlying these representations lay a long-running anxiety triggered by the unusual gender imbalance in the city of Freetown and its surrounding villages. Observers recognised that women were always in strong demand: some village managers even sent an escort down to the King’s Yard to collect newly arrived women, lest they be ‘carried off’ on the way to their new homes.⁹¹ European observers expressed on the one hand a paternalistic desire to protect women and girls from being pounced upon, while on the other hand they expressed fear and disgust of overt female sexuality and the exercise of female agency unrestrained by male influence. The need was constantly reasserted to keep the sexes in virtuous seclusion until Christian marriage. For critics and supporters of the colony alike, the inability of the colonial government and missionary organisations to enforce and normalise Christian marriage rites was considered a significant indicator of the failure of liberated African policy and the European civilising mission generally.⁹²

A third running theme to highlight in the writings of contemporaries was the idea that apprentices were routinely forced into illicit activities for their masters’ and mistresses’ financial gain.⁹³ Alongside prostitution, it was claimed that burglary and petty theft were substantial sources of income for some families. In October 1836 Governor Campbell wrote to the Secretary of State, relaying details of cases before the courts, including that of two apprentice boys – one a liberated African and the other a child who had been sent to the colony from the hinterland – who both claimed that they had been driven by hunger to steal a turkey.⁹⁴ Campbell felt that apprentice masters and mistresses were in fact often the instigators of thefts for which young apprentices were apprehended. In a similar vein, Elizabeth Melville lamented the plight of apprentices

‘sent out’ on thieving missions ‘by a hard negro task-master’.⁹⁵ She was convinced of the dishonest inclinations of the black population, and the role of the white colonists in providing moral direction for apprentices. She expressed her frustration that ‘the little Liberated children [...] whom you try to train up in some sort of pious and moral habits, are coaxed and bribed’ by others to steal household items such as ‘tea, sugar, biscuit, butter, needles, pins, thread; in short, any little thing that falls in their way’.⁹⁶ She described how her own former servants, ‘the best educated and well-conducted’, had gone on to ‘tamper [...] with the younger members of the establishment, and it is constantly done with those apprenticed out to the more wealthy classes of the blacks’. Melville felt that apprentices risked social exclusion by remaining loyal to their white apprentice-holders:

If the young creatures remain faithful and honest [...] then they are told, “Ah! berry well! – soon your massa and missis can go England and leff you here, den you catch hungry too much, but ’pose you can go beg from black man, dem no gib you nothing, could you like white people better past we”.⁹⁷

One further theme to highlight in these writings is the idea that the Liberated African Department was either incompetent or indifferent to its duty to police the regulations surrounding apprenticeship, and that its negligence and absence of compassion had a profoundly isolating impact on apprentices. In *The White Man’s Grave*, Rankin narrated a poignant story of the separation of two little children, Calabar and Fayenawon, whose close friendship in the King’s Yard was torn apart by their distribution as apprentices, never to see each other again.⁹⁸ Hannah Kilham reported the story of Ninga, one of her schoolgirls, whose elder sister she knew to be in the colony but because she had ‘probably [been] put out as an apprentice’, there was no way of finding her.⁹⁹ Elizabeth Melville related a conversation with an elderly Settler nurse, who advised her that it was no use hiring a colony-born person as a domestic servant, for they had “no love for work, all lazy too much; but King-yard child good for work”.¹⁰⁰ In the nurse’s opinion, recently liberated children were a much better investment because, without anyone else to take care of them, they were ‘apt to get attached to the family to whom they were apprenticed’ and ‘become faithful and willing servants’. By contrast, ‘no dependence’ could be placed on ‘those who had parents and friends in the colony’, because ‘they generally turned out dishonest and unworthy of trust’.¹⁰¹

From Chief Justice Jeffcott's transcript of William's case in 1831, it is clear that the boy initially approached the Liberated African Department complaining of ill-treatment, but Assistant-Superintendent Cole's response was to send him home and inform his master of the complaint. Both the testimonies of Cole and the overseer, Oyoo, indicate that whipping of apprentice children took place at the Liberated African Yard as a matter of standard discipline. Oyoo testified that he was the overseer to whom apprentices were given to be flogged. He produced for the court 'the Cat which he uses on such occasion', and explained that 'to such a Boy as William he would only give a dozen lashes with 3 or 4 tails of the Cat. The flogging [was] inflicted lightly, he never cut children "too much"'.¹⁰² Thomas Cole also testified in the Quie case that 'in every instance where Liberated African Apprentices are brought up for trifling delinquencies he has had them flogged' but that 'as they are numerous he does not keep a record of them'.¹⁰³ By contrast with the apparently rare role of presenting apprentices' cases to the courts, the Department had a regular role in punishing apprentices, often at the request of their masters and mistresses.

Thus the Department played a dual role in the isolation of apprentices: passively, in apparently never implementing an effective system of checks nor fully investigating allegations of abuse, and more actively in positioning the apprentice-holder in clear priority over the apprentice. Both William's and Quie's testimonies make it clear that the boys each knew the acts perpetrated against them to be abnormally cruel and that they knew to whom they could be reported, yet as Thomas Cole's behaviour in William's case demonstrates, the departmental superintendent did not always act to investigate allegations fully. By contrast, the testimonies of both Cole and the overseer, Oyoo, make clear the systematized regularity with which liberated African children were brought to the Liberated African Department to be flogged for minor offences.

The intense personal isolation evident in the testimonies of William and Quie, as documented by Jeffcott, stand in sharp relief against the picture of societal empowerment presented by Peterson's *Province of Freedom*. Quie, in particular, was not protected by his neighbours; instead he was beaten and returned forcibly to the home of Judith O'Connor. Nor, after the final beating, did he run to friends to shelter him. Instead, he crawled under a piazza and hid there alone for two days until he was discovered. The neighbourhoods in which these boys lived were not environments of

sterile seclusion, yet it is evident from both cases that an apprentice child might have no one to turn to and no immediate means of escaping abusive treatment.

When apprenticeship of newly liberated Africans to private individuals was finally abolished by decree on 15 April 1848, it was not because of the long-standing moral objections to the policy and its impact on the welfare of liberated Africans. Rather, it was both a strategic decision in order to drive labour emigration to the West Indies, and a ‘moral’ concern of a different sort: as we have seen in the comments of Governor Fergusson and A.B.C. Sibthorpe above, officials and commentators perceived in the total control of masters over apprentices the creation of a two-tier society and the decay of work ethic in the ‘superior’ class.¹⁰⁴ This, Governor Fergusson described as ‘a moral millstone’, implying that the ready availability of apprentice labour was a curse that made ‘idleness’ an addiction amongst the established population, a kind of toxic atrophy, until the people forgot how to provide for themselves.¹⁰⁵ The choice of the word ‘millstone’ is interesting. It implies a dragging effect, a sinking effect, a prevention of ‘progress’, and it is to this decay or prevention of work ethic that the word ‘moral’ refers – not to the duty of care, or the supposedly endemic abuse to which Fergusson had himself borne witness in July 1831.

It is not clear whether indentures still being served were affected by the 1848 decree: the precise wording was that the governor ‘deem[ed] it his duty to abstain *in future*’ from supplying apprentice labour to the colony at large. Nor, it would appear, did the decree mean that the indentured labour of newly arrived liberated Africans to Europeans and affluent black colonists ceased. Pine explained in his accompanying dispatch to Lord Grey that he would ‘place [...] with the missionaries, and other persons of respectability’ ‘such of [the liberated African children] as refuse[d] to emigrate’, and that these apprentices would receive ‘proper instruction’ and ‘a fair amount of wages’.¹⁰⁶ ‘They [would] be distinctly told, that they [were] free to remain with, or leave their employers’.¹⁰⁷ Employment of boys as apprentices at trade – for example as apprentices on naval ships – also continued into the 1850s and beyond. Nevertheless, the decree marked the official end of a policy that had, for thousands of recently arrived children and adults, determined their initial experiences of the colony of Sierra Leone.

Conclusion

The policy of apprenticing liberated Africans to private individuals in the territories of liberation was conceived of and built into the 1807 Abolition Act for both ideological and practical reasons. ‘Freedom’, under this configuration, was a state that existed either prior to enslavement or following a gradual instructional period under British-led tutelage. While bound as an apprentice, a liberated African’s ‘freedom’ should be considered as merely an absence of legal ownership, not freedom to exercise true agency.¹⁰⁸ The stated rationale for the apprenticeship policy was that liberated Africans, as individuals who had experienced enslavement, needed to be ‘schooled’ to re-acquire their freedom.¹⁰⁹ A more prosaic function of the policy was the delegation of maintenance cost and supervisory responsibility. The outcome was a policy that reflected the moral ambiguity of its framers on the ethics of an intervention that ‘liberated’ by constraining individual freedom and extracting labour of marketable value.

Throughout the 40-year lifespan of the apprenticeship policy, its much-questioned morality challenged the basic identity of Sierra Leone as a bastion of post-slavery humanitarian governance, and provided an important focal point for the post-abolition anxieties, discernable from late 1810s onwards. Yet in spite of negative reports, and without any meaningful improvement in measures to protect apprentices, the system was sustained, in the belief that there was no cost-effective alternative system. To suggest, as Peterson does, that the liberated Africans of Sierra Leone enjoyed a shared ‘province of freedom’ is to imply that the absence of control of a functioning colonial overseer equated to the positive experience of ‘freedom’. Unfortunately, this simplification achieves the opposite of its intent, because it perpetuates a binary construction of the imperial power-subaltern relationship by simplifying the social hierarchy that built up within this particular colonial context. Peterson’s narrative suggests that when new arrivals escaped the clutches of colonial oversight, they were assisted by sympathetic, welcoming peers, and never exploited. The delineation between the role of the white colonial government and the black civilian population’s role in resettling and integrating liberated Africans is a very blunt one, and suggests that the strength or weakness of the colonial government to impose its agenda is the sole gauge by which individual experiences of freedom and liberation should be measured.

The power relationship within the apprenticeship system was not, for the majority of indentures, one of British colonial authority to recaptive individual; rather the master-apprentice relationship was a context facilitated by the colonial government for private individuals via the Liberated African Department, but not monitored by them in any meaningful way. Established families – those with sufficient resources to obtain an apprentice – were part of Peterson’s ‘province of freedom’; the friendless apprentice’s opportunity to exercise agency in his or her ‘liberation’ was rather more equivocal. The indenture contracts reflect this difference: it was only ever ‘as if’ the apprentice had entered into the contract voluntarily. Across 40 years of practice, of paper reforms and real efforts alike, this essential power relationship remained constant for the thousands of liberated Africans who passed through the King’s Yard and into the private homes of Sierra Leone’s residents.

That the final decision to close off the supply of apprentice labour to individuals was linked explicitly to the need to encourage emigration to the flagging West Indies and to address the moral ‘decay’ of the population’s work ethic, rather than a crystallising ideal of fundamental human rights, reflects most powerfully on the very qualified nature of nineteenth-century British humanitarianism. It reflects, even in the core ideology used to defend it, the compromises abolitionist humanitarians were prepared to make on a human level for more abstract moral, religious, economic and ‘civilising’ ideals. Its perseverance for 40 years demonstrates the ever-present tension between lofty aims and pecuniary restraints, and above all else, the primacy of group interests – defined in terms of progress – over those of the individual.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express her gratitude to the Trinity College Dublin, for supporting this research through the Ussher Research Fellowship and the Grace Lawless Lee travel fund, and to the then Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), now the Irish Research Council (IRC), through the Government of Ireland grant. Final work on this article was possible thanks to the Leverhulme Trust and the University of Leicester.

References

-
- ¹ The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA): CO 267/109, Jeffcott to Findlay, 11 Jul. 1831.
- ² *Ibid.*
- ³ See Christopher Saunders, 'Liberated Africans in Cape Colony in the first half of the nineteenth century', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18:2 (1985), pp. 227-229; Marina Carter, *The Last Slaves: liberated Africans in 19th century Mauritius* (Port Louis: Centre for Research on Indian Ocean Societies, 2003); TNA: CO 23/94/6, authenticated copy of the indenture of ten year-old Pompey Dala.
- ⁴ Jeffcott was removed from his appointment following a fatal duel. He went on to become the first judge of the Supreme Court of South Australia, but is perhaps better known for being one of the few British judges ever to appear in the dock charged with murder: R. M. Hague, 'Jeffcott, Sir John William (1796–1837)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jeffcott-sir-john-william-2271/text2913>, accessed online 7 November 2015.
- ⁵ R.R. Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire*, vol. 1. (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 110-12.
- ⁶ John Peterson, *Province of Freedom: A History of Sierra Leone, 1787-1870* (London: Faber, 1969); Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London, 1962; repr. Aldershot: Gregg Revivals 1993).
- ⁷ Peterson, *Province of Freedom*, p. 300.
- ⁸ Daniel Domingues da Silva, David Eltis, Philip Misevich and Olatunji Ojo, 'The Diaspora of Africans Liberated from Slave Ships in the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of African History* 55 (2014): 347-69.
- ⁹ See Bronwen Everill, *Abolition and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012); Nemata Blyden, "'We have the cause of Africa at Heart': West Indians and African-Americans in 19th century Freetown", Mac Dixon-Fyle and Gibril Cole (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Sierra Leone Krio* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006), pp. 91-105.
- ¹⁰ E.g. Roseanne M. Adderley, 'New Negroes from Africa': *Slave Trade Abolition and Free African Settlement in the Nineteenth-Century Caribbean* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 25-26; William A. Green, 'The West Indies and British West African policy in the nineteenth century: a corrective comment', *Journal of African History* 15:2 (1974): 247-59; *idem.*, 'Emancipation to Indenture: A Question of Imperial Morality', *Journal of British Studies* 22:2 (1983): 98-121; *idem.*, *British slave emancipation: the sugar colonies and the great experiment, 1830-1865* (Oxford, 1976); Anita Rupprecht, "'When he gets among his Countrymen, they tell him that he is free": Slave Trade Abolition, Indentured Africans and a Royal Commission', *Slavery & Abolition*, 33: 3 (2012): 435-55; Howard Johnson, 'The Liberated Africans in the Bahamas, 1811-1860', *Immigrants and Minorities* 7: 1 (1988): 16-40; Alvin O. Thompson, 'African "recaptives" under apprenticeship in the British West Indies, 1807-1828', *Immigrants & Minorities* 9:2 (1990): 123-44; Monica Schuler, 'Liberated Central Africans in Nineteenth-Century Guyana', Linda M. Heywood (ed.), *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Washington DC, 2001), pp. 319-52; Samuël Coghe, 'Apprenticeship and the Negotiation of Freedom: The Liberated Africans of the Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission In Luanda (1844-1870)', *Africana Studia* 14 (2010): 255-73; *idem.*, 'The Problem Of Freedom In A Mid-Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Slave Society: The Liberated Africans Of The Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission In Luanda (1844–1870)', *Slavery & Abolition* 33:3 (2012): 479-500; Beatriz Mamigonian, 'In the Name of Freedom: Slave Trade Abolition, the Law and the Brazilian Branch of the African Emigration Scheme (Brazil-British West Indies, 1830s – 1850s)', *Slavery and Abolition* 30:1 (2009): 41-66.
- ¹¹ Zoë Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections 1815-45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Alan Lester and Fae Dussart, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- ¹² Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1807, 47 Geo. III, c. 36 sess. I, Mar. 25 1807, *The Statutes of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland: 1807-1869* (London, 1807-1869); Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey*, pp. 112-13; Adderley, *New Negroes* pp. 25-26. See also Padraic Scanlan, 'The Rewards of Their Exertions: Prize Money and British Abolitionism in Sierra Leone, 1808-1823', *Past and Present* 225 (2014): 113-42. The contemporary term 'disposal', meaning the post-adjudication distribution of liberated Africans, captures the spirit of delegated responsibility with which disposal policy was first framed and with which disposal practices were often discharged. See Suzanne Schwarz, 'Reconstructing the life histories of liberated Africans: Sierra Leone in the early nineteenth century', *History in Africa*, Vol. 39 (2012): 187.
- ¹³ *Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, 5 George 4 1824* (London, 1824), p. 679, 690; 'Treaty between His Britannic Majesty and His Catholic Majesty', *British Parliamentary Papers BPP* 1818 (001)

XVIII.9, p. 11; L.M. Bethell, 'The Mixed Commissions for the Suppression of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African History* 7: 1 (1966), p. 79. See also Scanlan, 'Prize Money', p. 118.

¹⁴ Johnson, L.G. *General T. Perronet Thompson, 1783-1869: His Military, Literary and Political Campaigns* (London, 1957) in p. 51.

¹⁵ Hull History Centre, Papers of Thomas Perronet Thompson, TPT U DTH/1/2, Macaulay to Ludlam, 4 Nov. 1807, See also *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*, 1 Mar. 1805, vol. 3, c. 673; TNA: CO 23/58, Stephen to Liverpool, 14 July 1811; Kriegel, A.D., 'A Convergence of Ethics: Saints and Whigs in British Antislavery', *Journal of British Studies* 26:4 (1987), p. 441; See also Maeve Ryan, 'The human consequences of slave trade abolition: The Liberated African Department and the administration of liberated Africans at Sierra Leone, 1808-1863', (unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2014).

¹⁶ Scanlan, 'Prize Money'.

¹⁷ In 1822. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 138.

¹⁸ Public Archives of Sierra Leone (PASL), Liberated African Department Miscellaneous Return Book (LADMB) 1826-34, pp. 331-32; LADMB 1834-38, p. 165. See also da Silva et al, 'Diaspora of Africans'.

¹⁹ Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1807, 47 Geo. III, c. 36 sess. I, Mar. 25 1807, *The Statutes of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland: 1807-1869* (London, 1807-1869).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ 'Sierra Leone: Report of the commissioners of inquiry into the state of the colony of Sierra Leone, first part', (BPP) 1826-27 (312) VII.267, pp. 52-54. See also Sarah Biller (ed.), *Memoir of the late Hannah Kilbam* (London: Darton and Harvey 1837), p. 454.

²² TNA: CO 267/109, Jeffcott to Findlay, 11 Jul. 1831.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Michael J. Turner, 'The Limits of Abolition: Government, Saints and the "African Question", c.1780-1820', *The English Historical Review* 112: 446 (1997): 336; Schwarz, 'Reconstructing the life histories', pp. 202-03.

²⁸ *The African Herald*, (29 Jul. 1809).

²⁹ 'Return books', 10 Nov., 1834, quoted in Daniel Augustine Vonque Stephen, 'A History of the Settlement of Liberated Africans in the Colony of Sierra Leone During the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', (unpublished MA thesis, University of Durham, 1963), p. 31. See also Schwarz, 'Reconstructing the life histories', p. 202.

³⁰ PASL, Liberated African Department Letterbook (LADLB) 1827-28, Cole to Johnson, 12 Jul. 1828; Ibid., Cleugh to Johnson, 14 Apr. 1828.

³¹ Bathurst to K. Macaulay, 11 Jul. 1826, quoted in Stephen, 'A History of the Settlement of Liberated Africans', p. 30.

³² TNA: CO 323/148, Denham to Hay, 20 Sep. 1827.

³³ PASL, LADLB 1827-28, Denham to Hay, 27 Aug. 1827; TNA: CO 267/83, Denham to Hay, 4 Jul. 1827. See also TNA: CO 323/148, Denham instructions to managers, 25 Mar. 1827; quoted in *The Missionary Register for MDCCCXXVIII* (London: Seeley, 1828), pp. 16-17.

³⁴ TNA: CO 267/83, Denham to Hay, 4 Jul. 1827; PASL, LADLB 1827-28, Denham to Hay, 27 Aug. 1827.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid. Henry Dundas Campbell to Glenelg, 5 Sep. 1836.

³⁷ TNA: CO 267/133, Dundas Campbell to Glenelg, 8 Aug. 1836.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ TNA: CO 267/175, Fergusson to Stanley, 30 Jan., 1842, quoted in Robert W. July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2004), p. 136.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ A.B.C Sibthorpe, *The History of Sierra Leone*, 4th edn. (London: Routledge, 1970), p. 28.

⁴⁴ Findlay to Goderich, 15 May 1833, quoted in Stephen, 'A History of the Settlement of Liberated Africans', p. 31.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 31, 33.

⁴⁶ *The British Critic for 1816*, vol. V (April, 1816), p. 366.

- ⁴⁷ Rankin, *The White Man's Grave*, vol. 2, pp. 108-09. See also Andrea Downing, 'Contested Freedoms: British Images of Sierra Leone, 1780-1850', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Liverpool, 1998); Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* p. 264.
- ⁴⁸ Rankin, *The White Man's Grave*, vol. 2, pp. 109-10.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.92. Emphasis in original.
- ⁵⁰ Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 264.
- ⁵¹ A Young Lady/'Mary Church', *Sierra Leone; Or, the Liberated Africans* (London: Longman, 1835), pp. 31-32.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32, p. 36.
- ⁵³ [Elizabeth Melville], *A Residence at Sierra Leone, by a Lady* (London: John Murray, 1849), pp. 73-74.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 123-4, 126, 241, 252.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 310.
- ⁵⁶ 'Church', *Sierra Leone*, pp. 31-32; Downing, 'Contested Freedoms', p. 352.
- ⁵⁷ Thomas Coke, *An Interesting Narrative of a Mission, sent to Sierra Leone, in Africa, by the Methodists, in 1811* (London: printed for the author by Paris, 1812), pp. 39-40.
- ⁵⁸ The Reverend Samuel Walker, *The Church of England Mission in Sierra Leone* (London: Seeley, 1847), p. 302.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 328.
- ⁶⁰ Hannah Kilham, *Present State of the Colony of Sierra Leone* 2nd edn. (London: Darton and Harvey, 1832), p. 4.
- ⁶¹ Kilham, *Present State of the Colony*, p. 22.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 22.
- ⁶³ Biller, *Kilham Memoirs*, p. 419.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 420-21.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 454.
- ⁶⁷ See Christopher Fyfe, 'A.B.C. Sibthorpe: A Tribute', *History in Africa* 19 (1992): 327.
- ⁶⁸ James Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 50; A.P. Kup, 'John Clarkson and the Sierra Leone Company', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 5:2 (1972): 203- 220.
- ⁶⁹ See accounts reproduced in Philip Curtin (ed.), *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967).
- ⁷⁰ Mamigonian, 'In the Name of Freedom'.
- ⁷¹ E.g. Rupprecht, "When he gets among his Countrymen".
- ⁷² 'Sierra Leone: Report of the commissioners of inquiry', *BPP* 1826-7, part I, p. 32.
- ⁷³ TNA: CO 267/91, 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the State of Sierra Leone 1826-7', Appendix A 11, Deposition of Richard Garrett.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Deposition of Thomas Brown. See also, *ibid.*, Deposition of James Maggan of Kissy.
- ⁷⁵ See also *ibid.*, Depositions of Jem Joe, John Spencer, Matthew Mason and Robert Gray.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Deposition of Malicow.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, Deposition of John Taylor.
- ⁷⁸ E. Francis White, *Sierra Leone's Settler Women Traders: Women on the Afri-European Frontier* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), p. 33.
- ⁷⁹ See British Library (BL), Church Missionary Society Archives (CMS) CAI/059, Journal of Frederick Bulman, 09 Mar. 1842; J. Claudius May, *A Brief Sketch of the Life of the Reverend Joseph May* [Freetown: unknown, 1896]; Spitzer, *Lives in Between*, pp. 61-63.
- ⁸⁰ Such as Samuel Ajayi Crowther, Joseph Wright, Ali Eisami. If these writers were apprenticed on arrival in Freetown, they do not mention it: Curtin, *Africa Remembered*. See also Paul E. Lovejoy, "'Freedom Narratives" of Transatlantic Slavery', *Slavery & Abolition* 32:1 (2011): 91-107.
- ⁸¹ TNA: CO 267/91, 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the State of Sierra Leone 1826-7', Appendix A 4-9; 'Report from the Select Committee ... Part I', *BPP* 1842, evidence of William Hamilton, p. 272.
- ⁸² TNA: CO 267/109, Jeffcott to Findlay, 11 Jul. 1831. See also Rankin, *The White Man's Grave*, vol. 2, p. 109.
- ⁸³ Peterson, *Province of Freedom*, p. 203. 'Report from the Select Committee ... Part I', *BPP* 1842, evidence of Dundas Campbell, p. 553; *Proceedings of the general antislavery Convention called by the committee of the British and foreign antislavery society* (London: Ward, 1841), testimony of Dundas Campbell, p. 502; 'Report from the Select Committee ... Part I', *BPP* 1842, Appendix 4, Russell to Maclean, 14 Jul. 1841, pp. 139-40.
- ⁸⁴ Darius Rejali, *Torture and Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 233.
- ⁸⁵ 'Report from the Select Committee ... Part I', *BPP* 1842, evidence of R.R. Madden, p. 646; Walker, *The Church of England Mission*; TNA: CO 267/133, Dundas Campbell to Glenelg, 5 Sep. 1836.

-
- ⁸⁶ E.g. TNA: CO 267/133, Dundas Campbell to Glenelg, 5 Sep. 1836; 'Report from the Select Committee ... Part I', BPP 1842, Appendix 22, Prince Manna to Denman, 28 Nov. 1840, p. 458; and above.
- ⁸⁷ Barbara Bush, "'Daughters of injur'd Africk': African women and the transatlantic slave trade', *Women's History Review* 17:5 (2008): 673-698; Ann Laura Stoler, 'On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty', *Public Culture* 18:1 (2006): 132.
- ⁸⁸ African Institution, *Ninth Report of the Directors of the African Institution* (London: African Institution, 1815), p. 62; Robert Thorpe, *Postscript to the reply 'point by point': containing an exposure of the misrepresentation of the treatment of the captured negroes at Sierra Leone* (London, 1815), p. 29.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 29.
- ⁹¹ Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 138; BL CMS CAI/0126, Journal of Johnson 21 May 1821.
- ⁹² Downing, 'Contested Freedoms', pp. 37-41; PASL Colonial Secretary's Letter Book 1835-36, Cole to Jones, 11 Jun. 1836, quoted in part in Silke Strickrodt, 'African Girls' Samplers from Mission Schools in Sierra Leone, 1820s to 1840s', *History in Africa* 37 (2010): 203.
- ⁹³ Satirised by Thompson in his 'squib' of 11 Nov. 1808: *The African Herald*, 10 (11 Nov. 1808). See also P.E.H. Hair, 'Freetown Abused, 1809', *Durham University Journal* 28:3 (June 1967): 152-60.
- ⁹⁴ TNA: CO 267/133, Dundas Campbell to Glenelg, 6 Oct. 1836.
- ⁹⁵ Melville, *A Residence at Sierra Leone*, p. 126.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 270. See also p. 127.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ⁹⁸ Rankin, *The White Man's Grave*, vol. 2, pp. 130-133.
- ⁹⁹ Biller, *Kilham Memoirs*, p. 425.
- ¹⁰⁰ Melville, *A Residence at Sierra Leone*, p. 32.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² TNA: CO 267/109, Jeffcott to Findlay, 11 Jul. 1831.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid. See also 'Church', *Sierra Leone*, p. 31.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Hansard Commons Parliamentary Debates, 3rd series, 19 Mar. 1845, vol. 77, cc. 1173-203*; 'Report from the Select Committee ... Part I', BPP 1842, evidence of Findlay, Beecham, Macaulay, Hamilton, Campbell, Madden, Jones, Carr and Huntley; TNA: CO 879/1/29, 'Memorandum on the condition and method of disposal of captured Africans at Sierra Leone, by Sir George Barrow', 1847; TNA: CO 267/204, Pine to Grey, 26 Apr. 1848. See also Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 230 and Melville, *A Residence at Sierra Leone*, p. 124.
- ¹⁰⁵ TNA: CO 267/175, Fergusson to Stanley, 30 Jan., 1842, quoted in July, *Origins of Modern African Thought*, p. 136.
- ¹⁰⁶ TNA: CO 267/204, Pine to Grey, 26 Apr. 1848.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁸ Scanlan, 'Prize Money', p. 116.
- ¹⁰⁹ See Coghe, 'Apprenticeship and the Negotiation of Freedom', p. 262.