

“MORE AUSPICIOUS SHORES”: POST-EMANCIPATION BARBADIAN
EMIGRANTS IN PURSUIT OF FREEDOM, CITIZENSHIP, AND NATIONHOOD IN
LIBERIA, 1834 – 1912

By

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Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY

August, 2013

Nashville, Tennessee

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To all those who labored for my learning, especially my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to more people than there is space available for adequate acknowledgement. I would like to thank Vanderbilt University, the Albert Gordon Foundation, the Rotary International, and the Andrew Mellon Foundation for all of their support that facilitated the research and work necessary to complete this project. My appreciation also goes to my supervisor, Professor Richard Blackett for the time he spent in directing, guiding, reading, editing my work. At times, it tested his patience, sanity, and will to live. But he persevered. I thank him for his words of caution, advice and for being a role model through his research and scholarship. His generosity and kind spirit has not only shaped my academic pursuits but also my life outside the walls of the academy.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the members of my dissertation committee: Jane Landers, Moses Ochonu, and Jemima Pierre. They have provided advice and support above and beyond what was required of them. I am truly grateful not only for all their services rendered but also the kind words and warm smiles with which they have always greeted me. My sincere thank you also goes to the non-teaching staff at Vanderbilt University: Heidi Welch, Brenda Hummell, and Jane Anderson. I would also like to thank several archivists. Verlon Stone at the Liberia Collection at the University of Indiana, Bloomington as well those at the archives at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, The Barbados National Archives, the Barbados History and Museum Society, the Albert Porte Memorial Library in Liberia, the Philadelphia Library Company, and the libraries at the University of Liberia.

Sustained encouragement and moments of much needed laughter and joy came from my parents, family, friends, and an entertaining group of classmates. I thank them all for their moral support and for making this experience a very memorable one.

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INTRODUCTION

So much hope was wrapped up in the outcome of the 1841 Niger Expedition, a new wing of the abolitionist movement formed by Thomas Buxton, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), and the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade in England.¹ Their intention, to eradicate the slave trade once and for all. With agriculturalists, scientists, missionaries, and liberated slaves as interpreters, the expedition sought to promote free-produce cultivation as an alternative to slave trade-derived capital. This would facilitate the emergence of "legitimate commerce" as well as sow the seeds of civilization and Christianity among African natives. A few days after arriving in Africa, the chief medical officer of the expedition logged that "fever of a most malignant character" had broken out.² It had not only "paralyzed the whole expedition" but also added further fuel the view of Africa being the "white man's grave" and whites being unsuitable for missionary work there. Despite their failures on the Niger, however, abolitionists did not give up their platform. Instead, they turned their attention to liberated slaves, those Africans rescued from slave ships on the Atlantic, to be the new vehicles of civilization, Christianity, and commerce in Africa.

News of the events on the Niger crossed the Atlantic and quickly penetrated the Caribbean grapevine. In a February 17, 1841 letter to the editor of *The Liberal*, a Barbadian newspaper, a writer operating under the pen-name, *Africanus*, alerted Barbadians to "a rumor afloat of a scheme of the British people for the civilization of

¹ For more on the Niger Expedition see Howard Temperley, *White Dreams, Black Africa: The Antislavery Expedition to the River Niger 1841-1842* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

² See William Simpson, *A Private Journal Kept During the Niger Expedition from May, 1841, Until June, 1842* (London, 1843); Samuel Crowther, *Journal of an Expedition up the Niger and the Tshada in 1854* (London, 1855).

Africa.” With Buxton's Niger Expedition taking place within the growing civilizing spirit of the mid-nineteenth century, *Africanus* surmised that “[t]he energies of the British people, pent up for years, now seek an outlet in philanthropic acts.”³

Through the medium of his editorial, *Africanus* in his efforts to reveal British actions on the Niger, tacitly entered West Indians into a broader transatlantic dialogue about Africans worldwide. *Africanus*' effusive praise of British efforts created a means by which diasporic interests in global African affairs could be reflected. He summoned the image of a united diasporic as he mused: “How exalted ought to be the emotions of gratitude, in the breast of every descendant of Africa to the British nation that so disinterestedly, so humanely, extends the hands of succor to the sons of that despised land, with a view of raising them to a station among the civilized nations of the earth!”⁴ Though grateful for the British efforts and while their interests in Africa corresponded with empire's vision for the continent, West Indians like *Africanus* went further to consider notions of participation and leadership. To be sure, they considered themselves to be important stakeholders in ideas of slave trade abolition and African civilization. For whereas abolitionists saw instructing liberated Africans in missionary work as the best policy for African civilization, West Indians regarded themselves as central to any new campaign geared towards this end. Indeed, *Africanus* declared in his editorial: “It is necessary for the practical success of the scheme that the children of Africa in the colonies should lend their zealous cooperation in this gigantic undertaking.”⁵

³ *The Liberal*, February 17, 1841.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See Melanie J. Newton, *The Children of Africa in the Colonies: Free People of Color in Barbados in the Age of Emancipation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008).

West Indians like *Africanus* ascribed their significance to the African civilizing project to their historical connection to both Africa and Europe.⁶ Their positions at the crossroads of this socio-historical duality led them to believe they were especially valuable to the quest to recover Africa's past and unlocking its great, civilized, and modern destiny. Though Buxton and the British empire sought this outcome, it could not be brought about by whites. As *Africanus* pointed out, "there is nothing in the least unreasonable in the idea that in the far regions of the continent another China may be concealed from the vision of the great European nations who at present consider themselves the monopolisers of learning and science."⁷ To rally diaspora to the cause of recovering Africa's glorious past, *Africanus* invoked a notion of a globalized racial identity that transcended the local in the service of diasporic duty: "We are not borne down by the paltry considerations of locality. No! Wherever our species is found there we instinctively feel to be our home because with them we are identified. When we raise our voices in that cause, they awaken a responsive chord in the breast of the Negro in every part of the world."⁸ Despite his faith in West Indians' abilities, *Africanus*, like those of the Niger Expedition, fretted about the perils of African emigration. He shrugged off this concern and instead reasoned that "if some of us perish through the blissful influence of climate in our attempts to build for ourselves a temple of liberty, we will die with the consoling reflection that our race will reap the benefits of our martyrdom in their cause."⁹ *Africanus* presented martyrdom as a necessary fate for the diaspora by virtue of their

⁶ See Dirk Sinnewe, *Divided to the Vein?: Derek Walcott's Drama and the Formation of Cultural Identities* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001), 115.

⁷ *The Liberal*, February 17, 1841.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

diasporic duty for the cause of African redemption.

Beyond their interest in the British civilization campaign, Afro-Barbadians' interest in African emigration had been also driven by a series of post-emancipation woes. A number of unfavorable circumstances in Barbados had already pushed many emigrants to neighboring islands in search of higher wages, land, political rights, better living conditions, and other post-emancipation opportunities. Barbadians interested in African emigration, however, projected their anxieties about Caribbean post-emancipation into a messianic vision of Africa as religious, socio-economic, political Eden. *Africanus* put this question to the Barbadians: “If political equality is denied to us in that land which gave us birth by those in whom rests the power to bestow it – how are we to obtain it?”¹⁰ On the one hand, he suggested that Barbadians fight their way “as the braver spirits among us are doing—bringing all our moral energies to the good work.”¹¹ In another breath, however, he demanded that they seek it “on other and more auspicious shores, leaving behind the land of our birth — that land which is dear to our hearts, to be tilled by the tyrants who claim it as their own.”¹² The developments in post-emancipation revealed the shortcomings of British efforts of both sides of the Atlantic. In the process it outlined critical connections between West Indian freedom and African civilization.

The idea of civilizing Africa had thus provided Barbadians with a more “auspicious” and meaningful post-emancipation vision. In the process, it pushed Barbadians to consider broadening their post-emancipation horizons by way of a transatlantic route. On July 7, 1851, the editor *Baltimore Sun* captured British West

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

Indian migration interests in the views of a native who wondered: "Can we not endorse the words of the *British Review* and say '[t]he Americans are successfully planting free negroes on the coast of Africa; a greater event, probably in its consequences, than any that has occurred since Columbus set sail for the New World." According to the native, "West Indians will emigrate to Liberia. They will crowd your steamers. They will take with them intelligence, wealth, and a perfect knowledge at once of the agriculture of the country. They will clothe the hillside and the vale with fields upon fields of sugar cane, a plant indigenous to Africa, and where it grows most luxuriantly."¹³ As with *Africanus*, the editorial in the *Baltimore Sun* in pointing to "the various burdens and vexations still imposed upon the Africans in the West Indies," outlined the underlying relationship between the diaspora and Africa in the connections forged in the failed plans orchestrated by the British for West Indian post-emancipation and African civilization. It must have been this realization that led the West Indian native to confidently declare that "thousands of families are sighing for the vastly superior privileges of the young Republic of Western Africa."¹⁴

Post-emancipation issues such as wages as immigrants motivations' to migrate from Barbados only took emigrants so far. To migrate across the Atlantic after emancipation needed additional drive. The 346 Barbadian Several Barbadians who had formed themselves into the Barbados Company for Liberia found this in a pan-Africanist desire. In a letter to the American Colonization Society (ACS) seeking emigration assistance, they noted that their interests in Liberia was two-fold: "One being, the improvement of their condition by diligent labor," and "two, the noble desire of assisting

¹³ *The Baltimore Sun*, July 7, 1851.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

to elevate their fatherland, or building up a nationality, without which they consider their race can never attain their proper position in the family of nations."¹⁵

A push and pull Atlantic dynamic eventually coalesced to bring about West Indian emigration to Liberia. With decreasing African American emigration to the republic and the demands for population growth and national development, Liberian officials also sought to lure the Barbadians across the Atlantic. In 1862, Edward Wilmot Blyden, himself a West Indian emigrant from the Virgin Islands, returned to the region to circulate a pamphlet "To the Descendants of Africa throughout the West Indian Islands."¹⁶ Post-emancipation Barbadians with their various complaints, no doubt receptive, warmly received the circular. By March 1, 1864, Daniel Warner, the president of Liberia, reported that he had received hundreds of letters enquiring about Liberia. The Liberian Department of State subsequently informed the Barbados Company that their letters had "caused the president considerable gratification. Entertaining ardent desire that the exiled sons of Africa from all parts of the world should return and unite their efforts in building up on this benighted shore a home for themselves and their posterity, it occasions him real pleasure to notice the enthusiasm."¹⁷ Pan-Africanist inflected language infused with notions of racial brotherhood, common history, and destiny brought together the interests of blacks on both sides of the Atlantic into one unified goal.

Like the Barbadians, African American migrants who had become Liberian political officials also wielded pan-African rhetoric to their advantage: "Brethrens of the

¹⁵ *The African Repository*, December (1864): 19.

¹⁶ See Burleigh Holder, "A History of Crozierville," *Liberian Studies Journal* III, 1 (1970-71), 23-24.

¹⁷ ACS, Reel 196, Domestic Letters, Letter no.163. Folio 63559. (American Colonization Society, Washington D.C., USA).

Antilles, we are one in origin and destiny. We have the same history of centuries of suffering, of tribulation and woe.”¹⁸ The Liberians encouraged the exiles to come back to their fatherland. Daniel Warner, himself a migrant from Baltimore who had become Liberia's third president, pointed out to the Barbadians that “[t]he time seems to have come in the providence of God, when this oppressed people, wherever they may be found in their exile, should seek together and co-operate for the establishing in the land of their fathers a home and a nationality.”¹⁹ As if sensing the possibility of Barbadian emigration to the neighboring British crown colony of Sierra Leone, President Warner and others pointed out why Liberia would be the best choice. They pointed to the republic’s independence and acknowledgement of its sovereignty by leading nations, particularly highlighting that the republic was “the most suitable starting point from which the returning exiles may begin to take possession of and civilize this long-neglected land, and thus aid in restoring this ancient cradle of civilization to her pristine glory.”²⁰ Liberia provided British West Indians with an escape from the encumbrances of empire and racial oppression. With the possibilities citizenship and an objective of building up a black nationality, migration to Liberia had also created a path to a more meaningful freedom.

By the 1865, Afro-Barbadians had grown impatient with the colonial establishment. As a group deeply concerned about self-determination, the conciliatory, planter friendly terms of Caribbean post-emancipation had lost its appeal. Despite their frequent petitions to the two houses of parliament, their prayers for a reasonable and just

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

reform and a greater role in the body politic had not been answered. From this, many Barbadians had begun to believe on a deeply penetrating level that empire and racism were the reasons for their continued subordination and second class status in Barbados. While they were excluded and denied civil and political rights in Barbados, Liberia offered inclusion in the body politic and a role in the nation building efforts. Holding possibilities for economic as well as political advancement, migration to Liberia offered a more substantive experience of freedom. Thus, given and the push and pull forces that migrants had to negotiate, the pressures of Barbados post-emancipation could not be regionally contained and overflowed across the Atlantic on April 6, 1865, when fifty Barbadian families (346 people) emigrated to Liberia.

Barbadians emigration in 1865 represents a watershed moment in Caribbean, Liberian, and Atlantic world history. Yet, even with this significance, the story of Barbadian emigration to Liberia in 1865 has been a lost historical chapter dwarfed by both the American Civil War and the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica.

Demographically, it has been over-shadowed by the sheer numerical dominance of African American migrants to the African Republic because comparatively, the number of Barbadian emigrants was notably negligible. The Barbadians' transatlantic experience has also been the subject of a fragmented discussion in the Caribbean and Liberia often been relegated to footnotes.²¹ Parallel analyses of these emigrants occurring on either side of the Atlantic, in the Caribbean and Africa, worked in isolation to one another.

Previously, scholars had thus either subsumed Barbadians under the larger African American migrant groups who became known as "Americo-Liberians" or neglected to

²¹ See Tom W. Shick, Roll of the Emigrants to the Colony of Liberia Sent by the American Colonization Society from 1820-1843 [computer file]. Madison, WI: Tom W. Shick [producer], 1973. Madison, WI: Data and Program Library Service.

look at the interconnected, overlapping, and contiguous nature of their lives across the Atlantic.

Using letters, ship manifest statistics, birth and church records, newspapers reports, observation of colonizationists, Liberia presidential and legislative records, and a variety of other sources, this dissertation explores the social, economic, and political changes in the lives of these fifty Barbadian migrant families as they transitioned from living in a Caribbean post-emancipation society to life in the West African Republic. It explores the emigrants' efforts to find freedom, citizenship, and to build a black nation that would be the envy of the world. Barbadians left for what they assumed would be greener pastures in Liberia, wishing for a future unburdened by the past. But as their lives in the Caribbean and Liberia showed, it would be impossible to separate the two. The dissertation seeks to understand and fully account for the shifts, continuities, discontinuities, and mutabilities in the experiences of the Barbadians and the ideologies that accompanied them in their migration from the Americas to Africa and from period of emancipation to the era of the early twentieth century.

Within the Barbadian migration is a layered story of Caribbean emancipation, migration, and African liberation. The story of Barbadian migration to Liberia at first represents a regional Caribbean post-emancipation saga about the shortcomings of abolitionism, the legalization of racial inequality, and the restructuring of capital in the aftermath of slavery. Viewing migration as a move to right the disappointments of emancipation and in illuminating the struggle undergirding the onerous task of shaping the conditions and meanings of the new freedom within post-slavery Caribbean societies

further Thomas Holt's notion of "the problem of freedom."²² The dissertation thus intersects with scholarships that grapple with the real and epistemological challenges of the post-slavery period across the Atlantic world.²³

Their migration and the transatlantic persistence of migrants' struggles shows that emancipation was not a singular moment where all was resolved and fulfilled in ways freedmen imagined. Migration shifted the frontiers of Caribbean emancipation and brought together experiences of emancipation for different groups of blacks together. The changing dynamics of Afro-Barbadians' social, economic, and political life stories revealed in the transatlantic shift in the frontiers of Caribbean post-emancipation thus creates new paths for the study of transatlantic post-emancipation phenomenon. Barbadians' struggles to navigate the circumstances of life under Barbados post-emancipation and colonial rule and as they transitioned into living in an independent West African Republic exposed the similarities in transatlantic mechanisms of exploitation. Barbadian migration also reveals the challenges, choices, and desires of post-emancipation for families and individuals. These transitions show post-emancipation as an evolving project, moving over time and space and undergoing ontological redefinitions in Barbados as well as in Liberia when Barbadians transition from being subjects to citizens and were confronted with new challenges and experiences as well as old forms of dominance appearing in advanced guises.

²² See Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

²³ See Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott. *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

Additionally, within this story of migration are the tensions that resulted from the convergence of various black Atlantic communities. Barbadian migrants arrived in Liberia well after colonization had begun in 1822 and collided with African Americans, African re-captives, and Liberian indigenes. The influx of these groups proved momentous because Liberia had been imagined as a nation building project for African Americans alone. The American Colonization Society (ACS) in the constitution had thus declared that the objectives and efforts of the organization were to "exclusively colonize free people of color residing in our country in Africa."²⁴ When the ACS extended assistance to Barbadians and African re-captives, much thought was not given to the social, cultural, and political ramifications of their settlement in Liberia. Over time, however, as these groups of black migrants arrived in Liberia, their presence not only marked important social and demographic changes, but also created problematic ideological and political shifts as they brought different issues and visions to bear on Liberia.

Black migrants had envisioned their future experiences of liberty and equality as rooted in a homogeneously black Liberia. The migration of the Barbadians allows us to see how blacks sought to make freedom, experience it among themselves, and their struggles to build a nation. The colonization of the various diasporic groups in Liberia had been driven by the idea that race and racial oppression were the factors that sustained hierarchies and various levels of un-freedom in the diaspora. Indeed, to white colonizationists as well as black migrants, the conclusion was that black oppression was embedded in black and white racial dynamics. With fantasies of racialization based on

²⁴ See "Outline of the new constitution for the American Colonization Society, *The African Repository* October (1835): 288-289.

the centrality of Africa in black identities and grounded in common histories of subordination and oppression, migrants believed that racial consistency would serve as a socio-political contract. Many migrants thus imagined that their journey to a black republic would easily open up access to new and improved experiences of freedom, citizenship, and nationhood. Yet, for many groups of blacks, the migrant road to full citizenship in Liberia would be marked by rough patches and detours. In some important respects for others, it remained an incomplete journey.

Within the context of Liberia's nation-building, new hierarchies were created among black migrant groups and indigenous African ethnicities. Ideas about freedom, citizenship, and nationhood blurred and transformed as they too migrated across space and time. Despite established pan-African ideals, as diasporic blacks and indigenous African ethnicities confronted each other in the nation-building efforts, new exclusionary practices emerged resembling those hierarchical arrangements the black migrants had previously struggled against. This ultimately exposed the vicissitudes of what was previously believed to be a collective black identity. Developments in Liberia thus illustrated that blacks' experiences of inequality and subordination were not always determined by white racism alone. It further shows that understanding of the causes and purveyor of black subordination and oppression goes beyond a critique of racial coexistence between blacks and whites. Black efforts towards nation building circumscribed by the changing demands of mid-nineteenth century capitalism further demands a critique of the overarching structures, systems, and processes to which race is attached.

The migration of the Barbadians, along with the other groups, and these kinds of early "return" laid some of the broad foundations for how we conceive of diaspora, black identity, and pan-Africanism. Places like Liberia were central to a post-slavery sense of black Zionism. Together in Liberia, were those free African Americans, some deported, others voluntary migrants, and slaves freed with the expressed demand that they be sent to Liberia. Some from the West Indies who were re-captive Africans taken from the Liberian coast, by returning to the area, completed that circular migration that many see as quintessential to diaspora. Yet, with the identity politics that emerged, especially in the period of the 'Scramble for Africa,' it became evident that while diasporic blacks had returned to the motherland with their African identities at the forefront, it was rather their diasporic identities that took preeminence in their lives. With the middle passage seen as central to the experience of diaspora, many re-captive Africans who were rescued on the African coast and had not crossed the ocean would not be included with African Americans and West Indians who had coalesced on the basis of this theoretical formation of diaspora. Additionally, the diaspora thought they were promoting both their cause and that of Africa's, but in many ways they only reinforced the status quo by advancing European imperialistic ideology and consolidating efforts towards the control of Africa and Africans. Through their migration and in their efforts to civilize and revitalize the African continent, the diaspora (knowingly and unknowingly) became cultural brokers, acting as a bridge between Europeans and natives in the larger efforts towards implementing Christianity, civilization, and commerce in Africa. Pan-Africanism as a liberatory device and political instrument had reprimanded the values of the social and political systems of the west and had further supplanted them by imagining alternatives.

However, with various dynamics taking place to create gaps between pan-Africanism as an intellectual and a lived experience, pan-Africanism as an ideology of liberation failed to transition from intention to commitment.

There are six chapters in this dissertation. Chapter One, "Laboring under Infatuation': Freedom on Hold in Post-Slavery Barbados," uses birth, baptism, legal and tax records to show the historical context out of which the cluster group of 346 Afro-Barbadians emigrated to Liberia in 1865. The chapter illuminates the historical background from which interest in Liberian emigration emerged. In exploring the political and institutional processes that reshaped post-emancipation society in Barbados, it identifies restrictions and barriers to freedom and other controversies undergirding the "problem of freedom" as many sought efforts to shape its conditions and meaning during emancipation. It specifically highlights the ways in which the structuring of issues during post-emancipation conspired to sustain un-freedom, maintain landlessness, and disenfranchisement for Afro-Barbadians. In this way, it examines issues surrounding acquiring land, negotiating wage and labor agreements, and acquiring civil and political rights, all of which figured to varying degrees into freedmen's sense of place and prospects for the future after emancipation.

Chapter Two, "Imagined Geographies of Redemption: Barbadian Emigrants and the Idea of African Civilization," is a prosopography that tells us about the demographics and ideologies of Barbadian emigrants going to Liberia. It comprises new empirical evidence pieced together from different sources and is presented as a micro-history of the Afro-Barbadians' life during Barbados post-emancipation. Who they were, what they did, and thought, especially about the larger British efforts to civilize Africa, illuminates

something about pan-Africanism and moves us beyond the over-simplified idea that blacks in the diaspora and elsewhere were homogenous. It further helps us to understand the complexities of abolitionist and pan-African ideologies while showing that colonization was not a starkly racialized phenomenon as well as challenges the assumptions that it was a white on black movement.

Chapter Three, “‘Come over and Help US...We Have a Gem of an Empire’: The ACS, Barbadians, African Americans, and Liberian Colonization,” uses letters written by the Barbadians and other forms of correspondence to look at the "black Atlantic" through the socio-cultural, religious and ideological contexts within which Liberia was imagined. It addresses the experiences of African Americans whose emigration patterns preceded and informed the Barbadians’ relationship to the ACS. It also shows the varying ways in which African American experiences tempered the emigration vision of the Barbadians. The chapter also shows how these issues had begun to fracture the emigrants’ visions of building a pan-African republic even before they arrived in Liberia. To this end, the chapter also looks at the legacy of the ACS and explores how its changing dynamics and extension into Barbados reshaped its image. The chapter is also an interrogation of Liberian colonization historiography where the exclusion of Barbadian emigrants underscores a significant problem. The relative smallness of the Barbadian emigrant population in Liberia previously led scholars to dismiss their import. However, in homogenizing all emigrants to Liberia, scholars have undermined the role of blacks’ cultural diversity in the shaping of Liberia’s history.

Chapter Four, "Shifting Frontiers of Freedom, Citizenship, and Nationhood: Black Encounters, Identity, Plurality, and Stratification in Liberia," details the encounter

of these groups and highlights the tension surrounding settlement, group identity, and socio-cultural formations. It shows the emergence of social ascriptions and nomenclature and how they would be politicized and mobilized in establishing relationships among the different groups as well as with the state. The ensuing relationships further became a litmus test by which other achievements would be measured. In this way, increased distinctiveness in the social sphere ultimately crushed abolitionist and colonizationist expectations that Liberian nation building would help blacks to overcome the inter-ethnic hostilities that had encouraged the slave trade, the root of black oppression. The social landscape created identity politics, which posed challenges to ideas about blackness and raised questions about the future stability and cohesiveness of the nation.

Chapter Five, "The Politics of Black Nation Building: Citizenship and Nationhood and the Making of a Transnational Black Identity," explores blacks' experiences of citizenship and nationhood and the making of a transnational black identity through the dialectics of blacks' experiences and the political processes of nation building in Liberia. By paying particular attention to the social, legal, political, and economic spheres, the chapter highlights the ways in which the different groups politically mobilized. It highlights the ways in which the various segments of the black population represented their identities, related to the state, and to one another. It further shows the mutually beneficial interactions and points of tension between the black populace. It also explores how blacks used the state as an instrument to address questions of black progress, modernity, and respectability.

Chapter Six, "This is Another National Experiment: Barbadian Political Leadership in Liberia and the Scramble for Liberia," explores Liberia in its transition

from the nineteenth to the twentieth century and the change in political leadership from African Americans to West Indians. The chapter addresses this transition by looking at the background, experiences, and policies of Arthur Barclay and other West Indian migrants who occupied leadership positions in Liberia in the early twentieth century. It particularly focuses on how Barclay and other West Indian political leaders navigated the barrage of issues and changing demands that confronted the nation during that period. Political leadership in Liberia was an interesting opportunity for migrants who had aspired to these kinds of positions in Barbados, but it was also a perilous challenge. With the exigencies of the period, the leaders were often caught between a rock and a hard place, forced to choose between continued independence and self-sustained development and neo-colonization and imperialism through American and European investments, loans, and diplomatic relationships. In a period of British intrusion, Americo-Liberians were suspicious of the "English" heritage of Barbadian leaders. This distrust often affected Barbadians' efforts to design policies that would address the native question and Liberia's sovereignty. In addition to showing the vicissitudes of blackness that emerged within the Liberian nation-building process, this chapter aims to move us beyond oversimplified binaries— black/white, colonizer/colonized, African/ European—as well as reshape our views of pan-Africanist, imperialist, and colonizationist ideologies.

The dissertation concludes with an epilogue that looks at Liberia in the imaginary of twentieth century pan-Africanists such as Marcus Garvey and his back-to-Africa movement. This later twentieth movements were not novel developments but rather a continuation of earlier efforts. Though different in their approaches, these continuities across time highlights the persistence of black struggle.

CHAPTER I

“Laboring under Infatuation”: To be Free Indeed in Post-Emancipation Barbados

"The Emancipation Act marked the end of abolitionist efforts. They were satisfied."¹
Eric Williams - *Capitalism and Slavery*

In 1837, Caribbean migration patterns caught the attention of James Thome and Thomas Kimball, two American abolitionists on a six months tour of Antigua, Barbados, and Jamaica to assess the workings of “the great experiment of freedom.”² In published reports of their observations, the abolitionists inferred that freedmen “may leave the island if they choose and seek their fortunes in other parts of the world.” Barbadians in particular, had seemingly interpreted emancipation in this way, exploiting their post-slavery privileges through widespread migration to the colony of Demerara.³ As the abolitionists observed, however, the increasing migration of Barbadians soon turned into a nuisance to colonial authorities who “became alarmed lest they should lose many of the laboring population.” Barbadian emigration had become problematic to the point that there were efforts to re-establish the plantation and other material vestiges of slavery. As the abolitionists discerned in the midst of their travels, “the question was under discussion...whether it should not be unlawful to prohibit emigration.”⁴ The "problems of freedom" highlighted in the prevalence migration made the devices of black subversion

¹ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Andre Deutsch Limited: Worcester, 1964), 191.

² James A. Thome and Joseph Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies: A six months' tour in Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica in the year 1837* [Accessed through *The Making of the Modern World*. Gale 2009] Gale, Cengage Learning. Vanderbilt University on 14 November 2009 [http://galenet.galegroup.com].

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

and white control visible and exposed the ways in which the law operated as a new mechanism of black exploitation and control following the abolition of slavery.

During post-emancipation, emigration from Barbados would transition from a circum-Caribbean phenomenon into a transatlantic occurrence and from the black peasantry to other social classes. By 1863, *The African Repository*, the journal of the American Colonization Society (ACS), reported that “a spirit of emigration to Liberia is reported to exist in St. Kitts, Demarara, St. Thomas, and other islands of the West Indies.”⁵ In Barbados particularly, Liberian emigration efforts had assumed structure with the formation of various societies: The Barbados Company for Liberia, The Fatherland Union Barbados Emigration Society for Liberia, and The Barbados Colonization Society for Assisting in the Suppression of the Slave Trade and the Introduction of Civilization into Africa. The ACS noted that “letters have been received at this office invoking aid on behalf” of the Barbados Company for Liberia from “Mr. Joseph S. Attwell, one of its active members now in this country...” Growing interest in Liberian emigration among Barbadians had made an emigration agent out of Attwell who had initially left Barbados to study divinity at the Institute for Colored Youths in Philadelphia.⁶

In making his “Urgent Appeal in Aid of Emigration...From Barbados to Liberia,” Attwell explained that “were free passages provided several hundred of worthy and industrious Barbadians would gladly and immediately seek the attractive shores of the African Republic.” He noted that the potential Liberian emigrants were predominantly artisans and professionals with large families from the Afro-Barbadian middle class.

⁵ *The African Repository*, January (1865): 20.

⁶ *The Times*, December, 11, 1867-- reprinted in the Barbados Historical and Museum Society (hereafter referred to as the BHMS).

Among the 346 interested emigrants were the members of the politically elite and socially mobile Barclay family. At the head of the family was Anthony Barclay, the president of the Barbados Company for Liberia, a penman, and a superintendant at the St. Mary's Asylum. He intended to take his entire family to Liberia: his wife Susan, a confectioner, and their thirteen children — Mary who shared her mother's profession; Antoinette and Elizabeth, one a school mistress and the other a teacher; Melvina, a fancy worker; Sarah, a music teacher; Anthony, the merchant clerk and Ernest, a coppersmith and Laura, Arthur, Florence and Ellen, twelve, ten and eight years, respectively. James Wiles, a blacksmith, had also signed the petition to emigrate with his wife Mary Wiles and their seven children. Two brothers, Samuel and Charles Inniss, one a boot maker and the other a cabinet maker, also signed the petition with the over 300 hundred other Barbadians who intended to emigrate to Liberia should the ACS grant their request for assistance.⁷

Migration to Demerara and to Liberia were a part of a larger post-emancipation trend in Barbados. Indeed, between 1834 and 1864, emigration from Barbados was among the highest in the circum-Caribbean region. While the 1851 census recorded Barbados' population at 160,000, in the years immediately following emancipation, 9,814 migrated to British Guiana, 1,495 to Demerara, 3500 to St. Croix, and 999 to Antigua.⁸ By 1865, when the movement took on a transatlantic dimension, 346 Barbadians

⁷ See Ship manifest for the full list of Barbadian emigrants in *The African Repository* August (1865): 236-242.

⁸ Census Report of the Population of Barbados 1851 – 71" (Barbados National Archives: Barbados), 1.

migrated to Liberia and other to colonies in the British empire such as Sierra Leone.⁹ By 1871, more than 13.4 percent of the aggregate Barbadian population lived in other places.¹⁰ Historians interested in showing the persistence of the defining issues of slavery into freedom have often pointed out that these statistics for the most part represented black peasants and laborers. Such scholastic interests, no doubt influenced by the sheer number of emigrants from the peasantry, captured the strong reactions of the formerly enslaved to emancipation as codified in the Abolition Acts (1833) and experiences of post-slavery with the aim to show their continued agency.¹¹ That these scholars have argued that freedmen psychologically viewed movement as synonymous with their new freedom, their majority representation in post-emancipation Barbadian emigration statistic is not surprising.¹² Historians have even explored the displacement of poor whites in their attempts to illustrate the expansive effects of societal reconstruction in the post-slavery era.¹³ They, however, have said nothing of the prospects and the effects of

⁹ Demerara became a county of British Guiana in 1833 but continued to be considered as a separate colony by the Barbados census.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Scholars of Caribbean post-emancipation such as Walter Rodney and Woodville Marshall have shown how laborers envisaged their experiences of freedom and the appeal of emigration. See Woodville Marshall, "We be Wise to many more Things: Blacks Hopes and Expectations of Emancipation"; Rebecca Scott, "Former Slaves: Responses to Emancipation in Cuba"; Sidney Mintz, "The Origins of the Reconstituted Peasantries" in Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (eds), *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society from Emancipation to the Present: A Student Reader* (Princeton: M. Wiener Publishers, 1996).

¹² Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South, from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003); Thomas C. Holt, *Black Over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina During Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977); Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985); Lee Wilson Bettis, *The Economics of Sharecropping in NE Brazil* (Columbus, Ohio State University, 1976); Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

¹³ James L. Roark, *Masters Without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Norton, 1977); Rudolph M. Lapp, *The Ante Bellum Poor Whites of the South Atlantic States* (Ph. D. Thesis in History -- University of California, Berkeley, Sept. 1956); Karl Stewart Watson, "The Redlegs of Barbados" (Master's Thesis, University of Florida, 1970); Karen F. Davis, "The Position of Poor Whites in

post-emancipation on that segment of the black population who had been free before emancipation.

The broad appeal of emigration at first glance alludes to some sense of uniformity across race of post-slavery expectations and experiences. Indeed, the desires for “a better living” driving the appeal of emigration to laborers could falsely be conflated with the desires of the Afro-Barbadian middle class to secure, as they told the ACS, an “improvement of their condition.” That the various social classes migrated to different areas renders these kinds of conclusions problematic and suggests that the appeal of and catalysts for emigration was not the same for all social groups. The real significance of post-emancipation Barbadian emigration statistics then becomes the questions they provoke about the correlation of social class with post-emancipation expectations, experiences, and migration destinations. How were experiences of post-emancipation different across social classes in Barbados? What motivated different social groups to leave Barbados? The answers to these questions could reveal the motivations of those Afro-Barbadians, supposedly of the middle class, who emigrated to Liberia.

Migration provides a provocative look at Barbados post-emancipation. It not only point to the issues driving interest in Liberian emigration, but also opens up some of the central controversies undergirding the task of shaping the conditions and meaning of the new freedom. These questions often surrounded the nebulous issues of free labor, the right to move about, and the civil and political status of Afro-Barbadians. Post-

a Color-Class Hierarchy: A Diachronic Study of Ethnic Boundaries in Barbados” (Ph.D. Thesis, Wayne State University, 1978); TJ Keagy, “The Poor Whites of Barbados,” *Revista de Historia de America*, No. 73/74 (Dec 1972).

emancipation land tenure regimes and the restructuring of labor agreements mediated Barbadians' access to livelihoods. Understanding the political and institutional process that reshaped post-emancipation society in Barbados identifies the restrictions and barriers to freedom that Barbadians across different social classes sought to escape. Emigration thus highlights the ways in which labor became a contested category and informed the political construction of class during post-emancipation.

This chapter explores the historical background from which interest in emigration during post-emancipation can be understood and out of which the 346 self-proclaimed members of the Afro-Barbadian middle class emigrated to Liberia in 1865. The dynamics of restructuring post-emancipation conspired to sustain unfreedom for social groups in different ways. It highlights how the legal, political, and labor restructuring of post-emancipation affected different classes and how this shaped their divergent emigration paths. To be sure, I show the distinctions between the black peasantry's wage-based, economic understanding of free labor that generated their specific emigration paths and the Afro-Barbadian middle class' civil and political interpretation of free labor that produced their transatlantic emigration to Liberia.

Governed by a different set of factors and class ethics, the middle class had specific expectations of emancipation. Largely free and thus able to move about prior to the end of slavery, the Afro-Barbadian middle class anticipated an even broader spectrum of rights than black laborers. I argue that because there had been some subsequent improvements in the lives of the Afro-Barbadian middle class before the end of slavery, their expectations of post-emancipation were much higher. Their dilemma was further

compounded by the valorization of race rather than class in post-emancipation. Additionally, issues of independence, access to civil and political rights, social mobility, and respectability had always been a part of middle class self-constructs. This then fueled their protests against the lack of institutional means of making their voices heard and their repression by the colonial establishment. Failure to realize their goals after thirty years of freedom in Barbados fostered a sense of stagnation and societal disassociation that greatly factored in their gloomy view of the future for themselves and their family. Their emigration to Liberia in 1865 reflected how they imagined their possible places in Liberian society, it was also a response to the issues they faced in Barbados.

Slavery in the Making of Caste in Barbados

In 1625, two years after the British settled Barbados, the first ten slaves were brought to the island. In the early years, slaves and servants worked together to make Barbados the most treasured colony in the British Empire. In the early eighteenth century, the growing profitability of sugar that led to an increased demand for slaves, resulted in a shift of the island's population from majority white to black. Servility and inhumanity defined slavery as well as created distinctions along race and class lines. Miscegenation, however, soon defied these efforts. By the mid-1700s, mixed-race individuals, who became known as creoles or coloreds became the nexus of a racially bifurcated society.¹⁴ A group of Africans, likely artisans and their children who were either free-born or manumitted from slavery joined the free coloreds to create another group within Barbadian society. The title of "free coloreds" came to designate both free blacks as well

¹⁴ See Jerome S. Handler, Frederick W. Lange, and Robert V. Riordan, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

as free mixed-race individuals in slavery. Their addition to the landed white aristocrats, poor whites, and black slaves outlined a social hierarchy at the center of the racial, cultural, and economic conundrum in Barbados and black Atlantic societies alike.¹⁵

In Barbados, as in many other slave societies, black and slave were not always synonymous nor were they always a unitary status. They were often cluster statuses, for which race and gender were often the defining characteristics. Free coloreds quickly came to understand the differences between a “free person and a “free black.” Coloreds especially were seen as “distinctly superior to the blacks, and even as slaves, they were mostly given the more favored jobs as domestic servants, personal attendants, or artisans on estates.” The historian Mavis Campbell notes that “they were accorded a position by a white neighborhood consensus.”¹⁶ Indeed, a precise social and racial balance characterized the lives of free coloreds whereby they were given enough privileges to be higher than slaves and free blacks but not enough to be equal to their white counterparts. They enjoyed a series of privileges and rights that poor whites could not afford that were also not extended to slaves. While there were laws regulating the movement of slaves from plantations, the colored class were free to move about. Due to their skillfulness as artisans and through the resourcefulness of their fathers who were often planters, members of this group were also economically prosperous. Because they were not slaves, free coloreds in theory were British subjects who could claim the rights held by whites. Jerome Handler has noted that these kinds of peculiarities conferred upon them an “un-

¹⁵ See Edward L. Cox, *Free Coloreds in the Slave Societies of St. Kitts and Grenada, 1763-1833* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

¹⁶ See Mavis C. Campbell, *The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society: A Sociopolitical History of the Free Coloreds of Jamaica, 1800-1865* (Rutherford [N.J.]: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975).

appropriated” status in slave societies in Barbados.¹⁷

The experiences of the potential emigrants to Liberia were driven by the era within which they came of age. Of the 346 emigrants, fifty-four of them were less than four years old at the time of departure in 1865. In Barbados they would have experienced very little of the social environment. Conversely, approximately eighty of the emigrants who declared interest in emigrating to Liberia were born prior to the legal ending of slavery in 1834. As such, they had not only survived the institution of slavery but also thirty years of post-emancipation. Among this group was Anthony Barclay, a fifty-five year old born in 1810. A political leader before slavery ended, he headed several pro-Africa organizations and became the chair of the Barbadian Company for Liberia. Holborn Jessamy — sixty-five years old, born in 1800; Catharine McClean — sixty years old, born in 1805; James Gittens – sixty years old, born in 1805; and John T. Worrell – fifty-nine years old, born in 1806 were the oldest amongst the group of Afro-Barbadian emigrants to Liberia. Though this demographic cluster of emigrants came of age in a slave society, they were nonetheless the children of a revolutionary time. This was the era of the Haitian Revolution, slave rebellions, abolitionist activities and the struggles of ordinary people for rights.

¹⁷ See Jerome Handler, *The Un-appropriated People: Freedmen in the Slave Society of Barbados* (John’s Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1974).

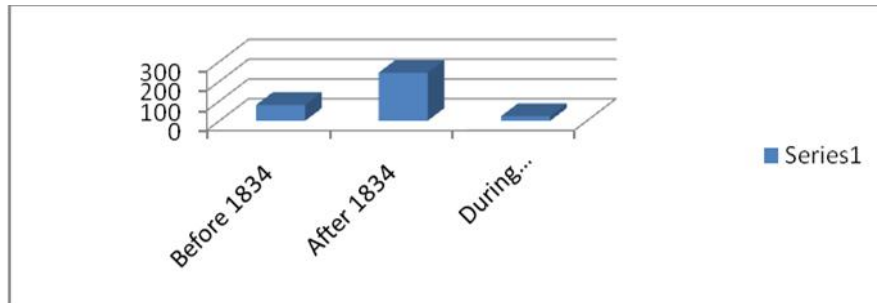


Figure 1 Eras within which Liberian Emigrants were Born¹⁸

Historians often dispute the nature of the interaction between the different groups within a slave society. They all agree, however, that the institution of slavery was the fundamental determinative element.¹⁹ While slavery meant physical coercion for slaves enforced with the full force of the law and without impunity, the institution also created issues for the “un-appropriated” class. For instance, planters often did not acknowledge their colored slave children. Beginning in 1721, the oligarchy comprised of white planters passed a series of discriminatory laws against free coloreds. While whites could testify against them, free colored were legally prohibited from testifying in civil proceedings involving whites. Furthermore, they could not vote, hold elective office, or serve on juries. Socially, they were excluded from political and religious leadership positions. They were prohibited from taking communion at the same time as whites and like American blacks were forced to sit in segregated seats in church. While they were excluded from the social, civil, and political privileges of citizenship, they were forced to serve in the militia and to contribute to other general societal upkeep. They were

¹⁸ Author's computations of ship manifest data.

¹⁹ See Elsa V. Goveia, *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Karen Fog Olwig, *Small Islands, Large Questions: Society, Culture, and Resistance in the Post-Emancipation Caribbean* (London: F. Cass, 1995); John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community; Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

obligated to pay taxes for school upkeep, but excluded from them. Though these issues may have caused free colored to despise whites, they were also grounds on which they coveted their societal status and power. In 1802, the Barbadian Governor noted in reference to the free coloreds that “for though not the property of other individuals, they do not enjoy the shadow of any civil right.”²⁰

In 1799, in efforts to carve out a place in the Barbadian pecking order, fifty-eight free coloreds signed a memorial to Governor Ricketts and the Barbados Council appealing for protection under the law and the right to testify. To further secure their place in the hierarchy, free coloreds often took a position on issues regarding the institution of slavery. Some free colored even owned slaves. As such, like members of the *gen de couleur* of Haiti, free coloreds in Barbados often sided with whites against slaves, especially during slave revolts.²¹ This was often done to not only separate themselves from enslaved blacks, but also to demonstrate that they deserved citizenship by virtue of their loyalty rather than discrimination based on their skin color. A case in point was the Belgreave Address. In 1816, with the Haitian Revolution still hanging over the Caribbean, the Bussa Rebellion broke out in Barbados. In this instance, free colored elites sought to distance themselves even further from slaves. In 1819, a group of free coloreds, ostensibly headed by Jacob Belgreave, sent a letter denouncing slave uprisings throughout the Caribbean and deplored the work of British abolitionists.²² They further

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins; Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963); Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004).

²² See Melanie J. Newton, *The Children of Africa in the Colonies: Free People of Color in Barbados in the Age of Emancipation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 80.

sought to demonstrate their loyalty “to the land of our nativity and to the institutions and forms of government under which hitherto had the happiest of lives.” As such, they declared their opposition to “insurrectionists and other radicals,” and vowed to “assist with all their power in the maintenance and subordination of good order.”²³ Anthony Barclay Senior, who along with 172 other freemen signed a petition requesting the privilege of testifying, also supported an advertisement for the Belgreave Address.²⁴ As a pay-off for helping to crush the rebellion, free coloreds won the right to testify for a brief period.

By May 6, 1833, however, within the crucible of heightened abolitionist activities, free coloreds sought to counter the Belgreave Address. On this occasion, Anthony Barclay Junior supported “strong resolutions at a public meeting of freedmen” and “became one of the members of a committee elected to present an address to the Barbadian governor.”²⁵ The tone of the address was such that it branded Barclay and his cohort of agitators as “dangerous men who desired to throw the colony into anarchy and confusion.”²⁶ Anthony Barclay Jnr, perhaps supported the new resolution based upon the realization that as long as slavery persisted his race would not be truly free. While slavery continued, freedmen were expected to maintain “a respectful deference to whites [as an] indispensable duty and were to stay in the position accorded to them by whites.”²⁷ Not only would the rights and legal position of free coloreds remain in a strange and peculiar

²³ *The Barbadian*, February 25, 1824.

²⁴ Jerome Handler, Ronnie Hughes, and Ernest M. Wiltshire, *Freedmen of Barbados: Names and Notes for Genealogical and Family History Research* (Charlottesville, Va: Published for the Friends of the Barbados Archives by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy, 1999).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Karch, “London Bourne of Barbados (1793 – 1869),” 30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

place as long as the institution continued, they particularly would not be entitled to the rights and privileges of a citizenship.

Emancipation across the Caribbean

On July 13, 1830, while abolitionists were raising their arguments, an article printed in *The Barbadian*, expressed the hope that no fresh blow would be directed at the West India interests. It pointed to the “ridiculous attempts to rob the West Indians of their property.” The writer highlighted that he was praying that “the late exertion made by Mr. Wilberforce and his friends at Freemason’s Tavern, was the last expiring effect of an exhausted faction.” He concluded by pointing out that “the West Indians are laboring under infatuation.”²⁸ By 1831, however, excitement at the prospect for freedom had started to build up across the Caribbean. Gossip circulated among slaves that planters were withholding letters from the Queen that sanctioned their freedom. The circulation of this news in Jamaica led the Creole slave, Samuel Sharpe, to lead a Christmas Day strike that quickly morphed into what became known as the “Baptist War.” The influence of this war has become a part of a broader historiography about the motivations for abolishing slavery. No work has produced more discussion on the subject than Eric Williams’ *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), a response to a series of views that exalted the role of British humanitarians in the struggle to end slavery.²⁹ In what is now known as the

²⁸ *The Barbadian*, July 13, 1830.

²⁹ For works on abolitionism see Eric Eustace Williams, *Capitalism & Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); R. J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989); Seymour Drescher, *From Slavery to Freedom: Comparative Studies in the Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

“Williams’ thesis,” Williams argued that eighteenth century commercial capitalism created through slavery and monopoly developed the wealth of Europe. This early formation became the impetus for industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century that would destroy the once vibrant slave regime.³⁰

In the Abolition Act of 1833, British political leaders adopted a gradual approach to emancipation. While Jamaicans moved quickly to enact the legislation to abolish slavery, the Barbadian legislature, as historian Anthony Phillips notes, responded slowly. According to Phillips, "changes had to be virtually imposed from the outside on a dissenting Barbadian judiciary."³¹ On August 1, 1834, in this climate of dissension and reluctance, slavery finally came to a “legal” end in Barbados and across the British Empire. Transition was peaceful on most islands. One Special Magistrate, Richard Robert Madden who had gone to Jamaica from England observed: “Not a single riot occurred throughout the island, and not a single man, woman or child, was butchered to make a Negro holiday.”³² North American which was still in the throes of slavery watched in vain for rebellion and riots. In a letter to the editor of *The Colored American* titled “Satan Out-generaled,” one writer remarked at the West Indian example of peaceful transition: “Throats cut? No. Towns in conflagration? No. Plantations plundered? No. What then? On several plantations the laborers would not work till they were satisfied that they should receive fair wages! Prodigious! What will sensible men at the South infer from

³⁰ Eric Williams, *Capitalism & Slavery* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1966), 210.

³¹ Anthony Phillips, “The Parliament of Barbados, 1639-1989.” *BHMS* (38): 422.

³² See Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor and Politics in Jamaica and Britain 1832 – 1938* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 55.

such news?”³³ Freedmen and their allies celebrated emancipation, participating in spontaneous festivals and bacchanals, singing “The monster is dead! The Negro is free, God save the Queen.”³⁴

Laws pronouncing the legal end of slavery did not mean an easy transition to freedom. As an ongoing project, the material vestiges the plantation complex outlasted the legal end of slavery. This was especially true for Barbados. According to the enumerator of the 1851 census, the difficulties in transitioning to freedom in Barbados was compounded by the island's distinctiveness. This included its small size, its geographical position, overpopulation, and lack of industrialized and mechanized employments beyond the manufacturing of sugar in the post-slavery period.³⁵ Because the island totaled just 166 square miles and had a population density of 966 per square mile issues that had to do with land redistribution were gravely affected. Furthermore, as an island with a population of whites greater than that of any other island, who owned the majority of the land and wealth, made societal reconstruction even more difficult.

In several other ways, the aims and objectives of abolition and its very radical agenda would be usurped and undermined in a number of ways during post-emancipation as society reorganized to keep freedmen in their proper places. Eric Williams ridiculed Thomas Buxton's celebration of the success of his abolitionist labors: "A mighty work is accomplished as far as this country is concerned." According to Williams, and as historians have come to agree, the Emancipation Act, much to the dismay of freedmen,

³³ *The Colored American*, September 22, 1838.

³⁴ See Jeffrey R Kerr-Ritchie, *Rites of August First: Emancipation Day in the Black Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007).

³⁵ “Census Report of the Population of Barbados 1851 – 71.” (Barbados National Archives: Bridgetown, Barbados), 1.

marked the end of abolitionist concerns. "They were satisfied," Williams chided. He noted that "it never occurred to them that the Negro's freedom could only be nominal if the sugar plantation was allowed to endure." Williams recalled "when Gladstone, in 1848, still claimed the protective duties for the planters, he most emphatically stated that it had nothing to do with the Negro." Gladstone saw no reason to allocate "funds of the country in giving a further stimulus to that condition, which is one of the comfort fully adequate to their scale in society and their desires." In this instance, which provided an opportunity for the anti-slavery rabble rousers, Williams noted that "[t]he abolitionists were silent. It never occurred to them that the negro might want land." Williams showed the end result of such oversights and shortsightedness in abolition and emancipation, particularly with the emergence of black peasant wage laborers. He pointed out that "[i]n Antigua, where all the land was appropriated, planters and slaves flocked to the churches when the news of emancipation reached the island, thanked God for the blessings of freedom, and returned to their labors, the slaves now raised to the dignity of landless wage earners paid twenty five cents a day." This was not peculiar to one island. As Williams pointed out: "The same was true of Barbados, where similar conditions prevailed, except that the Barbadians omitted the thanksgiving." What abolitionists demanded ultimately was not codified into law. With all these occurrences in what was to be an era of radical transformation, Williams' asked: "Where were the abolitionists?"³⁶

The Emancipation Act then was not the culmination of efforts towards freedom. In fact, it left unfinished business that would become the prologue to a social, economic, and political struggle that persisted far beyond the 1830s. While emancipation portended

³⁶ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, 191.

revolutionary transformations, changes were neither radical nor immediate for the class of newly freedmen as well as free coloreds. The reluctance of the Barbadian legislature to enforce the Abolition Acts foreshadowed the process by which post-emancipation changes would be enacted. During the efforts to enact the conditions of the new freedom, there were concerns regarding in whose favor interpretations of free labor would tilt and how this would disrupt the old power structure. The local black press and its international proxies made it their duty to track the struggle to implement freedom. They prophesied that “compulsory labor will first be exacted by means of vagrant and police laws; then the wages of such compulsory labor will be limited by arbitrary legal enactment, the maximum being fixed by the very party interested in keeping down wages to the lowest point.”³⁷ The Abolition Act had preserved the fundamentals of the free market economy and its large appetite for labor. In the absence of a structural and ideological overhaul of the idea of labor, the colonial government made use of its power of compulsion to retrieve the newly freed laborers for the still extant plantation system, a subset of the larger exploitative market system. These policies, then, were enacted to mitigate labor problems and to create the environment in which Barbadians would be properly conditioned into being wage laborers. With one hand, abolition freed slaves from the shackles of plantation life and into the world of free labor. With another, the enactment of laws reclaimed them for the old plantation complex, postponing freedom and thereby nullifying the wishes and desires of the newly freed.

Only in Antigua did slaves immediately receive full freedom. A period of apprenticeship was implemented as the nexus between absolute slavery and unconditional

³⁷ *The Liberal*, February 24, 1838.

freedom. On March 27, 1834, E.G. Stanley, the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, wrote with some consternation about the apprenticeship program, which he referred to as the “Great National Experiment ...the success of which the country looks forward to with much anxiety.”³⁸ The installation of the apprenticeship period was done in an effort to facilitate a “smooth transition” from slavery to wage labor. It, however, not only sought to stifle the emergence of strictly free labor, but sanctioned the kinds of coercion that ensured the persistence of un-free labor.

As a period designed to create a docile workforce, apprenticeship combined paternalism and social controls to create the new rank of waged laborers.³⁹ During apprenticeship, slaves under a certain age were required to continue working on plantations for a further period of six years if they were field slaves and for four years if they were house slaves. Apprentices were to give some forty-five hours of labor per week to their masters, but could use spare time to work on their provision grounds or in other forms of employment.⁴⁰ Apprentices were neither given incentives to produce nor paid wages. The apprentice’s master bore responsibilities for his material needs and for the development of his skill. As with slavery, runaways were to be punished with imprisonment. Neglectful or disobedient apprentices had their “malfeasances corrected.”⁴¹ As apprentices, ex-slaves were neither permitted to bear arms or hold

³⁸Colonial Office Records (CO) 318/118/55. University of the West Indies at Cave Hill Archives: Barbados.

³⁹ See Richard K. Fleischman, “Accounting, Coercion and Social Control during Apprenticeship: Converting Slave Workers to Wage workers in the British West Indies, c. 1834-1838,” *Accounting Historians Journal* (December 2005).

⁴⁰See D. G. Hall Hugh Paget and Rawle Farley, *Apprenticeship and Emancipation* (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1970).

⁴¹ Robert Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labor* (University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 25-26.

offices of civil importance.⁴² The “Tumults and Riotus Act” arbitrated disputes between employer and employees, the breaking of which could result in harsh penalties. Similarly, the Vagrancy Act of 1838 legislated that idle persons found not working and on the streets without a fixed address could be sentenced to up to a year imprisonment or to an extended term of hard labor.⁴³

During the apprenticeship period, “magistrates” were appointed, oftentimes from the black community, by the British government to mediate between plantation owners and ex-slaves. Magistrates — special, stipendiary, and police — in Barbados and other islands reported monthly on conditions within their parishes. As historian Sidney Mintz has argued, “the presence of magistrates and the formation of police and a system of vagrancy meant that the balance of freedom was heavily weighted in the favor of the plantation establishment.”⁴⁴ They were to protect apprentices from cruelty while also ensuring their continued services to their masters. In their guidance of the freedmen, they were advised to keep six basic elements in mind: the habits of the peasantry; their tastes; the rate of mortality; the nature of criminal offenses; civil offenses; and the relationship between the newly freed apprentices and the former slaveholders.⁴⁵ For their roles in making ex-slaves into subjective colonial subjects, magistrates became party to the militarized social policy that sought to maintain the old status quo.

⁴² Sylvester Hovey, *Letters from the West Indies: Relating especially to the Danish island St. Croix, and to the British Islands Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica*, (New York, 1838), 39, 96-116.

⁴³ British Parliament House of Commons Papers, Acts Passed by Colonial Legislatures or Councils, (Volume 45).

⁴⁴ Sidney Mintz, “The Origins of the Reconstituted Peasantries,” in *Caribbean Freedom: Economy and Society From Emancipation to the Present*, Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd (eds) (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 94.

⁴⁵ See Robert Steinfield, *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Strict policing and enforcement of work arrangements molded ideas of what newly freed laborers were to become as free individuals, workers, and families. Children were especially affected by the structuring of post-emancipation. Laws enacted to affect children were an effort to control families after emancipation. In their article, “The Slave Family in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom,” Laurence Brown and Tara Inniss noted that “the emancipation of children under the age of six in 1834 resulted in severe strains on the slave family as planters attempted to maintain their ‘third gang’ of child labour.”⁴⁶ Parents’ refusal to apprentice their children on the plantations elicited more indirect means of coercion. Plantation owners responded using the number of family members as a way of allocating food and other critical resources. Such practices often times resulted in widespread child malnutrition. British abolitionists Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, who visited Barbados in 1836 insisted that: “The boon of freedom granted, as if in mockery to their helpless infants has proved a source of misery and bitter persecution to the Negro mothers.”⁴⁷ After 1834, the neglect of free children increased following parents’ refusal to apprentice them and their subsequent removal from the estates by planters.

Samuel Prescod, in a frequently run column in the *The Liberal* titled “The Blessings of the Apprenticeship System,” also sarcastically critiqued this aspect of the apprenticeship program. “A few days ago,” Prescod noted, “Mr. Tinling, Special Justice

⁴⁶ Laurence Brown and Tara Inniss, “The Slave Family in the Transition to Freedom: Barbados, 1834-1841,” *Slavery and Abolition* Vol 26, August 2005, pages 257 – 269. Also see Elizabeth Ann Regosin, *Freedom's Promise: Ex-Slave Families and Citizenship in the Age of Emancipation* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002).

⁴⁷ Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837, Being the Journal of a Visit to Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbados, and Jamaica Undertaken for the Purpose of Ascertaining the Actual Condition of the Negro Population of Those Islands* (London: Cass, 1968).

of District G, sentenced four women with young children to give three Saturday's labor each to the estate for having been a little late to the field."⁴⁸ This, according to Prescod, was "deemed a very mild punishment, a tender mercy sort of an affair; and they were threatened to be more severely dealt with should they similarly offend again." Prescod took a final jab at the authorities with a sarcastic note on the effect this kind of system could have on families: "We should like to know the decrease in the infant population since the commencement of apprenticeship. Of course it is to be entirely attributed to careless inattention of the parents."⁴⁹

In 1838, fearing the possibility of a decline in their power and position, the colonial establishment effectively introduced the system of tenancy. Similar to the sharecropping arrangement that developed in the American South three decades later, tenancy like apprenticeship as a system of servitude sought to remake former slaves into a peasantry. Tenancy, as some historians argue, represented a balance between the freedman's desire for self-sufficiency and the planter's insistence for ready, productive labor.⁵⁰ But tenancy proved that un-free labor and free labor were not as strictly demarcated as it was imagined. As a brutal scheme of labor allotment and management, tenancy curbed competition, hindered free labor and at times permitted the use of terror and other extra-legal forces against workers.⁵¹ Contractual arrangements of subsistence and housing, combined with the ever-present possibility of their removal from plantation

⁴⁸ *The Liberal*, March 21, 1838.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Norton, 1978), 162.

⁵¹ See Jonathan M. Wiener, *Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 16.

property were all a part of a continuum that ensured freedmen continued dependence on the plantation system for survival. This system of paternalistic dependency, the refusal to sell freedmen land, as well as the implementation of the variety of legislations, not only thwarted the industry of freedmen, but also secured the cheapness of labor in Barbados. At the end of 1839, Joseph Evelyn, the police magistrate for Christ Church, noted “I am happy to say that the labourers are beginning to feel the *necessity* of rearing up their children in habits of industry.”⁵² Sturge and Harvey in their observations of Barbados apprenticeship system were also intrigued by apprentice parents’ encouragement of their free children to pursue the trades rather than agriculture.

Apprenticeship became an important predictor of black ability. This largely rested on how many perceived slave labor and the emerging free labor habits of blacks during apprenticeship. In 1840, members of the British and Foreign Antislavery Society (BFAS) held a convention to show “the superiority of free over slave labor.”⁵³ Amongst those present at the convention were Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, two British abolitionists who had visited Barbados in 1837; Samuel Prescod, the colored Barbadian human rights activist; the British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson; the U.S. delegates Thomas Binney and James Birney and several others. To support their arguments for the advantages of free labor, the delegates drew on empirical facts demonstrating the ruinous economic effects of slavery. To underscore the particular condition in Barbados, they pointed to the views of “Dr. Dickerson, who resided in Barbadoes as secretary to the late Hon. Edward Hay, the governor of that Island.” Dickerson noted “[t]hat it has been

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ *The Colored American*, January 23, 1841.

known for many ages, by men of reflection, that the labor of slaves, whether bought or bred, though apparently cheaper, is really far dearer in general than that of freemen.”⁵⁴

The abolitionists further drew on the works of moral philosophers and political economists. The political economist Heinrich Von Storch had produced a body of work on the system of serfdom in the Russian empire. According to Storch, a serf “working always for another and never for himself, being limited to a bare subsistence, and seeing no prospect of improving his condition not only loses all stimulus to exertion; he becomes a machine, often very obstinate and very difficult to manage.” He highlighted the simple logic that “a man who is not rewarded in proportion to the labor he performs works as little as he can. This is an acknowledged truth,” Storch contended, “which the experience of every day confirms. Let a free laborer work by the day he will be indolent. Pay him by the piece,” however, according to Storch and “he will often work to excess and ruin his health.”⁵⁵ The observations of Adam Smith and his magnum opus, the *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, featured largely in the arguments during the convention. Smith argued that “freedom available to all rather than a small group was the highest achievement of modernity.”⁵⁶ He further argued that a man owning his own labor was “the most cared and inviolable foundation of all property.”⁵⁷ As such, slavery had been a supreme violation of individual liberty.

In their critique of post-emancipation, the London abolitionists present at the convention drew heavily from Prescod, one of the delegates who Sturge and Harvey,

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ *The Colored American*, January 23, 1841.

⁵⁶ See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 1827.

⁵⁷ Drescher, *Mighty Experiment*, 21.

organizer of the convention, had likely met on their trip in Barbados. Prescod pointed to evidence exemplifying laborers' gravitation towards independence. They specifically pointed to the differences in productivity between periods when laborers were required to work for the plantations without wages and when they worked for themselves. They highlighted that "the special justices...were being continually called upon to decide as to the alleged sufficiency, or otherwise, of the work done by the laborer as a day's work." They used this point to illustrate that when land was available for peasant agriculture or other enterprises, apprentices also interpreted free labor as an independent enterprise where they would not be alienated from the fruits of their labor. They also showed that contrary to the view that freedmen were lazy they did in fact enjoy work, but desired "a fair standard that could guide" them.⁵⁸

For Barbadians in particular, landlessness further compounded that problems of post-emancipation. Peasant farming that had created an alternative economy on larger islands such as Jamaica might have worked if land was available for such ventures in Barbados. In 1841, a St. Michael magistrate testified in parliament that, "little progress has been made by the laborers in establishing themselves as freeholders, not from any disinclination on their part to become so, but circumstanced as our island is, there is little probability of any great number being able to obtain freeholds."⁵⁹ According to the magistrate, "the reason is obvious; there is not in the whole island a spot of waste land fit for cultivation, and as the land is principally divided into plantations, the proprietors are not likely to sell off small plots for that purpose; and there being no public lands

⁵⁸ *The National Era*, September 16, 1858.

⁵⁹ Parliamentary Papers, 1842 (479). XIII. Appendix VI. Report of Police Magistrates of St. Michael's Parish, June – December, 1841 (Grey to Stanley, 18 April, 1842 No. 12, Enc.No.1.) in Select Committee on West India Colonies, 1842.

available, it is plain that freeholders to any extent cannot be established in this country.”⁶⁰ Their inability to access land on which to establish their communities and families opened laborer’s eyes to possibilities elsewhere.⁶¹

William Sewell, who had been for some years on the editorial staff of *The New York Times*, echoed these same sentiments in 1861. Having spent two successive winters in the West Indian islands, Sewell would argue in his work, *The Ordeal of Free Labor in the British West Indies*, that freedmen were not indolent. He noted, “I have endeavored to show — and I hope successfully — that the experiment of free labor in the West Indies has established its superior economy, as well as its possibility.”⁶² From his estimation “not a single island fails to demonstrate that the Creoles of African descent, in all their avocations and in all their pursuits, work, under a free system, for proper remuneration, though their labor is often ignorantly wasted and misdirected.”⁶³

The BFASS ultimately came to view the apprenticeship period with much deserving suspicion. They saw it as “a deliberate action to ensure that the plantation owners were provided with free labor even after slavery was abolished.”⁶⁴ Other critics saw it as a manifestation of the fear that ex-slaves would flee to independence in areas beyond the boundaries of the plantation where they would be outside the control and supervision of the better sorts. The observations of Hilary Beckles that the continued rule of the Plantation Great House during post-emancipation ensured a landless freedom in

⁶⁰ See Janet Momsen paper on Rural Post-Emancipation Rural Settlement in Barbados (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, Department of Geography).

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² William G. Sewell, *The Ordeal of Free Labor in the British West Indies* (New York: A. M. Kelley, 1861).

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Anne-Marie Sharman, 1993 ed., *Anti-Slavery Reporter* (13) no 8.

Barbados echoed Holt's views on the uses of materialism in Jamaica where land was available. Landlessness in Barbados provided the means by which white elites along with the colonial establishment could indoctrinate social, civil, and labor habits while keeping the lower classes in their proper social place.⁶⁵

Altogether, the Abolition Act for the most part was an empty gesture. Liberty may have been granted in writing, but its very actuality was undermined and made vague by the same mechanisms that had conspired to preserve slavery. While abolitionists had hinged freedom on the economic potential of free labor, judicial enactments unleashed newer forces of labor coercion that alienated laborers from their labor. Apprenticeship as a quasi-economic and social mechanism of post-emancipation maintained the economic status quo. By training freedmen for the social, economic and political positions somewhere at the bottom of the class system, apprenticeship, like slavery, conditioned freedmen for lives with few second chances, little support and narrow opportunity; lives of subordination, supervision, and control. The apprenticeship system would come to a premature end in 1838.⁶⁶

Emigration and the Geopolitics of Free Labor

Leery of working agreements in Barbados and having experienced no radical transition from slavery, freedmen sought to take the matter of structuring their freedom

⁶⁵ Hilary Beckles, *Great House Rules: Landless Emancipation and Workers' Protest in Barbados, 1838-1938* (Kingston: I. Randle, 2004).

⁶⁶ In 1837, the publicizing of James Williams' experiences as an apprenticed laborer in Jamaica, in a short pamphlet, *A Narrative of Events since the First of August, 1834* helped to bring apprenticeship to a premature end in 1838. See Diana Paton, *A Narrative of Events Since the First of August, 1834* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

into their own hands. Abolition, having released a significant portion of the labor force had effectively caused a labor shortage in many of the islands. This opening of the labor market generated labor competition among the islands. But it also created a new-found confidence in freedmen's value of their labor that were often at odds with the colonial structure. Low wages in Barbados compounded by issues of high population density and unavailability of land pushed Barbadian freedmen to seek opportunities in other islands where labor was in short supply, where higher wages were offered, and land was available. The transition from slavery to freedom in Barbados, would thus be sharply marked by the rapid rise in emigration.

The efforts of Barbadian laborers to find land and new opportunities in some ways reflected the hemispheric movement of freed-people after slavery.⁶⁷ In the American South in the aftermath of the Civil War, African Americans moved to escape unfair contractual arrangements, better wages and to acquire land.⁶⁸ Studies have shown similar contemporary movements of laborers from the English countryside to urban areas and to even as far as Australia. The same force of pull factors occasioned by the free wage market has been shown in the migration of workers from the British West Indies to the Spanish speaking Caribbean. The right to move about freely that had been the right of a few had become a popular claim. From Jamaican peasants in the foothills of the Blue Mountains to the Exodusters of the United States, the logic of movement had been inexorable. Movement was a metaphor for freedom. In post-emancipation, it became an

⁶⁷ See Nell Irvin Painter, *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York: Knopf, 1977); David L. Golbert and Jerome Handler, Barbados in the Post-Apprenticeship Period: The Observations of A French Naval Officer, *Journal of the BHMS*; James Haskins, *The Geography of Hope: Black Exodus from the South After Reconstruction* (Brookfield, Conn: Twenty-First Century Books, 1999).

⁶⁸ The works of Stephen Hahn, Thomas Holt, Rebecca Scott, Lee Bettis and Patricia Fumerton have together further shown that such movements of laborers in the 19th century point to broad similarities throughout the Atlantic.

insurgency mechanism employed by the newly freed. Much like running away in slavery the widespread movement of Barbadian laborers represented the continued subversion of subaltern people in freedom.

The movement of Barbadians in post-emancipation was as much a response to labor demands as it was to an a priori emigration impulse within Barbados. Migration for Barbadians had evolved from a rural to urban phenomenon, expanding to the larger Circum-Caribbean region and later farther into the Atlantic. Barbadians moved for a variety of reasons. In slavery, Barbadians had been used to populate South Carolina, Trinidad, and some of the Windward Islands.⁶⁹ During slavery, there had also been widespread emigration by freedmen from the countryside to the city of Bridgetown to escape the estates and to participate in shop-keeping, huskery, and other forms of urban commerce.⁷⁰ During the post-emancipation period, emigration would be also driven by the earlier presence of Barbadians in other islands, which together with intra-regional shipping created networks of communication that informed them of labor conditions and social, economic and political possibilities in other islands.

All of the issues that made Barbados unique also combined to push the island's already existing emigration fever to a boiling point. The island's over-population was so much so that it was one of the only islands to refuse recaptured Africans and Asian

⁶⁹ See P.F. Campbell, "The Merchants and Traders of Barbados, *BHMS* (34) (May 1972): 85; See Jerome Handler and Lon Shelby, "A seventeenth Century Commentary on the Labor and Military Problems in Barbados, by anonymous author written in 1667." Karl Watson, "The Barbados Endeavor to Rule over All." A Socio-Political Commentary on Barbados/Carolinas Relationships in the Seventeenth Century, *BHMS* (43): 80-95.

⁷⁰ See Pedro L. V. Welch, *Slave Society in the City: Bridgetown, Barbados, 1680-1834* (Kingston: I. Randle, 2003).

indentured laborers after slavery.⁷¹ These factors kept Barbadian wages among the lowest of all the British Caribbean territories. When other islands sought to use emigration agents and newspaper advertisements to lure Barbadian laborers to their shores, they played to this issue. A J. H Shannon who peddled his business on Victoria and Prince William Henry Streets, frequently ran such emigration advertisements in *The Times*, one of the local newspapers: “Notices to laborers out of employment, wishing to go to St. Croix in search of work; offered free passages to [said] island where they can make their own terms.” Laborers would be “accompanied by Mr. Shannon or his agent to protect their interests. If terms offered are not satisfactory they will be brought back to Barbados at a moderate charge.” It stipulated, however, that “only those in earnest for work need apply...able bodied men with families are preferred,” and that “a limited number to be taken on first voyage all of whom must be vaccinated.”⁷²

Later that August, Shannon published another notice: "Laborers wanted for Antigua. Offering a bounty of \$24.00 to each able-bodied laborer with free passage for self and family; house and land free of charge; medical attendance, free of charge, wages, 20 cents per day; Term of service, 3 yrs." This time the notice specified that “none but agricultural laborers are wanted. No children taken without parents,” the ad warned.⁷³ Shannon noted that a remittance service would be provided through “Messrs. Ramsey, Elder & Co.” who would “receive any money at their store in Antigua and deliver the

⁷¹ See Roseanne Marion Adderley, *"New Negroes from Africa": Slave Trade Abolition and Free African Settlement in the Nineteenth-Century Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Lisa Yun, *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008);

⁷² Extracts from the *The Times*, Friday July 17, 1863 in *BHMS* (30): 156.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 157-158.

same in Barbados free of charge.”⁷⁴ Jamaica indeed became the destination of many of the Afro-Barbadian middle. The following September emigration advertisements by Shannon switched to: “notice to middle class men. Mr. J.H. Shannon will send passengers to Jamaica should a sufficient number offer during the next fortnight.”⁷⁵ In a letter to the editor, Shannon reports the remittance from Antigua of about \$50.00 by the emigrants from the island to their friends here.⁷⁶

On October 30, 1863, “Edward Walcott, agent appointed by the Government of British Guiana to make arrangements with those desirous of obtaining employment in that colony” joined the group of emigration agents advertising for laborers: “A Bounty of fifteen dollars and a free passage to themselves and families to those disposed to comply with the terms of the contract, which will be fully explained to every intending Emigrant by one of HM justices of the Peace before signing the agreement.”⁷⁷ By the next article Walcott had been forced to withdraw the bounty because of objection from government. “A letter from the colonial secretary under the direction of the governor to Mr. JH Shannon,” reprinted in *The Times*, on Friday November 6, 1863, “objected to the offering of a bounty as an improper inducement for leaving the island.” In the next issue of *The Times*, Mr. Walcott issued “a notice withdrawing his offer of a bounty of fifteen dollars to emigrants to British Guiana on account of this objection” stating that “the offer remains of a free passage, certain employment on arrival, comfortable houses, and

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 159.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 160.

hospital care in case of sickness.”⁷⁸ By the following December, Shannon resumed advertisements with offers of “free passages for laborers to Surinam and Nickerie,” at wages of 40 cents per day and “the usual advantages of housing etc. Free passages back if employment is unfavorable.”⁷⁹ *The Mirror*, the St. Vincent newspaper, similarly reported on the government interest in Barbadian laborers.

Barbadians in these other countries sometimes found the freedom they sought but at other times did not in which case they made plans to return home. The journal of Charles Henry Strutt, a Stipendiary Magistrate on a tour of British Guiana commissioned by Governor Henry Light captures the experiences of Barbadians in other territories. He found thirty Barbadians at the Woodley Park Plantation to be “sulky and out of humour” with “a few of them appear[ing] to be slightly suffering from fever. When asked how they liked Berbice, the emigrants responded that “it did not agree with their health, some of them adding that they would go back to Barbadoes as soon as they had the means to carry them.” The Barbadians noted that they had no other complains, which the inspectors attributed to their living conditions: “they were located in comfortable new wattle cottages detached from each other, built upon a dry sand reef.” The foremen and manager, however, told the inspector that Barbadians “were the most idle, worthless people he had ever met with.”

On inspecting “the Barbadians upon Plantation Blairmont” he “found thirty-five of these people located here in very comfortable well-built detached cottages raised upon brick pillars, floored and shingled; found some of them sickly and complaining of the

⁷⁸ Ibid, 161.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 163.

climate; two or three appeared very cheerful and contented.” He made the important note that “none had any complaints to make against their manager.”⁸⁰ Amidst the circulation of such reports from other islands and increasing emigration statistics, Governor Macgregor pleaded with the Barbadian Assembly: “For the sake of humanity,” to not impede the free labor experiment. Instead, he offered ways to curb further colonial contestations and labor emigration “by steadily persevering in the gradual amelioration of interior relations and in peaceful pursuits of agriculture and commerce, that the creditable station may be ever prosperously maintained through the favor of providence.”⁸¹

Laborers formed the majority of emigrants from Barbados but emigration agents also sought artisans. Having organized themselves into guilds and societies, these professions commanded importance in Barbados. For instance, when His Royal Highness, Prince Alfred second son of Queen Victoria, and the first member of the Royal family visited Barbados between February 21 and March 1, 1861, his procession included groups such as the Shipwrights Provident Union, bricklayers, and tobists.⁸² That a “colored” man captained the schooner that brought Sturge and Harvey to Barbados convinced them that the middle class people had already commandeered these kinds of occupations.⁸³ However, the restructuring of labor had created competition between the artisanal middle class and poor whites. The British observers noted: “The competition of the colored people has driven (the poor whites) out of almost every field where free

⁸⁰ House of Commons Papers (16): 234-236.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² The Visit of HRH, Prince Alfred to Barbados February 21 – March 1, 1861. Extracts reprinted in the *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* (BHMS) (29): 82.

⁸³ Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey, “The West Indies in 1837” (London: Hamilton Adams and Co, 1838).

laborers were wont to exercise their skills and industry.”⁸⁴ This point was corroborated by a sermon delivered by the Archdeacon of St. Michael's Cathedral in 1833, who noted that, “[t]he free blacks have, by their superior industry, driven down the lower order of whites from almost every trade requiring skill and continued exertion. I believe that not one in twenty of the working shoemakers is a white man. The working carpenters, masons, tailors, smiths *et cetera*, are for the most part men of colour [...]”⁸⁵ Nearly all the communication between the Barbadians and the ACS noted that the willing emigrants were artisans with families.⁸⁶

This kind of labor competition in Barbados pushed poor whites to look to emigration. On December 23, 1860, in an article in *The Standard*, the Jamaican governor noted an “alleged offer from the government of Barbados to transfer to this island certain white inhabitants who are manifestly by no means calculated to improve the material condition of that colony.”⁸⁷ The newspaper reported that “the governor took it upon himself to reject this offer,” because of his “personal knowledge of the character of the people whom the governor of Barbados seems anxious to get rid of.”⁸⁸ Familiarity with the habits of the “red legs,” as Barbadian poor whites were often called, led the Jamaican governor to declare that “they were by no means the class of immigration that would suit the present wants of Jamaica.” The governor added, “if the Barbados whites can migrate to Jamaica and settle themselves by their own means, we shall be happy to welcome

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Jill Sheppard, *The Redlegs of Barbados*, (New York: K.T.O. Press 1977) 46

⁸⁶ See Letter from Jas. Walker to William Coppinger, ACS Reel 96, domestic Letters, Letter no. 67. Folder 63417.

⁸⁷ *The Jamaican Standard*, December 23, 1860. Extracts reprinted in the *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* (BHMS) (27): 76.

⁸⁸ Ibid

them; but if they are to be imported as paupers, we had rather they stay away.”⁸⁹ Poor whites eventually acquired the means to emigrate and did so, starting communities in Jamaica, Trinidad, and South Carolina.

Emigration like many other issues about freedom became a contested category. Movement thought to be a universal natural right became a legally constituted process. The anxiety of the Barbadian plantocracy about the movement of labor resulted in three core legislations. On April 26, 1839, the Legislature passed “an act to prevent the clandestine deportation of young persons from this island.”⁹⁰ On February 24, 1840, in a legislation titled “an Act to regulate the hiring of servants and to provide for the recovery and security of their wages” colonial officials passed the Master and Servant Act, a piece of post-emancipation legislation unique to Barbados that sought to control the hiring of labor. The census report on emigration activities offered a note of caution to the legislature: “A well regulated emigration system, which shall provide for the admixture of a fair proportion of females and end of old and young of both sexes in the ebbing flood, appears to be the only safe course by which the escape from the evils which either an unhealthy emigration, such as has been in progress during the last ten years...”⁹¹ Through these legal instruments, the meaning of emancipation was decoupled from the desires of those who were meant to experience it.

All throughout this period, legislative adjudications like apprenticeship hovered in a slavery-like manner over freedom. Policies against emigration were followed by more gruesome labor laws. On February 4th, 1841, Governor MacGregor who had also been

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ *Laws of Barbados: Laws Statutes and Compilations* (London, William Clowes and Sons, 1875).

⁹¹ Ibid.

observing the effects of emigration, in addressing a legislative session, referred to the departure of 2,157 laborers to other islands under what he saw as “deceitful allurements practiced on the inexperience and credulity” of laborers.⁹² Colonial officials put forward several contractual agreements between laborers and planters. Further attempts were made to tie freedmen contractually to plantations by eschewing the necessity of a mandatory written contractual instrument.⁹³

...Provided always, nevertheless, that where any such contract shall be entered into for one month, and at the expiration thereof, any such servant...shall with the consent of his or her employers, either expressed or implied, continue in such service either after the first month, or after any subsequent month, every such continuance shall be deemed and taken in every such case to be a renewal of the contract of the service...⁹⁴

One month later, the legislature further amended “the act to prevent the clandestine deportation of young persons,” as well as another “to regulate the Emigration of Labourers from this Island and to protect the Labourers in this Island from impositions practiced on them by Emigration Agents.”⁹⁵ These configurations of the law represented contemporary efforts to discipline labor after slavery; ‘to tame the man and to preserve the slave.’

For much of the post-emancipation period, the tension between freedom and labor played out in these emigration laws. These legislations not only undermined the freedmen’s labor but further designated laborers as wards of the state. With the advent of

⁹² Welch, *Slave Society*, 2.

⁹³ B. Hawes, *West India Colonies: Copies of the Laws, Ordinances and Rules Not Hitherto Printed, No in Force in Each of the West India Colonies, for the Regulation of Labour between Masters and Labourer, and Stating the Dates of Their Being Put in Force* (London: Colonial Office, 1848).

⁹⁴ Public Acts in Force, 1837 -1841, 175-188. Barbados Department of Archives.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*

these legislations, individuals who supported emigration now incurred the wrath of the colony's legal and political system. These emigration laws served other social, economic and political purposes.⁹⁶ With the new legislations operating under the guise of protecting laborers from the machinations of speculators and emigration agents, colonial officials could act as if emigration were the only problem they were trying to solve. However, by reeling in the boundaries of freedom sought by freedmen through labor and emigration, these laws also became justification for the continued rule of the plantocracy. In Barbados, the unavailability of land for peasant agriculture or other forms of independent enterprise combined with material bait and the necessity of survival ensured that freedmen could only understand free labor in its alienated, waged sense. Landlessness ensured freedmen continued alienation from their labor and the products of it. The new laws further sought to not only diminish freedmen's sense of the value of their labor, but also blocked their mobility, the literal and metaphorical condition on which they anchored their new freedom.

Efforts to prosecute persons believed to be promoting emigration from Barbados under the new law exposed how ordinary Barbadians had come to think about migration and labor after slavery. Shortly after the passage of the Act, while "passing in the street," the Bridgetown Police Magistrate overheard Jane Dayrell, "a poor Bridgetown widow," haggling with a laborer who was attempting to charge her "an exorbitant price for a bundle of fuel." Dayrell supposedly told the laborer in jest that he should "go to

⁹⁶ The Barbados Census of 1851-71 list these groups as a representation of the varying "complexion" of the population.

Demerara where he would make a better living.”⁹⁷ Though it was purportedly an innocent and innocuous proposition, the observing magistrate insisted that the widow had breached the newly decreed Emigration Act and summoned her to the courthouse to stand trial on April 2, 1840.⁹⁸ With simple questions of movement perceived to be a natural right of free persons becoming matters of law, post-emancipation became an atmosphere of restriction masquerading as freedom. Juridical enactments such as the Emigration Act signaled new imperial tactics in an arena of shifting social change.

While legal statutes like the Emigration Act were directed at the black laboring class it was the Afro-Barbadian middle class who brought litigious action against it, mobilizing the resources of the different groups within Afro-Barbadian society. Needless to say, a group that had not only been free for longer but also had more resources and education were not going to take, at least without resignation, what they perceived to be an attack from the imperial establishment. Assuming leadership of the larger Afro-Barbadian community, members of the middle class called several public meetings in Bridgetown in the months following Dayrell’s case. Embracing the title of “the most clamorous adviser of the peasantry,” Samuel Prescod, a “colored” human rights rabble-rouser and editor of his own newspaper, *The Liberal*, became the driving force behind the meetings. Presiding as its chairman, Prescod helped to focus the various post-emancipation discontents into cogent political action. The widow, Jane Dayrell, who was present at the meeting informed Prescod that “in a letter which was published at the time, one of the magistrates held out a threat to her that they would bear the charge in mind if

⁹⁷ “Letter of Prescod to Right Honourable Lord John Russell, Her Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State,” November 26, 1840. Colonial Office Records (CO) 28/137. University of the West Indies at Cave Hill Archives: Barbados.

⁹⁸ C. V. H. Archer and Wilfred K. Fergusson, *Laws of Barbados* (Barbados: Advocate Co, 1944).

she ever appeared before them again for the slightest offence.”⁹⁹ In a subsequent emigration petition to Lord John Russell, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Prescod highlighted not only Dayrell’s case, but others he deemed illustrative of Barbados legally restrictive and politically exclusive post-emancipation atmosphere.

Barbadian colonial officials also responded to increasing emigration by prosecuting emigration agents. On May 10th, a month following Dayrell’s trial, Police magistrate Applewhaite from St. Phillip’s parish charged and convicted Thomas Day, an emigration agent from British Guiana, £50 or three months in jail for acting as such an agent. That same day “John Thomas Brown, a shopkeeper in the parish examined as a witness in Day’s case was convicted by the same magistrate for aiding and abetting Mr. Day in his agency.” While giving testimony, the shopkeeper had unwittingly incriminated himself, disclosing that “he had served laborers in the parish about to migrate with provisions from his shop by order of Mr. Day.” The court advanced Brown’s conviction on the additional charge of his “[h]iring out his cart to Mr. Day to take the baggage of emigrants to town from whence they embarked for British Guiana.”¹⁰⁰ The shopkeeper appealed his verdict which the court subsequently reversed, but the emigration agent experienced no such fortune. Though the Assistant Court of Appeal reduced Day’s fine to £25, a further appeal to the Court of Error, comprised of the Barbadian governor and council, confirmed his sentence citing the “clandestine” and “fraudulent” nature of his motivations.

Unsurprisingly, the restriction of movement was meant to restrict labor, which

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

had fallen in short supply in Barbados after the end of slavery. Day, who recognized this, argued in his court case that the legality of his actions as an emigration agent rested on a natural assumption of emancipation: “The right of the free laborer to seek employment wherever he can obtain the best return for his labor.”¹⁰¹ The periodic repetition of emigration laws in Barbados during post-emancipation reflected their relative ineffectiveness. Still, the freedom dreamed up in the abolition and emancipation acts had been won in name only. With the ideas of old plantocracy still holding sway, freedom was all but lost in the social, political, and economic realm.

Barbadian planters and the island’s larger colonial structure had other reasons to fear the opening of the labor market. Movement from Barbados had much to do with the internal dynamics of different islands and played an important part in augmenting geopolitical shifts during post-emancipation.¹⁰² The social, political and economic conditions of different islands influenced freedmen’s emigration tendencies. During his trial, Day, the emigration agent, used what he viewed as Barbadian laborers’ enthusiastic desire to sell their labor to the highest bidder to challenge allegations that he had not “fraudulently” or “clandestinely” motivated laborers to emigrate. He cited instances where prospective emigrants had “walked upwards of 800 miles in the course of their repeated applications before they eventually succeeded.”¹⁰³ It was rather planters’ interest reinforced by a “system of terrorism,” than the need to “protect” laborers that Day saw as the real obstacle to applicants’ desires for emigration. Day saw his actions as simply

¹⁰¹ Memorial of Thomas Day to the Right Honourable Lord John Russell. CO 28/139.

¹⁰² Karen S. Dhanda, “Labor and Place in Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica: A Search for a Comparative Unified Field Theory Revisited,” *New West Indian Guide* (75) No. 3&4 (2001).

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

facilitating the “opening [of] the labor market of the West Indies to general competition.” This, he felt, would in effect ensure “the emancipated classes the full and entire benefit of the act for the abolition of slavery.”¹⁰⁴ But this “opening up of the labor market to general competition” was exactly what Barbadian planters feared. They viewed the efforts of neighboring colonies to attract their laborers as “an unnatural inter-colonial contest.”¹⁰⁵ Instead of fear of the mistreatment of laborers by emigration agents, as the wording of the laws suggested, it was the fear of laborers’ empowerment and labor competition with other islands that underlined Barbadian planters and colonial government officials’ view of Day’s business deals.

The prevalence of these arrests of emigration agents, particularly those from British Guiana, by the Barbados government demonstrated that the opening of the labor market had shifted the arena of colonial contest in the post-emancipation era. Whereas the predominant issue in slavery had been competition over sugar production, labor became the central rivalry among West Indian territories in the post-emancipation period. From the governor’s viewpoint, Barbados’ density of population was a non-issue.¹⁰⁶ Facts from the 1851 census countered this view, however, and pointed out that “Barbados could well spare this number, and still a greater number, without injury to the agricultural, or any other interest.” This supports the speculation that efforts to maintain low labor costs drove emigration legislation. Barbadian colonial officials were also concerned, as the census highlighted, that “the withdrawal of one class of the population,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Minutes of Assembly from meeting of February 4, 1841, quoted in Frank Marshall’s *Early Post-Emancipation Emigration*, 61.

¹⁰⁶ Census report 1851 – 1871.

of a large excess of that class, of the sex and age most valuable to the community and the consequent increase of the non-productive and infirm proportion of the population is a matter of grave consideration.”¹⁰⁷

Labor restructuring affected the artisanal middle class’ sense of independence. For artisans, as a self-reliant and independent group, the transformation from slavery to freedom had eroded some sense of self-sufficiency. Access to land was imperative to this sense of independence. The possibilities that Barbadians saw in the promises of land acquisition was not only part and parcel to their western understanding of holding property, but held all the possibilities of freedom, citizenship, and respectability that they hoped for as individuals and families. As has been observed in other post-emancipation societies, this threatened to remake artisans and their children into workers dependent on wages. These kinds of economic exigencies threatened the social relations of this group.¹⁰⁸ For these reasons, emigration across the Caribbean appealed to this group. Wages varied, but “handcrafts men” such as boat-builders, smiths, joiners, house carpenters and masons could earn \$1.50 per day in British Guiana. The fee for shoemakers, bakers and tailors was from 10 bits (80 cents) to \$1 per day.¹⁰⁹ About a hundred young men left under this scheme in 1839 and a further 2000 had left by 1841. It was only after conditions in British Guiana became less attractive later in 1841 that the outflow lessened. This no doubt help to explain as *The African Repository* reported,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Bruce Laurie and Eric Foner, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 15.

¹⁰⁹ Patricia Stafford, *The Growth and Development of the Brown and Black Middle Class, 1838-1988 and Its Role in the Shaping of Modern Barbados* (Thesis (Ph. D.)--University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados, 2005).

among the Barbadians interested in Liberian emigration were artisans: “coopers, carpenters, shoemakers, a wheelwright, printer and teachers with several who thoroughly understood the cultivation of the cane and manufacture of sugar, and the culture and preparation of all kinds of tropical products.”¹¹⁰

Historian Pedro Welsh has argued that emigration, and particularly the early migration to places such as Demerara, was fueled by the legal binds in which Barbadians found themselves rather than a search for better wages. “Bound to the plantation under a contract in which they had no input,” noted Welsh, “in addition to experiencing a shortage of land for settlement or to establish peasant farming meant that the laborers were at the mercy of the former enslavers.”¹¹¹ The increasing lure of emigration agents, the promises of higher wages, accommodation, land, and other enticements with which Barbadians were unaccustomed, proved effective in defining the ways in which the free labor market would now operate. Not only had they been forced into a strictly alienated, wage-based interpretation of free labor, but as the census report highlighted, “pestilence or emigration is apparently the alternatives as an escape from starvation.”¹¹² The appeal of emigration to both the middle class and laborers were not solely aimed at securing the economic benefits derived from better wages and land. The attendant political capital, which comes from the ability to control and claim the fruits of one’s labor and to make claims on the larger society were also critical.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, Emigrant List Reference of Brig Cora: Vessell #141, African Repository XLI (August 1865), 236-242.

¹¹¹ Paper given by Pedro Welsh at the 41st Annual Conference of the ACH at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, “The Forgotten Dimension: Barbadian Emigration to Suriname in the Nineteenth Century.” Also see Frank Harcourt, “Early Post-emancipation Migration from the Caribbean with Particular Reference to Official Attitudes to Emigrant Agents, 1838 -1842 (Master’s Thesis, University of the West Indies at Mona, 1998).

¹¹² Ibid.

Slighting the Middle Class' Political Agenda

In the years following abolition, growing class division separated the black community even further indicated by qualitative shifts in experiences of labor, civil involvement, and material well-being. While the peasantry slipped into a reality of permanent wage labor, many artisans became the merchants, entrepreneurs, and politicians of the emerging black middle class.¹¹³ The social changes of abolition purportedly held profound economic and political ramifications for the middle class. However, they like the peasantry experienced no radical altering of their status. Given that they were already free, the slow implementation of changes after slavery was even more frustrating for them. As black peasants and the middle class drifted apart, each developed fresh outlooks to approach freedom.

Sturge and Harvey as well as Thome and Kimball directed most of their attention to this group having been entertained by some of them.¹¹⁴ They used consumption patterns to assess the standards of living in terms of this group and their movement towards civilization and culture.¹¹⁵ At the home of Thomas Harris, Esq. born a slave, a campaigner for the rights of free coloreds, they ate “an epicurean variety of meats, flesh, fowl, and fish - of vegetables, pastries, fruits and nuts, and that invariable accompaniment of a West Indian dinner wine.” Joseph Thorne, enslaved at the Belle until about twenty years of age, who they described as “a dark mulatto, with negro features and curly hair,”

¹¹³ Also see Diane Barnes, *Artisan Workers in the Upper South: Petersburg, Virginia, 1820-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 2.

¹¹⁴ See Pedro L.V. Welch and Richard A. Goodridge, *“Red” and Black Over White*, (Bridgetown: Carib Research and Publications, 2000).

¹¹⁵ Similar evaluation and analyses are used to understand contemporary social development. See. T. H. Marshall and T. B. Bottomore, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto Press, 1992)

had a “large library of religious, historical and literary works.” They also described his furniture as “costly and elegant.”¹¹⁶ These experiences of members of the Afro-Barbadian middle class were regarded by Sturge and Harvey and his generation of abolitionists to be the standards of a civilized life and by which they were admitted into a realm of "civilized" society to which black peasants were not privy. It was also Barbadians' claim to these material experiences that indexed civilization by which they considered themselves fit to regenerate Africa.

Kimball and Thome met with members of the black middle class who enjoyed a great degree of social, economic and political success. They dined with London Bourne and his family. Bourne was the son of William Bourne, who was a slave and became a wealthy cooper. Bourne was also born a slave but like his father he found success as a merchant in Bridgetown. Kimball and Thome also noted, “he owns three stores in Bridgetown, and lives in very genteel style in his own house and is worth from twenty to thirty thousand dollars.”¹¹⁷ The abolitionists described the Bournes as “genuine and unadulterated negroes,” whose eleven year old son was about to set out to Edinburgh in Scotland to study at the university. Bourne had become a part of the middle class in typical fashion exhibiting the kinds of education and literacy often noted in the Afro-Barbadian middle class.

They also met with Prescod, who they described as, “chiefly devoted to the interests of the colored community.” Prescod like Bourne had also come to the middle

¹¹⁶ James A. Thome and J. Horace Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies* (New York: Arno Press, 1838, and The New York Times 1969), 72-73.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 75.

class in typical fashion. He like many member of the colored sect of the middle class was the son of a planter and a slave mother. He was initially apprenticed to a joiner in Barbados and at a later date he went to study at the Inns of Court in England, a project unfortunately interrupted by his ill health. But while members of the middle class were economically successful, they were ever mindful of the racial hierarchy in Barbadian society which confined them to an uncomfortable socio-political place. Cecilia Karch has highlighted that although London Bourne was commercially successful, racism initially denied him membership in Commercial Hall.¹¹⁸ Despite the success of non-white merchants, Karch points out the governor refused to endorse the passage of an “Act for constituting a Corporation for the better ordering and managing of the Barbados Chamber of Commerce” reasoning that “no mercantile gentlemen of the coloured body were to be members of that institution.”¹¹⁹

Kimball and Thome noted these kinds of prejudices in their observations. They noted that “the prejudice against color is stronger in Barbados than in any other colony, although the colored class of its population is numerous, wealthy, and respectable, and comprises some of the first merchants of the island.” They highlighted that both Mr. and Mrs. Prescod were educated in England but complained of being excluded from white society.¹²⁰ Prescod experienced similar insults, though as the son of a wealthy planter and lawyer and the Afro-Barbadian woman Mary Smith he neither resembled nor came from

¹¹⁸ Cecilia Karch Braithwaite, “London Bourne of Barbados, 1793 – 1869,” *Slavery and Abolition* (28) (April 2007): 23- 40.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ F.A. Hoyos, *Builders of Barbados*, (Basingstoke: MacMillan Education Limited, 1972) 46; Glenn O Phillips, “The Beginnings of Samuel J. Prescod, 1806-1843: Afro-Barbadian Civil Rights Crusader and Activist,” *The Americas*, XXXVIII, 8 June 1982, 366.

upbringings similar to that of the majority of Bridgetown's darker inhabitants. Before 1843, when he became the first Afro-representative to the House of Assembly, Prescod had been ejected from the gallery of the House of Assembly while observing a legislative session. During a session to discuss the Franchise Bill in 1829, the precocious twenty-two year old Prescod was promptly struck by a fellow attendee with an umbrella for having yelled out an appeal for Afro-Barbadians to be given civil liberties.¹²¹ An English visitor to Barbados who witnessed the ridicule with which Prescod was often greeted commented that if he lived in England Prescod would be "esteemed as a gentleman whilst in Barbados he is in some degree a despised colored man."¹²² The abolitionists left Barbados believing the "star of hope" was rising on the black and brown community. For the middle class, this was not altogether true.

Middle class blacks may have appealed to the Mother Country for reprieve but they took their cues from the struggles of contemporaries in other colonies. Ships arriving in the wharves brought news of gains in other islands creating a Caribbean-wide consciousness among the Afro-Barbadian middle class about the possibilities for freedom.¹²³ While the post-emancipation period affected Jamaica in similar ways, the Afro-Jamaican middle class fared better, acquiring liberties and moving into positions of social, economic and political power. By the early 1800s, Jamaica's free-colored

¹²¹ Glenn O. Phillips, "The Beginnings of Samuel J. Prescod, 1806-1843: Afro-Barbadian Civil Rights Crusader and Activist," *The Americas* (38): No. 3 (Jan., 1982): 363-378.

¹²² William Lloyd, *Letters from the West Indies* (London, Darton and Harvey, 1838), 17. See Glenn O. Phillips, "The Beginnings of Samuel J. Prescod," 364.

¹²³ For views on how news circulation build networks in the Black Atlantic world see, Julius Scott, *The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution* (Thesis (Ph. D.)--Duke University, 1986); Phillip Troutman, "Grapevine in the Slave Market: African American Political Literacy and the 1841 Creole Revolt." *The Chattel Principle: Domestic Slave Trades in the Americas*, ed. Walter Johnson (New Haven, Conn., 2004), 203-33.

population became active participants in several phases of economic life. A few had even inherited plantations from their fathers. Others educated at universities in Britain, achieved upward social mobility and a degree of “acceptance” by whites.

In Kingston, the children of free coloreds outnumbered whites in schools. Of the 500 students at the Wolmers Free School in 1837, 430 were children of free coloreds.¹²⁴ By contrast, Kimball and Thome noted that in Barbados “no colored student has yet been admitted within the walls of Codrington College.”¹²⁵ However, they found a class of free colored small independent freeholders and a number of brown and black schoolteachers. Kimball and Thome noted that a large proportion, if not a majority of Bridgetown merchants were “colored”, that many “mechanics” in the city were enterprising “colored” or black men and that all skills needed by the plantations they visited, including blacksmithing and coopering, were performed by black men. In 1813, more than 2,400 Jamaican free coloreds signed a petition delivered to the House of Assembly demanding the right to give evidence in court. Three years later, in 1816, free coloreds in Jamaica again petitioned for full political and civil rights on the grounds that despite being taxpayers they were not represented. They threatened to cease paying taxes until they were granted these rights. Under pressure from free coloreds, the local authorities gradually removed legal restrictions, culminating with the passing of the ‘Act for the

¹²⁴ See Mavis Campbell, *The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society: A Sociopolitical History of the Free Coloreds of Jamaica, 1800-1865* (Rutherford [N.J.]: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975); Gad J. Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics, and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1981);

¹²⁵ Sturge and Harvey, 154. Codrington College was set up under the will of a wealthy West Indian planter, Christopher Codrington who left his plantations in Barbados to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In 1829-30, under the leadership of Bishop Coleridge, it became a predominantly theological college which was affiliated to the University of Durham in 1875. Medicine was also taught during the nineteenth century. Sean Carrington, Henry Fraser, John Gilmore and Addington Forde. *A-Z of Barbadian Heritage* (1990; Oxford: MacMillan Caribbean, 2003) 47.

Removal of All Disabilities of Persons of Free Condition on December 21, 1830.’ The ability to acquire land in Jamaica created further differences in the experience of freedom on the two islands. Land mass was critical in this regard. Even Jamaican peasants could acquire land, which they often received from Baptist missionaries or by squatting. With this, they built numerous free villages and communities and established themselves as peasant farmers.¹²⁶

In view of these developments in the wider Caribbean, Prescod and others held a public meeting in April 1840 to appeal against “the present very restricted and partial enjoyment of the elective franchise.” Though they saw the franchise as the sole arbiter of exercising citizenship, the middle class by appealing to the judicial systems were in a small way already imagining themselves as imperial citizens. In a letter to Colonial Secretary Lord Russell, Prescod speaking for those who attended the meeting, pointed to the fact that “respectable and influential merchants, storekeepers, and freeholders” were denied rights enjoyed by their counterparts in Jamaica.¹²⁷ They further highlighted what they saw as “the partial and unequal constitution of the government” and “the many serious abuses and evils resulting therefrom.”¹²⁸ They wrote that the abolition of slavery had “effected no alteration in the state of things, as the franchise had continued to be limited to 1,200 out of 130,000 persons.”¹²⁹ They further pointed out “there are certain parts of our colonial code which except us from participating with our white brethren in

¹²⁶ See Gad Heuman, “Slavery and Emancipation in the British Caribbean, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 6, (2) January 1978, pages 166 – 171.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Minutes of Assembly, Meeting of July 14, 1840.

¹²⁹ Ibid

certain privileges, and to which, as British subjects we humbly conceive we have a claim; and that it is our intention, in a less agitated state of the colony, to pray for a removal of such parts which by the several enactments of the legislature materially affect us.”¹³⁰

They pointed out that they were good British subjects who exercised proper social and religious conduct. “Your petitioners ... have all been baptized and brought up in the religion of the established church of England and their general conduct has been met with universal approbation and upon no occasion whatever have they shewn an unwillingness to comply with the rules and restrictions that the legislature have thought proper to lay upon them.”

The petitioners further showed a keen awareness of developments in other islands, particularly Jamaica: “Your petitioners with due pleasure beg leave to observe to your honorable and worshipful house that there are some laws and restrictions laid upon them that the legislature of the sister colonies have found necessary to adopt for the government of the same class of persons.” As they noted, while “those restrictions may have been necessary a century and a half ago, they trust that [you] will see the utility of adopting laws more suitable to the improvement of the present age...putting us on the like footing of people of color in Jamaica, and the other sister colonies of their royal master and king.”¹³¹ In 1831, the legislature had responded to these petitions by passing what became known as the “Brown Privilege Bill.” The bill repealed “all acts or such parts of acts that impose any restraints or disabilities whatsoever on his majesty’s free colored and free black subjects...to which his majesty’s white subjects...are not

¹³⁰ Journal of the House of Assembly, 3rd and 18th of February 1824.

¹³¹ Ibid.

liable.”¹³²

Middle class petitions elicited many reactions from the assembly. Fearful of middle class schemes for political rights and other reforms, the Barbados Assembly of landed white aristocrats voted to make stricter voting prerequisites. The 1842 “Franchise Act” moved to set new qualifications for representation and voting. According to the act, “a member of the House of Assembly had to possess at least thirty acres of land with a house worth at least 500 pounds or control property with an annual value of 200 pounds.” They could also possess “annual income of no less than 300 pounds.” On the other hand, “freehold property worth twenty pounds, leasehold property with a rental value of 100 pounds, an annual income of twenty pounds, or occupancy of urban house or business-place with a rental value of fifty pounds, or payment of parochial rates of five pounds” formed the minimum qualifications for the vote.¹³³ White elites through the Barbadian Assembly had successfully used racial, ideological, economic and imperialistic rationales to exclude freedmen from the body politic. The white oligarchy made political rights that would be accompanied by respectability commensurate with property and land ownership. The Barbadian middle class had been disqualified from citizenship and political prominence on the grounds that they did not own sufficient property and land. Indeed, they found that no matter how powerful or vociferous they were in the black community, they could always be put in their place by the small white oligarchy. With no kind of leverage they might even face declension into the peasant class. By 1865, subjection to the political whims and fancies of the white oligarchy, a range of economic forces, exclusion from the body politic and an inability to be socially mobile resulted in

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Woodville Marshall, “List of Voters for Barbados 1873: A Comment,” *BHMS* (51): 187.

middle class frustrations.

These observations of developments in Jamaica became the crowning step in the Afro-middle class disillusionment with freedom in Barbados. Their sense of relative deprivation stemmed from the discontent they felt when they compared their position to that of middle class Jamaicans. It is no wonder that some of the Barbadian emigrants who had intended to go to Liberia ended up in Jamaica. As Barclay noted, some “persons have changed their minds and have turned their attention to another land, viz Jamaica...”¹³⁴

The Emergence of Interest in Transatlantic Migration

Throughout post-emancipation, the façade of a secure Afro-Barbadian middle class existence deteriorated into an uncertain reality many did not know how to continue to face. Like other social groups, for Barbadians interested in Liberia, emigration also became a means of confronting post-emancipation anxieties. The emergence of Liberia in the marketplace of possible destinations for Barbadians illustrated the gaps and ontological redefinition of post-emancipation by Barbadians. Unlike Demerara and St. Croix that prioritized better wages as a key demand for the peasantry, Liberia represented desires for a greater freedom that was inclusive of citizenship and the experiences of nationhood. Attwell explained this as reasons for the migrants’ interest in Liberia; reasons the emigrants themselves afterwards would reiterate. In his letter to the ACS, Attwell noted that the emigrants were “desirous of emigrating to Liberia for a two-fold reason: one being the improvement of their condition by diligent labor, and two, the noble desire of assisting to elevate their fatherland, or building up a nationality, without

¹³⁴ ACS, Reel 96, Domestic Letters, Letter no.50, folder 63389.

which they consider their race can never attain their proper position in the family of nations.”¹³⁵

Liberia became a new frontier for prospective Barbadian migrants for a variety of reasons. In Barbados, the Emancipation Act had merely positioned blacks in a way that they could be only be reclaimed for the plantation and a life of wage labor. In 1865, the Atlantic facilitated blacks' desires and demand for a more amenable post-emancipation experience. Decisions surrounding pursuit of a transatlantic path to freedom oscillated between staying in comfortable and familiar surroundings and venturing into the unknown. This distance, however, cemented the Barbadians' hope that one day through their own initiatives, they would be able to clear the barriers and access their dreams. The interest in Liberia was as much a consequence of these reasons as it was a result of other push factors related to Barbados' size and overpopulation. Attwell explained that the natural consequence of Barbados' excessive population was emigration. Besides, Attwell remarked, “several thousand have already gone to neighboring colonies.”¹³⁶ While the middle class cited the improvement of their condition by diligent labor as one of the primary reasons driving their interest in Liberian emigration, it was not always evident how the implementation of free labor in Barbados or even emigration laws affected them. The Afro Barbadian middle class had become the vanguard of black post-emancipation activism for the specific kinds of civil and social privileges that protesting could afford them. As C.L.R James explained: “The leaders of a revolution are usually those who have

¹³⁵ *The African Repository*, December (1864): 19.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

been able to profit by the cultural advantages of the system they are attacking.”¹³⁷ Black class distinctions forged during slavery had separated colored educated men like Prescod from the peasants he sought to defend.

Middle class petitioning primarily sought to make post-emancipation laws less restrictive. What was considered inviolable rights in other places and to other races, was now negotiable by law in Barbados. They argued that the passing of these legal statutes was an infringement on a basic human right. They also sought to make the laws more accessible to the goals of the middle class. Prescod’s petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, challenging the constitutionality of post-slavery injustices, illustrates middle class efforts to create a space for dialogue over these issues. Their aims were to make claims on citizenship and to extend their orbit of power through the appropriate legal and political channels so as to establish themselves as respectable people entitled to rights.

Secondly, the middle class made appeals to the Barbadian Assembly and the British colonial establishment on behalf of their laboring counterparts. This was critical to the middle class’ sense of place in the rank and order of Barbadian society. London Bourne, a wealthy Afro-Barbadian merchant, had equally interesting answers for Charles Tappan when he visited Barbados in 1858. Bourne’s responses to Tappan’s questionnaire give further insights into the Afro-Barbadian middle class experiences of freedom.¹³⁸ The questionnaire titled “The Results of Emancipation in Barbados” featured thirteen

¹³⁷ C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins; Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).

¹³⁸ Karch, “A Man for All Seasons: London Bourne,” *BHMS* (45).

questions geared towards gauging if emancipation had bettered the lives of ex-slaves in particular and Barbadian society in general. Tappan further asked: “Do laborers usually take greater interest in estates than under slavery.” Though not a laborer himself London Bourne answered: “Yes, where there are good feelings between employers, laborers, that is, where wages are fairly established fairly paid, there is no dissatisfaction of the slightest nature exists.” In concluding, Tappan asked “on the whole, have former slaves benefited otherwise by emancipation and in what respects;” Bourne replied that “they have all the rights of men, and all those attributes which providence in his goodness has destined for men.”¹³⁹

Through his memorial, Prescod also sought to “fully avail himself of this constitutional means to bring your lordship acquainted with the following facts illustrative of the spirit in which the said act [emigration act] has been and is yet being carried into effect by the magistrates and others in authority.” In light of the charges made against Day, Prescod noted: “it was not stated in the charge, nor shown in evidence that any particular person or persons had been contracted with, enticed, or persuaded by defendant to leave the island, but simply that he acted as such an agent.” He further noted that “neither before the magistrates in the first instance nor in either of the subsequent appeals was it shown that he had promoted his object by falsehood or fraud.” He noted that in almost all of the cases that firstly, “the law was invariably imposed by the convicting magistrates; secondly, that in none of them did it appear in evidence that the party had promoted his object by falsehood or fraud.” Middle class issues remained largely with the law. In November of 1849, when John Candler a representative of the

¹³⁹ *The Liberal*, February 9, 1859.

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) visited the West Indies, Prescod highlighted that “laborers are not suffering from the operation of laws against them, but from the absence of laws to protect them.”¹⁴⁰ He further added that though they “hire houses, and land for provision grounds,” they still “have no security of tenure for either,” as they “can be ejected at a day’s notice.”

Finally, the middle class co-opted the issues of the laboring class because they realized that race linked their collective social, civil and political fates together. They also realized that in legal matters, contestations persisting into the post-slavery period had moved to a judicial and political realm in which they or laboring counterparts could neither make claims nor seek redress. No case demonstrated this more than in 1840 when Magistrate Frederick Watts filed a libel suit against Prescod. The dispute started with concerns over the welfare and the quality of freedom of the Barbadian underclass and centered on different interpretations of free labor. It was particularly directed towards those laborers on a plantation in St. George, an interior parish. On July 8, 1839, Prescod, in a letter to *The British Emancipator*, reported that the laboring classes were suffering from oppression and fraud and that in a new post-slave society not only were laborers now less free than any other class, they were also further driven to desperation.¹⁴¹

Prescod’s story reached governor MacGregor who then hired Magistrate Watts to examine Prescod’s allegations. As with the Belgreave counter address, Anthony Barclay was again appointed chairman of a committee of enquiry into the statements of the St.

¹⁴⁰ Joseph Borome (ed), “John Candler’s Visit to Barbados, 1849,” *BHMS* (50): 128.

¹⁴¹ *The Liberal*, February 10, 1838.

Georges deputation and to present a memorial to the governor.¹⁴² Subsequent to conducting his interviews, Watts in reporting to the governor brought a deputation of laborers to bear out that they were reasonably well treated contrary to Prescod's claims. The document read to the governor in the presence of the laborers, supposedly with their acknowledgment and consent noted, "far from being improperly interfered with, as free we have every advantage that any class of subjects possess, the same laws that govern us, the same magistrates to guide us, and in fact every privilege enjoyed by every other citizen of the state."¹⁴³ From the perspectives of the editors of the *Globe*, this acknowledgment clearly refuted Prescod's slanderous comments that had served to "blacken the characters of the White inhabitants from the Governor down to the lowest grade of the official authorities and especially the planters of the island." The elites punctuated their dissatisfaction with Prescod labeling him an unpatriotic and disloyal mischief-maker whose letter had only sought to disrupt the "mutual good feeling" that existed between the planters and the laborers.

Prescod criticized Watts for being selective in the plantations he visited and deliberately ignoring the views over 90,000 laborers in Barbados. In addressing the court during his trial, Prescod sought to transcend the simple charge of having printed false information by pointing out that the case not only had an impact on his rights but also that "of every man of every class in the community who knew himself a free man and desired to maintain his freedom." He further explained that in writing the letter he had

¹⁴² Jerome Handler and Ronnie Hughes, and Ernest M. Wiltshire, *Freedmen of Barbados: Names and Notes for Genealogical and Family History Research* (Charlottesville, Va: Published for the Friends of the Barbados Archives by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy, 1999); Jerome S Handler, *A Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627-1834* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971).

¹⁴³ *The Liberal*, November 27, 1839.

merely sought “redress for the laboring class by supplying his friends in England at the Anti-Slavery Society with the necessary information regarding the state of the colony and the conditions of the people so that the society could use its influence to exert pressure on behalf of these members of his country.”¹⁴⁴ The shrinking ambit of middle class power had led to their reliance on these kinds of political tactics.

Race had linked the fates of laborers and the middle class in the post-slavery period. The middle class felt that though legislation was directed towards the peasantry, it also comprised their own sense of political security. Laborers tacitly recognized the import of this connectivity. Writing to the *Liberal* under the pseudonym “Defensor” one supporter of Prescod noted that though the laborers had been questioned they had not known that their answers were geared towards vilifying Prescod, making him out to be an enemy to their cause. As far as the daily gossip among the laboring community went, headmen had only shown up to tell them that it was necessary that they sign the address so as to cultivate good relations between themselves and their employers.¹⁴⁵ The “Defensor” further noted that the laborers had sought to make it known publicly that they had not signed any address against Prescod. In fact, according to the writer, the laborers only became aware of the true intent of the address when it was read in their presence to the governor.

Conclusion

Historians have long argued that the coming of emancipation across the British Empire in 1834 did not mean that freedmen were now freer than they had been. The re-

¹⁴⁴ Thome and Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies*, 9.

¹⁴⁵ Harcourt, “Early Post-Emancipation emigration from Barbados,” 51.

designation of slaves as apprentices meant that slavery now operated under a new name. For the middle class who had been free before slavery, freedom brought few if any changes. The institutional shifts and social processes necessary to bring about a change in livelihood had failed. Despite using litigious means for inserting themselves into the body politic and their persistent petitioning for post-slavery reforms, responses from both colonial and local authorities fell short of expectations. This increasingly restrictive political atmosphere played on middle class concerns for their future entitlements to rights and possibly their fears of class relegation. The prospects of achieving civil and political rights that would afford them the kinds of respectability and social mobility were rejected by the ruling white oligarchy. The ensuing gap that developed between their post-emancipation ambitions and the freedom that came created a sense of societal disassociation that made life in Barbados unbearable for them and further made them open to the idea of emigration.

The Afro-Barbadian middle-class had grown impatient with the colonial establishment. By the 1860s, despite their frequent “petitions to the two houses of parliament,” their prayers “for a reasonable and just reform” had not been answered. Concern for their material and political advancement made middling blacks receptive to the idea of emigration. Thus the Liberian government’s offers of citizenship and land to willing West Indian emigrants would create further excitement among the potential emigrants. While they were denied civil and political rights in Barbados, they had the chance of becoming first class citizens in Liberia. Whereas Barbados excluded them, Liberia offered the middle class inclusion in the body politic and a significant role in societal goals to “build up a nationality.”

CHAPTER II

Imagined Geographies of Redemption: Barbadian Emigrants and the Idea of African Civilization



Figure 2 Map of the Atlantic World

In the late eighteenth century, a peculiar paradox characterized the British Atlantic world.¹ In 1787, British abolitionists had planted a colony at Sierra Leone with the intent of it becoming a “province of freedom” for poor blacks.² But while it came to symbolize freedom along a coast over-run by slave trafficking, it also became a contradiction to the kinds of black bondage maintained by the British in its other colonies across the Atlantic.³ Some saw these incongruities as loopholes in the British abolitionist

¹ See Alexander Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers: Black Migrants across the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008).

² See David Lambert, “Sierra Leone and Other Sites in the War of Representation over Slavery,” *History Workshop Journal* 64(1) (2007): 103-132.”

³ See Zoe Laidlaw, “Heathens, Slaves and Aborigenes: Thomas Hodgkins’s Critique of Missions and Antislavery,” *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1, 2007, 133-161.

campaign. One Lieutenant Governor of Gambia warned that barring a more harmonious course of action, “the blacks in the West Indies will...receive his emancipation at the expense of his brethren in Africa.”⁴ Seemingly in fulfillment of this prophesy, by 1840, when West Indians had begun to carve out their lives as free men after emancipation, the slave trade, in contravention to abolitionist laws and treaties, had been revitalized with force on the West African coast. Having entered its busiest phase in the “second slavery movement”, it would send many more Africans into slavery in Cuba and Brazil.⁵

Thomas Buxton who had succeeded William Wilberforce as the antislavery agitator in the British Parliament became the new leader of abolitionist efforts.⁶ In his publication, *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy* (1840), Buxton expressed a desire to “ascertain why it is that our gigantic efforts and costly sacrifices for the suppression of the slave trade had proved unavailing.”⁷ Many problems beleaguered abolitionists’ efforts.⁸ However, Buxton’s focus on Africa as the lone site from which to yet again implement abolition policies highlighted the kinds of one-dimensional and shortsighted

⁴ Quoted in J. Gallagher, “Fowell Buxton and the New African Policy, 1838-1842,” *Cambridge Historical Journal* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1950), pp. 36-58.

⁵ For more on the “second slavery” and the campaign to abolish the Atlantic slave trade, see: Dale Tomage and Michael Zueske, eds., *The Second Slavery* 2 (Binghamton, NY, 2008); Karen Racine and Beatriz G. Mamigonian, *The Human Tradition in the Atlantic World, 1500-1850* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010); Manolo Florentino, *Tráfico, cativo e liberdade: Rio de Janeiro, séculos XVII-XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2005); Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba After Slavery* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁶ William Hague, *William Wilberforce: The Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2007); Eric Metaxas, *Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery* (New York, NY: Harper San Francisco, 2007); Stephen Tomkins, *William Wilberforce: A Biography* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2007).

⁷ Thomas Fowell Buxton, *The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy* (London: Dawsons, 1968).

⁸ See Eric Williams, *Capitalism & Slavery* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1966); Christopher Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977).

thinking that seemingly handicapped British abolitionism.⁹ The 1841 Niger Expedition, an outgrowth of Buxton's newly established "Society for the Suppression of the Slave Trade and the Civilization of Africa," aimed to once more plant independent settlements on the West African Coast.¹⁰ The intent was to not only to affect abolitionism by counteracting slaving *entrepots*, but also to gradually transform and revitalize the continent.¹¹ Through civilization, expansionism, and missionary work, the cardinal tenets of British imperialism, abolitionists believed they would advance the cause of African civilization.

Finding suitable candidates to effect abolition and "civilize Africa had become one of the most intractable problems in the efforts of the British. As Africa increasingly became known as the "white man's grave," new standards for choosing "missionaries" for fieldwork revolved around candidates' immunity to disease and their degree of "enlightenment."¹² British abolitionists' response to this dilemma was their embrace of new ideas that acclimated blacks with their exposure to Christianity and other facets of enlightenment would not only be beneficial in terms of their sense of identification with their "African brethren," but by virtue of their race they would also be able to weather the dangers of the African environment.¹³ In their efforts to initiate these ideas, British

⁹ Howard Temperley, *White Dreams, Black Africa: The Antislavery Expedition to the River Niger 1841-1842* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

¹⁰ See Phillip Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Actions, 1780-1850* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1965).

¹¹ See Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹² For views on climate and racial differentiation see Mark Harrison, *The Tender Frame of Man: Disease, Climate, and Racial Difference in India and the West Indies, 1760-1860* (Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 1996).

¹³ See John Turner, "A Black-White Missionary on the Imperial Stage: William H. Sheppard and Middle-Class Black Manhood," *Journal of Southern Religion* 9 (2006).

abolitionists trained liberated Africans such as Samuel Crowther as missionaries to proselytize to native Africans.¹⁴

As an extension of the imperial complex, British plans for African civilization would not go unnoticed by the empire's black inhabitants in its West Indian colonies. Neither did the paradox of black's simultaneous freedom on one coast, subordination on another, as an underlying shortcoming of abolitionism escape them. Black West Indians' views on African civilization developed as a corresponding movement alongside and within British efforts and activities in Africa. Anthony Barclay and other Barbadians who had expressed interest in emigration to Liberia illustrated that they had been keenly following British works in Africa. In the resolutions passed by the committee of The Barbados Company for Liberia, they expressed that: "The philanthropic objects which Her Majesty's Government have in view and the measures which they have adopted for the carrying out of the same have for some time engaged the attention of a considerable portion of Her Majesty's loyal subjects in the Island of Barbados."¹⁵ In inserting themselves in this transatlantic dialogue, West Indians aimed to challenge the British African civilization campaign by questioning who should be in charge of those efforts. Emancipated West Indians came to share the British imperial ideas of abolitionism and African civilization but considered themselves to be important stakeholders.

The resolution passed by the committee of The Barbados Company for Liberia

¹⁴ See James Schön, and Samuel Crowther, *Journals of the Rev. James Frederick Schön and Mr. Samuel Crowther: Who, with the Sanction of Her Majesty's Government, Accompanied the Expedition Up the Niger in 1841 on Behalf of the Church Missionary Society* (London: Cass, 1970); Duke Akamisoko, *Samuel Ajayi Crowther: His Missionary Work in the Lokoja Area* (Ibadan [Nig.]: Sefer, 2002); Lamin O Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999);

¹⁵ *African Repository*, August (1848): 240-242.

illustrated the ways in which Barbadians, having imbibed British imperial notions, now came to see African civilization as their solemn duties as diasporic blacks. This perception of diasporic duty instigated by the granting of abolition to West Indians, were further developed by anxieties about African civilization in the mid-nineteenth century. According to Barclay, it had “awakened in them...a deep feeling of gratitude for the great measure of emancipation, whereby their brethren in bondage were generally raised from a state of abject slavery to the proud position of British freemen.” This was the reason for their “disinclination to remain passive spectators of the great work of moral regeneration already commenced for the benefit of their brethren on the continent of Africa, to whom they are closely bound by the ties of consanguinity, affection and sympathy.”¹⁶ These factors thus contributed to the broadening of the migratory horizons of Barbadians.

But though resentful of white British arrogance, West Indians who sought to emphasize their African-ness, by espousing a similar superior attitude towards Africans also revealed themselves also to be archetypical British snobs. The reason for their anger was not so much about the idea of civilizing Africa but who should do it and who should be in charge of it. Despite their desires to migrate, West Indians were not actively trying to subvert the will of the British empire. Joseph Tracy, a director of the ACS, in writing to the colonization society noted "some of the West India blacks are determined to colonize in Africa. Their plan is to do it under British protection, but they are resolved to do it whether they have that or not."¹⁷ In a letter to the ACS, Barclay and the leaders of the Liberian Company expressed further motives for wanting to emigrate to Liberia. They noted that they were driven by the “noble desire of assisting to elevate their fatherland, or

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ ACS Domestic Letters reel 55, folio 31060. Letter 270.

building up a nationality, without which they consider their race can never attain their proper position in the family of nations.”¹⁸

Beyond their interest in the British civilization campaign, Barbadians’ views on African emigration had been exacerbated by a series of post-emancipation woes that had affected the Afro-Barbadian middle class’ ability to eke out a suitable living. A number of unfavorable circumstances in Barbados had already pushed many emigrants to other neighboring islands in search of higher wages, political rights, and better living conditions and other kinds of post-emancipation opportunities. Barbadians interested in African emigration, however, projected their anxieties about Caribbean post-emancipation onto a messianic vision of Africa. *Africanus* even put this question to the Barbadians: “If political equality is denied to us in that land which gave us birth by those in whom rests the power to bestow it – how are we to obtain it?”¹⁹ On the one hand, he suggested Barbadians fight their way “as the braver spirits among us are doing—bringing all our moral energies to the good work.”²⁰ In another breath, however, he demanded that they seek it “on other and more auspicious shores, leaving behind the land of our birth — that land which is dear to our hearts, to be tilled by the tyrants who claim it as their own.”²¹ The idea of civilizing Africa provided Barbadians with a more “auspicious” and meaningful migratory trajectory. In the process, it further pushed a Barbadian population already immersed in post-slavery Caribbean migration to consider longer transatlantic routes to freedom.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

Exploring the origins of these views among Barbadian emigrants unearth an intriguing and under-explored dimension of Caribbean post-emancipation and Liberian colonization bottom-up history. Understanding why Barbadian emigrants considered Liberia as a destination necessarily means understanding their socially differentiated livelihoods, backgrounds, cultures and the ambitions and ideologies of the communities, families, and its disaggregated social actors who opted to go there.²² This sets up how they envisioned the benefits and trade-offs of undertaking such as long journey. The emigration of these 346 Barbadian emigrants therefore challenges assumptions of West Indian post-emancipation and the de-facto post-slavery middle class. Against the uncertainties that emigration to Liberia presented—travel across the Atlantic and disease and death in Liberia— Barbadians were still willing to forgo living in the West Indies for a life in Africa. That they were willing to discount these uncertainties highlighted the lack of confidence they had in any future in the Caribbean.

In a way, understanding who the Barbadian emigrants were further allows us to engage with pan-Africanist, imperialist, and colonizationist ideologies in all there complexity and the various inversion of these historiographies. *Africanus* had restructured British transatlantic plans in the Caribbean and Africa to place “blacks” at the center of orchestrating their own freedom. The insertion of West Indians’ views in the plans to civilize Africa and to eradicate the slave trade brought some semblance of congruity to the transatlantic abolition campaign. Furthermore, that some West Indians had taken up the task of finding their own freedom while aiding the African civilization project also meant that British imperialistic designs for blacks on both sides of the

²² See Ian Scoones, "Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: A Framework for Analysis" (IDS Working Paper 72).

Atlantic had in a sense been derailed. By putting West Indians at the nexus of any viable Afro-European relationship, *Africanus* had inserted them into the traditional binary oppositional narrative that often defined encounters between the two continents. Using their colonial subjectivity to leverage West Indians' importance to the African civilization project, both *Africanus* and Barclay could be seen as pan-Africanists.

However, Barclay's views on civilization and imperialism suggests that West Indians' views on Africa were more varied and complex than most historians have recently accounted for. As the seven resolutions of the Barclay-headed Barbados Company for Liberia showed, West Indians believed that life under the British imperial system had endowed them with the kinds of "civilization" that they could now impart to Africans. As "children of Africa in the colonies," West Indians believed they had a certain Afro-European double-consciousness that would lend itself to African development. Africa served as a backdrop for not only the fantasies of diasporic blacks but also their sense of heroism. Beyond racial identification with Africans, West Indians believed their industrious habits and religious beliefs, gained from their association with Europeans, made them model civilizers. West Indians' preconceived notions of the significance of their imperial heritage and race, therefore, moves imperialism and colonization beyond its "white on black dimension" to their more complex aspects.

Chapter two is a prosopography that presents new empirical data on the Barbadian emigrants to Liberia. Part one is a methodological reconstruction of the emigrants' lives from the ship manifest records supplemented with newspaper reports, baptism records,

census data, tax-payer and voting lists.²³ Often in historical accounts, emigrants are subsumed and represented as large masses rather than individuals and families with specific agendas. This chapter thus seeks to decentralize the ACS and demystify the emigrants by making them visible, focusing on them as individuals and as families. It highlights the familial, professional, racial, class, and other communal connections within the Barbadian migrant stream. Part two highlights the socio-cultural, religious and ideological contexts out of which they imagined Liberia to be a “more auspicious shore.” Both parts offer a micro-historical view of the Afro-Barbadian families before their departure to Liberia that essentially lays out the background against which their later socio-economic, cultural, and political lives in Liberia can be understood and contextualized.

The chapter argues that the nature of the emigrants’ goals and how they imagined themselves as actors in Liberia moves us beyond an over-simplified vision of pan-Africanism. Barbadians’ emigration to Liberia and their larger than life ambitions was as much a flight into ideological escapist fantasies as it was a willful strategy aimed at finding land and economic security, social mobility and power. Ambiguities, conflicts and philosophical tensions were inherent to the reasons and ambitions undergirding their emigration to Liberia, thus complicated their pan-African vision. The unequal pairing of

²³ The empirical data presented numerous issues and challenges. The organizing principles of the ship manifest were names, ages, occupations and the various religious affiliations of the Barbadian emigrants. Further information gathered from church birth records, tax information, newspaper reports and census data, used to corroborate and supplement often turned up differences. For instance, differences in religious ascriptions often had nothing to do with changes but were rather societal, religious and cultural distinctions. Emigrants were designated as Episcopalian in a US context but were viewed otherwise as Anglican. Episcopalian is the American term for Anglican. At other times, the birth record of a child would list a different occupation for the parent other than the one assigned on the ship’s manifest. These kinds of issues also illustrated the nature of the cultural differences that would later manifest themselves in Liberia.

Barbadians' civil-religious, economic and political ambitions had two clear implications. Firstly, the nature of the dynamics that united their economic and ideological ambitions ensured that their pan-African ideals were compensatory and tenuous from the outset. Secondly, and an even more striking problem evident in the goals of Barbadian emigration movement, was the pre-figured societal hierarchy that placed West Indians above native Africans in the visions to civilize and develop Africa. These issues raise questions about imperialism and colonization as starkly racialized phenomenon. These kinds of contradictions were harbingers of the problematic dynamic that later influenced the course of nation-building in Liberia.

Afro-Barbadians in Post-Slavery

The ACS' considerations of the possible impact of the Barbadian emigrant stream were made on account of the perceived value of their family units, labor and industry, religion and level of civilization. Yet, the 346 Barbadians who expressed interest in emigrating to Liberia were by no means a homogenous group. They were a heterogeneous group whose identity as Barbadians and "blacks" intersected with differences in gender, age, skill, education, religious affiliation, and social and political status. They were often embedded in different identifiable groups, communities, and institutions. These became visible through Anglican baptismal registers and ship manifests that recorded the names, professions, and addresses of parents thus allowing historians to reconstruct the organizational nature of their households, family and kinship networks, work, religious affiliations, and community and class ties.

The web of relationships among the group of emigrants often crisscrossed and reinforced one another. Single individuals formed the minority of a voyage dominated by a group of over fifty couples with large families who were self-proclaimed members of the middle class. The emigrants, specifically the males, were largely artisans who were predominantly from urban areas. Of the 346 total emigrants, eighty-one or twenty-three percent were between the ages of sixty-five and thirty-one were born before slavery ended in 1834; 244 or seventy percent were born after slavery's end; and twenty-four were born during the period of apprenticeship (1834-1838). The age demography, class, religious affiliation, skill, and education of the emigrants highlight the kinds of variations in experiences that oriented their views towards how life would be experienced in Liberia.

The particularities of the Barbadian migrant stream were developed over time in settled geographically bounded communities following the end of slavery. The emigrants were from different locations, among them the more interior and rural parishes of St. Thomas, St. Phillip, and St. Joseph. At least half of the families, however, were from the largely urban parish of St. Michael and the up and coming urban settlement of Christ Church. Bordered by Christ Church to the south and St. George to the east and located on the southwestern tip of the island, the parish of St. Michael housed the Barbados capital of Bridgetown. Established by English settlers in 1628, the city of Bridgetown having become the center of economic and political life in Barbados, by extension, also became a strategic cis-Atlantic community within the British Atlantic world.²⁴ Historian Karl

²⁴ To understand the importance of Cis-Atlantic communities in the British Atlantic World, see David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas, *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

Watson has noted that “because of the geographical location of the island and the favorable trade winds, Barbados, Bridgetown in particular, became an entrepot for the re-exportation of slaves to North America and other Caribbean islands.”²⁵ With its port, trading activities, and lively maritime culture, Bridgetown stood out as the center of the island’s commercial life. Trade and governance further reinforced its centrality to the connection between Barbados and the Metropole.²⁶

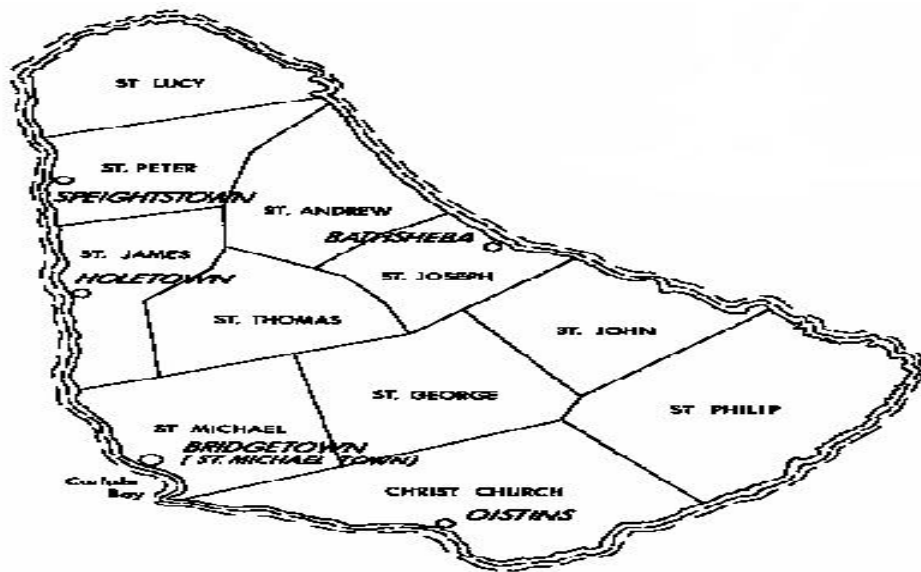


Figure 3 Parish Map of Barbados

By 1809, a small group of colored and blacks, among them merchants, artisans, and other professionals, established a stronghold in Bridgetown making the Barbadian capital the cultural hub of the black Barbadian middle class.²⁷ Through natural increase

²⁵ Karl Watson, *The Civilised Island, Barbados: A Social History, 1750-1816* (Ellerton, Barbados: Caribbean Graphic Production, 1979).

²⁶ Stephen Hornsby, *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2005).

²⁷ Patricia Stafford, “The Black and Brown Middle Class in Barbados” (PhD Dissertation: UWI-Cave Hill, 2005).

and manumissions blacks eventually comprised 61% of Bridgetown's free population.²⁸ Robert H. Schomburgk, in his *History of Barbados* (1848), noted that "the population of the island as of 1829 was 14,959 whites, 5146 free coloured and 82,902 Negroes."²⁹ In 1851, the census counted a mixed population of one-tenth whites, one-fourth colored, and two-thirds blacks.³⁰ In Bridgetown, free blacks often came in contact with sojourners of the British Atlantic world, including seamen and mariners who worked on the wharf in the city. Through these contacts they received news from around the Caribbean and Atlantic as well as forged far-reaching connections.

Many black Barbadian middle class families like the Barclays lived on the famous Roebuck Street in Bridgetown. The popular street not only boasted some of the better housing available in the urban area, but was also the site of the island's first parliament. The local Barbadian newspaper, *The Times*, carried advertisements that exemplified the affluence of the area. "For sale, the eligible property No. 16, Roebuck Street consisting of a cool and commodious residence with every convenien[ce], in a desirable situation near the church and the market; outbuildings for every purpose in an enclosed yard and a detached house with tenantry; the whole yielding a rental of \$26 per month or \$300 per annum, and capable of yielding much more with a minimum outlay."³¹ The taxation rates laid out by the St. Michael Vestry were especially high in this parish. Most inhabitants

²⁸ See Jerome Handler and Arnold A Sio, "Barbados" in *Neither Slave nor Free* (eds) David W. Cohen & Jack P. Greene (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 217; Cecilia A Karch, "A Man for all Seasons: London Bourne," *BHMS* (XLV): 1.

²⁹ Robert Schomburgk, *History of Barbados comprising a geographical and statistical description of the island, a sketch of the historical events since the settlement and an account of its geology and natural productions* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1848).

³⁰ "Census Report of the Population of Barbados 1851 – 71" (Barbados National Archives: Barbados), 1.

³¹ *The Times*, September 19, 1865,

could, however, afford these taxes as the area mostly housed professionals including merchants and blacksmiths.

Bridgetown was most famous for its small retail outlets known as huckster shops and other similar establishments that sold furniture.³² Shop-keepers and hucksterers often peddled their goods and wares in Bridgetown, parlaying those efforts into establishing shops on Roebuck street. An American prisoner-of-war detained at Barbados during the war of 1812 recorded that “there was a large number of free Negroes residing in Bridgetown, most of them in comfortable circumstances... These free Negroes carried on all the mechanical trades, such as tailors, shoemakers, jewelers, and were expert workmen. Many of them were shopkeepers. Indeed, I should think that the largest numbers of shops were kept by them.”³³ As a shopkeeper, Samuel Skeete, one of the would-be Liberian emigrants, was an active member of this popular profession in Bridgetown. Merchants and shopkeepers paid about one third the entire taxes, two thirds being borne by proprietors and planters. Given that the majority of the emigrants were from the urban area we can assume that they were taxpayers in one way or another. In that sense, despite being barred from the franchise, being corralled into the legal and alternative economies of the state gave them some semblance of active participation in citizenship.

Family functioned as the fundamental organizing principle in the ship manifest that documented the Barbadian migrants. The Barbadian group was made up of over fifty

³² See “The City of Bridgetown,” *The Sunday Advocate*, June 30, 1996.

³³ Wanren Alleyne, “Old Bridgetown’s Black Businessmen in it so Happened, *Barbados Advocate*,” quoted in Cecilia Karch Brathwaite, “London Bourne of Barbados (1793 – 1869).” *Slavery and Abolition* Vol. 28, April 2007.

families. This was a part of a larger pattern where the ACS encouraged whole families to emigrate because they did not want to be associated with breaking up families as was the case with American slavery. Furthermore, because mortality often exceeded natural growth, whole families were encouraged to emigrate as a means of addressing population challenges in Liberia. Family, kinship networks and social relations played an important role in migration ventures. Not only were families a pivotal concern in decisions to emigrate, they also figured significantly in the establishment of support networks at the destination. Furthermore, the extent to which migration could provide means to success largely depended on the capacity of migrants and their households to mobilize support through their established kinship networks. The family dynamics of the Barbadian emigrant cluster group revealed the kinds of social dynamics that would be added to those already existing in Liberia.

Family figured importantly to post-slavery social reorganization as well as to the nation-building project in Liberia. After slavery, families were thrown into a relationship with the market economy in Barbados and the wider Atlantic unmediated by any legal or structural barriers. How families negotiated these barriers determined their survival after slavery. Indeed, the new post-slavery household became a significant decision-making unit which had implications for labor supply throughout the colonies and the wider Atlantic world. Migration became a way for families to negotiate the post-slavery labor market. For black nations like Liberia, the migration of families became central to its development.

While the Barbadians' broader family patterns were similar to African Americans, these particular emigrant families for the most part did not reflect the same kinds of male

absent household that sociologist E. Franklin Frazier and others observed among African Americans.³⁴ Families such as the Barclays who had started to have children during slavery were able to maintain their household thirty years after the institution ended.³⁵ The domestic arrangement of the Barbadian families highlights an important distinction from African Americans who in many cases, by being forced to emigrate, often left family members behind.³⁶ The omission of this important context out of the Liberian emigration experience have served to stifle deeper understandings of the multiple social forces brought by emigrants to Liberia that went on to shape the culture in a variety of ways.

Based on the Barbadians' skill and intelligence that implied their degree of civilization, members of the American Colonization Society (ACS) considered them beneficial to the growth of Liberia. The ACS saw letters written by the Barbadian colonization Society as indicative of this broader view about the Barbadians' intelligence. In one instance, the editor of *The African Repository* used a letter written by the Barbadians to the Liberian President J.J. Roberts to highlight these attributes. "The

³⁴ Frazier contended that slavery had divided black families. That the Barbadian emigrants more often than not had 2 parent families demonstrates the familial stability within this group of emigrants. See Edward Franklin Frazier and Nathan Glazer, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); Herbert George Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).

³⁵ Laurence Brown and Tara Inniss, "The Slave Family in the Transition to Freedom: Barbados, 1834-1841," *Slavery and Abolition* Vol 26, August 2005 , pages 257 – 269. Also see Elizabeth Ann Regosin, *Freedom's Promise: Ex-Slave Families and Citizenship in the Age of Emancipation* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002).

³⁶ See Tom W. Shick, Roll of the Emigrants to the Colony of Liberia Sent by the American Colonization Society from 1820-1843 [computer file]. Madison, WI: Tom W. Shick [producer], 1973. Madison, WI: Data and Program Library Service [distributor], 1973 and 1996; <<http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/Liberia/index.html>>; (04 June 2011); Peter J. Murdza, *Immigrants to Liberia, 1865* (Dept. of Anthropology University of Delaware: Newark, 1975); Emigrants Database, Virginia Emigrants to Liberia, Virginia Center for Digital History, University of Virginia ([/liberia/index.php?page=Resources&ion=Search%20Emigrants](http://liberia/index.php?page=Resources&ion=Search%20Emigrants)).

designations of those who sign it are particularly worthy of notice. Out of nine, six belong to that which we may assign the title of literary and especially intelligent class of society being school masters, librarians, or engaged generally in literary pursuits.”³⁷

Anthony Barclay listed as a penman in the ship’s manifest ranked among the educated. Barclay seemed to have come from a line of educated freed blacks. His father had signed the Belgreave Address in 1819 and Barclay junior himself had signed the later counter address on May 6, 1833. Barclay’s wife Sarah Bourne, was the daughter of the black merchant London Bourne who had sent his children to be educated in England. As evident, Barclay’s children, both males and females, were educated as school teachers, clerks and in other professions. This gives some context as to how the Barclays would fare socially and economically in Liberia. Aside from the political background of Barclay, it explains the driving social force behind the young son Arthur becoming president of Liberia and other Barclays assuming other governmental positions.

It became quite evident that the ACS viewed skill and labor as the single most important attribute of the emigrants. In addition to the ship manifest, nearly all other communication between the Barbados Company for Liberia and the ACS emphasized that the emigrants were artisans.³⁸ However, for the most part, only the occupations of the male emigrants were noted. The primacy accorded to males and their labor highlight the kinds of patriarchy existing in post-emancipation Barbados that would underpin the makings of the new Liberian nation. Males with their professions were always listed first on the ship manifest, a move that highlighted their roles as the economic core of the

³⁷ *African Repository*, July (1857), 38.

³⁸ See Letter from Jas. Walker to William Coppinger, ACS Reel 96, domestic Letters, Letter no. 67. Folder 63417.

family. For example, in the Blackett family, the father, Edward Blackett was listed as a smith while no profession was listed for his wife, Mary Elizabeth Blackett. It can be inferred that the wife's role was to care for the four young children: Catharine Jackman Blackett, six years; Alonzo Horatio F.H. Blackett, five years; Alfred Eleazer F.G. Blackett, three years; Alberta Lavinia Blackett, one year. This was the same for the Padmore family. While the father Jacob Padmore was listed as a carpenter on the birth record of his daughter Ruth Padmore and as a farmer on the ship manifest, no occupation was listed for the mother Lucretia Padmore on either the baptism record or the manifest. Of the eleven Padmore children, one of the sons, Jacob Padmore was listed as a mason. This was the model exhibited on the manifest for almost all of the Barbadian emigrant families.

Nonetheless, this pattern was not always the case. The Barclay family's diversified household income was attributed to their levels of education and political affluence. Anthony Barclay, the superintendent of the St. Mary's Asylum, and a "pen man" had a family of thirteen. He married his wife Sarah Barclay, formerly Sarah Bourne, the daughter of London Bourne, the wealthy Afro-Barbadian merchant, and a confectioner on September 6, 1835.³⁹ Together the Barclays had eight daughters, and four sons. One son, Samuel Gerald, however, died in Bridgetown on the 17th of June 1854 at age five before the family could depart for Liberia.⁴⁰ The other children were raised to be industrious. Mary shared her mother's profession as a confectioner; Antoinette and Elizabeth, one a school mistress and the other a teacher; Melvina, a fancy worker; Sarah,

³⁹ Gerald K. Barclay, "Brief Life Sketch Of the Late Malvina Barclay", based on original papers of L.A. Grimes, University of Liberia Library, August 10th, 1973.

⁴⁰ Ibid

a music teacher; and Laura, Florence and Ellen, twelve, ten and eight years, respectively. The three sons included Anthony, a merchant clerk, Ernest, a coppersmith and the young Arthur Barclay, a ten year old at the time of his departure. That both males and females in the Barclay family had skills meant their family may have operated under different dynamics. As a politically affluent and educated family, emigration to Africa promised more than upward mobility. As members of the Barclay family would later demonstrate vividly, emigration also held the possibility of establishing fruitful political careers.

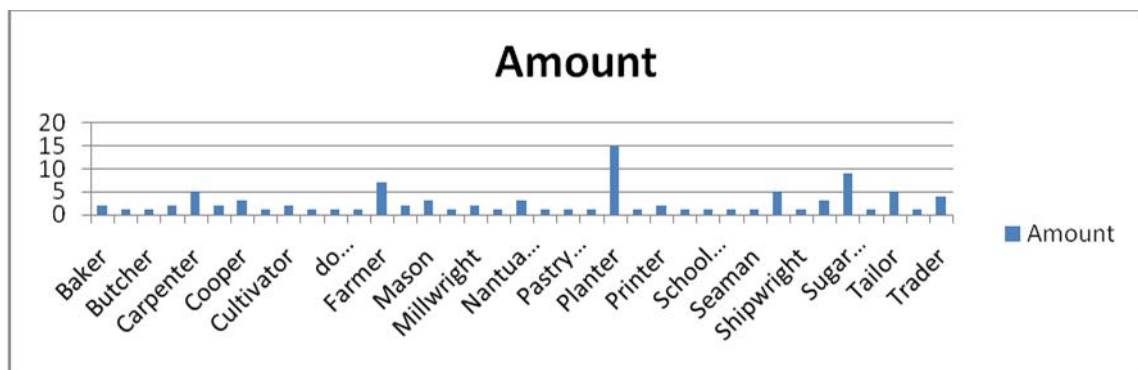


Figure 4 Some of the Declared Professions of the Liberian Emigrants⁴¹

Labor had as much import in the family dynamics as it did to national development. The value of these emigrants' skills and experiences go beyond what their meager numbers suggest. Its importance within the family unit rippled outwards to their communities and the nation. Of the 346 emigrants, 115 were males who possessed marketable skills. For the most part, the emigrants were artisans, a group of workers long noted for their centrality to communities. As organizers of brotherhoods, guilds and labor unions, artisans were also a politicized group within the colony. In Barbados the importance and prestige associated with artisanal organizations such as the Shipwrights

⁴¹ Author's computations based on ship manifest data.

and Bricklayers Union was recognized when the group marched in a procession when Prince Alfred, the second son of Queen Victoria, visited Barbados in 1861.⁴² Barbadians and other blacks on all sides of the Atlantic joined these organizations to forge connections and to maintain and enhance their status.⁴³ The kinds of organizational involvement later became important to Barbadian migrants who became the presidents of Liberia.⁴⁴ The skills of the Barbados emigrants made emigration especially appealing, providing opportunities beyond those available if they were to remain in Barbados in the confines of the island's rigid economic, social and political structure.

The many "planters" among the Barbadian emigrants highlight property as one of the central goals underlining emigration from Barbados. Unavailability of land had longed plagued blacks in Barbados.⁴⁵ They, like many African Americans were forced into the tenant system. At least sixteen of the emigrants were designated as "planters" or small farmers. Among them were John Nurse, thirty-five; James Briggs, thirty-three; John Braithwaite Weeks, forty. William Edward Tull, a forty-four year old was also among them. He was married to Sarah Ann Tull, aged forty. Together they had five children: Joshua, Esther, Catherine, Henry and Vashti. The family resided in Tull's Land in St. Thomas. Guy Brown, a forty year old was married to Delia Brown, thirty-eight. They lived in Rawlin's Land with their four boys: Albert, Nathaniel, Ernest and

⁴² "The Visit of HRH, Prince Alfred to Barbados," *BHMS*, February 21 – March 1, 1861

⁴³ See Philip A. Howard, *Changing History: Afro-Cuban Cabildos and Societies of Color in the Nineteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998); Ivor Miller, *Voice of the Leopard: African Secret Societies and Cuba* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009).

⁴⁴ See James Robert Spurgeon, *The Lost Word; or, The Search for Truth; Oration Delivered Before the Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free Masons in the Republic of Liberia, Dec. 27, 1899, Monrovia* (Monrovia, Liberia: Press of the College of West Africa, 1900).

⁴⁵ Planters usually connote large scale farm holdings, however, this was designation made of the Barbadian farmers by the ACS.

Frederick. "Planters" such as Isaac William Denny, twenty-nine, John Brathwaite, twenty, and John Adamson, twenty-two, represented the averaged age single emigrants on the journey. That they were "planters" going without family members suggest that perhaps they did not have a stable family structure in Barbados.

Emigration was especially important for this group of "planters" whose livelihood depended on land. The majority of the island's post-emancipation woes revolved around the politics of land and its attendant issues. The *African Repository* further noted that the island had "[t]he most industrious population under the sun there is not an uncultivated acre of land in the island...every part not devoted to these products is cultivated with vegetables, fruit, cattle, and poultry...Land near Bridgetown rents for twenty-four dollars per acre."⁴⁶ The ACS read the plight of the Barbadians well: "The secret of this astonishing prosperity is that there are no Crown lands vacant fields and districts belonging to the Government on which idle people squat, and with the aid of the gun and the fishing-rod or line, together with a shabby cultivation of a little ground for gardens, earn a precarious and uncertain living, as is customary in Tobago, Antigua, St. Kitts, Dominica, Trinidad, and other islands where Crown lands abound."⁴⁷ The promise of land that had been attached to social, economic and political advancement in Barbados made emigration to Liberia especially attractive to this group.

How the ACS allocated labor within the Barbadian emigrants' family units revealed attitudes surrounding gender roles and the sexual divisions of labor. Though family acted as the fundamental organizing principle within the ship manifest, the

⁴⁶ *African Repository* August (1864): 367-368.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

emphasis on the importance of male labor encoded patriarchy. Males were always described as heads of household, a move that highlighted the domesticity of women. While males and their labor would be seen as a tool for economic and political development women were welcomed for their social roles.⁴⁸ The emigrants' ambitions to improve themselves by "diligent labor" underscored an artisanal ethic of independence, self-reliance and dedication to work, widely recognized as foundational to the Protestant work ethic held by the emigrants. As Lamin Sanneh noted in his work on Sierra Leone, *Abolitionists Abroad*, "[s]uch an inventory of the skills and trades represented by the emigrants reveals the exaggerated faith in the limited means at their disposal, but it reveals nevertheless, the bold outlines of the experiment to found a new society on African soil."⁴⁹ For the Barbadians, emigration was about more than finding a new society; it was also about establishing themselves as a driving force in their new home.

Religion also became a factor in cultivating the beliefs and virtues and reinforcing labor habits. For while the emigrants were attempting to acquire in Africa what post-emancipation had denied them in Barbados, they also saw themselves as bringing important religious and social values to Liberia. As Attwell told the ACS: "A large proportion was the professed followers of Christ, prompted by the love of souls, as well as the desire to improve their temporal condition many Christian people of the Episcopalian, Wesleyan, and Moravian Churches, are desirous of emigrating to Liberia

⁴⁸ Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Knopf, 1976); Rowland Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953); Alan Dawley, *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976).

⁴⁹ Lamin O. Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999), 78.

for a two-fold reason, one being the improvement of their condition by diligent labor.”⁵⁰ Churches were both ideological institutions and a way to acquire status, and as such carried social as well as religious judgments. They inculcated ideas of virtue, hard-work, morality, abolitionism and missionary work. Together, these would inform emigrants’ views on native Africans’ involvement in the slave trade.

The establishment of churches throughout the Caribbean did much ensure the subjugation of blacks, often associating their belief systems with evil and devil worshiping. To this end, the Catholic Church became especially influential in the efforts to outlaw Africanist religions such as Vodou in Haiti, and Obeah in the British Caribbean. On the other hand, some of the Christian churches, particularly the non-established Presbyterians and Congregationalists, played role in helping to free the slaves, sometimes at the costs of the lives of priests. Still, the growing presence of blacks in Christian churches highlighted their duality as Africans and imperial subjects and the solidifying of social hierarchy.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of Barbadian emigrants were Anglicans. In 1628, when the first batch of English settlers arrived in Barbados, they established the Church of England as one of the earliest English institutions. As the oldest established church attached to empire, the Anglican Church had more prestige than any other religious institutions on the island.⁵¹ Many of the Barbadian emigrants went to the same parish churches and their children were baptized by the same ministers. These kinds of religious and social connections created ties among the emigrants that re-enforced and unified their

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Gordon K. Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968).

sense of vision for Liberia. Given that many of the emigrants were from St. Michael's parish, their children were baptized in one of the two Anglican churches of the parish, St. Mary's Chapel and St. Paul's. St. Michaels. A number of emigrants were Methodists who followed the teachings John Wesley, known for his work in abolitionism.⁵² Moravian and Methodist churches had become increasingly known as the "dissenting churches," differing from the Anglican mainstream doctrinally and in worship practices.⁵³ Several Methodist missionaries had gone to Barbados to proselytize and set up churches. A prominent missionary, Reverend William Shrewsbury was thought by Barbadian planters to be an agent of "the villainous African Society," and someone who frequently communicated with the abolitionist, Thomas Buxton. Assumed to have had a role in uprisings on the island, such as the Bussa Rebellion, Shrewsbury and his wife were almost killed and later expelled from Barbados. Buxton who defended him following the uprising praised him for his work.

Notwithstanding these troubles, much like in African American communities, Methodism established a foothold in Barbados. Interested in the lives and material existence of ex-slaves, they began institutions that would provide conversion to Christianity but also educate them in a movement they defined as "Emancipation in Action." On December 30, 1861, a local newspaper, *The Barbadian*, reported that "the new Wesleyan Chapel called Belmont on My Lord's Hill will be opened for divine service on Wednesday morning at eleven am, 1st January, 1862, in the presence of H.E.

⁵² See Kenneth Cracknell, and Susan J. White, *An Introduction to World Methodism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Frederick A. Dreyer, *The Genesis of Methodism* (Bethlehem, Pa: Lehigh University Press, 1999).

⁵³ Alvin Thompson, *Emancipation I: A Series of Lectures to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Emancipation* (Barbados:1984), 91.

the Governor” who laid the cornerstone of this chapel on 14th Oct. 1861.⁵⁴ Reverend Henry Bleby, who had preached in various parts of the Atlantic, preached the opening sermon. He would go on to play a prominent role in the social and spiritual lives of Barbadian Wesleyans.⁵⁵ Ideas about African indigenes and their need to be civilized would also be filtered and widely distributed to the diasporic audience through itinerant ministers such as Bleby. In these kinds of setting, the trope of the native as heathen and savages would be taken up by Barbadians.

Marshall Hall became a site for many of the lectures in religion and world affairs given by the Wesleyan ministers. On one occasion, “the talented and popular lecturer, Reverend Bleby, describing the rise and progress of Assyrian Archeology gave a lecture on Nineveh: Its Ruined Palaces and Sculptures,” to a large audience.⁵⁶ Again on Friday, November 13, 1863, another local newspaper, *The Times*, noted the occurrence of an “interesting lecture on The Wonders of the Deep” given at Marshall Hall by Reverend Bleby.⁵⁷ Isaac Graves, a sugar boiler from Lower Collymore Rock in St. Michaels, along with his wife, Rebecca Graves, a seamstress and their seven children were a part of this tradition as members of the Wesleyan church in Barbados. So too was the twenty-nine year old Samuel Inniss, a boot-maker, and his brother, Charles Inniss, a twenty-three year old cabinet maker.

Baptism was an important part of the families’ religious dynamic. Parents engaged in these kinds of religious rituals as a sign of devotion, but also attain virtue,

⁵⁴ *The Barbadian*, December 30, 1861,

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

⁵⁶ *The Times*, November 13, 1863, reprinted in the BHMS.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*

respectability, and other values. Samuel Skeete's baptism in St. Michael's Cathedral recorded on July 19th, 1856 was perhaps done for these kinds of religious and social purposes.⁵⁸ He was the son of Samuel and Sarah Jane Skeete who lived on Baxter's Road in Bridgetown, not too far away from the cathedral. As evident, the names of the father and mother, the profession of the father and the abode were always registered on the baptismal records of the children. The only exception to this was the baptism of Sarah Jane Graves, twelve years, born in 1853, which was solemnized in the district of St. Paul's in the parish of St. Michael's on June 15, 1854 by the officiating Minister H. R. Redwar.⁵⁹ Sarah was her mother's namesake and on this occasion it seemed as if only the mother was present. Sarah Graves lived in Lower Collymore Rock and worked as a domestic. The fact that none of these women bore children to unnamed fathers illustrates that the Barbadian emigrants undermined the classic stereotypes of black families.

The evolution of St. Mary's church is particularly important in understanding the efforts of the church to accommodate the social demands of the people of color in Barbados. The expansion of these services to blacks occurred against the backdrop of a coming emancipation. In 1816, the Bussa Rebellion led to "a proclamation by the Prince Regent denying that emancipation had been ordered, but recommending to the local authorities in the respective colonies to...promote the moral and religious improvement, as well as the comfort and happiness of the Negroes."⁶⁰ William Harte, who became a part of the clergy at St. Mary, had been known to emphasize the doctrine of equality

⁵⁸ Barbados National Archive. Record of Baptisms. Accessed July 13, 2010.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Arthur Charles Dayfoot, *The Shaping of the West Indian Church 1492-1962* (Gainesville:University Press of Florida, 1999), 152.

between the races. One of his sermons led parishioners to accuse him of “trying to alleviate the slaves of their duty by including doctrines of equality inconsistent with their obedience to their masters and the policy of the island.”⁶¹

Located in Lake Folly, the St. Mary’s Anglican Church was built to accommodate the growing population of the city, particularly its colored constituents. The parish subsequently divided into two ecclesiastical districts. The children of Anthony and Sarah Barclay, Arthur Barclay along with his twin sister Florence, were baptized on November 29, 1854 by F.B. Grant in St. Mary’s Chapel.⁶² Minister Grant also baptized another pair of emigrant twins, Helen Beatrice and Ella Alberta Wiles, daughters of James Thomas and Mary Elizabeth, on February 14, 1865, just months before they emigrated to Liberia.⁶³ The Wiles, having moved from Chapman’s village, lived in Lake Folly where the father worked as a blacksmith. With this move, St. Mary’s Chapel had become an important part of their family life. F.B. Grant would also baptize their other daughter, Laura Editha Wiles, twelve years old born in 1853, on August 9, 1854. Two years later, on February 10, 1856, another daughter of the Wiles, Florence Irene, was also baptized there.⁶⁴

Several other children and families were from St. Thomas in central Barbados. The Holy Innocents Church became significant for many parishioners, especially the many emigrant children from this parish who would be baptized in this church. This was where William Edward, a carpenter and his wife Sarah Ann, from Tull’s Land baptized

⁶¹ See Sehon Goodridge, *Facing the Challenge of Emancipation: A Study of the Ministry of William Hart Coleridge First Bishop of Barbados, 1824 – 1842* (Bridgetown: Cedar Press, 1981); Canon Goodridge, St. Mary’s, Barbados Museum and Historical Society

⁶² The Barbados Archive, Baptism record, Accessed on July 13, 2010.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

their son Henry Herdle Tull, whose was born on December 16, 1858.⁶⁵ The June 12th baptism of Ruth Padmore, nine years old, born in April 27, 1856, was also solemnized in this church by the officiating minister H.N.B Blankett.⁶⁶ Her parents, Jacob and Lucretia Padmore, lived near Kew, where her father worked as a carpenter. Adriana Alberta Louisa Thorpe twelve years, born in 1853, was baptized September 13, 1853 by H.H.B Bovell at the chapel of the Holy Innocents.⁶⁷ She was the daughter of John Isaac and Elizabeth Maria Thorpe, who lived in Billain where her father worked as a mason. Frances Eliza Bourne, a nine year old, born July 11, 1856, daughter of Francis and Susan Bourne, from Codrington Hill, was baptized by M.C., Chrinkett. Like John Thorpe, Francis Bourne was also a mason. Seven year old Amelia Moore was born on June 14, 1858 and baptized by H.H.B. Bovell on September 9 in St. Thomas parish. Amelia and her parents Edward and Maud Moore lived in Clefts Handle Mill where the father worked as a freight carrier.⁶⁸

In the parish of St. Phillip, on July 7, 1863, Samuel Brown, a laborer and his wife Catherine Brown from Rawlin's Land went to H.M. Collymore at the Chapel of St. Martin to baptize their son, Frederick Augustus Brown. Similarly in St. Joseph, Thomas Henry Eastman, a laborer, and his wife, Rebecca Ann, from Joe's River drew on Minister John Bradshaw from the St. Joseph parish church to baptize their daughter Laura Matilda Eastman who was born on April 4, 1861. Two years later in the same community of Joe's River in St. Joseph, the plumber, John Abraham Cox and his wife Molly Ann also had

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

minister Bradshaw baptize their son Josiah Cox who was born on December 15, 1864. On that same day, Reverend Bradshaw also baptized two other children from Joe's River: a watchman's daughter, Helena Jane Clarke and a blacksmith's son named Josiah.⁶⁹

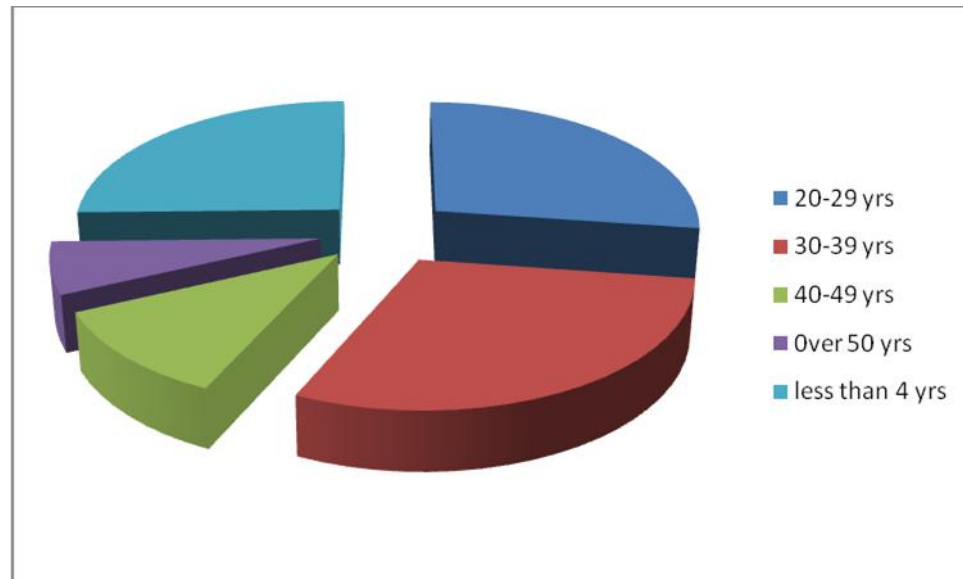


Figure 5 Age Profiles of the 346 Barbadian⁷⁰

Altogether, the Barbadians were the largest group of non-American emigrants to settle Liberia. Family structure, skills, religious practices and other key experiences served to distinguish this cluster group of Barbadians from other Liberian emigrants. The emigrants understood that these characteristics gave them social, religious and political leverage. What further gave the Barbadian emigrants significance were the meanings the ACS themselves and the Liberian officials to them. The prospect of the Barbadians coming to Liberia had raised questions even before they arrived. President Warner was already pondering these issues, noting that “my opinion of the company of Barbadians is that they will do well, and will prove as valuable an acquisition to the country as the same

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Author's computations based on ship manifest data.

number of the American population that have come into it have done.” He went on to note, however, that “on this question there is amongst us a diversity of opinion—some favoring the American side of the question; others, the West Indian side,” forecasted the kinds of fractious issues that would later prove ruinous to the nation building project.⁷¹

Several societies illustrative of the formative beginnings of pan-Africanism had grown out of the early initiatives of the educated Afro-Barbadian middle class. They had formed The Fatherland Union Barbados Emigration Society for Liberia. Reflecting changing motivations to migrated The Barbados Company for Liberia later became The Barbados Colonization Society for Assisting in the Suppression of the Slave Trade and the Introduction of Civilization into Africa. The leadership of these organizations included an all male cast of prominent Barbadians. Barclay, chairman of the Barbados Company for Liberia, was a well-known politician of sorts. John Blackman, vice chairman, like Barclay, was also politically inclined and economically prosperous. Blackman was also a signatory of the 1823 Belgreave Counter Address, which had railed against black Barbadians' vow to support the plantocracy against slaves in insurrections. Blackman's will raised several questions. In his will, he left “six slaves to be sold and the balance of estate to be divided among children; one child receive £30 less than others because that is what he paid to have them manumitted.”⁷² Blackman was possible not a traditional slaveholder but had rather bought slaves for the purpose of freeing them.

Charles Phipps, who was the secretary, also signed the Belgreave Counter Address. He was noted as being “the first teacher at the Colonial Charity School for

⁷¹ *The African Repository* February (1866): 35 - 39.

⁷² Handler, *Freedmen of Barbados*, 6.

Boys, started in 1819 or 1820; taught at the school until at least August 1831 and perhaps longer. In October 1829, he and Joseph Kennedy were secretaries of the “Barbados Auxiliary Bible Society.” In March 1831, Phipps along with Thomas Cummins, another leader in the Barbados Company for Liberia, were the secretaries of the Colonial Charity School. Samuel Donokan treasurer, and five other members, Conrad Reeves, Henry Dayrell, who seconded a motion at a public meeting of freedmen on May 6, 1833; John Sheafe, Samuel Sandiford and John S. Gaskin, were also a part of the leadership of the company. The Barbados Company for Liberia was particularly geared towards the emigration efforts. Given the objectives of these societies, some leaders took the opportunity to raise their concerns directly with the Liberian president. Their presentation to him of the resolutions of their society foreshadowed the manner in which their kind of politics would be negotiated (See Appendix A).

In their resolutions, the Barbadians presented an image that reflected religiosity, family values, skillfulness, which was all attractive to the youthful Republic. In the language, aspirations, and self-image of the leadership of the emigrant society, the superior sense of “Englishness” pervaded every aspect of their goals. The first resolution acknowledged the efforts of “her Majesty’s Government to suppress the slave trade, put down slavery, and civilize the untutored inhabitants of the continent of Africa.” They also pointed to the ruinous effects of climate on British efforts in Africa but noted that there was hope “now abundantly offered by the capacity and disposition of the descendants of Africa, inhabitants of the British West India colonies.” Having expressed gratitude for an emancipation that had raised their brethren in bondage from “a state of abject slavery to the proud position of British freemen,” they were now also disinclined “to remain passive

spectators of the great work of moral regeneration already commenced for the benefit of their brethren on the continent of Africa, to whom they are closely bound by the ties of consanguinity, affection and sympathy.” In essence, slavery and colonialism were seen as crucibles within which West Indians acquired provided enlightenment, industry and moral elevation. They acknowledged the impact of the continuation of the slave trade on Africa, but also highlighted that equally responsible for the continent's underdevelopment were the “dark clouds of ignorance and superstition.” Not only did they owe it to God and the British government, but also to themselves to offer their personal services in the efforts to regenerate Africa by planting a colony in Fernando Po or elsewhere. They hoped to introduce the natives to “our manners and customs, making known to them the follies of continuing the slave trade, building schools to introduce ‘systematic culture,’ to teach land cultivation and introduce commerce. They also hoped that “by our examples, moral, religious, and social, to form a nucleus from which instruction may be radiated around, and the well disposed be induced to amalgamate with us.”

They pointed to the practical nature of their scheme. If they were given land, their industry encouraged and a relationship established between the African coast and British West Indian colonies like Barbados that would cause a flow of emigration to Africa of “numberless persons who are already civilized, and who will carry with them their various trades and profession and their capabilities of every degree of instruction necessary for the formation of a newly settled colony.” They noted that their actions would not interfere with the labor program for recaptured Africans in Barbados. They would only be affecting “a mutual interchange of the already civilized to a place where civilization and industry are required, and of the uncivilized to already civilized

countries.” Like all other emigration ventures, they believed that Providence would be their guide. The Barbadians’ emigration project tempered as it was by notions of British superiority shows how these West Indian blacks viewed their relationship to Africa and Africans and foreshadowed future problems.

Africa in the Barbadian Imagination

Africa occupied a tenuous and an ever-shifting place in the lives of different segments of its Diaspora. Memory of it inspired a variegated political, cultural and religious consciousness among those in diaspora.⁷³ Since slavery, Africa had always figured significantly in how Barbadians’ perceived their identity individually and collectively and was also significant in how they imagined their place in the world. As a conduit of mediating and understanding, and the relationships between the periphery and the core inherent in diaspora, Africa also had an impact on how Barbadians understood themselves. How Barbadians received knowledge of the world and Africa informed their geopolitical literacy and helps us to understand why they chose Liberia. It also furthers our understanding of the conflicts that emerged within “pan-African” ideology.

After slavery, Barbadians forged a relationship with Africa through church missionary societies.⁷⁴ Missionaries in the Caribbean were greatly influence by Thomas

⁷³ See Claude Clegg, *Africa and the African American Imagination* (Ann Arbor: Pro-Quest Information and Learning, 2006).

⁷⁴ For African missions see Waibinte E. Wariboko, *Ruined by "Race": Afro-Caribbean Missionaries and the Evangelization of Southern Nigeria, 1895-1925* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007); J. F. Ade. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891: The Making of a New Élite* (Evanston [Ill.]: Northwestern University Press, 1965); McKenzie, P. R. *Inter-Religious Encounters in West Africa: Samuel Ajayi Crowther's Attitude to African Traditional Religion and Islam* (Study of Religion Sub-department, University of Leicester, 1976);

Foxwell Buxton in England and his idea of taking the gospel to Africans, as well as William Knibb in Jamaica who had become closely connected to the Basel Mission in Akrapong, near the Guinea Coast.⁷⁵ The increase in white missionaries in Africa was closely tied to the idea of the “white man’s burden” driven by visions to civilize Africans by turning them from their savage and heathen ways. But this vision would fall victim to the ravages of African diseases to which they were not immune. As a result, those promoting missionary activities in Africa insisted that a combination of environment and Europeans’ lack of immunity made it the White Man’s Grave. When blacks through their own initiatives started promoting their own movements to return to Africa it gave white missionary societies the perfect vessels through which to make their doctrine look familiar and attractive to Africans. Blacks, seen as racially amenable to the African environment were soon deployed as the new missionaries, and became the agents of European abolitionism and colonizationism in Africa.

West Indians supported the works of various missionary societies in Africa. They also established themselves among migration of diasporic blacks to Africa.⁷⁶ West Indian missionaries had long established themselves in areas such as the Rio Pongo in Sierra Leone. In 1851, Barbadians formed their own missionary societies by joining Anglican churches across the Caribbean to facilitate a West Indian mission to West Africa. The West Indian Church for the Furtherance of the Gospel in Western Africa, started in 1855,

⁷⁵ Arthur Charles Dayfoot, *The Shaping of the West Indian Church, 1492-1962* (Barbados: The Press University of the West Indies, 1999).

⁷⁶ See Kristin Mann Edna G. Bay, *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London: F. Cass, 2001); Ana Lucia Araujo, Mariana P. Candido, and Paul E. Lovejoy, *Crossing Memories: Slavery and African Diaspora* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011); Rodolfo Sarracino, *Los que volvieron a Africa* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1988); José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy eds., *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil During the Era of Slavery* (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2004).

incorporated in 1857, and was commonly referred to as the Pongas Mission.⁷⁷

The initiative for the mission came from Reverend Rawle, principal of Codrington College in Barbados. In 1703, Christopher Codrington, a West Indian sugar planter, made a will leaving three plantations and over 300 slaves for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The College had long been known for its experiments in Anglican altruism on Barbadian plantations.⁷⁸ The missionary impulse was also felt by William Colebrook, who was appointed governor of the island in 1848. Both felt it was the primary duty of the church to spread the gospel and they felt even more secure in their view that the West Indies owed a special debt to Africa because of the slave trade. It was decided that “a mission to West Africa would be a work peculiarly suitable to the church in the West Indies, where the population consists so largely of persons deriving their origin from that country.”⁷⁹ The Reverend J. Bradshaw became its secretary while Rev Rawle, became its vice president. One vice patron was S.J. Hill, Governor of Sierra Leone. Rawle provided accommodation on Codrington College for the training of seven mission students. Shortly after the first set of missionaries was deployed, *The Barbadian* published a report stating that “Mr. Phillips, a young, simple-hearted, well-educated, and brave son of Barbados and Codrington College, who went out to Africa between one and two years ago to join the Pongas Mission... was soon obliged to retreat from the field of operations in consequence of a severe attack of illness.” While the broadly held

⁷⁷ James Ebenezer Reece and Charles Guilding Clark-Hunt, *Barbados Diocesan History* (London: West India committee, 1928).

⁷⁸ Frank Joseph Klingberg, *Codrington Chronicle; An Experiment in Anglican Altruism on a Barbados Plantation, 1710-1834* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1949); Angela Cole, *God Have Mercy: The Codrington Trust* (Barbados: s.n.], 2003); Nina Langley, *Christopher Codrington and His College* (London: S.P.C.K., 1964).

⁷⁹ *Ibid*

assumptions about blacks' easy adjustment to African environments had not worked, Reverend H.J. Leacock became one of the first missionaries to land at Sierra Leone. On the 15th November 1857, it was reported that the first church of the mission at Fallangia was "solemnly opened for divine service."⁸⁰

Barbadians of all economic class supported missionary works. One administrator of the missionary society in Barbados noted that "those from the Egerton's Estate deserve particular notice, as the laborers there again manifested their interest in the evangelization of their fatherland by contributions."⁸¹ So extensive was the support that the mission was forced to remark on even the support of the young children. "There is something peculiarly interesting in such liberality as has been exhibited by these laborers, or by the children of the St. Thomas's Sunday School, already to their beneficence, like that of the Macedonian Christians mentioned in St. Paul to the Corinthians, shining forth from amidst their poverty, as fine gold in a rugged rock."⁸² The administrator commented that "such facts are not simply interesting. They are highly encouraging and instructive, as showing how ready the great bulk of the people and even their children are to interest themselves and to help in works of piety and charity, if the appeal be only made to them judiciously and kindly."⁸³ The missions held a parochial association at Holy Innocents church where several of the emigrants were members. Among its well-known subscribers included the prominent Afro-Barbadian, London Bourne, who had an annual subscription

⁸⁰ *Pongas Mission Reports and papers, The Barbados Archive, Bridgetown: Barbados.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

of ten pounds.⁸⁴

Missionaries were not only keen on spreading the gospel. Black missionaries dedicated themselves to improving the social as well as material needs of African societies. Many considered skilled blacks of exemplary character to be especially suitable as missionaries. Missionary work sought to inculcate the “protestant work ethic” in Africans, uniting religion, labor and virtue. One missionary society remarked that “having pointed out the necessity of having some helps to the mission such as artisans and agriculturists, steps have been taken for sending out a Christian family of exemplary character and industrious habits, the head of which is a carpenter of repute in his trade, while his wife and children are helpful in various ways, he and they knowing something of agriculture and other pursuits, and being willing to make themselves generally useful.”⁸⁵ While these factors enhanced the stature of the 346 Barbadians as emigrants, they also laid the groundwork for future tensions. Their class status, skills and education, which added to their sense of religious self-righteousness, prefigured a hierarchy that called for an unequal relationship between them and native Liberians.

For these and various other reasons, missionary experiences in Africa were often met with misfortune. Blacks neither showed more tolerance for the African environment, nor did they always experience the success initially anticipated. Waibinthe Wariboko has examined one such failed case involving Jamaica missionaries to southern Nigeria in the early 20th century. The men and their wives who went to Africa under the aegis of the Church of England’s Church Missionary Society’s (CMS) had a mission of “improving

⁸⁴ Karch, “A Man for all Seasons: London Bourne,” *BHMS* (XLV): 1.

⁸⁵ *The Barbadian*, November 7, 1863.

the spiritual and moral conditions of Africans.”⁸⁶ But they were also motivated by economic and social interests Wariboko argues. Assumptions and diverging views of race and identity also helped to ruin the mission. He concluded that African liberation did not feature highly among these missionaries who felt no close affinity to the Africans they sought to uplift. His argument was a departure from the standard historiographical narrative. This includes the ideas of Joseph Harris who argues that “the idea of return is one of the key features of the African diaspora, a completion of the circular process that is inherent to diaspora.”⁸⁷ Barbadian missionaries themselves also struggled to find common ground with native Africans. The *Barbadian* newspaper reported on news received about “the burning down of the W.I. African Mission buildings in the Pongas country, and the destruction of all or nearly all, the personal property of the missionaries.” While they noted that “the calamity was a purely accidental one,” they also saw it as “a calamity which every Christian believer in this land will most deeply deplore.”⁸⁸

On May 8, 1863, *The Times* reported in its ecclesiastical news that “the Reverend. Phillips and Duporte, from the Pongas Country in West Africa, arrived here on 29th ultimo on the troopship *Adventure*. These missionaries are on a six months leave of absence. The latter has been unremittingly devoted to missionary labor in the Pongas Country for the last 7 years.”⁸⁹ On their return, the missionaries met with other

⁸⁶ Waibinte E Wariboko, *Ruined by "Race": Afro-Caribbean Missionaries and the Evangelization of Southern Nigeria, 1895-1925* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007).

⁸⁷ Joseph E. Harris, *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*. Washington, D.C. (Howard University Press, 1982), 20.

⁸⁸ *The Barbadian*, December 9, 1863.

⁸⁹ *The Times*, May 8, 1863.

Barbadians eager to hear about their travel experience. A report of a meeting held on the previous night at Marshall's Hall noted that it was filled to capacity and that "the Reverends Duporte and Phillips, the missionaries recently arrived from West Africa, spoke on all their experiences, telling of the benefits brought to the people of the region and the necessity for continued support for the mission. High tribute was paid to the late Reverend Leacock, the martyr of the Pongas. The favorable impression made by these missionaries at various meetings held during their visit is frequently reported."⁹⁰ The missionaries certainly spread the word throughout Barbados, preaching many sermons. A notice was printed in the *Times* that "the Reverend J.N. Durant will preach 2 sermons at the St. Leonard's Chapel, during Advent, on the subject of Missions; the first on Sunday November 27, and the second on Sunday December 11, services will begin at 3p.m precisely and the offertory collection will be made in aid of the Pongas Mission."⁹¹

In addition to going to Africa as missionaries, West Indians had also established relationships with Africa in other ways. Prior to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Barbados had forged an interesting relationship. Barbadians' interest in Liberia in part grew out of their misadventures in Sierra Leone. West Indians began to emigrate to Sierra Leone shortly after its founding in 1787. In 1796, a number of Jamaica Maroons who had been deported to Nova Scotia were exiled to Sierra Leone. They would go on to play a military role in the development of the British Crown Colony. Recalcitrant slaves, particularly those from the 1816 Bussa's Rebellion in Barbados along with several members of the West India Regiment also retired to Sierra Leone. These early migrations from different parts of their Caribbean empire would not go unnoticed by the British. Nemata Blyden in her

⁹⁰ Extracts from the *Times* Newspaper, May 8, 1863, BHMS 30:155.

⁹¹ *The Times*, November 19, 1870.

work *West Indians in West Africa* noted that by adopting an imperial policy on labor and race the British by 1834 had successfully established a link between their territories in the West Indies and Sierra Leone. On the African Coast, Africans liberated by the British from illegal slave vessels were encouraged to migrate to the West Indies to alleviate the labor problems there. With the additional idea that Africans would be exposed to civilization in the West Indies, many West Indian planters welcomed this emigration program. While British West Indies territories struggled with labor problems and political agitation for rights after slavery, British West African territories such as Sierra Leone struggled over slavery and issues concerning self-governing. The British Empire collapsed these two problems by hiring West Indians to fill governmental positions in Sierra Leone.⁹² While thwarting their efforts towards freedom in the Caribbean, the British would use to maintain their colonial interests endeavors in Sierra Leone.

One such migrant was the Barbadian, Thomas Carew, who in 1818, became the mayor of Freetown. Alexander Fitzjames, trained as a lawyer in Trinidad, was also an emigrant to Sierra Leone. Before migrating to Sierra Leone, he had brought attention to the ills of the British colonial system in his home country. For instance, he had written about planters' inability to transition from the roles as slaveholders and its effects on freedmen's effort to experience full freedom.⁹³ When in the absence of Stephen Hill, the white British governor, Fitzjames assumed the position of Sierra Leone's acting governor in 1858, issues of insubordination and questions relating to race and power quickly emerged. West Indians such as Fitzjames were increasingly regarded as excitable and

⁹² Nemata Amelia Blyden, *West Indians in West Africa, 1808-1880: The African Diaspora in Reverse* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 43.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

over-zealous and unsuitable for leadership. Fitzjames' dismissal from his position as Queen's Advocate in Sierra Leone signified the increased racism that bolstered the new colonial order.⁹⁴

This period of transatlantic exchanges between British colonies in the West Indies and those on the West African Coast animated the consolidation of British views on race. While freedmen would come to occupy positions of prominence in Sierra Leone closed to them in the West Indies, they came to realize that the British colonial office viewed them in the same way they did Africans. Both West Indian and African blacks were excluded from the highest political offices in the Caribbean and in Sierra Leone. West Indians who agitated and fermented discontent were regarded as outsiders.⁹⁵ William Drape also a West Indian emigrant, the first editor of the newspaper *The New Era*, was labeled as one such agitator and outsider. The colonial establishment in Sierra Leone dismissed Drape as "an adventurer from the West Indies," an accusation meant to highlight his outsider status.⁹⁶ Such accusations and the tense nature of Sierra Leone society during those undermined the position of West Indians in authority so much so that the colonial establishment would significantly changed its attitude towards West Indians migration.

Because of these changes, Liberia emerged as an alternative attractive destination to Barbadians. Almost simultaneously, American colonization organizations had begun attempts to make Liberia into an Americo-African country. The colonizationist, John Lathrobe, specifically wanted the United States in time to supplant all its great European

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

rivals in Africa. Reverend Thomas Galludet, speaking to New York City colonizationists, hailed the colony's commercial growth as astonishing. Even the British, he insisted, conceded that Liberia was better poised than Sierra Leone to garner the unfathomed interior trade.⁹⁷ An English visitor, F. Harrison Rankin praised Liberia, saying that she had surpassed her larger and older neighbor, Sierra Leone in learning the arts of civilized life.⁹⁸

The Question of Pan-Africanism

In the early 19th century, the concept of pan-Africanism, still very much in its infancy spoke of a common black identity which transcended localities and was based on the historical experiences of the middle passage and slavery. It grew to encapsulate the notion of a shared experience of racism, colonialism and imperialism, one which later evolved into a belief in the common destiny of African peoples wherever they happened to reside to unite and struggle for social, economical and political equality.⁹⁹ As a sociopolitical worldview, it was grounded in ideas of racial solidarity and cohesion that transcended national boundaries. As the ideology evolved, however, racial, political and economic progress became its driving tenets. Pan-Africanism's necessary role as a black socially contractual instrument, by its ontology, its aesthetics and moral law was a response to Western racism, discrimination and subordination.

Emigration to Africa had long been thought of as an essential component of pan-African beliefs. This ideological trajectory began with black migration to Sierra Leone.

⁹⁷ P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 158.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 167.

⁹⁹ Immanuel Geiss, "Pan-Africanism" *Journal of Contemporary History* 4: 1, 1969.

Both the British colony and Liberia was seen as a part of the Christian civilizing project that would also bring economic growth to the continent. Complexities within black life were over-looked in the interest of a broader vision of racial up-liftment and economic development. But, the reasons driving emigration among different segments of the diaspora were not always the same. Differing political and socio-economic ideas oftentimes resulted in divergent visions for Africa. The issue then became one of functionality of pan-Africanism's inability to balance communal and individual economic and racial motives.

Nowhere were the complexities within pan-Africanism more visible than in the U.S, where it was thought African Americans could not coexist with whites if the promises of American democracy was to be fulfilled. By the 1850s a series of repressive acts, the Fugitive Slave Act (1850), the Kansas Nebraska Act (1854) and the Dred Scott (1857) tormented blacks further. African Americans responded primarily through two leaders who came to represent an assimilationist and a separatist tradition within pan-African and Black Nationalism debates. The emigration debate divided black leadership. On the one hand, Frederick Douglass, an assimilationist, believed that blacks should remain in America, arguing that leaving the US was tantamount to abandoning those who were still in chains.¹⁰⁰ On the other, Martin Delany argued “that only through wielding the national helm could Africans in the Americas achieve their quest for representation and preserve their distinctiveness.”¹⁰¹ Emigration became a move aimed at finding

¹⁰⁰See, R. J. M. Blackett, "Anglo-American Opposition to Liberian Colonization, 1831-1833." *Historian* 41, no. 2 (1979): 276-294; Howard Bell, "Negro Nationalism;" A Factor in Emigration Projects, 1858-1861." *Journal of Negro History* 47 (January, 1962) 42 – 53.

¹⁰¹ Herman L. Bennett, "The Subject in the Plot: National Boundaries and the History of the Black Atlantic." *African Studies Review* Vol 43 No1, 105.

economic opportunities and political development outside the sphere of white control. Douglass' and Delany's differences in views over emigration would indeed not only put them at odds but also fracture the vision of black abolitionism and nation-building in the 19th century.¹⁰²

In Barbados, the different motivations for emigration to Liberia created similar kinds of contradictions. Barbadians' understandings of free labor that figured in their attempts to reconstitute themselves as self-owning beings complicated their pan-Africanist vision. However, the kinds of dynamics that combined the Barbadians' civil-religious language with their political and economic ambitions held implications for pan-Africanism. Barclay's address to J.J. Roberts, an African migrant who had become the first president of Liberia, and the resolutions of the Barbados Company for Liberia invoked some crucial questions not only about pragmatism but also about the functionality of pan-Africanism. The effects of patriarchy on the ideology had already become evident in Barbados. While the emigrants saw their individual economic and social successes as important to the development of Liberia, this success would not come if they lived on equal terms with native Africans. Diasporic visions for African development operated on the assumption of native Africans' weakness, of their cultureless heathenism. Thus, while Africa and African development was the focus in the Barbadians' brand of pan-Africanism, its structure rendered Africans as subjects not

¹⁰² Kwando Kinshaa, *Emigration Versus Assimilation: The Debate in the African American Press, 1827 – 1861* (London: McFarland, 1988); Martin Delany and Robert Campbell, *Search for a Place; Black Separatism and Africa, 1860* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969); Martin Robison Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States; And, Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2004); Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

actors in the process of nation-building. These kinds of idea when brought to Liberia would no doubt create tensions on the ground.

Developing the flexibility to adjust the different components of pan-Africanism depending on the demands of the situation in Africa was crucial to the viability and implementation of the ideology. It would be necessary to resolve these kinds of tensions to achieve a more functional pan-Africanism. Whether Barbadians' lofty pan-Africanist ideals could stand up to the realities of life in Liberia depended on their ability to adjust their views on ethnic and class differences. Were Barbadians black British imperialists or were they pan-Africanists? One thing became readily evident: Barbadians embraced and asserted different ideologies as long as it supported their ends or served their meanings of freedom. For better or for worse, Barbadians had demonstrated in their various pursuits and through movement prior to 1865 that they saw themselves as independent agents of their own fortunes.

Barbados in the 1860s

Several other factors pushed families out of Barbados in 1865. The year before the emigrants left for Liberia a drought which had resulted in short crops caused "peculiar suffering and deprivation to all classes of the community, and resulted in an unprecedented increase of the numbers of naked and starving poor in the island."¹⁰³ Such were the effects of the drought on the island's poor that the government held a meeting "to consider the question of the distress that has for some time existed in the island, and

¹⁰³ BHMS: 30, 189.

suggest, if possible, some practical measures of relief.”¹⁰⁴ Reverend Grant, curate of the District church in St. Michaels responded to the drought by collecting and distributing old clothes and foodstuffs “among the poor of the district instead of the customary dinner.”¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, by 1865, Afro-Barbadians’ frustrations with the futility of their efforts to enact franchise reform had reached a noticeable boiling point. Many of the middle class such as those who were about to emigrate were displeased with franchise reforms. Prescod, on this occasion, much like he had been doing since the end of slavery, was at the forefront of the charge. One columnist wrote: “Writing on this subject, the editor invites the calm and serious attention of his readers to a speech reprinted by special request delivered at a public meeting held in May, 1849, by the most talented and energetic member of the colored class, Samuel J. Prescod from whose arguments moderate and prudent reformers may gather valuable hints for pressing on our legislation an extension of the franchise, a lowering of the qualifications.”¹⁰⁶ Prescod may have been the “braver spirit” carrying on the fight for civil and political rights to which *Africanus* referred. Others such as Barclay had given up the fight and opted instead to search for a better life on “more auspicious shores.”

Liberian officials had formed their own perceptions about the reasons behind different emigrants’ interests in Liberia. “Repulsions here and attractions there will lead the colored population to seek a nationality of their own, with actual homes, real title to

¹⁰⁴ BHMS (30), 194.

¹⁰⁵ BHMS (30), 190.

¹⁰⁶ BHMS (31) and (32), 156.

the soil and active dominion of the country where they reside,” they declared.¹⁰⁷ In considering the particular interest of the Barbadians, they pointed out that “these emigrants have enjoyed personal liberty for 30 years, in one of the most beautiful West India Islands, under the colonial government of Great Britain.”¹⁰⁸ This led them to infer that the Barbadians “longed for a higher theatre of action, and had made up their minds that Liberia, the black man’s Republic on the black man’s native continent, above all other places, could satisfy their desire.”¹⁰⁹ They viewed this as indicative of “the final judgment of the multitudes of the African race recently emancipated,” concluding that “when a clearer view of the claims of humanity and Christianity prevail, thousands of them will call upon us to aid them to plant colonies and spread Christian civilization and freedom along the whole African coast.” They further noted the prospects Liberia held for different classes of emigrants: “If of the better class they can rise in Liberia at once to social equality and usefulness. They can enjoy the dignity of true self respect beyond anything they can attain in our midst. If of the lower sort, they will have open doors and more inducements to successful activity than they can have here. Whatever their condition in any part of the United States, they will have good reason to be thankful for encouragement and aid in securing an asylum in the Liberian Republic.”¹¹⁰

On Saturday, March 11, 1865, when the financial Secretary of the ACS, William McLain arrived in Barbados to attend to the emigrant’s departure he would not find the full quota of emigrants. Barclay relayed the news that “so desirous were many of these

¹⁰⁷ *The African Repository*, July (1866): 41.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

people to remove to Africa that before intelligence of the action of the ACS could reach the island... several of its members numbering in all 16 persons, embarked on a small vessel chartered by the British Government to transport recaptured Africans from her colonies in the West Indies to Sierra Leone.” He noted that “they regretted they could wait no longer.” That these men could not tarry says something about the trying nature of Barbados post emancipation. On April 5, McLain chartered and attempted to dispatch the *Brigantine Cora* with about three hundred emigrants. However, they were “delayed until the following day to allow a commission ordered by the Governor of the island to survey her and for the English Admiral commanding on that station to enable his first executive officer to make an examination of how the Queen’s subjects were provided for.” This appeared to have been a sneaky attempt by colonial officials to curtail the departure as they had attempted to do on so many occasions in the past. Many more people than the 346 who eventually emigrated wanted to go to Liberia. A meeting of the Fatherland Union Society reported there were many more who wanted to go to Liberia.¹¹¹

Casting the emigration of the 346 Barbadians to Liberia within the context of African civilization highlights how West Indians negotiated different post-emancipation push and pull forces in their efforts to find a freedom that was to their liking. Renewed calls for African civilization occurred in the years after emancipation and thus framed Barbadians’ thoughts about how they should pursue their new era of freedom. Emanating from the emigrants own religious and ideological beliefs, these views which became additional push factors for the emigrants, developed outside the context of the economic and political pressures of post-emancipation Barbados. In the host of factors that

¹¹¹ *The Times*, Friday July 7, 1865.

influenced them, this proved especially critical given that they were more personal and were a more accurate reflection of who the emigrants were and would be as Liberian citizens.

Freedom was not a passive experience for Barbadian families. They sought myriad of ways and means to improve their lives. The 346 Barbadians who eventually emigrated to Liberia had multiple emigration possibilities from which to choose. These included regional destinations such as British Guiana, Jamaica, and Trinidad. These places were not only closer in distance, but also afforded some possibilities for the political equality these emigrants desired and economic and social opportunities that conformed to their understandings of post slavery free labor. Yet in spite of these options, these emigrants still chose to go to Liberia. While the social and ideological factors helped to focus the emigrants' discontents into genuine efforts to emigrate to Liberia, they were also influenced by pull factors from across the Atlantic.

CHAPTER III

“Come over and Help US... We Have a Gem of an Empire” The ACS, Barbadians, African Americans, and Liberian Emigration

Towards the end of the American Civil War, Joseph Jenkins Roberts, a Virginia mulatto who had emigrated to Liberia and had been the republic's first president wrote a letter to a friend in the US.¹ Roberts inquired: “What is to become of the large number of colored people who are now employed in the Federal Service when the war shall have ended? Is it contemplated to locate these people somewhere?”² Like most who had contemplated the answers to these kinds of questions, Roberts surmised, “I presume this is going to be a subject of no little importance to your government by and by.”³ Roberts' supposition proved accurate. For even before the Emancipation Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln had reflected on Roberts' concerns. This occasioned him on August 14, 1862 to invite “a group of colored men” to the White House to inform them that “a sum of money had been appropriated by Congress and placed at his discretion for the purpose of aiding their colonization in some country of their people...”⁴ Pointing out, “you and we are different races... we suffer from each other,” Lincoln urged them: “go where you are treated the best.”⁵

Around this same period, the American Colonization Society (ACS) commemorated its forty-sixth anniversary. The celebration, however, occurred amidst

¹ For early African Americans emigrants to Liberia see Marie Tyler-McGraw, *An African Republic: Black & White Virginians in the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

² *African Repository* August (1865): 249-250.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *The Christian Recorder*, August 23, 1862.

⁵ *Ibid.*

complaints that the Civil War had “not only diminished our receipts, but it has deprived us of our usual supply of emigrants. Many who would have sought to improve their fortunes in Liberia have been diverted to the army.”⁶ With this growing reality, the ACS focused the agenda of its anniversary meeting on reasons why African American emigration to Liberia must increase and ways to carry out this measure. John Latrobe, the president of the ACS, in an address to the members moved to outline the critical factors that would boost African American emigration. “What are the causes that lead to emigration,” he asked the audience.⁷ He noted, “two powerful causes always lead to emigration: the repulsions of the old home and the attractions of the new.” He further added that “moral causes operate as surely as physical causes.” Pointing to the religious and missionary motives that brought the pilgrims to Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, Latrobe concluded that likewise, the “missionary motive in the Christian Negroes will carry them by thousands to their own nationality.” To Latrobe, this calculation was “as sure as the relation of cause and effect.”⁸ To African Americans, however, motivations towards African emigration were much more complex than Latrobe cursory reckoning.

African Americans would reject both Lincoln’s offer and Latrobe’s theory. Rather than turning to either Lincoln’s colonization proposal or the ACS’ long established Liberian emigration scheme, African Americans had begun to look forward to the prospects of the post-Civil War era. The war having led to declining colonization interest among African Americans had become problematic for the ACS. As members of the ACS observed, “[emigrants] who could go have high anticipations that an important

⁶ *African Repository* August (1865): 249.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

change will be wrought by it in their favor, and that their political and social condition will be so improved as to relieve them from the necessity of seeking a home elsewhere.”⁹ What merely appeared as isolated events within the Atlantic were linked together by the war. The effect of the American Civil War on emigration proved even more troubling to a Liberian government fraught with issues since attaining independence in 1847.

William C. Burke, an African American emigrant in Liberia in a letter to an acquaintance showed how the effects of the war had resounded far and wide. “This must be the severest affliction that have visited the people of the United States and must be a sorce [sic] of great inconvenience and suffering and although we are separated from the seane [sic] by the Atlantic yet we feel sadly the effects of it in this country.”¹⁰ He further added, “[t]he *Steavens* not coming out as usual was a great disappointment and loss to this country.”¹¹ The Civil War having stemmed the flow of emigrant ships such as the “*Steavens*” had created an Atlantic dilemma for Liberian emigrants and politicians alike. By 1862, when the US joined the throng of countries that had officially recognized Liberia’s sovereignty, these growing problems had irrevocably changed the course of the ACS’ emigration policies and Liberia’s political goals.

In Liberia, each new milestone accompanied plans for development and nation-building. The emigration committee of the ACS made it their objective “to increase the number of emigrants for the reason that they are needed for the development of the physical resources of the country and for promoting the interests of Liberia generally.”¹²

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Bell I. Wiley (ed), *Slaves no more: Letters from Liberia 1833 – 1869* (Lexington: 1980), 211.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *The African Repository*, March (1865): 72.

By 1865, the growing need for skilled and educated blacks to assist in this national endeavor compelled Liberian officials to appeal to prospective emigrants to “come over and help us,” always appending “we have a gem of an empire.”¹³ Within these requests were hidden fears of the indigenous population who far outnumbered the migrants. The very recognition of Liberia's modernity depended upon increasing migration to offset this disparity. As President James Payne noted in an Annual Message to the Liberian Legislature, " I consider it important to recommend to you for consideration the subject of immigration to this government. I am of the opinion that the circumstances of a country in which the proportion of the civilized populace bears so small a ratio to the uncivilized, make necessary that the government should not omit to use any means within its power to increase its enlightened population."¹⁴ These occurrences combined with the impact of the Civil War would lead to the usurpation of one of the ACS’ core policies.

The formation of the ACS had been exclusively to aid African American emigration. Declining interest in Liberian emigration among African Americans would lead the ACS to become open to other blacks interested in emigration. This was a radical change but few colonizationists expected it to have practical effect. But it would have profound effect on Liberia, particularly on the question and experience of citizenship for the various groups of blacks who would migrate there. The opening up of the ACS’ Liberia emigration scheme to West Indians essentially made this period the turning point and *the* pivotal moment in the Barbadians’ quest to emigrate to Liberia. In this instance, these occurrences acting in concert with other transatlantic, socio-political, economic,

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ James Spriggs Payne Annual Message to the Legislature December 11, 1865 in Elwood D. Dunn ed, *The Annual Messages of the Presidents of Liberia 1848-2010: State of the Nation Addresses to the National Legislature : from Joseph Jenkins Roberts to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 217

and ideological push and pull factors combined to breathe new life into Latrobe's idea of the repulsion-attraction dynamic and made the emigration of the 346 Barbadians a reality. The possibilities the Barbadians had only dreamed of finally began to materialize, as rising uncertainty in the Caribbean synergized with incentives offered in Liberia.

In 1838, a premature ending of the apprenticeship in the West Indies had sowed Barbadians' interest in emigration. Prospective Barbadian emigrants, however, had also begun to experience a level of insecurity in the future of Caribbean post-emancipation. The lack of social mobility and issues surrounding voting and civil rights had long been a source of tension among the Afro-Barbadian middle class. With post-emancipation having caused a heightening of issues around labor, land tenure and civil rights, Barbadians, as we have shown, had begun to migrate around the Caribbean in search of a sustainable post-slavery livelihood. This regional migratory trajectory, however, changed as better prospects came into view across the Atlantic. By 1863, the *African Repository*, the journal of the ACS could report that "a spirit of emigration to Liberia is reported to exist in St. Kitts, Demarara, St. Thomas, and other islands of the West Indies."¹⁵ They made the distinction, however, that "in Barbados it has assumed an organized form" under the title "the Barbados Company for Liberia."¹⁶ As a case in point, the editor noted that "letters have been received at this office invoking aid [o]n behalf of the Company."¹⁷

In 1862, Edward Blyden, Liberia's Secretary of State, recommended that Liberian President Daniel Warner conscript prospective emigrants from the West Indies. As an emigrant from the Virgin Islands, he personified the world that the Barbadian emigrants

¹⁵ *The African Repository* January (1865): 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

would later embrace. In 1862, Blyden had returned to his native St. Thomas to launch an appeal for Liberian emigration throughout the West Indies. Blyden's circular promoting emigration became especially popular in Barbados where it was reprinted a number of times. As a result, it was reported that hundreds of letters were received in Liberia from the West Indians expressing an interest in settling in Liberia.

In response, President Warner issued a proclamation to "the descendants of Africa throughout the West Indies who may be desirous to return to their fatherland and assist in the building up of an African nationality."¹⁸ Warner told the Barbadians that "the government and people of this Republic are anxious to welcome them to these shores."¹⁹ This kind of response may have served to reinforce Barbadians' ideological visions of the existence of an African brotherhood. Through his declaration, Warner had further established a clear link between the goals and objectives of Liberia and those of the Barbadians. The black nationalist, Alexander Crummell, was also a vital recruiting agent for Liberia. In a moving invitation, he remarked, "For myself I cordially invite Barbadians, Jamaicans, Sierra Leoneans as well as Americans to this common heritage of the Negro--as the Emigrant Commissioner of New York greet the German, Italians, Swedes, English and Irish, who arrive at the port in the hundreds and thousands; and thus every year swell the already vast population of the great republic of America."²⁰

¹⁸ Quoted in Cecilia Karch Brathwaite, "London Bourne of Barbados (1793 – 1869)." *Slavery and Abolition* Vol. 28, April 2007, 23-40.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Wilson Jeremiah Moses ed., *Destiny and Race Selected Writings, 1840-1898* (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 190.

Additionally, in areas where post-emancipation had failed the Barbadian emigrants, provisions made by the Liberian government pandered to their desires, offering them direct incentives. To further attract the Barbadians, the Liberian government noted: “A grant of twenty-five acres of fresh, fertile land will be made by the government to each family and ten acres to each individual.”²¹ They also added that “persons of all classes and pursuits are invited.”²² With this Warner highlighted that “the demand in this new and growing country for persons skilled in all the professions and in every branch of industry is unlimited.”²³ These provisions proved to be enticing to the Barbadians for two reasons. Firstly, the offer provided a direct counter to the issues of expensive or unavailable land in Barbados. Secondly, the demand for skilled persons directly addressed the needs of Barbadian emigrants to improve themselves “by diligent labor.” That the Barbadians had been “represented on respectable authority as industrious, moral and intelligent” suggested to the ACS that they “would be justly considered as a desirable accession to that country.”²⁴ The timely coincidence of these transatlantic issues had brought together the once unconnected desires of the Barbadians, Liberia, and the ACS.

Latrobe’s notion of repulsions and attractions being the driving force of emigration has been explored in scholarly analyses of migration. In the late 19th century, the geographer Ernest Ravestein used rural to urban movements in Britain to highlight

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

the centrality of push and pull forces to the laws governing the migration process.²⁵

Ravestein noted that migrants considered the various opportunities available to them and chose the migratory path that maximised their gains. He further suggested that historically, migrants had negotiated both homeland and destination conditions in order to arrive at a final decision as to whether, where, and when they should migrate.

“Oftentimes, just to go away,” wrote John Dillard, a Yale scholar studying the South in the 1930s, “is one of the most aggressive things that another person can do, and if the means of expressing discontent are limited, as in this case, it is one of the few ways in which pressure can be put.” C.M. Harr noted a similar pattern among white indentured servants in the colonial times. “Indentured servitude was called into existence” he observed, “by two different though complementary forces: there was both a positive attraction from the New World and a negative repulsion from the old.”²⁶

Push and pull forces, however, cannot be divorced from the specificities of the conditions within which they operate. The nature of pull factors that influenced the Barbadian emigrants provides some possible answers as to why they chose to emigrate to Liberia rather than the neighboring British West African colony of Sierra Leone. The scope and migratory direction that particular groups of migrants undertake critically depends on the constellation of sociopolitical and institutional factors that shape their prevailing conditions. Additionally, the sway of push and pull forces are contingent on prospective emigrants’ perceptions of what they would acquire through migration as

²⁵ Ernest Ravestein, “The Laws of Migration,” *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, Vol. 48, No. 2. (June, 1885), pp. 167–235; “The Laws of Migration,” *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 52, No. 2. (June, 1889), pp. 241–305; “The Birthplace of the People and the Laws of Migration,” *The Geographical Magazine*, Vol. 3 (1876), pp. 173–177, 201–206, 229–233.

²⁶ C.M. Harr., “White Indentured Servants in Colonial New York,” *Americana* (July, 1940), 371 quoted in Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University Press of North Carolina, 1944), 10.

opposed to remaining in their homeland. Given this notion, the distance the Barbadian emigrants were willing to travel is particularly evocative. It suggests that the Barbadians considered the stakes of remaining in Barbados as elevated, but had confidence in what they would find in Africa. Besides the complexity that contexts confer on migration stories, the social, political and institutional matrix also determines the tradeoffs of the decisions of different emigrants. For instance, the push and pull factors that drove African Americans to Liberia in many ways paralleled those that fueled the flight of the 346 Barbadians to Liberia. But while both were mediated by similar institutional, ideological and economic factors, they came out of disparate socio-political contexts.

Having illustrated in Chapter One and Two the labor, politics and economic circumstances of post-emancipation that made life intolerable for the Barbadian emigrants, this chapter looks at the socio-cultural, religious and ideological contexts within which they imagined Liberia to be a “more auspicious shore.” The chapter also highlights these visions as issues that had begun to fracture the emigrants’ pan-African dream even before they got to Liberia. It addresses the experiences of African Americans whose emigration patterns preceded and informed the Barbadians’ relationship to the ACS. It also shows the varying ways in which African American experiences tempered the emigration vision of the Barbadians. To this end, the chapter also looks at the legacy of the ACS and explores how its changing dynamics and extension into Barbados reshaped its image as well as emigrants’ views of colonization.

The Chapter is also an interrogation of Liberian historiography. For the most part, in writing about Liberia scholars have been oblivious to the role of individuals besides African Americans. Migrants’ roles in the shaping of the social and political history of

Liberia, however, went beyond the contributions of African Americans. By homogenizing all emigrants to Liberia, scholars have undermined the role of blacks' cultural disparity in the shaping of Liberia's history. The relative smallness of the Barbadian emigrant population in Liberia previously led scholars to dismiss their import. But what the Barbadian emigrant stream lacked in numbers, they made up for in social, economic and political contributions to Liberia. Their exclusion thus underscores a significant problem in Liberian historiography.

The inclusion of the Barbadian emigrants in Liberian colonization historiography presents opportunities for expansion of scope. With the exception of Claude Clegg, Tom Schick and Antonio McDaniel, histories of the ACS have tended to concentrate on the society's leadership and those who founded the movement. The inclusion of the Barbadians further adds to those scholars who have looked at the emigrants rather than the leaders of ACS. The inclusion of the Barbadian migrant stream additionally yokes together several historiographies that recasts new and interesting conceptual and theoretical boundaries that will further our understanding of the nation's complex history. For instance, uniting this neglected and seemingly unconnected dimension of Caribbean post-emancipation with Liberian colonization will highlight the changing and diverging nature of livelihood strategies, freedom and experiences of it which are not readily apparent through other kinds of narratives. Furthermore, adding Barbadians, the post-emancipation context out of which they emigrated, and the post-independence period into which they arrived shows the Liberian project as one negotiated by a wide cross-section of blacks with different experiences and ideas. This kind of framing and synthesis highlights the nature of the challenges that were inherent to the Liberian experiment.

Historians have looked to African American Liberian emigration to explain the social, cultural and political transformations that took place there. Concerned with explaining the broader implications of America's racial and social landscapes, they neglected other phenomena taking place at the fringes but having theoretical implications. With an American centric historiography all emigrants to Liberia were grouped under the title of Americo-Liberians and collectively accused of being Americo-Liberian imperialists. Though a remarkable number of the Barbadian emigrants would come to dominate the Liberian political scene, they are barely footnotes in a nation-building conversation generally framed around issues related to the African American emigrants. The insertion of the Barbadians and their relationship with the ACS builds on traditional African American emigration historiography and also transforms some of its traditional arguments. The inclusion of Barbadians offers an opportunity to look at Liberian emigration from a comparative perspective showing the similarities and differences in the factors that motivated emigrants, their experiences, and their social, cultural and political contributions to the nation-building efforts. Their inclusion also shows how highly skilled emigrants were able to circumvent the barriers and death traps that usually plagued other Liberian settlers.

African Americans, West Indians, and the Idea of Africa

The idea of Africa operated in remarkable ways in the imagination of different sectors of the diaspora. From the moment the first slaves were brought from Africa to the other side of the Atlantic the relationship between the African diaspora and the African

continent though profound has also been complicated.²⁷ When Countee Cullen wrote his poem, “What is Africa to me?,” he addressed what had been a recurring question in the diaspora’s social, political and historical discourse.²⁸ It had invited African Americans in particular to consider their relationship to Africa, a place that had been thrust upon their identities. His contemporary, W.E.B Du Bois in his work, *Dusk of Dawn*, also considered similar questions, thereby simultaneously constructing and interrogating the African Diaspora’s conceptual terrain.

As I face Africa, I ask myself: What is it between us that constitute a tie that I can feel better than I can explain? Africa is of course my fatherland. Yet neither my father nor my father’s father ever saw Africa, or knew its meaning or cared much over it. My mother’s folks were closer, and yet their direct connection in culture and race became tenuous; still my tie to Africa is strong...one thing is sure and that is the fact that since the fifteenth century these ancestors of mine had a common history, have suffered a common disaster, and have one long memory...the badge of color is relatively unimportant save as a badge; the real essence of this kinship is its social heritage of slavery; the discrimination and insult...²⁹

Du Bois considered the heritage of blacks’ shared past of slavery, oppression, and marginality to be the basis of connection between communities of the black Diaspora as well as to the nature of their relationship with the African continent.³⁰

The idea of Africa and notions of a common black identity had united African Americans and Barbadians even before they came together in Liberia. It had become an amalgam of similar experiences that had flowered into its own language and a sort of

²⁷ See Claude Clegg, *Africa and the African American Imagination* (Ann Arbor: Pro-Quest Information and Learning, 2006).

²⁸ See Countee Cullen’s poem in Henry Louis Gates and Nellie Y. McKay, *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1996).

²⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn* (New York: Library of America, 1986), 590.

³⁰ Also see James Sidbury, *African Identity as a Diasporic Creation? Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

code that allowed them to experience life from a shared perspective. Rather than leading insular lives, both groups had always known about, communicated with, as well as had face to face contact with one another. Julius Scott demonstrated this view in his work, *A Common Wind*, arguing that the circulation of news by dockworkers and sailors influenced ideas of freedom and political culture around the Atlantic during the revolutionary period.³¹ As much as this communication pervaded the era of the Haitian Revolution, it was no less true before, during and after the American Civil War. David Walker demonstrated this sense of connection in his “Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World.” Historians such as Sterling Stuckey has argued that Walker’s Appeal would become an ideological foundation for Black Nationalist theory.³² In his work, *Slave Culture*, Stuckey went further to highlight the intrinsic pan-African impulses that led to the formation of a black ethos in the 19th century.³³

Indeed, the fight against slavery and the pursuit of freedom that routinely united West Indians and African Americans never developed in isolation, but were rather an expression and extension of each other. For while going to Africa was motivated on the shortcomings of Caribbean post-emancipation, it was further developed with the tide of growing black diasporic consciousness. Occurrences in the US, African American experiences, as well as their views on Liberia often tempered Barbadians interest in Africa. Barbadian newspapers, such as *The Liberal*, oftentimes reprinted articles from African American newspapers such as *The Colored American* and *The North Star*.

³¹ Julius Sherrard Scott, *The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution* (Ph. D.)--Duke University, 1986), 4.

³² Sterling Stuckey, *The Ideological Origins of Black Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972).

³³ Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

American newspapers reciprocated reprinting of West Indian articles. In 1840, the *Colored American*, printed a letter from the Anti-slavery Society of Brown's Town, Jamaica which noted that "the day is not far distance when America will be brought to repentance and will be induced to restore to the negro his long with-held birthright."³⁴ On April 10, 1851, *The Pennsylvania Freeman* reported on a meeting in Bridgetown, Barbados in which "West Indians expressed their solidarity with African Americans against the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and announced their intention to collect funds to aid fugitives in their escape."³⁵ In an article in the *Colored American* reprinted in the *African Repository*, the author noted, "if we could suppose that the American citizen cared nothing for the wrongs and sufferings of the negroes in the West Indies, there is another point of view, in which it cannot be denied that the subject has an intense interest in this country. We refer to the effect the abolition of slavery in the W. Indies may produce upon our black population of our southern states."³⁶

West Indian emancipation further held the American gaze not only by providing a context to the black experience of freedom, but also gave momentum to American abolitionists. In 1855, as Frederick Douglass highlighted in his paper, "people of colour in New York turned out in full force to celebrate another return of the day that brought the Emancipation Act into full force in the West India."³⁷ He further noted that this gave

³⁴ *The Colored American*, June 20, 1840.

³⁵ *Pennsylvania Freeman*, April 10, 1851. For further explorations of West Indian celebrations see Jeffrey Kerr-Ritchie, *Rites of August First: Emancipation Day in the Black Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007); Edward Bartlett Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008).

³⁶ *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, October (1831): 247.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

“impetus to the anti-slavery cause of which it stands greatly in need.”³⁸ At one point, West Indians directly sought to assist African Americans. On February 24, 1834, “when a ship of African American emigrants bound for Liberia stopped to provision in the Bridgetown port the coloured portion of our community donated thirty dollars in provision to the Liberian colonists.”³⁹

Black Americans also expressed interest in the West Indies in other ways. On June 15, 1857, *The Springfield Republican* reported: “A desire is expressed on the part of some of the more intelligent emancipated Negroes on the island of Barbados to emigrate to Africa. They have addressed a letter to President Roberts of Liberia on the subjects, and ask that the vessels of the colonization society may touch at Barbados for emigrant passengers.”⁴⁰ The *Republican’s* story had drawn on the reports of a Reverend Hooker who had travelled to Barbados immediately following the apprenticeship period. Hooker reported that Barbadians were well on their way to progress, but that “the lands [are] mostly in the hands of whites, and is held at prices beyond the reach of colored men; who are generally poor.”⁴¹ Attainment of education, Hooker also noted, only further compounded the plight of Barbadians. And as a consequence of their general dissatisfaction, a group of these Barbadians wanted to establish a settlement in Africa, where they would be able to “sell and reap the fruit of their own industry and enterprise.”⁴²

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *The Barbadian*, February 24, 1834 reprinted in Melanie J. Newton, *The Children of Africa in the Colonies: Free People of Color in Barbados in the Age of Emancipation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 201.

⁴⁰ *Springfield Republican*, June 15, 1857.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

On another occasion, William Wells Brown, former slave, author and leading abolitionist, writing to Frederick Douglass from England on the fugitive slave issue argued that: “Owing to the great influx of fugitives into this country within the past and present year, and the comparative destitution that many are in...many of these people might be induced by an offer of fair compensation, to go to the West Indies and become tillers of the soil, instead of wandering about the streets of London, looking in vain for work.”⁴³ A writer to *The African Repository* noted that “the colored population of New York has always felt a deep and cordial connection with the condition of the West Indies. They aim at being put as to public law in the same condition in which their brethren in those islands are found.”⁴⁴ The author, however, cautioned African Americans that they should be aware that the state of things in the West Indies was not as they imagined. He noted that if African Americans realized that a “Christianized human nature was far from being gained in the West Indies,” they would come to the conclusion that “whatever can in the present circumstances of the world, elevate their race, may be looked for in Africa more readily than in other places.”⁴⁵ These kinds of relationships between blacks in different parts of the Americas produced what historian Richard Blackett has called the “hamic connection.”⁴⁶

These kinds of newspaper communications allowed Barbadians to weigh the pros and cons of migrating to Liberia or elsewhere. In a letter to William Copping, secretary

⁴³ *Frederick Douglass Paper*, September 25, 1851.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Richard J.M. Blackett, “The Hamic Connection: African Americans and the Caribbean, 1820 – 1865,” in Brian L. More et al (eds) *Before and After 1865: Education, Politics and Regionalism in the Caribbean* (Ian Randle , Kingston, 1998), 318.

of the ACS, the Barbados Company for Liberia reported that “the editor of the West Indian newspaper has sent us two African Repositories from your society, and we are in daily communication with him.”⁴⁷ Other news on Liberia may have even helped to steer the Barbadian emigrants away from Sierra Leone. Sometimes visitors would write letters praising Liberia for surpassing “her larger and older neighbor, Sierra Leone in learning the arts of civilized life.”⁴⁸ Speaking to New York City colonizationists, Reverend Thomas Galludet hailed “Liberia’s commercial growth as astonishing, further insisting that even the British conceded that Liberia was better poised than Sierra Leone to garner the unfathomed interior trade.”⁴⁹ On January 8, 1858, *The Liberal* newspaper in Barbados reprinted an article from the American papers on the slave trade, “in which Mr. Rainey, the commissioner who went to Africa with the returned Negroes spoke highly of the fine appearance of the country, of the industry, intelligence and refinement of the people of Liberia.”⁵⁰

These kinds of images of Liberia and of Africa in general had become central to various separatist and emigration movements that developed among both African Americans and West Indians. The reasons that drove the emigration of African Americans and Barbadians to Liberia in many cases also underscored the nature of the connections they felt towards Africa.⁵¹ However, emigration meant different things to both groups, was used to fulfill different needs, and evolved out of dramatically different

⁴⁷ ACS reel 96, Domestic Letters, letter no. 32. Folder 63367.

⁴⁸ P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 167.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 158.

⁵⁰ Brathwaite, “London Bourne of Barbados (1793 – 1869),” 87.

⁵¹ See Howard Bell, “Negro Nationalism; A Factor in Emigration Projects, 1858-1861.” *Journal of Negro History* 47 (January, 1962) 42 – 53.

contexts. Post-emancipation circumstances placed labor, socio-economic and pan-African considerations at the forefront of Barbadians' decisions to emigrate to Liberia. Along with pan-Africanism, attempts to escape slavery and racial discrimination drove African American emigration. In conjunction with their different socio-economic, political and cultural factors West Indians, unlike African Americans were not emigrating from a slave society.

Even more significant, Barbadians' imperial heritage differed from African Americans' republican politics. Imperial views, policies and techniques of government shaped the developing politics of the Caribbean. The British Empire was the context in which many Barbadians experienced the transition to modernity. That all the Barbadian emigrants to Liberia had experienced thirty years or more of freedom contributed to how these two emigrant groups would experience Liberia. Furthermore, Barbadian emigration to Liberia was largely a self-generated voluntary initiative. African Americans in some cases were forced to emigrate against their will. These differences suggest that both groups brought different kinds of experiences to Liberia. It also factored into how the two groups would coexist in Liberia and how they would be viewed by outsiders, particularly missionaries and colonizationists.

Black Colonization and Emigration

From the Europeans emigrants who settled the American mainland to the Barbadians who were sent to South Carolina, colonization had long been an established

enterprise. The idea of formally colonizing American blacks had its origins in the 18th century as part of a larger reform agenda. As fears developed in the US over what had transpired in Haiti, an Irish immigrant, Thomas Branagan, proposed a plan to relocate blacks to territories in Louisiana in a manner somewhat similar to the Indian reservations. Back in the 1770s, Thomas Paine supported a resettlement plan to send blacks to areas beyond the Alleghenies and Samuel Hopkins suggested sending them to Africa. Liberalism, pragmatism, and self-interest combined to defeat these and other early attempts at colonization.⁵² They, however, would resurface by the early 19th century, as discussions grew in various states about their growing free black population. In states like Pennsylvania where successful opposition to slavery had left behind a considerable number of free blacks, several lingering questions surfaced: What was to be done with those released from the chains of slavery? Should they remain in America or should they be sent elsewhere?

In 1787, answers to these persistent questions in America manifested themselves when British abolitionists such as Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharpe, and William Wilberforce, institutionalized the idea of African colonization by establishing a British colony in Sierra Leone.⁵³ Their efforts were designed to ameliorate the conditions of poor blacks in England, most notably loyalists who had emigrated there after fighting on the

⁵² Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

⁵³ See David Lambert, "Sierra Leone and Other Sites in the War of Representation over Slavery," *History Workshop Journal* 64(1) (2007): 103-132; See Zoe Laidlaw, "Heathens, Slaves and Aborigines: Thomas Hodgkins's Critique of Missions and Antislavery," *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1, 2007, p. 133-161; Richard West, *Back to Africa: A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

British side in the American Revolutionary War.⁵⁴ The British found other uses for Sierra Leone, sending maroons from Jamaica there as well as retired members of the West India Regiment.⁵⁵ The Sierra Leone experiment struggled in its infancy not only from underfunding, but from the death of the black emigrants from tropical diseases. Any decision to leave the American mainland would have to be weighed against these factors.

Sierra Leone's failure, however, did not deter early African Americans who were closely observing the colony's developments. It reignited early black support for emigration that had developed among free blacks in Massachusetts and Rhode Island who in 1773 and the 1780s had petitioned for public funds to migrate to Africa.⁵⁶ Indeed, emigration had been a grass-root radical social movement by blacks before it was institutionalized by a group of whites into the colonization movement. However, African American interest in emigration during that period waxed and waned for several reasons. Paul Cuffe, a sailor of Indian, black and Quaker heritage, became one of the earliest advocates of the British experiment with colonization.⁵⁷ In 1811, he visited Sierra Leone in search of information on how Americans could develop a similar arrangement for its own black population. In his boat, "the Traveller," Cuffe transported thirty-eight former slaves to Sierra Leone. He planned a return trip in which he would transport free blacks

⁵⁴ Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves, and the American Revolution* (New York: Ecco, 2006); James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

⁵⁵ Nemata Blyden, *West Indians in West Africa, 1808-1880: The African Diaspora in Reverse* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000).

⁵⁶ See Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

⁵⁷ See Floyd Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

wanting to go to Africa, but died before his plans could materialize.⁵⁸ Plans similar to Cuffe's were developed to varying degrees of success in the early 19th century.

In 1817, these early efforts by blacks began to get national attention and a measure of success when a group of men moved to formally develop a colonization society.⁵⁹ Prominent members of the society included Robert Finley, a Presbyterian clergyman, future US presidents James Monroe and Andrew Jackson, judge Bushrod Washington, the nephew of George Washington, Francis Scott Key who authored the star spangled banner, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster and John Randolph. Scholars have differed over how the ACS began and whether philanthropy, religion, political pragmatism, or racism drove the interest of members of the scheme. Some attribute the organization's beginning to American politicians such as Henry Clay, members of the clergy such as Robert Finley, and Philadelphian philanthropists such as Robert Ralston. Others such as historians Eric Burin have credited the founding of the ACS to Charles Mercer, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster, whose actions he noted, grew out of their alarm at the surging free black and slave population in several states. Following the lead of historians such as Douglas Egerton, Burin regarded Charles Mercer as a southern conservative who laid the groundwork for the ACS.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Paul Cuffe and Rosalind Cobb Wiggins. *Captain Paul Cuffe's Logs and Letters, 1808-1817: A Black Quaker's "Voice from within the Veil"* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1996).

⁵⁹ See "Congressional Debate Regarding Paul Cuffe's Petition," *Niles Weekly Register*, April 2 1814.

⁶⁰ See Douglas R. Egerton, "'Its Origins Is Not a Little Curious': A New Look at the American Colonization Society," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5, (Winter 1985): 463-80.

By 1817, two members of the ACS, Samuel Mills and Ebenezer Burgess had “set off to the African coast to select a locality for the establishment of a Negro nationality.”⁶¹ They soon began to relocate American blacks to a colony they called Liberia, naming the capital Monrovia after the then president James Monroe. The aims of the ACS varied. Some believed that freed blacks posed a problem to the institution of slavery. Others believed that were blacks given a chance and a suitable environment they could become civilized. Nonetheless, like Sierra Leone, Liberia’s founding in 1822 represented the ongoing efforts of empires to subcontract African colonies to deal with their issues of citizenship and race. Indeed, the expulsion of freed black Americans to Liberia raised many questions about the nature of American racism. To many, colonization was an ill-conceived attempt to reverse the Atlantic system of violence and inhumanity wrought by the slave trade. As one of the first colonizationist, Reverend Robert Finley of Baskingridge, New Jersey pointed out: “Our forefathers brought the Negroes to American soil and we are bound if possible to repair the injuries inflicted on Africa.”⁶² He further noted that “Africa was a grieving mother who would forget her sorrows ...and ...bless the hands of her benefactors for returning her kidnapped children. Americans owed a moral debt which they could pay by transporting thousands of African progeny.”⁶³ Attorney James S. Green, son of Princeton’s President Ashbel Green, explained that

⁶¹ J. H. T. McPherson, *History of Liberia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1891), 3.

⁶² Quoted in P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 17.

⁶³ Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 20.

“slavery was a moral debt and colonization was the sinking fund, by the gradual operation of which, this debt will be ultimately charged.”⁶⁴

However, the politics of the period ought not to be solely represented and interpreted from the personalities driving the colonization process and the efforts to get rid of blacks in America despite a long tradition to the contrary. Evident with Cuffe’s efforts in the late 19th century, blacks had been actively seeking ways to go to Africa. Colonization was rather an intrusion into blacks’ own emigration efforts. By the first third of the nineteenth century, African Americans restored their search for a black nationality as Cuffe had done in the early years. African American emigration continued to Liberia up to that point, but not exclusively. Several other emigration schemes emerged in the US with varying degrees of success to counter the work of the ACS in Liberia.⁶⁵

Alternatively, race and politics interacted in such a way that different groups developed their own notions of freedom that would inevitably influence their ideas on emigration. As a result, various emigration movement developed with different supporting wings. Many shunned Liberia advocating Canada, Central America, and Haiti as alternative sites of emigration. In 1855, James Holly, emigrationist, missionary, and bishop, negotiated with Faustin Soulouque who had installed himself as Emperor of Haiti to restore efforts to encourage African American emigration to the first black Republic.⁶⁶ These renewed efforts developed as African Americans sought to escape the political

⁶⁴ Ibid, 85.

⁶⁵ *Niles Weekly Register*, July 3 1824.

⁶⁶ *Douglass’ Monthly*, January 1861.

turmoil that had come on the heels of the Fugitive Slave Act (1850), the Kansas Nebraska Act (1854), and the Dred Scott Decision (1857).⁶⁷ Richard Blackett whose study followed the efforts of Martin Delany and Robert Campbell to plant a colony in Abokeuta persuasively argued that black emigrationists had formed their own brand of colonization and manifest destiny with commerce, Christianity, civilization also as its driving force.⁶⁸ He further argues that emigrationism was a viable alternative for blacks who did not want to fall under the paternalistic control of whites. Blackett viewed emigration as a move to forge black leadership, to find economic opportunities, and political development free from the control of whites.

West Indians would have also been able to weigh their interest in emigration against African Americans' opposition to Liberian colonization. Many prominent blacks branded the movement as the hypocritical plan of slaveholders and their dupes. On March 24, 1848, nearly one year after Liberia achieved independence, Frederick Douglass, through his newspaper, *The North Star*, reminded his readers to continue to be mindful of the motives of colonizationists. "Be careful," warned Douglass, "of the alluring charms of nationality, independence, wealth, dignity and station, to induce the free colored man to emigrate to Liberia; they 'threaten as well as coax,' — they appeal to our 'fears as well as our hopes,' — they point to our degradation here, as well as our elevation in Liberia, and teach us to believe, that our condition here must become not better but worse, the

⁶⁷ Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality*, 8.

⁶⁸ See R. J. M. Blackett, "Anglo-American Opposition to Liberian Colonization, 1831-1833." *The Historian* 41, no. 2 (1979): 276-294; "Martin Delaney and Robert Campbell: Black Americans in search of an African Colony, *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Jan., 1977), pp. 1-25; "Return to the Motherland: Robert Campbell, a Jamaican in Early Colonial Lagos," *Phylon* (1960 -) Vol. 40, No. 4 (4th Qtr., 1979), 375-386.

longer we remain.”⁶⁹ Douglass further explained: “They tell us, that, now we may emigrate with our own free will; but that the time must come, when we shall have no option in the matter - that we shall be compelled under the arm of stern necessity, to quit this and seek another country.” Referencing the publication of the thirty-first annual report of the ACS, Douglass mockingly called the ACS the “[n]egroliating Society.” He depicted colonizationists as, “long-faced, smooth-tongued, mischievous hypocrites,” who were still in the business of trying to get free Negroes out of this country to their home in Africa.”⁷⁰

Douglass was not alone in his condemnation. Other blacks who were not so well-known also questioned the colonization and its separate but equal assurance. On August 21, 1859, a Philadelphian, J.G. Steward, wrote a letter to the editor of *The Christian Recorder* in an effort to warn blacks against the enticements of colonizationists. He sought to expose what he believed to be the true motives of colonizationists. Steward wrote: “These dear colonizationists clothed in the hypocritical garb of a mawkish philanthropy, are here to remove him to his own dear native land — the golden land of Liberia.”⁷¹ He questioned the reasons driving colonizationists’ interests. He noted that, “[f]irst the ostensible purpose was *to* suppress the slave trade, but the real purpose was, no doubt, to quiet agitation on the subject of slavery, and to allow the breeding process to go on.” Steward further went on to ridicule the idea that Liberia was “the bright prospect of a great country after the model of the United States. The ostensible object now,” he observed, “is to induce emigration for the purpose of Christianizing Africa,” but the real

⁶⁹ *The North Star*, March 24, 1848.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *The Christian Recorder*, August 21, 1859.

purpose was "to maintain the supremacy of the white race and justify themselves in history for their past treatment of the Negro."⁷²

Both Steward and Douglass were speaking to the black readership of their respective newspapers. Douglass explained that his motivation for writing the article was to inform the colored people about "who were operating against their hearths, homes and happiness."⁷³ Douglass in particular pointed out that his "attention to this society, was not so much for the benefit of our white as our colored readers; though it may be profitable to both." Yet, these African American authors were not only addressing blacks in the continental US, but also those in other regions. With these and other criticisms, Liberia and the legacy of the ACS were burdened with controversies. Viewing these attitudes to colonization and the ACS against the Barbadians' view of Liberia and their ensuing relationship with the ACS highlights not only how emigration functioned for different streams of migrants, but how both the movement and the organization evolved.

William Lloyd Garrison also criticized colonizationists. Depicting them as the enemy rather than friend of blacks, he widely publicized these ideas in his newspaper, *The Liberator* and in his book, *Thoughts on African Colonization (1832)*.⁷⁴ Garrison's position is particularly interesting for what it reveals about the changing opinions on the scheme. Up until the publication of *Thoughts*, Garrison had been a part of a group that saw removing free blacks from the US to colonies in Africa as the best way to effect abolition. However, James Forten, a prominent African-American in Philadelphia helped

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ William Lloyd Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization* (New York: Arno Press, 1968); William Lloyd Garrison and Truman Nelson, *Documents of Upheaval; Selections from William Lloyd Garrison's the Liberator, 1831-1865* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966).

to change Garrison's resolve showing him that African Americans opposed colonization. Garrison's opposition to and subsequent lambasting of colonization hinged on the belief that colonization denied blacks the right to a better life in America, their native land and took them away from the responsibilities of the struggle to free those still in bondage. The publication of Garrison's work, which exposed those interested in colonization to the opinions of the black masses in America, resulted in a significant turning point in the abolitionist and colonization movement and our understandings of it. So effective was Garrison's critique that it caused strong ideological and wealthy supporters such as Arthur Tappan to disengage from the movement. Since then, questions about colonizationists' motives and debates, regarding whether or not they were racist or benevolent, have focused exclusively on their work with African Americans and their efforts in the continental US.

The Legacy of the ACS

Few aspects of American history has generated as much interest or has undergone the kinds of dramatic interpretations and reinterpretations as the Liberia colonization experiment. The movement was a long-lived and protracted phenomenon that entrapped three continents. With over 16,000 emigrants transported to Liberia, the numbers were equally phenomenal. Over the years, the historiography surrounding the ACS and the Liberia experiment has been driven by numerous debates. The counterpoints of benevolence or racism, however, have been one of the most explored areas. Fixation on these issues often came as a way of critiquing America from the plight of blacks who

were sent to Liberia.⁷⁵ Black suffering might have been one of most difficult and visible issues of the Liberia experiment, but several other problems beleaguered the colonization movement and the organization. The African American historian W.E.B Du Bois once opined that the colonization movement was one “poorly conceived and not altogether genuine.”⁷⁶ Like Du Bois, a certain cadre of scholars has viewed the failures of the Liberia experiment from the vantage point of sectionalism and the differences in vision that emerged amongst its leaders while others have come to see the movement as ideologically flawed.

Two schools of thought have dominated the historiography of the Liberia experiment. Some leftist radical scholars view colonizationists as more motivated by racism than benevolence. They see the movement as a racist scheme put together by southern slave holders who were bent on expatriating the free black population who they saw as posing a problem to the institution of slavery. For them, colonization was meant to consolidate rather than weaken the institution of slavery. Others more conservative maintain that benevolence drove colonization and have often attributed this idea to the Christian and humanitarian impulses of the movement’s early founders. They argue that colonizationists were benevolent Christians who saw colonization as a means towards gradual emancipation. More recently, some scholars have argued that the movement should be seen as a conservative approach to emancipation one that held both anti-slavery and racist impulses.

⁷⁵ See Claude A. Clegg, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁷⁶ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois's *The Suppression of the African Slave-trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870* (NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1896).

Other scholars have pointed out the inherent irony and racism undergirding the idea of benevolent colonization. Nicholas Guyatt offers a critique of colonizationist ideas in the early national period that were carried out under the umbrella of benevolence.⁷⁷ By not treating Indian and black removal as discrete phenomena, Guyatt shows how colonization and race are linked. He argues that 19th century colonization ventures represented a maturation of racism in which proponents were able to support the idea without necessarily saying that the colonized race was permanently inferior. By pointing out that inferior races were being sent to a new place in which they could emulate the ways of whites, he pointed out that “benevolent colonization combined an abstract commitment to non-white potential with a familiar squeamishness about racial coexistence.”⁷⁸

This kind of colonization rested on the principle that civilization would be the result of the venture. In some ways, colonization had the potential to prove that oppressed groups such as blacks and Indians could be the equal of whites. This was particularly ironic, argues Guyatt, as the proponents of this kind of benevolent colonization sought to remove the people beyond the borders of their own countries in order to prove their equality. In this regard climate and environmental factors were employed. Like Scottish enlightenment arguments that civilization and savagery were indices more of experience than race, colonizationists argued that “any human being placed under the right social circumstances could make the transition from hunter to citizen.” For example, colonizationist argued that tropical climates were more suitable for intellectual

⁷⁷ Nicholas Guyatt, “The Outskirts of Our Happiness:” Race and the Lure of Colonization in the early Republic. *The Journal of American History* Vol. 95. No 4. March 2009.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 89.

development for some races than others. That is, Africans were better suited to the climates where they could prove their capabilities. To scholars like Guyatt, the ideology that undergirded the colonization movement was a full-grown racism but one which was hidden behind a mask of benevolence. Advocates envisioned an America in which blacks, by virtue of their inferiority, could never be contributing members.

Views on colonization's formal beginnings have also served as a means of distinctions among scholars. Historians have acknowledged that different people contributed to the creation of the ACS, but they have disagreed over the movement's predominant architect. In order to point out the originator of the movement and efforts to advance the moderate approach to colonization, historians such as Douglas Egerton have revisited the roots of colonization. According to Egerton, while the Liberia colonization movement has long been associated with Robert Finley of Basking Ridge, New Jersey, other research suggests that the political reformer Charles Fenton Mercer was the original orchestrator of the movement. In order to ascribe conservatism to colonization Egerton traces with great subtlety the movement's founder, his motivations and the spirit in which the movement developed.⁷⁹

Understanding Mercer as the originator of the colonization movement has been the most effective means of quieting the old abolitionist critique. Though a southerner who owned slaves, Mercer had come to support the idea of a free labor society in which neither slaves nor free blacks figured prominently. He had become all too knowledgeable

⁷⁹ See, "Averting Crisis: The Proslavery Critique of the American Colonization Society" in Douglas R Egerton *Rebels, Reformers, & Revolutionaries: Collected Essays and Second Thoughts* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Egerton, "Averting a Crisis: A New Look at the American Colonization Society." *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (Winter 1985): 463-80; Egerton, *Charles Fenton Mercer and the Trial of National Conservatism*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1989.

about the dilemmas of class division on a visit to England in which he had observed the plight of the poor black loyalists and their effects on British industrial development.

Mercer feared that a similar problem could occur in the US. Like most Virginians in the Early Republic, Mercer believed that color would permanently relegate free blacks in the US to a low class position and state of degradation. From Mercer's perspective, a rapidly industrializing American society would serve only to exacerbate the problems of the black lower class and threaten America's economic progress.

In this regard, understanding the differences between abolitionism and anti-slavery is tantamount to understanding this underlying approach to the moderate view of colonization. While abolitionists believed slavery to be immoral, anti-slavery advocates did not necessarily believe in the immorality of the institution. Rather, they often supported freeing society from the clutches of slavery because they saw the institution as well as free blacks as contrary to societal racial harmony and economic development. Thus, Mercer, a slaveholder, disliked slavery, slave holders and free blacks alike. His support for colonization resulted from his efforts to get rid of blacks thereby subverting the slaveholding interests. According to Egerton, Mercer's idea of the prerequisites of a productive and progressive American society acknowledged or incorporated neither the institution of slavery nor free blacks. Yet, seeking to repatriate blacks to a colony in Africa as a way of solving America's impending class problems and steering it away from a path that was already threatening societies such as England, stemmed from racist beliefs about blacks' ability. In a classic Early Americanist position that often advocated contradictory views on race and slavery and their relation to American progress, Egerton

portrayed Mercer as a colonization founder who harbored both anti-slavery and racist beliefs.

Other advocates of the moderate approach have shown that later colonizationist proponents were motivated by ideas similar to Mercer's. As advocates of Henry Clay's American system, some colonizationists were interested in colonization as a way to save the US' experiment with republicanism. Beverly Tomek has further shown that the Pennsylvania Colonization Society (PCS) evinced a truly conservative movement divided between a camp led by Matthew Carey, an advocate of internal improvement and Henry Clay's American system, and others such as Gerard Ralston and Elliott Cresson who were drawn to the scheme because of its humanitarian goal, social vision and prospects for emancipation.⁸⁰ Unlike Carey who looked to Mercer, Ralston and Cresson looked to Samuel Mills, Robert Finley and Robert Ralston as the movement's authentic founders. They further viewed colonization as an extension of Pennsylvania's history of abolitionism. Tomek noted Cresson's efforts to market the ACS as a legitimate benevolent organization that would bring about full emancipation. By differentiating colonization supporters Tomek showed how both anti-slavery and racists' views survived within one organizational body. The methodology undergirding Tomek's argument shows that while the primary interest of those who supported the Liberian experiment in Pennsylvania was black liberation, the reasons driving their support was not homogenous. By giving a nuanced view of individual supporters of the colonization

⁸⁰ Beverly Tomek, *Colonization and Its Discontents: Emancipation, Emigration, and Antislavery in Antebellum Pennsylvania* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

movement, Tomek showed how support for gradual emancipation, colonization, immediate abolition and anti-slavery were equally present within one association.

The moderate approach has also shown colonizationist as driven by the anxiety surrounding issues of race. P.J. Staudenraus in what has perhaps being the most definitive work on the movement has detailed the paradoxes of colonizationism, chief among them being the belief in the impossibility of two races co-existing in American society.⁸¹ Advocates of this position were neither slaveholders nor even racists. As Tomek opined, the Pennsylvania Society had found reasons to become weary of a rising black population. She argued that Pennsylvanians hoped that through their various anti-slavery efforts they would end up with a manageable black population that would foster good race relations in the state. Cresson for one had been convinced that colonization was necessary to avoid a race war. Emma Lapsansky-Werner and Margaret Hope Bacon have similarly shown that the friendship between Benjamin Coates and the Liberian President, Joseph Roberts, was predicated on their supposed mutual understanding that they should live in separate places. Yet, through his involvement with the Institute for Colored Youths and as an ardent supporter of the education of African Americans, Coates like Cresson who had participated in similar endeavors, was not thought of as racist.

Such a perspective harkens back to the ideas of early moderates who argued that colonization was a means of quelling sectional strife. In one of the first major works on colonization, *The American Colonization Society*, Early Fox an early advocate of the moderate view of colonization has argued that the movement was a compromise whose

⁸¹ Staudenraus, *African Colonization*, 123.

efforts were framed under the notion of preserving national unity.⁸² The colonization scheme, he argues, was the only plan that served the varying interests of all sections of the union, would not cause national upheaval and radical readjustment, and was a plan that was also practical and feasible. Scholars have argued that had not this middle position been present the Civil War might have happened much earlier.

Moderates broadly sought to show that not all colonizationists were slaveholders or racists. They have further shown that even these two categories of people supported colonization for reasons far more complex than their titles suggested. Beginning with Douglas Egerton, colonization historians of the moderate position have sought to trouble ideas surrounding the “real” founding fathers of the colonization movement.⁸³ Through this process, Egerton and others have shown the issues that fueled the “real” founders of the movement, chief among them being the view that slavery and un-free labor were both ruinous to society. A second segment of moderates have outlined the variety of reasons why people were drawn to the idea of colonization. By highlighting the inconsistency of colonizationist ideology, advocates of the middle approach have pointed out that both racist as well as progressive views drove the movement and accommodated people with diverging opinions on slavery. Using character analysis of some of the movement’s supporters in the Pennsylvania Society, Tomek has shown that support for colonization also resulted from reasons that drove individual’s opposition to slavery.

⁸² Early Lee Fox, *The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840* (New York: AMS Press, 1971).

⁸³ Douglas R. Egerton, “Averting a Crisis: A New Look at the American Colonization Society.” *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (Winter 1985): 463-80.

Eric Burin in his work, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution*, supports the multiple motivations view but has gone further. By looking at manumitters as a particular class of people variously motivated by convenience, control, profit, humanitarianism and Christian sensibilities and by showing the effects of their actions on slavery, Burin has argued that the movement should be viewed as a conservative approach to emancipation that was both anti-slavery and racist.⁸⁴ Advocates of the moderate approach which focuses on the motivations and intentions of the orchestrators of colonization have largely ignored the myriad of ways colonization affected blacks. Regardless of proponents' intentions and the ideology driving the movement, blacks often understood the movement through their own social, economic, and political goals.

The moderate approach aimed to disprove the abolitionists' wholehearted belief that all colonizationists were racists by delineating how ideas of racism featured in the rise of colonizationist thought. Racism was often determined by whether colonizationists believed blacks to be naturally inferior and such variations of view on race was often hidden in blanket assertions about colonizationists. Other colonizationists believed black inferiority was the result of slavery and white racism. These supporters were also likely advocates of gradual abolition who believed colonization to be the best way to achieve that end. They merged an abstract idea of black potential with their uneasiness about racial coexistence.

Using manumitters as a social category Burin has shown how the conservative dimensions of the colonization movement with its anti-slavery and racist aims fostered emancipation. By exploring the paradoxes of colonization through the actions of

⁸⁴ Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution*, 9.

manumitters, and the effects of their actions on the institution of slavery and local politics, Burin argues that profit, control, and commerce fueled the movement as much as Christian ideology and benevolence. As Burin argues, manumission and resettlement were the focus of Pennsylvania colonizationists.⁸⁵ He further notes that colonization undermined slavery by affording slaves “agency.” The slaves’ ability to achieve freedom through colonization, he argues, not only furnished them with the power to negotiate the terms of their own freedom but also that of other family members. Burin further argues that given this form of agency, colonization significantly subverted the slavemaster’s mastery. In the process of negotiating the slaves’ freedom, Burin argued that masters had to consider slaves as something other than property.

Yet despite the amount of agency manumission accorded slaves, oftentimes racist actions undermined the amount of control slaves could garner through the manumission process. Despite the fact that in anticipating their freedom manumitters often Christianized and educated their slaves, Burin nevertheless showed that more often than not these actions stemmed from anti-slavery and racist beliefs rather than from genuine benevolence and Christian principles. Manumitters, he argues, co-opted expatriation schemes in hopes of instituting the compulsory removal of their slaves. Often prejudice drove the conditions under which slaves were freed and most of the emancipated slaves were required to leave the state, which showed the racial fears central to such antislavery beliefs.

Thus, moderates have shown that the Liberian experiment cannot be condemned on the basis of the belief that it was a policy by slaveholders to consolidate slavery

⁸⁵ Ibid, 26.

because not all colonizationists were slaveholders. A belief in the idea that the anti-slavery advocate Charles Mercer was the true orchestrator of colonization is a central tenet of the moderate position. The variety of beliefs that existed within the colonization movement also forms another contour of the moderate position. Additionally, by looking at the beliefs and actions of manumitters has also served to most clearly illustrate that the colonization movement must be seen as a conservative approach to emancipation that was both antislavery and racist.

The moderate approach to colonization revived the moral discussions surrounding colonization. Yet despite its relative innovation this approach represents a retreat to old top-down views of history. These analytical shifts from racists to humanitarians though substantively creates a distorted and over-simplified picture in which the others involved are reduced to non-entities. It is not to say that the views of these men were not important but that they did not unilaterally define the process. Colonization has to be understood as being more complex than ideology, certainly more so than slogans, and even more so than the people representing the top leadership of the movement. Understanding the nuances of mass movements is often obscured when there is such reverence for the founders and leaders. The importance of hierarchical control is assumed when the movement is characterized by looking at its major players. This is mostly a top-down approach to colonization that does not take into consideration, for instance, the views of the grass-roots and the numerous people who contributed financially to the movement. Except for Burin who showed how manumission politics played out on a local level, there is often no sense of the broader public perception of the movement. These positions also often do not take a holistic approach to colonization,

giving voice to its various social and political actors. Except for a few historians, such as Claude Clegg, the black voice is also often missing, hidden or downplayed in the moderate approach to colonization.

Additionally, this view has been constructed within concepts that rely on the value judgments that are often seen through presentist lens. For instance, to assume Christians should automatically oppose slavery is anachronistic. Furthermore, whether racists or Christian humanitarians, the cause itself went on to transcend the motives of its member. Viewing colonization from the point of motivations of its supporters often obscure what the establishment of Liberia and colonization meant to blacks. It fails to see Liberia as a significant space that attended to the needs of many blacks whose desires for freedom were not being met in the US or the West Indies. Rather than ask the value laden question of how racist or benevolent colonizationists were, it might be more useful to ask, how did blacks make use of colonization? How did it meet their needs? Considered in isolation, racism or benevolence do not tell us enough about either colonizationists' attempts to rectify the black problem or how blacks struggled to define their freedom and remake a world that would meet their needs.

Furthermore, while the ACS was largely defined in terms of its relationship with African American, its expansion to include West Indians brings into view the newer avenues the organization was attempting to explore. That the ACS went beyond the boundaries of the US warrants a revisiting of the persistent racism-benevolence debate. On the one hand, this move could be seen as a genuine benevolent effort to assist blacks. On the other, given the growing divisions, insufficient funding, among other problems that led many to view the colonization society as a "nullity," the organization's expansion

into Barbados could be seen as a move to shore up its image in the US. What is sure, regardless of the motivation behind extending assistance to blacks outside of the US, is that this shift would unequivocally change the lives of the Barbadian migrants and Liberia's historical trajectory.

Liberia Attracting Barbadians Across the Atlantic

In 1847, Liberia's achievement of independence created a situation that became mutually advantageous to the newly sovereign republic as well as to blacks on the other side of the Atlantic. Independence signaled new possibilities of freedom for the young nation and blacks interested in emigrating to an independent black African republic. The ACS need to recruit emigrants to develop the country synergized with Barbadians' desires to emigrate there. In 1848, after independence, Liberian President, Joseph Roberts travelled throughout Europe, the US and the Caribbean in search of support for his young nation. Roberts travelled a route that had ineffable echoes of the slave trade. In London, Roberts met with Gerard Ralston, a white Pennsylvanian colonizationist who had become Liberia's consul and was negotiating diplomatic and trade agreements for the newly sovereign nation, as well as finding new migrants to relocate there.⁸⁶

On his way to the US, Roberts stopped over in Barbados much to the delight of a black populace who had been emigrating in droves from the island but were now fixing their gaze on the new West African nation. Roberts' stopover proved to be both fortuitous and unavoidable. Because of the nature of Atlantic currents, travelers across the Atlantic

⁸⁶ Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Colonization Society, April (1848): 7.

Ocean more often than not stopped in Barbados. To be sure, many African American emigrants had also stopped there on their way to Liberia. Roberts' visit coincided with the aspirations of an Afro-Barbadian populace just 10 years into their experience of full freedom. His visit was of vital importance to the Barbadians' views and understanding of Liberia. No doubt, the failures and successes of African American emigrants like Roberts who arrived in Liberia in 1829 and had risen to the highest position in the nation weighed on their migration decisions.

As chairman of the Barbados Company, Anthony Barclay capitalized on the opportunity to raise the concerns of his organization, the Barbadian Company for Liberia. He presented a lengthy address to Roberts on behalf of the society. It expressed their joy at the president's safe arrival in Barbados at a time "when a large portion of our brethren...have formed themselves into a society for the purpose of emigrating to the Western Coast of Africa with the intention of forming a settlement in the land of our forefathers."⁸⁷ It drew attention to "the great work of the moral regeneration of Africa already commenced by the British government under which we have the happiness to live." Barclay did not try to distance himself from the British imperial structure, a move indicative of the fact that in their efforts to achieve a desired goal blacks at times collaborated and worked within systems they saw as oppressive. Barclay suggested that West Indians, by virtue of their colonial subjectivity, had gained the necessary attributes

⁸⁷ Ibid.

that made them the most suitable to be at the nexus of any viable Afro-European relationship.⁸⁸

Barclay concluded his address to the Liberian president by appealing to the ideals of pan-African brotherhood. “Trusting that we exchange reciprocal feelings when we state that bound to each other by the ties of our common origin and feeling the same deep interest in the enlightenment and civilization of our fatherland,” Barclay requested that Robert provide “information and advice from the results of your experience as may assist us in our labor of love.”⁸⁹ For, as he predicted, Ethiopia would soon “stretch forth her hands to God.”⁹⁰ His reference to this popular black millenarian redemptive belief, albeit couched in notions of British superiority, highlighted the ways in which many Barbadians viewed their relationship to Africa. In closing, Barclay presented Roberts on behalf of the committee members with “resolutions unanimously passed by the Committee, of the Barbados Colonization Society for assisting in the suppression of the slave trade and the introduction of Christianity into Africa”⁹¹ (See Appendix A).

Several reasons drove West Indian interest in emigration and Africa. It was from these motivations that the problems that would later plague Liberia were germinated. According to the Barbadians, their aims were to introduce the natives to “our manners and customs, making known to them the follies of continuing the slave trade, building schools to introduce ‘systematic culture,’ to teach land cultivation and introduce

⁸⁸ See James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Connecticut, 1985).

⁸⁹ Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Colonization Society, April (1848): 7.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

commerce." They also hoped that "by our examples, moral, religious, and social, to form a nucleus from which instruction may be radiated around, and the well disposed be induced to amalgamate with us." The Barbadians believed that the issues faced by Africans could be settled by the beliefs of their privileged segment of the population. Unequivocally, the Barbadians' emigration project tempered as it was by notions of British superiority not only outlined how these West Indian blacks viewed their relationship to Africa and Africans, but also foreshadowed the churning of future problems.

After Roberts' departure, Barbadians sought to reach out to the ACS. Joseph Attwell, who had gone to study in the divinity school of the Philadelphia Institute for Colored Youth, began to solicit help for his Barbadian comrades from the Pennsylvania Colonization Society (PCS). In his various letters to this society and others he outlined his cause as "An Urgent Appeal in Aid of Emigration...From Barbados to Liberia." Attwell's arrival in the US in the early 1860s, proved to be opportune. Faced with a decline in African American emigration to Liberia during the Civil War years, the ACS had become open to extending their repatriation program to other blacks. Attwell explained to the ACS that "were free passages provided several hundred of worthy and industrious Barbadians would gladly and immediately seek the attractive shores of the African Republic." To entice the ACS, Attwell specifically outlined the disposition of the interested Barbadians as "Christian people of the Episcopalian, Wesleyan, and Moravian Churches are desirous of emigrating to Liberia." He repeated the reasons related to labor and building up a nationality that was driving their interest.

Almost simultaneously, Liberian politicians also sought to lure skilled migrants.

In 1862, Edward Wilmot Blyden, himself a West Indian emigrant from the Virgin Islands now the commissioner, sent a circular “To the Descendants of Africa throughout the West Indian Islands.”⁹² The circular was received warmly in Barbados. On March 1, 1864, Daniel Warner, the president of Liberia received hundreds of letters enquiring about Liberia. In response, the Liberian department of state informed the Barbados Company that their letters had caused “the president considerable gratification. Entertaining ardent desire that the exiled sons of Africa from all parts of the world should return and unite their efforts in building up on this benighted shore a home for themselves and their posterity, it occasions him real pleasure to notice the enthusiasm...”⁹³ The Barbadians were informed that the Legislature of Liberia had recently enacted a law providing that “each family emigrating from those islands to that Republic shall receive, instead of ten acres of land, as heretofore, twenty-five acres, and each single or unmarried individual ten acres instead of five.”⁹⁴

Like the Barbadians, Liberian officials also employed a pan-Africanist strategy that used language infused with notions of racial brotherhood, common history and destiny to lure the Barbadians across the Atlantic. “Brethren [sic] of the Antilles,” they addressed the Barbadians, “[w]e are one in origin and destiny. We have the same history of centuries of suffering, of tribulation and woe.”⁹⁵ Much like diasporic pan-Africanists elsewhere, the language of fate was used in this instance to encourage the exiles back to

⁹² ACS, Reel 196, Domestic Letters, Letter no.163. Folio 63559.(American Colonization Society, Washington D.C., USA).

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Burleigh Holder, “A History of Crozierville,” a speech given at the Crozierville Centenary, 1965, reprinted in the *Liberian Studies Journal III: 1* (1970-71), pp.23-24.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

the fatherland. “The time seems to have come in the Providence of God,” Warner noted, “when this oppressed people, wherever they may be found in their exile, should seek together and co-operate for the establishing in the land of their fathers a home and a nationality.”⁹⁶ They pointed out why Liberia was the best choice among all the emerging black republics. For one, its independence was acknowledged by all the leading nations of the world and this made it “the most suitable starting point from which the returning exiles may begin to take possession of and [civilize] this long-neglected land, and thus aid in restoring to this ancient cradle of [civilization] her pristine glory.”⁹⁷

On July 9th, 1864, the Barbados Company reached out to William Coppinger, corresponding and recording secretary of the ACS in Philadelphia. Referring to the stream of prospective immigrants, the leader of the organization acknowledged that he was writing “on behalf of the company of tradesmen and others of African descent in this island.”⁹⁸ Barclay noted, “they are respectable but poor.”⁹⁹ The letter informed Coppinger that they had taken steps “to accept the very liberal offer of which the government of the republic of Liberia so reasonably set forth, and would request of you such facilities as may enable us to obtain an easy passage to that great and growing republic.”¹⁰⁰

The Barbados Company alluded to the importance of the newspapers in creating the connections to the ACS. “The committee notice with pleasure in a recent local paper here, a communication from Mr. Geo. L. Armstrong, a colonizationist in which it is

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ American Colonization Society, Washington. DC, reel 96, Domestic Letters, letter no.32, folder 63367.

⁹⁹ Burleigh Holder, A History of Crozierville, *Liberian Studies Journal*, 25.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

stated that the colonization society are about to equip and send a vessel to Barbados for the purpose of conveying respectable colored persons to the shores of Liberia.”¹⁰¹ Ten days later, Anthony Barclay wrote Armstrong that he had heard the ACS would be sending a ship to Barbados “for the purpose of conveying any, and all well-behaved coloured people who are desirous of emigrating to the shore of Liberia.”¹⁰² Rather than clarifying what the ACS meant by “well-behaved,” Barclay wrote to ask for information such as the name of the vessel, the merchant to whom it belonged, what time it was expected to arrive in Barbados and the number of persons it would be able to accommodate . He pointed out that he was “personally interested in this movement, my greatest desire being to leave Barbados with my whole family being very large and settle in Liberia.”¹⁰³

Barclay’s was not the only group of Barbadians who were interested in relocating to Liberia. Several other emigrants in Barbados had expressed interest in Liberia, but had chosen to go elsewhere. Barclay noted that “some of the people from Christ Church being impatient have gone to Jamaica, but the great majority of our people who are disposed to move, are in favor of settling in Africa, their fatherland.”¹⁰⁴ Barclay and his colleagues in communicating with Coppinger keenly distinguished between their company, “the Barbados Company for Liberia,” and others that had formed such as “the Fatherland Union.”¹⁰⁵ In one letter they noted that “the Barbados Company for Liberia is not identical with the people of Christ Church who have corresponded with the Secretary of

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² ACS, Reel 96, Domestic Letters, Letter no.50, folder 63389.

¹⁰³ Ibid

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

State of the Republic of Liberia and are in possession of his reply.”¹⁰⁶ He noted that: “Those persons have changed their minds and have turned their attention to another land, viz Jamaica...”¹⁰⁷ He identified his group as consisting “chiefly of coloured men of the city of Bridgetown, chiefly artisans who nevertheless have the ambition of advancing themselves both in the social and political scale.” It was for these reasons that Barclay noted that they “do therefore gladly hail the liberal invitation offered them by the government of the Republic of Liberia—to return to their fatherland and assist in building up a nationality for their own good, as also for the elevation of degraded Africa.”

Four members of the committee had seen the proclamation in one of the local newspapers and had asked the Barbadian government for assistance in making their way to Liberia. They were, however, informed that the governor could not help to build up a foreign government. They then petitioned the legislature but got no response. They also called a public meeting and started a subscription list. Several attended the meeting including James Barclay, who spoke against plans to leave.¹⁰⁸ J.H. Shannon, who had been involved in recruiting emigrants to go to Demerara and other Caribbean territories, also mentioned that many at the meeting expressed concerns about emigrating to a “foreign flag” to whom they would have to take the oath of allegiance. The necessity to leave, however, over-ruled all objections for many were delighted with the prospects of “building up a nationality of the descendants of Africa.”¹⁰⁹

On October 10, 1864, the emigration committee of the Pennsylvania Colonization

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ ACS reel 96, domestic letters letter. no 51 folder 63391

Society reported it had received letters from Barbados recently applying for passages to Liberia for about "two hundred and fifty person, and credible statements that one thousand persons are desirous of emigrating to Liberia." The committee felt the call important enough to recommend the collection of donations for "the specific purposes of aiding this enterprise so full of promise, and at this time furnishing the only known opening for furthering emigration to Liberia."¹¹⁰ They planned to send Reverend John Seys, a superintendent of a large plantation in Trinidad and prominently connected to the Missions of the Methodist Church in Africa and who acted as an agent for recaptured Africans for the Government at Monrovia to Barbados, on a fact finding mission.¹¹¹ "Emigration to Liberia," he insisted, "will essentially benefit the colored people of Barbados. In that Island, as in all others in the Carribbean Sea, the negro is a kind of serf, or at most an alien, and may earn a mere living, but no more."¹¹² Whites, he surmised, "will forever keep him down, and he can expect nothing but to remain as a servile portion of community."¹¹³ Liberia was the natural home of black Barbadians. Free, they are "eligible to the highest place in the gift of an independent and sovereign nation of [their] own complexion, origin, tastes, and habits;" and they emigrate to "a climate perfectly congenial to [their] constitution, where the temperature, productions, soil, and everything else, are precisely like those of [their] native Island."¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Minutes of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society, October 10, 1864.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ *The African Repository* April (1865): 119.

Gerard Ralston and the Barbadians

The Barbadians had also written to Gerard Ralston, Liberian Consul in London, whose father was a founding member of the PAC. In a reply to the Barbadians, Ralston pitched Liberia as *the* up and coming Negro nationality. “Gentlemen,” he addressed John Worrell, Charles Lawrence and Samuel Griffiths, committee members of the Barbados Company for Liberia, “I have attentively considered this interesting letter, and I am rejoiced that as many respectable inhabitants of Barbados are willing to emigrate to Liberia to strengthen the negro nationality on the West Coast of Africa in conjunction with their African brethren of the United States of America, who have preceded them in establishing a highly vigorous representative republican Government.”¹¹⁵

Ralston outlined the advances made by Liberia. The nation had already “made treaties with many of the nations of Europe and America, formed social and commercial relations with all the neighboring tribes, and are enjoying a successful progressive career, but which we wish to accelerate and render more expansive by an increase of well-disposed, intelligent, and enterprising immigrants from Barbados.”¹¹⁶ Climate was again a keen factor. Ralston was confident of their success: Their good conduct and industry can turn the manifold advantages of a most fertile country and genial climate (for blacks, though unsuitable for whites) to the best account.”¹¹⁷ He communicated all the possibilities that awaited freed people in Liberia while also enticing the Barbadians with compliments on their intelligence and disposition. What’s more interesting is how

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Ralston, a white colonizationist, saw Barbadians' fate as bound up with African Americans in a united pan-African brotherhood. Ralston extolled the "enterprising black pioneers from the United States" who had settled in Liberia and tried to convince the Barbadians that the newly independent country was their only hope if they wanted to advance politically and economically.¹¹⁸ He reassured them that, "the reception of and the comfortable residence of a large and constantly increasing number of immigrants of colored people from all parts of the Western Hemisphere, the desire being to construct a vigorous nation from the Americo-African portion of the race, who will enjoy all the blessing of free and constitutional government with all the privileges which Protestantism, laws, customs, manners, language, and other peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxons can alone bestow."¹¹⁹ Advancing black nationality could only occur, he declared, on the African Coast. "Such a nation cannot exist in the United States, neither in Jamaica, nor Trinidad, nor Demarara, nor Hayti, nor Cuba, nor Central America, nor in short in any other country but Liberia. Whatever country the white man inhabits the black man ought to avoid."¹²⁰

Ralston provided eye-witness accounts of black emigration experiences in other countries. Of all other possible sites of settlement, Liberia held out the best hope Ralston declared."¹²¹ He pointed to a Charles Williamson who visited and examined many countries: "He had been in Canada twice; in the West Indies three times, and, under the British government, Trinidad five years. During that time he had examined the countries

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

with a view to see which was the best for the colored people. He was sixty-seven years of age and could expect little for himself.”¹²² Ralston noted that “in the West Indies capital ruled the people - the government recognizes you, but the planters, who had been accustomed to drive on slaves, knew you not.”¹²³ If they went to Canada they would not better their condition. He had lived there for seventeen months. He explained that “it costs money to get to Canada - money to get to the West Indies. The Canadas are peopled with many persons from this country. The leading men were principally Yankees.”¹²⁴ Furthermore, “in the West Indies he had to take his hat around to get the dead out of the way of the turkey-buzzards - that showed their sympathy.”¹²⁵ Politically, Ralston noted that “in Canada you cannot be recognized in office - in the West Indies it is better, and some colored persons get into office. In the Canadas he never heard of but one colored man being in office.” He concluded that while “the Canadas are a fine country, he felt there could be no permanent home for them except in Africa, “where their children could enjoy all the blessings of liberty. That was the best country for them. As for the United States, “they did not want the colored people any more, they had got the use of them, and now in this State the new constitution did not recognize them at all.”¹²⁶ Ralston also pointed out why they should not emigrate to the neighboring black republic of Haiti.¹²⁷

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ *The African Repository* September (1864): 264.

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ Ibid

¹²⁷ Ibid. Also see “Colonization in Canada and Hayti, compared to colonization in Liberia.” In *African Repository and Colonial Journal*, Volume 8, 225-29. Washington D.C.: American Colonization Society, 1833.

Liberia "had as fine, or better, climate, as regards atmosphere than the West Indies."¹²⁸ He assured them, "I write this in the interest of a negro nationality which is the cherished wish of my heart to succor. The experience of 245 years proves that whites and blacks cannot live comfortably together. The whites dominate the blacks, and it is important they should live separately if both [are] to prosper."¹²⁹ In no other country but Liberia can "colored people live comfortably and be self-governing, and become a mighty nation to diffuse the blessings of civilization and Christianity over the innumerable peoples of the immense African peninsula."¹³⁰ In a subsequent letter to the ACS, Ralston recommended that "agriculturists and employers of laborers, cultivators of coffee, sugar, cotton, and other staple products, with their families, should now be selected and aided to remove to Liberia and called for the establishment of "a special fund of thirty thousand dollars" for the proper colonization of three hundred such persons.¹³¹

Following these lengthy back and forth communication between the Barbados Company, the ACS, Liberia officials and diplomats such as Ralston, President Warner instructed Blyden to write to the ACS to provide its ships for two to three years to bring emigrants from the West Indies. When Warner learnt that the ACS would help with Barbadian emigration, he responded that "the government of this republic feels very grateful to the Society for the great interest it has taken in its West Indian emigration enterprise, both as it regards the pecuniary means it has furnished and the happy selection

¹²⁸ *The Baltimore Sun*, August 13, 1952.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *The African Repository* September (1864): 264.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

of the emigrants sent out.” As much as Barbadians had considered Liberia to be “a more auspicious shore,” Liberian officials would also express the same sentiment hailing the Barbadian emigrants “as highly auspicious for the future welfare of Liberia and the civilization of Africa.”¹³²

This account of the relationship between the Barbadians and the ACS highlights the Barbadians as being assertive in courting the ACS. This intervention presents difficulties for an explanation of colonization that rests too much on notions of racism. The explanatory gap in the historiography can be filled by exploring the Barbadians' involvement. To accept these objections is not to deny that racism played a part, even a crucial one in the decision to form the organization and to transport free slaves to the Liberian colony. A full explanation of colonization needs to link subjective motives of the orchestrators to the objectives of blacks. However, this relationship is often not explored in detail because the main objectives have become to highlight the thoughts of officials' during the era. In the end, no single cause can be said to underlay a movement to which so many people and things contributed.

¹³² Ibid

CHAPTER IV

Shifting Frontiers of Freedom, Citizenship, and Nationhood: Black Encounters, Identity, Plurality, and Stratification in Liberia

THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY

VESSELS.	SAILED FROM.	TIME OF SAIL- ING.	NUMBER OF EMIGRANTS.
Barque Greyhound.....	New York	January 18, '65.	1
Brig M. A. Benson.....	Boston	February 9, '65.	1
Brig Cora	Barbados	April 6, 1865.	346
Barque Thomas Pope.....	New York.....	June 3, 1865.	7
Schooner H. P. Russell..	Baltimore.....	November 4, '65.	172
			527

Figure 6 The African Repository's Record of Migrant Ships to Liberia in 1865¹

In 1865, curiosity and anticipation about the post-Civil War era were enough to cause African Americans' interest in the Liberian emigration movement to wane.² But even so, that year the American Colonization Society (ACS) sent five migrant ships to Liberia. While this number of Liberian migrant ships suggested that African Americans did not continue to view the probable outcomes of the war with caution and suspicion, closer statistical examination of the ships' passenger would render those kinds of conclusions problematic. That year, the largest groups of migrants to Liberia did not hail from the customary departure points on the American mainland, a movement in keeping with trends in African American migration to Liberia in the post- independence era. In 1865 specifically, the largest group of migrants sent to Liberia under the auspices of the ACS departed from the Caribbean island of Barbados (see Figure 1).

¹ *The African Repository* February (1866): 35.

² See David W. Blight and Brooks D. Simpson, *Union & Emancipation: Essays on Politics and Race in the Civil War Era* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1997); David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

Barbadian emigration to Liberia has been a lost chapter in nineteenth century post-emancipation history. Dwarfed by the larger events of the American Civil War and the Morant Bay Rebellion (October, 1865), their emigration has been relegated to mere footnotes in Caribbean and Liberian colonization history. Still, to fully understand the depth and breadth of Afro-Barbadians' post-emancipation aspirations and to understand post-emancipation as process illustrative of blacks agency, a more expansive exploration of the transatlantic dimensions and experiences of this migrant group is necessary. The quest for liberty among blacks in the Caribbean and elsewhere after the legal end of slavery was neither static nor fixed, but in every way, it remained an active endeavor that persisted across space and time. Understanding post-emancipation as a process of blacks' persistence and rebellion against emancipation as codified in the Abolition Acts, means following these Barbadians on their migratory quest into Liberia more than thirty years after the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean.

Upon their migration, Barbadians became a part of an aggregation of black migrant groups in Liberia. West Indians, African Americans, African re-captives, and indigenes collided in the Liberian nation building project bringing with them different visions. With this, Liberia became a black multi-cultural space with multiple emerging voices and visions. Ostensibly these groups had been united through race and a spirit of pan-African solidarity. For African Americans and West Indians, the assertion of race rather than ethnic identity, typical in the diaspora on the western banks of the Atlantic, had been a unifying force. But whereas the struggle in the diaspora was between races, in Africa it was also within race, between blacks as well as whites as the scramble for Africa later showed. In the 1860s, however, the influx of these various migrant streams in

Liberia created a new milieu in which intra-racial and ethnic identity would be nurtured. Upon arrival, each group created and operated within their own networks and ethos or opportunistically allied with others, creating dynamics that reinforced the processes of designation and difference. West Indians and African Americans having similar experiences of slavery and diaspora allied with each other based on a variety of ideological and socio-religious beliefs. These practices were often deployed to achieve hegemony over re-captives and indigenes who had not gone through the full experiences of slavery and life in western society.

Though the political sphere defined some relationships, the social and religious sphere also fostered other horizontal and communal cross-cultural interactions. Inter-marriages, cross-religious interactions, apprenticeships, ward-ships, and "foster care" brought together African American, West Indians, re-captives and indigenes. In these early years, fragmentation was more palpable than ever. African American, West Indian, African re-captives, and indigenes though living within the same national boundary would establish individual settlements. Naturally these communities overlapped, but primary social networks were formed among those living within the same spaces and who came coming from similar backgrounds. In the ritual of encounter and settlement, the balance of power among the various groups would also be established. In the era of the transatlantic slave trade, with power intricately linked to the coast, the displacement of the indigenes from the coastal area and the movement away from the slave trade to more "legitimate" forms of commerce symbolically marked the shift of power from natives to settlers. The larger goal of this chapter is to bring together the historiographies of Caribbean post-emancipation, African-American emigration, and Liberian

colonization history into an expansive and comparative exploration of blacks' experiences of freedom, citizenship, and nation building. Using post-emancipation as a category of inquiry, I comparatively explore West Indians, African Americans, African re-captives, and African indigenes experiences of freedom upon their coming together on an African point of the Atlantic.

This chapter details these groups encounter and highlights the tension surrounding settlement, group identity, and socio-cultural formations. It shows the emergence of social ascriptions and nomenclature and how they would be politicized and mobilized in establishing relationships among the different groups as well as with the state. The ensuing relationships further became a litmus test on which other black solidarity and advancements would be measured. In this way, increased distinctiveness in the social sphere ultimately crushed abolitionist and colonizationist expectations that Liberian nation building would help blacks to overcome the inter-ethnic hostilities that had encouraged the slave trade, the root of black oppression. The social landscape created identity politics, which posed challenges to ideas about blackness and raised questions about the social stability of the nation.

Migrants and the Transformation of Liberia

The movement of ships on the Atlantic symbolized new life and fresh blood for Liberia's development. Ships' movements on the Atlantic also created changes on land in Liberia. The continual arrival of ships remained critical to Liberia's existence, playing a

significant role in replenishing the migrants necessary for the colony's survival amidst hostile indigenes, the transatlantic slave trade, and European colonial speculators. By bringing people from different places of origin, ships persistently orchestrated changes in Liberia's demography, altered its social and political landscape, and transformed the nation into a multi-ethnic space.³ Ships became important social markers in other ways. The type of ship on which emigrants arrived, and the time of arrival, became as significant as any other factor in determining their subsequent place in the Republic's socio-political order.

In the 1860s, ships brought the most diversity to Liberia. On January 16, 1865, Nicholas Augustus, a blacksmith from the Caribbean island of St. Thomas who had "worked his passage to New York on the ship *Theresa*," travelled to Liberia on the *Barque Greyhound*.⁴ The following month, John Blyden, a steam engine boilermaker, noted for his experience of having "survived ten months as a fireman in the U.S. Navy," sailed from Boston to Liberia in the *Brig M.A. Benson*.⁵ He was the brother of Edward Blyden, Liberia's Secretary of State. John Blyden and Nicholas Augustus were friends, both being from the same Danish Caribbean Island, a relationship that further pointed to the web of social, familial, and political connections that defined 19th century transatlantic migratory networks and relationships in Liberia. Having paid their own way to New York, the ACS assisted with their voyage to Liberia.

³ Alexander Byrd reference, Jehudi Ashmun, ed. *The African Intelligencer*, vol. 1, no. 1, July 1820. Rare Books and Special Collections Division. Library of Congress.

⁴ Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Colonization Society, April (1848): 7; *The African Repository*, February (1866): 35.

⁵ John Tracy to William McLain, September 26, 1864. Svend Holsoe Collection, Blue Folder University of Indiana, Bloomington.

In a Liberian colonization movement previously dominated by African Americans, the migration of the two islanders was atypical. However, given early Liberian migration trends, the migration of 173 African Americans from the Baltimore port in May of 1865 on the schooner *H.P Russell* was unsurprising. A series of legislations in the 1860s made life unbearable for free blacks in Maryland and Virginia. They left under the auspices of the Lynchburg Emigration Society (LES) that had been founded in 1825 as a chapter of the larger ACS.⁶ The LES publicized their goals as “aiding and promoting...the amelioration of the conditions of free persons of colour in the United States by resettling them in Liberia.”⁷ Mostly Baptists, the emigrants had been a part of a class of freedmen from Lynchburg, Virginia who were known to be “agriculturalists and mechanics of experience and business character.”⁸ John McNuckles, the leader of their emigration movement, was described by colonizationists as “a man of unusual shrewdness and practical good sense, a master plasterer and bricklayer, possessing the confidence and regard of the entire community in which he lived, and from which he removed to Africa.”⁹ The circumstances under which these emigrants departed Maryland, their experiences and practical skills projected some sense of the future they expected to find in Liberia.

Other states also served as points of departure for African Americans. Some of these emigrants had a more abstract, intellectually based imagination about life in Liberia. On June 3, 1865, seven emigrants left New York on the ship *Greyhound*. Among

⁶ For more on the Virginians in the making of Liberia see Marie Tyler-McGraw, *An African Republic: Black & White Virginians in the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

⁷ *The African Repository*, February (1865): 35.

⁸ Ted Delaney and Phillip Wayne Rhodes, *Free Blacks of Lynchburg, Virginia, 1805-1865* (Lynchburg, Va: Warwick House Pub, 2001), 24.

⁹ *The African Repository*, February (1865): 35.

them was Daniel Walker from Carbondale, Pennsylvania, Henry W. Johnson, his mixed race wife Patience, and their children who were from New York.¹⁰ Johnson was born in Vermont, but moved to Canandaigua, New York where he resided for over twenty years.¹¹ He had been a barber for many years, but according to the ACS, “in face of obstacles such as would turn back a man of more ordinary perseverance, Mr. Johnson acquired a knowledge of law, and was admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of New York.”¹² In clarifying what motivated individuals like Johnson to emigrate, colonizationists pointed out that “Mr. Johnson removed to Liberia, believing that in that field he can accomplish more for the political and social equality of his race than in America.” New African-American migrants, especially the skilled and professional, were always a welcomed sight in Liberia. In a letter to Alexander Crummell, one settler announced the arrival of the Johnsons.¹³ In a letter to a relative, Johnson spoke glowingly of “a pleasant voyage of thirty-six days.”¹⁴ Having to grapple with sickness and disease, migrants’ imagination and expectations about life in Liberia did not always match their experiences on arrival. For African Americans, social acceptance was pre-determined. As Johnson pointed out, “no incident happened during the journey and we have been kindly treated by all the prominent citizens of Monrovia.”¹⁵

¹⁰ Minutes of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society May 8, 1865.

¹¹ See Preston E. Pierce, *Liberian Dreams, West African Nightmare: The Life of Henry W. Johnson, Part Two* (Rochester, NY: Office of the City Historian, 2005), 8.

¹² *African Repository* February (1866): 35.

¹³ H.D Brown to Alexander Crummell, Monrovia August 20, 1865. Alexander Crummell Letters. Schomberg Collection, New York Public Liberia. New York.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

On April 8, 1865, the ACS sent the largest stream of migrants to Liberia. But rather than the traditional African American mainlanders these migrants were from Barbados. The organization had high hopes for the Barbadians, but there were lingering doubts and an air of suspicion hanging over them. As Joseph Tracy, secretary of the Massachusetts Colonization Society, in a letter to William Coppinger, secretary and treasurer of the ACS noted: "I shall be rather sorry if the Barbadoes expedition fails, but we must not risk too much. You and the committee will be able to judge whether it is safe. I have always had some doubts."¹⁶ At an earlier meeting with the board of directors, members had declared that "the whole trip [would] cost... a hefty portion of a declining treasury."¹⁷ The funds the ACS had managed to put together necessarily meant only selecting from the "best" prospective emigrants. With this, the ACS tirelessly sought information about Barbadians from "merchants engaged in trade in Barbados as well as those who had visited the island." Bearing the larger goals for Liberia in mind, it was probably only natural that they would have inquired about the Barbadians' religious orientation, industriousness, manners, and civility.

On March 11, 1865, William McLain, the financial secretary of the ACS, travelled to Barbados to oversee the operations. For some Barbadians who had expressed interest in Liberian emigration, however, McLain had arrived too late. Several members of the Barbados Company for Liberia, including its chairman, vice president, secretary, along with about sixteen other members, had left earlier for Liberia on a small vessel chartered by the British government for recaptured Africans. McLain was told that the

¹⁶ Joseph Tracy to William Coppinger, ACS reel 96, Domestic Letters No.166. Folio 63563.

¹⁷ *The African Repository* February (1866): 35.

emigrants “regretted that they could wait no longer.”¹⁸ McLain initially struggled to select from the large number of other interested Barbadians, which created difficulties in finding an appropriate ship. After several days, the colonization secretary approached the captain of the *Brig Cora* anchored in the harbor and negotiated a reasonable chartering rate. British unease about the Barbadians' migration was reflected in the efforts of the colonial administration to hinder the voyage. McLain reported to the ACS that the governor of the island delayed the ship's departure so that the English Admiral commanding the station and his first executive officer could "make an examination of how the Queen's subjects were provided for."¹⁹ It is possible that the British had made earlier attempts to stop their migration altogether. At last, on April 6, 1865, after being “finely fitted out, and bountifully supplied with medicines, food, water, fuel, cooking utensils and all things requisite for the people on the voyage,” the *Brig Cora* sailed from Barbados.²⁰

Historian Stephanie Smallwood has argued that for slaves the Atlantic passage was an “experience of motion without discernible direction or destination.”²¹ Yet, caught between the burdens of the past and the promises of the future, these freedmen's journey from Barbados across the Atlantic must have been a transformational and moving experience. With the ocean separating what lay behind and before them, two separate poles of freedom, one of Caribbean emancipation and the other of African liberation, the Atlantic stood at the crossroads of emancipation, of blacks being made free and their

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2007), 122.

efforts to claim freedom. The migrants had considered Liberia to be “a more auspicious shore.” Liberian officials were equally enthusiastic, hailing the Barbadians' arrival “as highly auspicious for the future welfare of Liberia and the civilization of Africa.”²² Such enthusiasm was, however, tempered. In waiting for migrants to arrive, President Daniel Warner observed: “My opinion of the Barbadians is that they will do well, and will prove as valuable an acquisition to the country as the same number of the American population that have come into it have done. On this question, there is amongst us a variety of opinion—some favoring the American side of the question; others the West Indian side.”²³ For Warner, this moment of uncertainty signaled his concern about potential national instability.

As the *Brig Cora* made its way into Monrovia harbor filled with expectant Barbadians hoping for all the rights and privileges of citizenship, Liberia was also being transformed by efforts to counteract the growing “Second Slavery.”²⁴ British and American ships routinely deposited Africans rescued from the Atlantic slave trade onto Liberia's shores in the 1860s. This made African re-captives were another dimension of Liberian immigration. One report from Liberia, marveling at the alarming rate at which re-captives pouring into republic, noted: “Several years since there were nearly 5,000 Congoes rescued from slave ships by American men of-war who were landed at Liberia.” Unlike African-American and West Indian emigrants, however, re-captives were not always a welcomed addition. A Liberian official grimaced at “the alarming influx

²² *The African Repository* February (1865): 38.

²³ *The African Repository* February (1866): 38.

²⁴ For more on the “Second Slavery,” the resurgence of the slave trade in the 1840s, and the campaign to abolish the Atlantic slave trade see: Dale Tomage and Michael Zueske, eds., *The Second Slavery* 2 (Binghamton, NY, 2008); Karen Racine and Beatriz G. Mamigonian, *The Human Tradition in the Atlantic World, 1500-1850* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010).

of savages landed from American cruisers in our midst within a few weeks or months,” who would have to be “civilized and [make] a profession of religion.”²⁵ This identification of re-captives as the “other” became one of the several discursive exercises in identity-making and social stratification in Liberia. As much as their difference was based on ethnic identity, the Atlantic had also become a force of distinction.

The Settlement of African Ethnicities

The making of Liberia as a migrant society had long preceded the arrival of the various diasporic groups under nineteenth century colonization, abolition, and pan-African projects.²⁶ To be sure, African Americans, West Indians, and re-captives had arrived in a migrant society long established by a multiplicity of African ethnicities on the Western African coastline, an area renamed by Europeans, like many other areas in Africa, for the nature of its trade. The spices, gold, and ivory bought by the Europeans in the coastal regions had resulted in the names Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, and Slave Coast. Similarly, the area around Cape Palmas, the coast between Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and present day Liberia noted for trade in the Malagueta pepper, came to be variously called ‘Malagueta Coast,’ ‘Pepper Coast,’ and ‘Grain Coast.’²⁷

According to anthropologists, migrants from the Mande, Kwa, and Mel linguistic groups, all belonging to the larger Niger-Congo family of languages, occupied the area

²⁵ *The African Repository* February (1865): 355.

²⁶ See Frederick Starr, *Liberia: Description, History, Problems* (Chicago: s.n, 1913), 7.

²⁷ See Harry Hamilton Johnston and O. Stapf, *Liberia* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1906).

around the Grain Coast.²⁸ The Mel group included the Gola and Kisi who had migrated from Sierra Leone and were known to be some of the oldest inhabitants of Liberia, lived in the north and coastal regions of the northwest along the Atlantic Coast.²⁹ Altogether, these ethnic groups spoke more than a dozen languages, including Bassa, Grebo, Dan, Kru, Mano, Loma, and Mandingo. That English eventually became the official language of Liberia was thus a testament to imperial power dynamics rather than demography.

The Mane ethnic group from the interior of what is now modern day Ivory Coast and Ghana were among some of the first African ethnic groups to settle the area. In the thirteenth century, migrants from North-central Africa who had initially settled in the hinterlands were soon driven by overcrowding to the coast. The Vais also came to the area following the collapse of the Mali Empire and the disruption in the salt trade.³⁰ The Kru who were a seafaring people were also present in the area and mounted an attack against these encroaching newcomers.³¹ Prominent among this language group were the Vai ethnic group who had invented their own alphabet and spoke Arabic and English. Kwa-speaking ethnic groups who occupied the southern half of present-day Liberia included the Bassa who would become the largest group of ethnic Liberians in Monrovia. Other groups included the Grebo who were among the earliest converts to Christianity as well as the De Belleh and Krahn. In their settlements, the various ethnicities had also

²⁸ Very few historical materials exists on the various ethnic groups that inhabited Liberia in the early nineteenth century. Though the records of the colonizing organizations are problematic, they remain as some of the only sources of this scarce archive. See Bai T Moore, *Liberian Culture at a Glance: A Review of the Culture and Customs of the Different Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Liberia* (Monrovia: Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs & Tourism, 1979).

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ *The Lagos Weekly Record*, November 9, 1896.

³¹ Jane Martin, "Kru men 'Down the Coast': Liberian Migrants on the West African Coast in the 19th and early 20th centuries," *International Journal of African Historical* (1995). *Studies* 18: 401-23.

partitioned the area into several kingdoms. Political power was vested in chieftaincies, and citizenship was more horizontally defined through kinship groups rather than a political entity called a state.

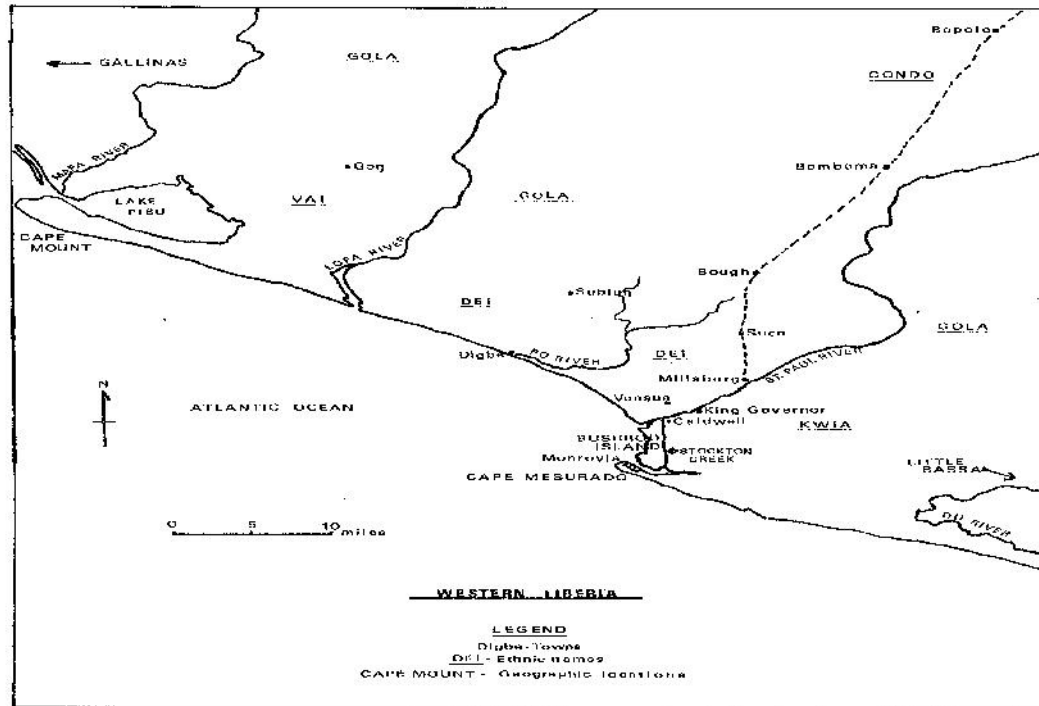


Figure 7 Map Showing African Polities on the Liberian Coast³²

Anthropologists have pointed out that prior to the arrival of the diasporic ethnic groups, there were several "states" in the area. In many cases, the use of the word state was probably another imposition of Western modes of thinking on African ways of living. As shown in Figure 2, three different ethnic groups lived in the area between the Lofa and St. Paul Rivers. In 1819, walking along the coast as far as Grand Bassa, J.B. Coates, a member of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) from Sierra Leone, had observed that the Dei were concentrated in the coastal areas, living in small huts where they engaged in boiling salt. Others observed that "[t]o the north of the Lofa River was a

³² Svend Holsoe, "A Study of Relations between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Liberia, 1821-1847," *African Historical Studies*, Vol.4. No.2 (1971), 331-362.

state with its capital at Gon headed by Zolu Duma, also called King Peter and Peter Careful by Europeans." It was alleged that King Peter's power extended over most of the Southwestern Gola people to the North of the river, possibly some of the Gola to the South and over the Vai in the Gawula and Tombe areas. The settlement of various African ethnic groups that came to inhabit Liberia were in many ways dictated by the geography. European observers noted that King Peter also seemed to have some control over the Dei area.³³ The Lofa River appeared to J.B. Coates to have formed an important line of demarcation, separating the Vai ethnic territory, ruled by their leader Zolu Doma from the area belonging to the Dei ethnic group.³⁴ Crossing this river, had ostensibly brought Coates into a supposedly friendlier territory ruled by the Dei chief King George.³⁵

Like many other Atlantic coastal areas in Africa, the transatlantic slave trade had also transformed the area in the sixteenth century.³⁶ Native ethnic groups occupied various positions in the slave trade. The Vais became middle men between Africans in the interior and the Dutch traders and slavers on the coast. The Kru, largely employed on slave ships, also became active participants in the slave trade; a move that simultaneously rewarded them and exposed them to its vulnerabilities. Amos Beyan argues that though

³³ Ephraim Bacon visited Liberia in March, 1820. Ephraim Bacon, *Abstract of a Journal Containing an Account of the First Negotiations for the Purchase of Lands for the American Colony* (Philadelphia: Clark & Raser, printers, 1824); *Abstract of a Journal Kept by E. Bacon, Assistant Agent of the United States, to Africa: with an Appendix, Containing Extracts from the North American Review, on the Subject of Africa. Containing Cuts, Showing a Contrast between Two Native Towns* (Philadelphia: Clark & Raser, 1824).

³⁴ J.B. Coates, "Journal of a Journey by J.B. Coates," C.A. 1/E7A, 75-76. Church Missionary Society Archives (London) quoted in Svend Holsoe, "Chiefdom and Clan Maps of Western Liberia," *Liberian Studies Journal*, I, 2 (1969), 23-39.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ See Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy, *Pawnship in Africa: Debt Bondage in Historical Perspective* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 19 .

Kru involvement in the slave trade provided them with material rewards, which often led to social and political mobility, it also affected their traditional institutional development.³⁷ The anthropologist Svend Holsoe insists, however, that the Kru only enjoyed the material aspects of the trade.³⁸ Nonetheless, prior to the arrival of diasporic blacks, African ethnic groups had established themselves on the coast and had been active participants in the Atlantic slave trade.

“A Place for the Despised Children of Ham”

In 1821, the ship *Elizabeth* arrived on the Liberia coast with some eighty-six African American emigrants, three white officials, and supplies. The intent was to plant a settlement on the West African Coast at Sherbo Island in Sierra Leone along the Grain Coast.³⁹ Born simultaneously out of benevolence and racism, this voyage represented efforts to both secure American slavery from the designs of free blacks and to return blacks at the “land of their fathers.” As an abolitionist move it was also meant to strike a blow to the trans-Atlantic slave trade by introducing civilization, Christianity, and “legitimate” commerce to the inhabitants of the area. Yet slave trading, representing the very creation of the returning diaspora, lingered on along the coastline. Legend has it that as the *Elizabeth*, a ship many hailed as “the Mayflower of Liberia,” off-loaded the pioneers to their new land of liberty, slave ships could be seen loading its slave cargo.⁴⁰

³⁷ Amos Jones Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State: A Historical Perspective, 1822-1900* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 35

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

³⁹ *The African Intelligencer* (1820): 1

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

With the slave trade still flourishing along the Liberian coast, the emigrants had not entirely escaped the traumas of slavery. In early Liberia, attempts to erect a temple of liberty on a coast where fellow blacks invested in human bondage symbolically represented the most glaring contradiction in the nation building efforts.

Immigrants' plans to build a nation did not include becoming a part of the traditional African systems. In the face of this history and efforts to create a new respectable society, the African American pioneers sought to escape identification with the pariahs of society still involved in the uncivilized act of slave trading. Still, the cooperation of some native groups proved invaluable to the new settlers. Having worked on British merchant vessels and American naval ships, the Kru ethnic group, for example, had learned a kind of Pidgin English that allowed some of them to serve as guides and interpreters for the new settlers. The Kru were also some of the first to provide labor for the colony, helping immigrants to clear lands for their settlement. They also supplied fish, rice, palm oil, and other local goods to the settlers that proved critical to the migrants' survival during the first years of the settlement. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century, the Kru fished and worked as laborers for African American settlers and European trading firms, loading and unloading passengers and goods on ships docked in Cape Mesurado.⁴¹

The *Nautilus* later arrived in Liberia bringing more migrants and supplies. In the years following, the ACS transported an estimated sixteen thousand migrants to Liberia, all the time creating the need for more land and fomenting designs to further overpower their neighbors. This generated an additional dimension to the kinds of aggressive actions

⁴¹ *African Repository*, June (1839):157

that created strife between the different groups in Liberia. Eli Ayres and army lieutenant, Robert Stockton, two white colonizationists had been sent to retain an area for the settlement. They envisioned Liberia as an American empire in Africa and were prepared to use force to extend the colony's territory. Stockton persuaded King Peter, a chief among the Dei and Bassa ethnic group, to sell Cape Mesurado by pointing a pistol at his head. In the treaty of May 1825, King Peter and other native kings agreed to sell the Cape, 130 square miles of land stretching from the Atlantic Ocean deep into the hinterlands, in return for "500 bars of tobacco, three barrels of rum, five casks of powder, five umbrellas, ten iron posts, and ten pairs of shoes, among other items."⁴² Between 1825 and 1826, Jehudi Ashmun, a white colonial agent, took steps to further lease, annex, or buy tribal lands along the coast and on major rivers leading into the interior.⁴³

Based on these hostilities, the African American pioneers would indeed begin to revise and define their identity. These cultural and social interactions with indigenes, in these moments of contestation over land and resistance to native hostility would help to define settlers' identity. Reports noted that when the agents and colonists returned in March of 1822 to take possession of their newly acquired land, the chiefs, particularly Peter, refused to acknowledge the society's rights and tried to return the payment that had been made under the terms of the treaty. The settlers were forced to retreat to Darzoe Island, a small islet located off the Cape, where they commenced building their homes. After the work had started, a British cruiser with thirty re-captive Africans was thrown ashore near the Cape near King George's town. George's people tried to take possession

⁴² *African Repository*, August (1825): 129

⁴³ Ralph R. Gurley, *The Life of Jehudi Ashmun, Late Colonial Agent in Liberia* (J.C. Dunn: Washington D.C, 1839), 147.

of the ship, as was customary, assuming it was theirs since it was on their land. Once attacked, British seamen returned fire and the new African American colonists came to their aid. The settlers' intrusion failed to endear them to King George and his people who responded by blockading the island and burning the houses of the settlers that had been built on the Cape. Other settlers who ventured off the island to fetch water were attacked and killed.⁴⁴

According to Holsoe: "On the surface, relations remained friendly. But all the time the chiefs were planning an attack. In October of 1822, a secret meeting was held where all the kings of the area discussed means of carrying out an attack upon the settlement. It was said that Kings Peter, Bristol, and Getumbe were against the attack because they felt that the colonists were their countrymen, as proven by their skin color."⁴⁵ Holsoe surmised that probably the real reason was they feared the military strength and superiority of the colonists.⁴⁶ But the natives also feared settler expansion and destruction of their way of life, which meant their loss of power to the colony. Through these dynamics the natives perceived the settlers as strangers. King George and the other chiefs felt that the colonists were strangers who had forgotten their attachment

⁴⁴ Svend Holsoe, *A Study of Relations between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Liberia, 1821-1847*, African Historical Studies, Vol.4. No.2 (1971), pp.331-362.

⁴⁵ Jehudi Ashmun, *History of the American Colony in Liberia from December 1821-1823* (Washington, 1826), 24 as recorded in Svend Holsoe's *A Study of Relations between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Liberia, 1821-1847*, African Historical Studies, Vol.4. No.2 (1971), pp.331-362.

⁴⁶ Svend Holsoe's *A Study of Relations between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Liberia, 1821-1847*, African Historical Studies, Vol.4. No.2 (1971), pp.331-362.

to their fatherland, reasoning that if they hadn't they would have placed themselves under the protection of the kings rather than the white men in the colonization society.⁴⁷

The mass of the early African American migrants to Liberia came from states such as Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Some colonizationists had become all too aware of the ruinous nature of manumissions which had producing a growing free black population. By the time of the Nat Turner rebellion (1831), many were fully convinced that free blacks were public nuisances who consorted with slaves.⁴⁸ While in the early decades emigrants came largely from northern states, by mid-century the majority would hail from southern states including North Carolina, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Georgia.⁴⁹ Many of the southern migrants were born free, but a large number had been freed on the express condition that they leave the United States. These dynamics divided the Liberian colonization movement between slaveholders who supported colonization as a means to protect slavery and northerners who supported it as a means to gradual abolition. These state divisions would soon surface in disputes among migrants.

Bell Wiley's narrative, *Slaves No More: Letters from Liberia 1833-1869*, provides a fascinating account of the hardships and successes that Liberian settlers encountered during their first few years in their new home. These letters reveal much about the process of adjusting to a life of freedom in a new and strange land. They often spoke about illnesses and deaths, crops, home building, and new immigrants. Almost all

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society 1831 – 1857* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971).

⁴⁹ In the late 1800s, more African-Americans left from the state of Arkansas to go to Liberia than from any other state in the United States. Kenneth C. Barnes, *Journey of Hope: The Back-to-Africa Movement in Arkansas in the Late 1800s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

requested supplies and conveyed regards to family members left behind. Wiley notes that disagreements among the colonists were relatively rare. But these letters also showed the many other difficulties that surfaced once emigrants confronted the on-the-ground realities. Beyond the constant struggle to survive, upon arrival, the once energetic imagination of a future of freedom on the western shores of the Atlantic gave way to disillusionment. Wiley writes that the new Liberians had to contend with many hardships including lack of adequate food and shelter, conflicts with natives, various diseases, overgrown land that was difficult to clear and cultivate, and the difficulty of establishing schools and churches.⁵⁰ Wiley notes that the usual pattern of reaction was initial enthusiasm for the new land and the new life, then, as the novelty wore off and disease began to take its toll, disillusionment and homesickness became prevalent.⁵¹

Survival remained the largest hurdle for the emigrants. Untimely death was a fate that would befall many of the early Liberian migrants and disease further haunted whatever psychological freedom they found in Liberia. Often arriving during the disastrous wet season, migrants had to clear swamp lands on which to construct their settlement. Whatever swiftness drove their clearing and despite their presumed biological inoculations,⁵² migrants were no match for the perils of the African environment and a wet season that exposed them to yellow fever and malaria. News of death pervaded letters and reports back to the US. As historian Claude Clegg has shown, the fatal costs of migration, loss of liberties, property, family, and life itself, led many migrants to question

⁵⁰ Wiley, *Slaves No More*, 5-7.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 7.

⁵² For views on climate and racial differentiation see Mark Harrison, *The Tender Frame of Man: Disease, Climate, and Racial Difference in India and the West Indies, 1760-1860* (Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 1996).

whether the liberty and freedom they sought were worth these costs.⁵³ Freedom became survival at any cost.

In seeking respite from civil, political and economic oppression in the US, migrants found common ground with their contemporaries. But this did not mean social equality. Indeed, it was in this sphere where battle lines would be drawn. According to an American physician who toured the settlements in 1858 “one source of friction was the assumption of an air of superiority on the part of emigrants from Virginia.” Migrants from Virginia who were mostly mulattoes, drew cultural capital from their mixed race origins. The physician noted that some of the colonists “complained of caste and say that the Virginians are mostly too high-headed and are all the time claiming that they are the *quality* of Liberia.”⁵⁴ Conversely, “pure blacks” who often came from other states were not viewed in the same way. On June 2, 1834, a Samson Ceasar noted in his letter: “There have come a great many from North Carolina who are dregs in this place.” Like “salt-water” slaves and creoles on American plantations and the interactions of blacks from the South and those established black communities in the North during the Great Northern Migration, conflicts again developed between old established migrants and new arrivals.⁵⁵ Seasoned migrants like John Brown Russwurm also complained that new migrants were refusing to earn their stay.⁵⁶

⁵³ Claude Andrew Clegg, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 7.

⁵⁴ Wiley, *Slaves No More*, 6

⁵⁵ Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Viking, 2010), 8.

⁵⁶ Wiley, *Slaves No More*, 6

With increasing tension and a growing lack of confidence in the ACS, state colonization societies developed and sought to establish their own colonial settlements in Liberia. Maryland colonizationist Benjamin Latrobe proposed that Maryland develop its own colony. In 1832 following an incident with the ship *Lafayette* in Cape Mesurado, Maryland ceased operating under the auspices of the ACS and established its own settlement at Cape Palmas with John Russwurm as the governor of what became the colony of "Maryland in Liberia."⁵⁷ Other settlements soon followed, reflecting these bureaucratic changes. Positioned on the left bank of the St. Paul River, on the ridge formed by Cape Mesurado, Monrovia, the oldest immigrant settlement became the focal point of political, economic, and cultural activities. Other settlements included Buchanan, Edina, Greenville, Harper, Robertsport, and Marshal, which boasted newly constructed or improved roads.⁵⁸

In these settlements, the recreation of colonial geographies highlighted the ways in which material cultures moved within the Atlantic World.⁵⁹ In these African American settlements, one and a half or two story stone and brick-porticoed houses reflected styles similar to southern plantations.⁶⁰ In its style of architecture, Monrovia was reminiscent of antebellum southern United States. Visitors to the area noted that the immigrants wore Western modes of dress to which they had been accustomed in America however unsuitable they were to Liberia's tropical weather: "a black silk topper and a long, black

⁵⁷ Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 8.

⁵⁸ Jo Mary Sullivan and Camille Mirepoix, *Liberia in Pictures* (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 1988).

⁵⁹ See John Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 344.

⁶⁰ See M. B. "Akpan, Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841-1964," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1973), pp. 217-236.

frock coat for men, and a “Victorian” silk gown for women.” African Americans also preferred to eat American food such as flour, cornmeal, butter, lard, pickled beef, bacon, American-grown rice, large quantities of which they imported annually and not African foodstuff such as cassava, plantains, yams, palm oil, sweet potatoes, and country rice grown by Africans in the Liberian hinterlands.⁶¹

Despite their initial struggles, migrants succeeded in achieving a tolerable existence. As some migrants’ letters demonstrated, they were able to also find some degree of success and happiness exceeding anything known by their black friends and relatives in America. William and Rosabella Burke, who were freed by Civil War General Robert E. Lee, migrated with their children to Liberia. On arrival, William joined the seminary in Monrovia, becoming a Presbyterian minister in 1857. The words of Lee’s former slaves would be sobering for those who came after them. A year after his arrival, William wrote a friend: “Persons coming to Africa should expect to go through many hardships, such as are common to the first settlement in any new country. I expected it and was not disappointed or discouraged at anything that I met with; and so far from being dissatisfied with the country, I bless the Lord that ever my lot was cast in this part of the earth.” In a letter to Mary Curtis Lee, his wife Rosabella Burke noted, “I love Africa and would not exchange it for America.”⁶²

Henry Johnson, who arrived in Liberia on August 10th, 1865, wrote a letter to satisfy the curiosity of those who were “anxious to know how I like Africa.” He noted that he was “very much please with it so far. It is a noble country. I am also pleased with the people. I am happily disappointed with the progress and present state of this infant

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² *Slavery Pamphlet Collection* (1857), Drew University Archive.

republic.” As Johnson noted, the American Civil War had affected the republic, but there were “many evidences of prosperity, industry and enterprise among the people.” Johnson described his fellow migrants as “high-minded and intelligent freemen! They look and act like men who know and have no superior but their maker.” According to Johnson, together they were “successfully solving the great problem in regard to the capacity of the black man for self-government; they are working out their own destiny in the land of their forefathers. With the help of God they will succeed in spite of all opposition.” As one of those migrants who had a more abstract and intellectual imagination about Liberia, Johnson confirmed that “the Republic of Liberia is no longer a myth, existing only in the brain of the enthusiast. It is a sober reality—a solemn fact.” But he too was aware of the demands of life in Liberia: “The only question is, shall it, for want of aid and emigration from abroad remain for some time weak and feeble, or shall it speedily become great and powerful?” Johnson closed his letter by appealing to those blacks who chose to remain in the US: “Black men of America! What a shame that you do not come here and aid the young republic; eternal disgrace to you if this government is allowed to languish and die for want of your aid.”⁶³ Evidently, not all blacks in the diaspora imagined Liberia and Africa to be their rightful home.

Re-captives in Liberia

African re-captives had been a part of the republic since its inception but the movements to counteract the "second slavery" dramatically increased their numbers after

⁶³ *The African Repository* February (1866): 40.

the 1840s. In the 1860s, one Liberian official bitterly complained that...during the present week two prizes were brought in within eighteen hours of each other; the first, a brig, supposed to be the *Storm King* of New York, prize to the *San Jacinto*, with 615 - 620 re-captives; the other, the *Ship Erie*, of New York, with 897—making over 1,500; both vessels were captured near Congo.” As Liberian officials observed, most slaves captured in this era were from Central Africa. Re-captives brought to Liberia were often taken from other points, even as far as Cuba. One official recorded that “several other prizes are expected up from the south coast momentarily; so that I doubt not at all—taking those that will likely be captured on the coast of Cuba, with those that will be captured on this coast—that the number of re-captives that will be brought to this Republic by American cruisers, to be landed, will, within the next three months, reach as high as ten or twelve thousand.” The official further noted that “[t]hose we now have here, with those now on their way from the United States, and expected momentarily, will constitute a number over 3,000, which number cannot possibly be controlled and trained but under the exclusive authority and supervision of the Government of Liberia.”⁶⁴ By all accounts, re-captive migrants to Liberia out-numbered both their African American and West Indian counterparts.

Despite their overwhelming numbers, unlike African Americans and West Indians, re-captives were not well-received. Thrust into the forefront with their increased presence, they would do damage to the unfolding national image. Their entry into Liberia in the 1850s and 1860s would do much to darken the complexion of Liberian politics and society. Compared to the early mixed raced Virginians and Marylanders, African re-

⁶⁴ *The African Repository* March (1865): 18.

captives were darker in complexion, spoke a different language, and could not read and write. Reports circulated about the “great alarm and consternation of the people of this community in particular, and of the Republic in general.” This helped to cement the kind of color politics that had emerged in the early decades. Racial caste did not end, it was merely redesigned. Stratifying Liberian society, color separated the diasporic migrants from the re-captives as well as the native ethnic groups. As evident in the migrants' complaints about the high-headedness of the Virginians, this question of "color" increasingly complicated national identity even as it structured power dynamics.⁶⁵ Holding the reigns of politics and color, Americo-Liberians wielded each in the service of the other. In many ways, this meant re-captives' exclusion from full citizenship.

In Liberia, it became perfectly legal to discriminate against re-captives in all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against blacks in the Americas. Once they landed in Liberia, the old forms of discrimination emerged and were made legal through governmental provisions. Liberia retreated from the full promises of emancipation. Bearing striking resemblance to the immediate post-emancipation period in the West Indies, free labor on the African side of the Atlantic did not mean the end of coercive and restrictive labor regimes. The politics of patronage started by the ACS evolved into a modified form of paternalism exercised by the migrants over the re-captive Africans. The nature of the relationship between the state and the re-captives would be quite different from that of the African Americans and Barbadians. Unlike their counterparts, their relationship to the state would be in the form of arranged housing and planned labor. To control re-captives, the Liberian government proposed a plan “to lay off a sufficient area

⁶⁵ *The African Repository* March (1869): 182

of land at some suitable place in each county, say of several hundred acres of land each; to build one or more large suitable houses on them, and to settle the re-captives thereon, under good teachers, mechanics, and agriculturists, employed by and amenable to this government.”⁶⁶

The post-independence attitude towards re-captives was in part a reaction to the quest for a national image that would be acceptable to whites and to suggest Liberia's treaty-worthiness. The fear of white perception of Liberia's un-civility over-rode the pan-African rhetoric that had driven many of the migrants to Liberia. Re-captives, having just been taken off slave-ships, were uncultured and were thus a socially disruptive element for a Liberian society aiming to project black humanity and civility to the broader white world. African Americans and Barbadian immigrants were all given parcels of land, the very act of ownership that accrued to them a certain amount of rights. Contrarily, re-captives with no access to land would not hold similar rights and privileges.

Turning African re-captives into civilized free laborers required multiple mechanisms, some coercive, others persuasive. The Liberian government in an effort to create a relationship between the state and re-captives designed systems meant to instill the ideals of virtue, industry and hard work. According to the government, in this way “the re-captives may, on the manual labor system, have a definite number of hours schooling each day, and a definite number of hours to work each day, at the various branches of industry, agriculture being the principal; and for them to be thus trained under the supervision of government, for their respective full terms of apprenticeship.”⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Instead of being small farmers, re-captives would be landless laborers at the mercy of fellow blacks. One report noted that “[t]he Executive Committee will, no doubt, at once agree with this government, that those re-captives who may not be apprenticed out to individuals immediately on their being landed, they should, without a week’s delay after being landed, be placed under the contemplated systematic and authoritative plan of training.”⁶⁸ According to the apprenticeship arrangements, a system of training and labor agreement where a number were “bound out to reliable persons... after the expiration of the one year’s support by the Society, fall on the hands of government to be supported and trained for terms of years, ranging from seven to fourteen years, according to the laws of this Republic regulating the apprenticeship of recaptured Africans.”⁶⁹ The indenture-ship plan was meant to socially, economically, religiously and politically organize re-captives. Their apprenticeship would not only render them useful to themselves but also to the republic. Paradoxically, this was meant to train re-captives in the habits of free laborers such that they could fully enjoy complete freedom.

Together with natives, re-captives were used for agricultural labor in practices akin to the systems of indenture-ship, tenancy and sharecropping that had existed in the West Indies and will in the US South after emancipation. The government noted that if re-captives could not find individual masters or guardians to be bound to, the Government of Liberia "would be obliged, for its own safety as well as by the promptings of humanity, to take these people, thus un-provided for and turned loose upon the mercy of the public, under apprenticeship to herself, for the lawful term of their

⁶⁸ *The African Repository* December (1860): 356.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

apprenticeship.”⁷⁰ In Liberian society, re-captives and natives became a part of a growing under-caste, a group defined largely by color, religion, and culture, and relegated to a permanent second-class status by law. The transference of these kinds of labor arrangement to Liberia shaped experiences of freedom, citizenship and nationhood for these groups. Running contrary to ideas of liberty and free labor that had driven many migrants to Liberia, the implementation of these kinds of systems further showed the ways in which views about freedom and labor had not been transformed across space and time.⁷¹ Dubbed Americo-Liberian imperialism, many attributed this brand of politics to the migrants’ American and European sensibilities.⁷² In many ways, however, they represented the cyclical rebirths of caste in the Atlantic World.

As much as the political sphere was coded African American and the labor sphere Barbadian, the religious and missionary sphere would be coded as re-captive. Liberian officials delighted in the fact that “some of the most promising of them [re-captives] should be sent as missionaries to the Congo country whence they were taken by the slavers.” Re-captives proved essential in the efforts to Christianize natives as many of them in this period were from areas such as Central Africa where Christianity had long established a foothold.⁷³ Liberian officials concluded that “when it is considered that these heathen "Congoes" numbered one-third as many as all the Liberians, it speaks well

⁷⁰ *The African Repository* December (1860): 356.

⁷¹ For African American tenancy and share-cropping see, Walter Pannell, *King Cotton: The Share-Cropper and Tenant Farming in the United States* (Los Angeles: Thor's Book Service, 1943).

⁷² M. B. Akpan, “Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841-1964,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1973), pp. 217-236.

⁷³ For more on the religious backgrounds of West Central Africans see Linda M. Heywood and John K. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Beatriz Gallotti Mamigonian, *To Be a Liberated African in Brazil: Labour and Citizenship in the Nineteenth Century* (Waterloo, Ont: University of Waterloo, 2002).

for the missionary spirit of the Liberian churches that such good results should have so speedily followed. Liberia deserves the name of ‘the Missionary Republic.’⁷⁴

The Insertion of Barbadians into Liberian Life

On May 10, 1865, after more than thirty days at sea, Captain Henderson anchored the *Cora* on Liberia’s shores. A migrant recalled that “the passage to Monrovia was a pleasant one and made in thirty-three days without serious sickness, or a single death!” More Barbadians arrived than was initially anticipated. According to the *African Repository*: “Instead of three hundred and thirty-three passengers, as was supposed, the captain landed three hundred and forty-six persons in good health: being forty-six more than was arranged with the representatives of the two Associations already named should go.” That they were “twenty-six more than berths had been provided for on board and thirteen more than answered to their names when called prior to the sailing of the vessel” suggest the enthusiasm for emigration. While the excess of migrants possibly also made for an overcrowded ship and uncomfortable Atlantic crossing, it also points to the Barbadians’ determination to find and realize their post-emancipation aspirations.⁷⁵

The arrival of the Barbadians in Liberia was atypical. Their coming had reversed the tides of Atlantic migration during a period of decreasing African American emigration and the increasing momentum in Second Slavery. To the extent that the Barbadians were not the customary African American migrants, Liberian officials marked their arrival as different. Such perceptions held meaning for experiences of

⁷⁴ *The African Repository* January (1877): 30.

⁷⁵ *The African Repository* February (1866): 37.

citizenship and nationhood. From the government house in Monrovia on May 13th, President Warner wrote a letter acknowledging the arrival of “Captain William Henderson of the *brig Cora*...bringing to us a company of emigrants from the Island of Barbados.” Though the ACS had debated its constitutional provisions in extending Liberian emigration into the Caribbean, differences of history and nativity still hung over the heads of the Barbadians upon their arrival in Liberia. Warner noted that “they were sent under the auspices of the American Colonization Society, but owing to the people being from a country not included in the constitutional provisions of the Society, but more particularly on account of the high prices of provisions, the usual six months of supplies were not furnished them.”⁷⁶ Barbadians were ultimately viewed and treated differently upon arrival in Liberia.

Given the horrors that often haunted these kinds of transatlantic journeys, Warner celebrated Barbadians’ successful crossing of the Atlantic: “They are all landed, three hundred and forty-six in number, not one having died on the passage out.” Having survived the terror of the sea, Barbadians now ventured onwards to what awaited them on land during the period of seasoning and adjustment. One observer noted: “They had to pass through as severe an ordeal of acclimation in the fever as any company that ever came from the United States. As they came from the tropics, we cannot account for this fact.” Luckily, by the time of their arrival, methods of receiving and settling migrants had been perfected. This would save them from the fatalities caused by over-exposure to the rainy season and the accompanying mosquito swarms that African American pioneers

⁷⁶Daniel Warner Annual Message to the Legislature December 11, 1865 in Elwood D. Dunn ed, *The Annual Messages of the Presidents of Liberia 1848-2010: State of the Nation Addresses to the National Legislature : from Joseph Jenkins Roberts to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 190.

had to endure.⁷⁷ On arrival, Barbadians, "were consigned to Mr. Henry W. Dennis, the Society's Agent at Monrovia who was instructed to transfer them to the authorities of Liberia."⁷⁸ Former president, J.J. Roberts wrote the colonization society, "Mr. Dennis will, of course, write you fully all about the Barbadians; how they have been, and are now getting on; the numbers of deaths etc." He observed the social and material conditions of the new West Indian migrants and pointed out: "A large majority of these people arrived here wholly destitute—except the limited supplies furnished them by American Colonization Society—much less, as you are doubtless aware, than the support usually allowed to emigrants from the United States." Roberts assigned the blame to the Barbadians, reporting, "as I understand they persisted and prevailed upon Mr. McClain though he cautioned them against it, to permit a much larger number to embark than he had the means of amply providing for." As such, "[t]he consequence is that when they were taken down with fever nearly the whole of their supplies had been expended; and the government was not able to afford them adequate relief." African Americans reached out to the West Indian newcomers. As Roberts reported: "Many citizens, however, have done what they could to relieve their most pressing necessities. I am told that those who are settled at Harrisburg, and in the neighborhood of Careysburg are well pleased with the country, and the prospect of making themselves comfortable."⁷⁹

Migration opened a way for a greater experience of freedom, but it equally exposed migrants to graver problems. Like many other migrants, the Barbadians had to

⁷⁷ Mark Harrison, *The Tender Frame of Man: Disease, Climate, and Racial Difference in India and the West Indies, 1760-1860* (Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 1996).

⁷⁸ *The African Repository* February (1866): 37.

⁷⁹ J.J. Roberts to the Colonization Society, August 19, 1865.

endure a new disease environment. Soon after landing, *The African Repository* reported that “few who were attacked by fever before they could be removed from the city are still here, but will be sent to the place of their destination as soon as they are sufficiently convalescent to undergo the fatigue of travelling.” H.D. Brown in a letter to Alexander Crummell noted: “The Barbadians have all been sick: of the three hundred and forty-six, thirty-four have died up to this time. I dare say Sidney will give you a list of the chief ones.”⁸⁰ Barbadian mortality rates were comparable to those of African American settlers but did seem excessive for the mid-nineteenth century period. Crummell wrote to the Pennsylvania Colonization Society that “the sufferings of the Barbadians emigrants in Liberia had been greatly aggravated by the most excessive rains known on the coast for years.”⁸¹ Still, these early experiences of death quickly changed some of the Barbadians' minds about life in Liberia. In Brown's letter to Crummell written just a few months after the Barbadians had arrived, he also explained that since the death Samuel Skeete, “his family have concluded to return to Barbados.”⁸²

For the Barclay family who had led the charge to leave Barbados, life upon arrival would also be quickly disrupted by death. The head of the Barbadian Company for Liberia, Anthony Barclay, became the first casualty, dying in Monrovia on January 16th, 1866 at the age of fifty-six years, just within a year of his arrival. Four months later, Elizabeth Ann, the Barclay's third child, died at the age of twenty-six.⁸³ Responsibility for raising the family and for leading the immigrants was left to the widowed Sarah

⁸⁰ H.D. Brown to Crummell, Schomberg Collection-Alexander Crummell Letters.

⁸¹ Minutes of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society, Sept. 11, 1865.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, *The Life of Malvina Barclay*, “Barclay Women in Liberia – Two Generations: A Biographical Dictionary, The Archives of the University of Liberia.

Barclay.⁸⁴ Struggles against disease and for survival leveled the otherwise growing divide of the Liberian society. That the Liberian environment was impartial to all regardless of social station brought migrants into a community that approximated, if only harshly and for fleeting moments, some semblance of fairness and egalitarianism.

Having rejoiced at the Barbadians' survival, Liberian officials in the same breath mused about the implications of their arrival for the republic. Barbadians entered Liberia with enormous cultural capital and credibility. Before their arrival, Liberian officials had often referenced their experience of over thirty years of freedom, acknowledged their industriousness, and their widely acclaimed religious character. Barbadians' skillfulness was declared the "most important part of the whole sojourn for a nation desperate for a healthy and productive population."⁸⁵ Colonizationists as well as Liberian officials saw Barbadians as possessing the kinds of agricultural and artisanal skills and experiences that were imperative for the future development of the country. President Warner in a check of the Barbadians' professions affirmed their value to the young republic observed, "Among them were coopers, carpenters, shoemakers, a wheelwright, printer and teachers, with several who thoroughly understood the cultivation of the cane and manufacture of sugar, and the culture and preparation of all kinds of tropical products."⁸⁶ Their religiosity further confirmed their pedigree and connections with their African American counterparts: "A large proportion was the professed followers of Christ."⁸⁷ This review of Barbadians' skill and religion led Liberian officials to conclude that they had come to

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ *African Repository* (1865): 37.

⁸⁶ *The African Repository* January (1866): 47.

⁸⁷ Barbadians were mainly Episcopalians, Wesleyans and Moravians; Episcopalians being the most numerous.

Liberia “prompted by the love of souls as well as the desire to improve their temporal condition.”⁸⁸

The Barbadians were viewed as a first class addition to the country. One onlooker noted: “As far as my observations have gone, the people just landed seem, upon the whole, to be a well selected company, and may be regarded as a valuable acquisition to our young Republic.” J.J Roberts writing to the Colonization Society noted: “They appear, from what I have seen of them, an interesting company. Most of the male adults, I am told are mechanics and practical farmers, and seem to have correct ideas about the circumstances and capabilities of the country—so far greatly pleased.” The migrants pleased Roberts: “We have long needed men here who thoroughly understand the cultivation of the canes and the manufacture of the sugar: and indeed the culture and preparation of all kinds of tropical products.”⁸⁹ For this, government officials praised the ACS for selecting those who possessed the wherewithal necessary for building Liberia: “To your large experience in the kind of materials required here for the up-building of this offspring of American philanthropy, and the further development of the country and the character of the people in it, and your sagacity in selecting those materials, is due the very respectable and promising immigration with which we have just been favored.” Officials further expressed their appreciation noting that “the government of this republic feels very grateful to the society for the great interest it has taken in its West Indian

⁸⁸ *The African Repository* February (1865): 37.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

emigration enterprise, both as it regards the pecuniary means it has furnished and the happy selection of the emigrants sent out.”⁹⁰

Once they had settled in, John R. Padmore, born in 1826, and who was a "planter" at the time the *Cora* left Barbados, wrote to a Mr. B: “We arrived at Monrovia ... after thirty-four days passage.” According to Padmore, “we would have reached here sooner but we met with nearly eight days calm. We waited upon his Excellency the president and were so kindly received that we the committee had the honor of taking a glass of wine with his Excellency in the State Hall.” He added: “Liberia is a great place...I shall soon be able to write and tell you all about this great continent.” Of the Barbadians who had departed before the *Cora*, Padmore noted that “Mr. W.[orrel] and wife and Mr. and Mrs. G arrived three days before us; all the others are at Sierra Leone. We are very comfortable; and except a slight cold, all are quite well.”⁹¹

One observer had met some of those Barbadians who Padmore noted had landed in Sierra Leone. “Previous to the arrival of the “*Cora*,” a vessel arrived at Freetown, Sierra Leone, from Barbados, with emigrants for Liberia. Of these, six had gone down to Monrovia previous to my leaving. The M.A. Benson stopped at Freetown, and there I made the acquaintance of the party who were remaining there. One of these sailed for Monrovia the day we weighed anchor from Freetown: some were sick and could not go, but they have sent down a request by Mr. Worrell to and for the government to allow Mr. Worrell to choose their allotments for them until such time as they can secure passage to Liberia.” He continued noting: “Of the six mentioned, one is a minister from Demerara,

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

who brings his wife, and [a] young black man, an assistant. He came out to Sierra Leone three years ago to see Liberia. He came at the desire of the black people of Demerara; but he could not get an opportunity to get down to Monrovia.” The individual had likely travelled to the West African Coast after Blyden had travelled throughout the Caribbean distributing circulars encouraging migration to Liberia.

Some in the Barbadian groups were also re-captive Africans. The observer noted, “Some thirty or forty persons came out with him at the same time: chiefly Akoos, who had been residing in Demerara. He returned back to his home, satisfied with the reports he had heard from Liberia, and has gone down to Bassa, where his grand-parents were born and whence they were stolen.” In the search for home, these West Indians had made what historians have called the circuitous route that defines diaspora and illustrated the logic of the relationship of the periphery to the center in identification. The observer was informed that the Akoo ethnic group who were prevalent as hired labor in Sierra Leone would soon follow this group that had come from Barbados via Demerara to Liberia. Also included in the re-captives was “a native Bassa man who went to Freetown several years ago, enlisted in the British Army, went to Demerara and served several years as a soldier” who was said to be “a kinsmen of Boyer.” In an effort to reconnect these groups, it was noted, “President Warner has sent him down to Bassa in company with Mr. Ulcans and his party.”⁹²

The migration of the various groups of blacks, each with different points of entry into the Atlantic signals the limits of frameworks often used to address black cosmopolitan spaces like Liberia. A multiplicity of terms have been used to describe the

⁹² *The African Repository* September (1865): 279-280.

various experiences of these groups including “exile,” “expatriation,” “postcoloniality,” “migrancy,” “globality,” and “transnationality.” From this, Khachig Tololoyan has argued that “diaspora is in danger of becoming a promiscuously capacious category that is taken to include all the adjacent phenomena to which it is linked but from which it actually differs in ways that are constitutive, that in fact make a viable definition of diaspora possible.”⁹³ Re-captives in Liberia often hailing from West Central Africa, particularly Congo and Angola had in many cases not crossed the Atlantic and therefore had not experience the middle passage and slavery that were seen as central to diasporic identities. These migrants defied the traditional definitions and identifications of African re-captives in Liberia. For them, diasporic identity was never the controlling identity but rather the subordinate. In this case, diaspora is fulfilled with their return to their “homeland.”

The Barbadians could have migrated to Sierra Leone, the British West African colony, which would have perhaps been more culturally and politically familiar. But migration to Sierra Leone would have meant the continuation of the experience of empire for a group that had been actively petitioning to get out from under it. Remarking on the Barbadians’ and other West Indians’ decision to migrate to Liberia rather than Sierra Leone, J.J. Roberts wrote: “Heretofore we have had, now and then a family or two to arrive from the British West Indies; but nearly all after a while, make a visit to Sierra Leone, and in most cases finally settle there, where the manners and customs of the people are more English, and of course more adapted to their early habits and taste.”

⁹³ See Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993).

Roberts was optimistic, however about the influx of the larger West Indian population. Their presence and group identity, he argued, would attract other migrants: "Perhaps this company, being a large number and forming themselves a neighborhood, as I understand they propose settling pretty much together between the St. Paul's and Carysburg, will gradually slide into our republican feelings and sentiments, and soon find themselves entirely identified with this country. If so, as I think most likely, these people, with the blessings of providence, will doubtless prove a great acquisition to Liberia."⁹⁴

People like Roberts understood the cultural and political differences that separated what appeared to be a homogenous black population in Liberia. The British background of the West Indians had inculcated a certain identity that influenced understandings of politics, citizenship, and nationhood. As, Linda Colley argues, British imperialism was such that phenotype was not as important in questions of citizenship.⁹⁵ All belonging to the empire were considered citizens though race figured in that question to various degrees. Culture, practice, loyalty, and allegiance which developed conterminously with the creation of the British empire determined belonging and citizenship. Contrarily, race lay at the very foundation of question of citizenship in the US. With the presence of the West Indians, Liberia's political culture entered into a complex political entanglement with English, American, and African cultures. Beyond the vision of a unifying national sentiment, these differences highlighted the on-the-ground realities that fractured notions of a collective black and pan-African identity.

⁹⁴ *The African Repository* September (1865): 249-250.

⁹⁵ See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

National belonging was not only politically conceived, but also religiously determined. Colonizationists had sought to establish “a separate, black Christian empire in Africa which would ultimately parallel the White Christian Empire in America- twin beacons of a sort.” Padmore in his first letter to a friend in Barbados noted that, “a special service was called for us on Sunday the 14th at the parish church by Prof. Crummell, which was handsomely responded to.” In his sermon to the Barbadians at the Trinity Church in Monrovia, Alexander Crummell chose a passage from Deuteronomy which summed up the exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt and their final settlement in the land of Canaan.⁹⁶ Crummell infused the Barbadians journey with the same notion of providence. He called on persons of African ancestry around the world to be actively engaged in the religious, economic and social development of the African continent.

In these kinds of performances, identities, alliances, and differentiation among the migrant community and the larger black populous not only coalesced and fragmented along the intersections of politics, but also along religion lines. Sharp lines of demarcation were drawn between Western and African religion with their respective associations with civilization and savagery. In these instances, race was muted as other lines of identity became available with religion which accorded to migrating blacks specific duties. As Crummell pointed out: “Our mission is evidently to organize the native labor all around us; to introduce regulating and controlling law among them; to gather their children into schools in order to train their intellects; to make these people civilized and Christian people; and to incorporate them into our republic as citizens, and

⁹⁶ *The African Repository* November (1865): 290.

into the church of God as Brethren.”⁹⁷ As Wilson Moses pointed out in his biography, in was in these ways that Crummell propagated his vision of black civilization and nationalism.⁹⁸

Barbadians had many deferred dreams they hoped to revitalize in Liberia. The emigrants hit the ground running seeking to transplant their experiences in many ways. The social and cultural values they sought to transfer said much about the dreams they had for Liberia. Religious life was the first socio-cultural aspects Barbadians sought to transplant. It became an important register in how they would identify and set themselves apart from newly arriving re-captives and the natives. A mere ten days after their arrival, the Barbadians commenced the building and establishment of Christ Church, their Episcopal Church in Barbados, in their settlement of Crozierville. Reports confirmed that the Barbadians “have an Episcopal church in this settlement, of which Rev. A. F. Russell is the industrious and energetic pastor, and like all other Liberian people they profess to be very religious.” Given the richness of cultures in the area, a spirited debate soon developed about the kind of nation Liberia could become. However, in the same way much thought was not given to the various available political models on which the Liberian nation could be built, the variety of available religious systems would be ignored. Blyden remained the only one keen on the Muslim political and religious traditions and what they could mean for regenerating the continent.

⁹⁷ Alexander Crummell, *Africa and America: Addresses and Discourses* (New York: Negro University Press, 1969); Richard Blackett, “Martin R. Delany and Robert Campbell, African Americans in Search of an African Colony,” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 62. No. 1 (Jan.1977), 8.

⁹⁸ See Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3.

Settlements and Social Plurality in Liberia

Like every other turn their life had made—the abolition of slavery, the end of apprenticeship, and the journey across the Atlantic—the Barbadians were again going to have to learn to adjust. In Liberia, this began with the establishment of their settlement, a ritual of arrival that every migrant had to endure. Barbadians had been enticed to Liberia partly because of the prospects of land on which to build their homes, better themselves, and to help to forge a successful black nation. Rather than becoming a part of the established migrant communities, they instead began their own community. According to Padmore, “the president has directed that our lands of twenty-five acres shall be laid off on Monday 16th on Carysburg road, which is the best locality for us.” Liberian officials knew that land would give the Barbadians a stake in the nation and that it would be an important link between freedom and citizenship. On these grants of land, Barbadians built their homes and remade themselves as commercial and subsistence farmers. They established the settlement of Crozierville, named after Samuel and John P. Crozer, Philadelphian colonizationists who had accompanied the first group of African American emigrants to Liberia in 1820.⁹⁹ The establishment of this and other migrant settlements would create social and economic networks of collaboration among distinct groups. This in many ways would re-enforce their sense of Barbadian-ness as an ethnic identity rather than racial identity. This further served to fracture the notion of a collective black identity.

⁹⁹ “Crozierville Past and Present,” *The Crozierville Observer*, September 10, 1903.

The Barbadians now had land, a commodity that had been scarce and beyond their reach in post-emancipation Barbados. In 1868, H.W. Johnson, Jr., writing from Lower Caldwell after visiting the Barbadian settlement in Crozerville observed that, "it is a beautiful section of the country. It may be called a 'hilly region. The air is very pure, the water clear and cool, and the prospect very fine."¹⁰⁰ He further added: "On every side we see a succession of valleys and hills, very much resembling the finest sections of Western New York. For romantic beauty, I have never seen anything in America to excel it. The further you go towards Carysburg the more magnificent the scenery."¹⁰¹ Johnson's observations of the environment reflected the constant efforts to compare Liberia to the US. But the fact that the Barbadian occupants of Crozierville had lived on some of the flattest lands in the Caribbean rendered these kinds of comparisons futile.

Crozierville, located along the St. Paul's River in Monsterrado County was about twenty miles from the capital in Monrovia where the majority of African American emigrants had settled. Located upcountry and towards the hinterlands, Crozierville was in close proximity to a host of approximately 2,000 ethnic native villages in central Liberia, in the northwest, and in the coastal region near Monrovia.¹⁰² Located further inland than other migrants, the Barbadians straddled the divide between African American settlements in the city of Monrovia and the natives in the hinterlands. This positioned them as a mitigating moral force in the social dynamics previously established between African Americans and the indigenes. Still, Barbadians in Crozierville having joined

¹⁰⁰ Harry Hamilton Johnston, *Liberia* (London: Hutchinson, 1906), 23,

¹⁰¹ See James Washington Lugenbell, *Sketches of Liberia: Comprising a Brief Account of the Geography, Climate, Productions, and Diseases of the Republic of Liberia* (Washington DC 1850).

¹⁰² *An Address Delivered by Rev. J.I.A. Weeks On the Occasion of the Eighty-Second Anniversary of the Landing of the West Indian Immigration to Liberia, at the Methodist Church, Crozierville, May 11th, 1947.*

established Native African and African American settlers and settlements, helped to mark the patterns that reflected the spatial, social, and political segmentation of Liberia. Barbadians' settlement did much to interrupt the coexisting rural-urban and traditional-modern divides that had ordered Liberian society. Settlements in a few interior and coastal areas featured large plantations and mining activities. The location of the Barbadians in the middle may have softened the sharpness of the spatial divide, but it also outlined the complexity of new dynamics and the uncertainty about their place in the Liberian social order. Not all Barbadians settled in Crozierville. Others went to more urban areas. The Barclay family, for example, chose to reside in Grand Bassa, Monsterrado County, one of the fifteen political and administrative partitions located in the northwestern section of Liberia.

Besides taking many valuable experiences in trade and manufacture with them, the Barbadian emigrants also carried over previously deferred dreams. Many sought social advancement in Liberia. Marriages revealed much about the social standing of the various migrants and social dynamics under which many Barbadians transitioned into elite status in Liberia. Different migrants had arrived in Liberia often with established family and kinship networks, but marriages and other social activities became an arena in which social and cultural lines would be crossed. Although the Barbadians to a large extent practiced endogamy, they also married into indigenous and Americo-Liberians groups. The *African Times* reported on one such marriage on the evening of the 31st of May "at the commodious dwelling house of the bride's father in Ashmun street by the Rev. C. A. Pitman, pastor of the Methodist Church, Monrovia, Florence Irene, eldest child and only daughter of the Hon. J. T. Wiles, Secretary of the Treasury, Republic of

Liberia and Jesse Randolph, eldest son of the Hon. Henry Cooper, merchant, of Monrovia." The Coopers were a prominent family in Liberia, one of the first colonists arriving in the "Elizabeth," the "mayflower of Liberia." The joining of these two families in marriage would be witnessed by some of the most prominent Liberians. Among the guests were "President James S. Payne and wife, the Secretary of State and wife, and the Hon. C. B. Dunbar, M. D. and wife." *The Observer* further reported: "The early part of the evening was most agreeably spent; music and song, and the manifest care, forethought, and solicitude of the host and hostess for the perfect enjoyment and gratification of their guests, rendering everything delightful." The newspaper further provided a view into the lives of prominent Liberians, noting: "The nuptial rites being ended and followed by a sumptuous and more substantial repast than the preceding varied and delicious dainties during the evening, dancing under the graceful leading of the bride and bridegroom and bridal suite, succeeded and was continued with refreshing intervals throughout the lovely moonlight night long after the youthful bride had departed to her new-made home, and the bright morning star sparkingly pellucid in rapt serenity bespoke the approach of day."¹⁰³

Within the Barclay family, Mary Augusta Barclay married James Padmore. Sarah Helena Barclay married Joseph Blyden at Grand Bassa on May 17th, 1873.¹⁰⁴ Ella Mai Barclay married attorney general H. W. Grimes, the father of Louis Arthur Grimes who became a chief justice. Antoinette Barclay never married and had no children. It was noted that she, however, "had a strong impact on her nephews and nieces by teaching

¹⁰³ *The African Repository* January (1877): 29.

¹⁰⁴ Brown Sherman, "The Life of Malvina Barclay," 2.

them through elementary school in a private institution in Monrovia."¹⁰⁵ Death also mediated the social relationships through which family was constructed. Arthur Barclay came to represent this phenomenon. He first married Miss Mary Marshall with whom he had five children, three boys and two girls. They included Sarah, Elizabeth, Augustas, Mary Antoinette, Gerald, and a baby boy who died a few days after birth along with his mother. Following his wife's passing, Arthur Barclay married Jane Lomax who had been formerly married to the attorney general William Davis. The couple had two children both of whom died in infancy. Upon the death of Jane Lomax, Arthur Barclay married Mrs. Florence Cooper widow of the late Senator A. B. King. After her death, he married Mrs. Sarah Cooper-Barclay, widow of the late Jesse Cooper.¹⁰⁶ Within two generations the Wiles and Barclay families, having moved into the elite class through politics, education, work, and marriage, had become the leaders of the Barbadian dynasty in Liberia (See Appendix A for Genealogy of the Barclay family).

Barbadian migration to Liberia fostered a more egalitarian relationship within family and across gender barriers with respect to the law. On the Western side of the Atlantic, Barbadians prayers for reform were often ignored, an indictment on the lack of personhood in the eyes of the law. Similarly, African Americans were told in the Dred Scott case in the Court's majority opinion that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."¹⁰⁷ In Liberia, Barbadian women openly challenged their male counterparts in court. In 1904, for example, Florence Wiles challenged her brother in court over the will of their father J.T. Wiles for property he had left in his will (See

¹⁰⁵ Brown Sherman, "Barclay Women in Liberia – Two Generations: A Biographical Dictionary, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Brown Sherman, *The Life of Malvina Barclay*, 1.

¹⁰⁷ See *Dred Scott Supreme Court Decision* (1857).

Appendix A for court proceedings). Florence, obviously aware of the law, and specifically the Homestead Act, was able to retain half of the property. That she was able to appeal and be legally recognized suggest the degrees to which migration had enhanced the post-emancipation lives of Barbadians. James Thomas Wiles was thirty-four years old when he emigrated but would later return to Barbados. Writing from Barbados, Wiles sent a power of attorney to Richard and to Mr. Grimes empowering them to act on his behalf in the disposal of property in Monrovia and the renting of other premises. He gave his son instructions relating to property business and indicated that he did not expect to live much longer. He asked his son to send him some Liberian coffee: "Try to collect some coffee from those Arthington people and send for me. I long to taste a little Liberian coffee. You could ship to Edward Bros. or your own agent asking them to ship to my address and it would come safe. You will have to double bag it so as to save it better..."¹⁰⁸

He also asked his son to remember to send him postage stamps "I have been asking for them for four years." He then chided him on his command of English and encouraged him to improve himself: "I understand from Mr. Grimes that both of you and himself have (illegible) together and gone to housekeeping in the cottage. This gives me much pleasure. You will be in good company by which you can immensely improve yourself." Wiles advises his son to "Get a dictionary and an English grammar and get him [Grimes] to instruct you. I believe he will take pleasure in so doing. Your spelling is very bad, try to improve it now." Wiles drew on the experiences of past-President J.J Robert to motivate his son: "Mr. Roberts said that when he was conferring degrees on some of the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

students of Liberia College that he was thirty-five years of age before he really began to study anything; and said that it was never too late to begin to improve the mind and in keeping with that it is just your time to begin-go on my son and try to make yourself a pillar of the State." Wiles was coming towards the end of his life but remained fully committed to the idea of upward mobility, telling his son: "I may not live to see that but my spirit will hover around you and your brother until the trumpet will sound. I have mentioned to Mr. Grimes my wishes and doubt not that he will give you his attention if you show any willingness."¹⁰⁹ J.T. Wiles died in Barbados at the age of sixty-six years on February 6, 1897 and was buried in Westbury Cemetery.¹¹⁰

The great emphasis placed on education and the driving ambition to succeed which were characteristic of Afro-Barbadians travelled well to Liberia. Both the Wiles and Grimes did well in this regard. By the time Wiles left Liberia he had purchased two houses in Monrovia and a number of lots. His son Richard Jones Wiles, also born in Barbados, did well, becoming Speaker of the House. Richard Wiles married Florence Mai Grimes who along with Louis Grimes were the children of Ella Barclay, the sister of Arthur Barclay who became President of Liberia in 1904. Florence was among the first women to graduate from the University of Liberia in 1905. Her brother Louis Arthur Grimes served as Attorney General and Chief Justice of Liberia and was considered a renowned jurist and legal scholar.

Like African Americans Barbadians interacted with the indigenes in various ways. The Barbadian immigrants had articulated their contempt for African social and

¹⁰⁹ *The African Repository* January (1888): 87.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

religious traditions. Their opposition to some religious traditions had become one of the seven resolutions of the Barbados Company for Liberia that they had handed to J.J Roberts upon his visit to Barbados in 1848. They considered their obligations with the natives their duty. They noted: "That whilst this meeting deeply deplore the wrongs that are continually inflicted on the helpless inhabitants of Africa, the atrocities which are daily perpetrated on them by the continuance of the slave trade as well as the dark clouds of ignorance and superstition which overspread the land, they cannot but conceive it a duty which they owe to God, the British Government and themselves to make a voluntary offer of their personal efforts, to advance as far as in their power lies, the grand work of the moral regeneration and civilization of Africa." They intended to accomplish this "by introducing amongst the inhabitants our manners and customs, by studying the language of the surrounding nations, by making known to them the folly and wickedness of continuing the slave trade, by establishing schools of general instruction." Civilization and social transformation would also be accomplished "by instilling into their minds the knowledge of the benefits to be derived from the cultivation of their lands, by introducing systematic culture, by endeavoring to establish the most friendly relations with the native tribes, by opening a mart for British commerce." They anticipated "by our examples, moral, religious, and social, to form a nucleus from which instruction may be radiated around, and the well disposed be induced to amalgamate with us."¹¹¹

Much of the Barbadians' acts of civilizing would be achieved through ward-ships, guardianships and fostering native children. The Barclay women were especially notorious for this practice. Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, a descendant of the

¹¹¹ Resolutions unanimously passed by the Committee, of the Barbados Colonization Society for assisting in the suppression of the slave trade and the introduction of Christianity into Africa.

Barclays, noted in her work, *Barclay Women in Liberia*, many of the Barclay women had no children and resorted to fostering native children. Born in Jondu, Cape Mount, Liberia, in February 1889, Victoria Elizabeth Jelloh Cheeseman, was the daughter of Ambollai Fahnbulleh and Jarsie Fahnbulleh of the Vai ethnic group. She spent the first six years of her life in Jondu, but soon after became the foster daughter of President Joseph James Cheeseman and Mary Ann Crusoe Cheeseman and moved with them into the Executive Mansion. She later married Louis Arthur Grimes. Ella Mai Gilbert Barclay who married Henry Waldron Grimes had two children, Louis Arthur and Florence Mai Isabel and one foster son, Frank Tarr Grimes. Georgia Ann Barclay, daughter of Anthony Barclay II, never married or had no children but was said to foster several children.

Though the Atlantic had opened the way for the Barbadians to experience a greater freedom, citizenship, and nationhood, it was also a revolving door through which old mechanisms of exploitation and subordination made their way to Africa. In their transition to citizenship in Liberia, British imperial notions that were imbibed by Barbadians became liberatory. As the portable vessels of imperialism, migrants were able to act out these claims in their relationships and efforts to subordinate other groups. By virtue of the acquisition of Western culture and possessing some knowledge of modern political organization, the Barbadians regarded their own culture as superior to that of the African population. Their very experiences as imperial subjects made Barbadians the agents of the imperialism that they had disavowed. It was observed that they too "disapproved of the scanty dress worn by many of the African peoples, whom they

regarded as semi-nude, un-tutored savages."¹¹² They despised African forms of religion as paganism, heathenism, and idolatry, and they looked contemptuously at African social and political formations. Natives had active institutions such as "poro", a secret society for men and "sande" for women.¹¹³ While free masonry quickly became influential organization in the political life of the country, natives continued to maintain their own cross-ethnic solidarities by retaining their own institutions and keeping their secrets from the migrant populous.¹¹⁴

Most suggestive of their cultural conceit was perhaps their lack of intermarriage with the indigenes. This did not necessarily mean the absence of relationships, just those that were legally recognizable. In the few cases where settlers intermarried with the indigenes, it often with the coastal Vai and Grebo ethnic group who often lived with settler communities and were the beneficiaries of education and "civilization." One such example was that of Euphemia Mary Davis, daughter of William McCall Davis of Americo-Liberian descent and Jane Seton Davis of the Grebo ethnic group who was born in Monrovia, Liberia, July 19, 1884. She grew up and was educated in Monrovia, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Liberia College in 1905. She married Edwin James Barclay, Secretary of State, 1920-1930, and president of the nation, 1930-1944. While she had no children she was said to foster many.

In 1836, the Acting-Colonial Governor, Reverend B.R. Skinner, reported that "the

¹¹² H.A Jones, "The Struggle for Political and Cultural Unification in Liberia 1847-1930" Doctoral Dissertation, Northwestern University, 1962, p.151; J.J. Roberts, Annual Message in African Repository (1851): 117

¹¹³ Anderson, Narrative of Journey to Musardu, 68-69.

¹¹⁴ See Beryl Larry Bellman, *The Language of Secrecy: Symbols & Metaphors in Poro Ritual* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1984), 8.

marriage of a colonist with any one the neighboring tribes was considered exceedingly disreputable and subjected the individual to the contempt of his fellow citizens."¹¹⁵ A late as 1879, Liberia's vice president, Daniel Warner, who advocated intermarriage as a panacea for breaching the cultural and social cleavages between both peoples, nevertheless noted that "it would require on the part of the man of the least culture, strong moral courage to break through the strong prejudice against the intermarriage of the colonists and natives which prevails here among the Americo-Liberians."¹¹⁶

Though they had been spatially cordoned off, the experiences of these different groups had been mutually interactive in a variety of ways. The indigenes entered African Americans lives as laborers, traders, and household wards. A doctor visiting Liberia in the 1830s, noted that it was with the Bassas whom "the colonists were most acquainted with, having daily and hourly intercourse with them, with nearly all of the resident natives living in the settlements being members of this large tribe..."¹¹⁷ The report noted that "[m]any Bassa children lived in the settler homes and attended Sunday school and school with the settlers. The children were often wards or servants who relieved the settlers of the most difficult work in the households and on the farms and who learned particular skills in settler workshops. In many of these case there were charges and admissions that some of the children were beaten because they were "lazy or

¹¹⁵ A. Archibald, *A History of Colonization on the Western Coast of Africa* (Negro Universities Press, 1969), 511.

¹¹⁶ Amos Sawyer, *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia: Tragedy and Challenge* (San Francisco, Calif: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1992), 194.

¹¹⁷ M. B. "Akpan, Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841-1964," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1973), pp. 217-236.

scoundrels."¹¹⁸ Still, friendships and other relationships would be established. It was within this social context that the English language, civilization and Christianity was most effectively transmitted.

Many observers also believed that the Africans themselves were culturally prejudiced against the settlers. They too disapproved of and despised many aspects of the settlers way of life. In particular, many of them sneered at the slave antecedents of the settlers, whom they regarded as socially inferior to themselves. Thus an American visitor to Liberia observed in March 1844 that on the one hand, the colonists "would never recognize the natives otherwise than as heathens," while on the other hand "many of the natives look with contempt on the colonists and do not hesitate to tell them that they are merely liberated slaves."¹¹⁹ Africans were said to also loathe the permissive, sexual standards among the settlers, some of whom carried on irregular, sexual relations with African women, particularly African girls apprenticed to settler families.¹²⁰

Other differences created divisions among the black populous. The experiences of the various emigrant streams were also used as a source of differentiation. The weight of history and the migrants' past were politicized and used to make social and political claims. A particular significance was accorded to not only place of birth but also to the number of years of freedom a migrant had experienced. Length of freedom featured largely in these differences and became status symbols that drove access to citizenship in Liberia. Re-captives having just received freedom could make little claim on the

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 225

¹²⁰ D.U.S.M. 5, "Complaint of the Cape Palmas Tribe," Big Town, Cape Palmas, 30 July 1875.

Republic. Natives were seen as even farther removed because of their involvement with the slave trade and other activities that marked them as heathens. The fact that unlike African Americans, Barbadians had not emigrated from a slave society and had experienced thirty years or more of freedom distinguished them from African Americans and accrued enormous social capital to them. Pre-existing notions of community and family undoubtedly also contributed to intra-black differences. This further complicated efforts to create administrative, bureaucratic, and legal structures that would register across the different groups of migrants.

Conclusion

With its various African ethnicities, Liberia had always been a heterogeneous society. These were further sub-divided into roughly sixteen ethnic groups who sometimes cohered and other times were divided by different cultural, social and religious practices. Africans exhibited group consciousness on occasions, which was often in opposition to African American settlers. The African Americans were divided by the states from which they migrated. Such divisions were exacerbated by skin color that were reflected in society and politics. African re-captives formed another societal group. Coming from Congo-Angola they held a different set of religious beliefs that separated them from both the indigenous African ethnicities as well African American and Barbadian settlers. Barbadians further added to the complexity of the Liberian mosaic with their backgrounds as West Indians and British imperial subjects. While black and African had been the predominant mode of identification in the diaspora, in Liberia the

increasing visibility of the image of the indigenes served to fragment this collective sense of blackness and cement efforts by the migrants to distinguish themselves.

As a result, different nodes of identification emerged. Loathing leaving behind the prestige their connections to America afforded, African Americans saw themselves as Americo-Liberians, a moniker that sustained their American past as it demarcated the distinctiveness of their identity. Americo-Liberians stood apart from African re-captives who were labeled “Congoes” and even further still from the “heathen and un-civilized” natives. Barbadians seemingly remained a floating group, sometimes associated with the “Congoes” and at other times regarded as “the West Indians.” These kinds of designations not only determined one’s place in society but also served as a marker of differentiation. On occasions, notions of civilization served as a means of bringing together Americo-Liberians and West Indians as the country's elites with the natives at the bottom. The struggle to maintain and elevate one's status, at the cost of racial solidarity, contributed to conflicts between migrants and the natives. Pan-Africanism did not make an easy Atlantic crossing. The quest for liberty and emancipation for blacks from the diaspora became less of an advocacy of racial equality and fragmented into group solidarities. Through geographical, socio-economic, and political separation, a rift was produced between the indigenes and later settlers long before the civil wars of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER V

The Politics of a Black Nation Building Citizenship and Nationhood and the Making of a Transnational Black Identity

Liberia was imagined as a nation building project for African Americans. As the ACS declared in their constitution: "The object to which its attention is to be exclusively directed, is to promote and execute a plan for colonizing (with their consent) the free people of color residing in our country in Africa, or such other place as Congress shall deem most expedient. And the Society shall act to effect this object in co-operation with the general government and such of the States as may adopt regulations on the subject."¹ Much thought was not given to the political ramifications of the migration of other groups of blacks to the republic. Over time, however, as other groups of black migrants arrived in Liberia, their presence not only marked important social and demographic changes, but also created ideological and political shifts. Many migrants imagined that their journey to a black republic would easily open up access to experiences of freedom, citizenship, and nationhood. For many groups of blacks, however, the migrant road to full citizenship in Liberia would be marked by rough patches and detours. In some important respects for others, it remained an incomplete journey.

African Americans, West Indians, re-captives, and other migrants to Liberia symbolized one of the unfinished works of emancipation in the Atlantic world. Their migration symbolically straddled the past and future. At its very heart were desires of transforming the inhumanities of slavery and slave trading by creating a modern black nation. But if abolition had been a daunting task, building a black nation, no less on a

¹ See "Outline of the new constitution for the American Colonization Society, *The African Repository* October (1835): 288-289.

coast over-run by slavery, would prove even more formidable. As a site that brought together disparate visions into the discipline and order of a black nation-state, Liberia became a crucible that embodied a significant part of the unfolding emancipation project and an important vessel through which political and ideological contestations over freedom, citizenship, and nationhood among whites, African indigenes, and diasporic groups could be observed.

With the convergence of diasporic migrants and African ethnic groups in Liberia, the 1860s proved a critical watershed moment for migrants and republic alike. The coming together of these various groups in making the Liberian state necessarily created challenges for the migrants both as individuals and social groups. But the influx of different groups of blacks in the 1860s disrupted the unfolding of Liberia's image and the creation of the national fiction. It further complicated blackness understood as an homogenizing force necessary for nation building; a process which would further define modernity, progress, and respectability for the race. Far from achieving a consolidation of black identity and aspirations, as well as a black cosmopolitanism, the Liberian nation building process rather inspired crisis for both the migrants and the nation state. The ensuing challenges encountered in efforts to author a unified national vision that would be legible across the different contours of Liberia's black inhabitants exposed the differences of blacks' post-emancipation imagination, the complexity of defining blackness, and the uneven nature of nation building. In the process, it also highlighted the difficult and fraught process of sustaining and transforming pan-African ideology from mere intentions to commitment.

These groups of blacks having come from various backgrounds of subject-hood

and subordination had separate preoccupations about life in Liberia. The coming together of these disparate experiences and dynamics challenged the Liberian nation building process in ways uncharacteristic of other post-emancipation societies. They would also shape blacks' experiences of citizenship and nationhood in different ways. The convergence of blacks in the Liberian nation building project begs a number of questions that are central to this chapter. In what ways did the union of these groups of blacks from various backgrounds of subject-hood affect nation building ? What part, if any, did the black cosmopolitan context that emerged in the making of the Liberian state play in transforming experiences of freedom, citizenship and nationhood for the different groups? How were the civil, political, legal, and economic processes different from or were similar to previous experiences in the Western world? In what ways did the pan-Africanist vision intersect with white imperialist and colonizationist aspirations in Africa?

This chapter explores blacks' experiences of citizenship and nationhood and the making of a transnational black identity through the dialectics of those experiences and the political processes of nation building in Liberia. It highlights the different ways in which the various segments of the black population represented their identities, related to the state, and to one another. By paying particular attention to the social, legal, political, and economic spheres, the chapter points to ways in which the different groups politically mobilized. It further shows the mutually beneficial interactions and points of tension among the black populace. It also explores how blacks used the state as an instrument to address questions of black progress, modernity, and respectability. In showing the vicissitudes of blackness that emerged, this chapter aims to move us beyond over-

simplified binaries— black/white, colonizer/colonized, African/ European—as well as reshape our views of pan-Africanist, imperialist, and colonizationist ideologies.

In many ways, blacks' migration to Liberia resulted from their experiences in the diaspora and a deeply penetrating belief that black and white racial dynamics provided the basis for inequality and socio-political stratification. But Liberia's location on the African continent, supposedly "outside" the purview of white racism, did not mean that issues of race were erased. The presence of the ACS and Europeans on the African coast ensured the persistence of struggles deeply intertwined with race. Additionally, black migrants entered Liberia with their various historical baggage colored by race, which later informed competing interests among them. These views as well as patriarchal ideas about the instrumentality of the state continued to bound black migrants in relationships of inequality. Race, religion, culture, and other bases on which blacks had been discriminated against in the diaspora would be redeployed in Liberia in exclusionary practices and other social forms of stratification that created hierarchies and power struggles. In Liberia, freedom, citizenship, and nationhood became imported colonial concepts that would be further circumscribed and disciplined within the parameters of the state. As imperialist ideology became liberatory for diasporic blacks, and as the evolution of rules for enforcing equality changed over time and space, blacks' migration to Liberia in many ways illustrated the cyclical rebirths of caste in the Atlantic world. The problem of inequality that blacks faced remained an ideological problem that resided in the political structures and policies of blacks and whites alike. Achieving equality and finding freedom, citizenship, and nationhood would not be achieved by the simple act of migrating to and creating a black only society. Finding freedom and creating equality

required serious ideological interventions regarding social and political ideas of community.

If, as David Lambert argues, the war of representation over slavery and the slave trade fought by abolitionists and their opponents took place in sites such as Sierra Leone,² Liberia, by comparison, became the controversial site in the war over black freedom, citizenship, and nationhood. Conflated as an abolitionist, colonizationist, and pan-Africanist project, Liberia, all at once, a site of freedom, a colony, and a pan-African republic, held visions that were often at odds with each other. With the multiplicity of views that were projected from all angles on Liberia, the nation became a contested space.

Ideological Contestations over Liberia

Before its establishment and throughout its existence, the meaning of Liberia was contested by its multiple inhabitants and different interest groups. In the early 19th century, the ACS held up Liberia as “the hope for the Negro.” President James Monroe, a slaveholder who had successfully petitioned Congress for funds to repatriate blacks, predicted that Liberia would be “little America, destined to shine gem-like in the heart of

² See David Lambert, “Sierra Leone and Other Sites in the War of Representation over Slavery,” *History Workshop Journal* 64(1) (2007): 103-132.” Lambert argued that “the controversies of the late 18th and early 19th centuries over the Atlantic slave-trade and slavery itself can be usefully understood as a ‘war of representation’ fought between abolitionists and their opponents. This war took place over a variegated terrain and focused on different subjects. In this paper it is the *sites* and *spaces* of this war that are examined – from those of the individual pages of pamphlets, to real-world places in and beyond the Caribbean. Sites such as the West African colony of Sierra Leone were more or less explicitly compared with the West Indian colonies and thus the war of representation was a multi-theatre conflict.”

darkness of Africa.”³ For benevolent colonizationists, Liberia was meant to provide a “fair field, an equal chance, and a free fight” necessary for “developing all the elements of [blacks’] latent and long obscured manhood.”⁴ This was because “the prejudices of race, the competitions of labor and the rivalry of a superior wealth and civilization will not accord to him here [in America], at least for a long time, if ever.” To solve this meant that “the Negro [should] be placed beyond this prejudice—where as the weaker class, he will not be depressed and overshadowed by the stronger— he should be removed to the home of his ancestors where he may elevate himself.”⁵ Colonizationism driven by both racism and benevolence necessarily created ideological conflicts, but it also colored the experiences of the black migrants in Liberia. Informed by these viewpoints, the results of Liberian nation building would serve as a barometer of blacks' potential for progress and modernity. On these basis, blacks would receive white recognition and respect.

Colonizationists promoted Liberia in the same ways to Barbadians as they had to African Americans. In a letter to the Barbadian emigrants, the white Philadelphian colonizationist and Liberia's consul general in London Gerard Ralston reminded them that Liberia was the only path to black advancement. Overshadowing other colonization and emigration schemes to Haiti, Canada, and South America, Liberia, deliberately and symbolically located in Africa as an independent black republic unlike Sierra Leone, was envisioned as the symbolic site of return to the motherland, the ancestral home of blacks.⁶

"No other such society," Ralston emphasized, could feasibly “exist in the United States,

³ See Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 16.

⁴ *The Christian Mirror*, September, 29, 1863

⁵ Staudenraus, *African Colonization*, 123.

⁶ *The African Repository* April (1865): 119.

neither in Jamaica, nor in Trinidad, nor Demerara, nor Hayti, nor Central America, nor in short, any other country but Liberia.” Ralston further located blacks' experiences of inequality in the West, candidly remarking: “Whatever country the white man inhabits the black man ought to avoid.”⁷

Prominent blacks concurring with colonizationist like Ralston also held up the colony as the national manifestation of blacks' identity and potential as a race.⁸ In a speech titled, “The Significance of Liberia,” Edward Blyden, who was a migrant from the Caribbean island of St. Thomas, highlighted the meaning of Liberia for diasporic blacks: “I am free to say that as Africans in the land of our fathers, hence our own land, with the advantages gained in slavery, we have special duties and glorious privileges. It is not our part to be looking backward across the ocean, but forward into the great continent, our ancestral home.” Blyden further associated migrating to Liberia with blacks' self-affirmation arguing: “Our brethren in foreign lands are striving by all possible unnatural means to become white, while we are looking eastward and are determined to remain natural.”⁹ For blacks like Blyden, Liberia was the very national embodiment of black liberty to which all blacks should aspire. But despite all it portended, Liberia as a black nationality did not always hold sway with blacks, signaling early conflicts that would later manifest themselves economically and politically. In the early years of the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ For explorations of emigration and colonization movements see: Graham Russell Hodges, *The Black Loyalist Directory: African Americans in Exile After the American Revolution* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1996); Leon D. Pamphile, *Haitians and African Americans: A Heritage of Tragedy and Hope* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001); Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty* (Beacon Press, Boston, 2006).

⁹ Edward W. Blyden, “The significance of Liberia, an address delivered in the senate chamber, Monrovia, Liberia, 20th May 1906,” (Liverpool: 1906).

colonization movement, the Afro-American black nationalist Martin Delany, in mocking Liberia's white patronage, referred to Liberia as “a burlesque on government” nothing beyond a “charnel house where black emigrants went to die.”¹⁰ Delany backtracked on his early statements, eventually visiting Liberia in 1859 during his quest to establish a colony at Abekouta.¹¹

Still, as Liberia became intricately intertwined with blacks' identity and sense of progress, many pinned their hopes and sense of self on migration to the republic. Blacks surmised that through their migration Liberia would become a modern political symbol reminiscent of Africa's glorious past and prospective future. The emigrant populace saw themselves as bearers of civilization and central to Africa's ability to attain its great destiny. Barbadians had reasoned that “there is nothing in the least unreasonable in the idea that in the far regions of the continent another China may be concealed from the vision of the great European nations who at present consider themselves the monopolisers of learning and science.”¹² When British abolitionists had begun to train re-captives for civilizing missions in Africa, the watchful Barbadians had inserted themselves in the process, pointing out that “[i]t is necessary for the practical success of the scheme [civilizing Africa] that the children of Africa in the colonies should lend their zealous cooperation in this gigantic undertaking.”¹³

¹⁰ Richard Blackett, “Martin R. Delany and Robert Campbell: Black Americans in Search of an African,” *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 62, No. 1, (Jan., 1977), pp. 1-25

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *The Liberal*, February 17, 1841.

¹³ *Ibid*

Liberia was explicitly a colonization project. Early black migrants to Liberia appealed to prospective emigrants using similar language of civilizing and Christianizing long established in old colonization and imperialist motifs. As Ralston had told the Barbadians, their migration to Liberia would “assist in putting a stop to the slave trade, establish a nationality, and labor for the civilization and Christianization of Africa.”¹⁴ Within blacks' own initiatives and pan-African aspirations were also desires of rescuing the native Africans from their backwardness in much the same way that the English had sought to rescue Indians in the Americas. Blacks in Liberia circulated calls for others to “Come Over and Help Us,” always appending “we have a gem of an empire.”¹⁵ An editorial reprinted in the *African Repository* from *Africa's Luminary* highlighted, "The Macedonian cry, 'Come over and help us,' is continually ringing and echoing in our ears from the natives of the adjacent country. Almost every breeze brings upon its wings the same sound; we hear it alike in the still small voice and in the strong roar of hundreds of the heathens around us; and we may not refuse to prolong the joyful news, lest possibly, we prove ourselves to be dumb and unworthy watchmen." Along with the idea that this was their duty as blacks, prospective migrants believed they were needed and that the indigenes would welcome them. Religion and black millenarian ideology was further infused with these ideas of civilization to achieve this end. As the African American pioneers pointed out "Africa, Western Africa stands forth in an imploring attitude, and

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *The African Repository* September (1841): 280

begs and entreats that her voice may be heard, that her petition may be granted; which is that the Gospel be preached unto her."¹⁶

The question of race and the moral necessity of abolition complicated aspersions cast about black imperialism. Still, indigenes were portrayed as docile beings waiting to be reinvigorated with the religion and culture of the returning migrants: "She only asks to be taught the way of salvation. Her condition is pitiable, indeed, is miserable in the extreme—dark, gloomy, and peculiar. Much has been done by different denominations of Christians, and yet comparatively speaking, nothing has been accomplished. Millions are yet without having so much as heard of the 'new and living way.'" The popular Psalm that ultimately became the hallmark of pan-Africanism would be wielded towards this end: "Ethiopia is stretching forth her hands unto God, and hundreds of her sons and daughters, are imploring the Christian Church to send life and salvation to them." They pointed out what they were witnessing, highlighting: "We are on the ground, and we see and know that the harvest is already ripe and that the laborers are few. We pray the Lord of the vineyard, and his co-workers to send forth more laborers."¹⁷ The civilization of Liberia would be the lighthouse that would show the way to the regeneration of the whole continent. Pamphlets, newspaper, and other publications invited blacks to migrate to Liberia with the clarion call: "We desire to blow the trumpet, if happily the sounding thereof may reach unto those who are ready, and willing to send and come to the relief of perishing thousands." Even in the face of untold dangers, advocates hoped that: "notwithstanding God in his providence and wisdom sees proper to remove by death, one

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

and another of the laborers sent here by the different Mission Boards their ranks will still be filled...though a thousand die, Africa will not be given up."¹⁸

As blacks in Liberia and prospective black migrants worried about the fate of the nation they were trying to build, America stood as a reminder and model for colonization and imperialist ventures. Viewed through these lenses, the rhetoric co-opted by blacks as emancipatory and the driving force for African civilization was not new. The Puritans' use of similar rhetoric, for example, was enshrined on the seal of the Massachusetts Bay Company that had established Massachusetts Colony. It depicted a dejected Indian with his arrows turned down entreating whites to "Come over and help us" (see Appendix C). Both American and, by proxy, Liberian colonizationist impulses had grown out of interpretations of Acts Chapter sixteen, Verse nine, where Christians were told: "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia and help us."

In many ways, the American background of Liberia's early black colonists and America's own development as a nation foretold the republic's fate. Like Liberia, British colonial companies had started out with a clear sense of the liberty and equality they hoped to achieve in America. As Jack Greene has argued, "[e]ver since the establishment of Virginia, colonies had been seen as Asylum[s] to receive the distressed and especially since the founding of the Carolinas, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania during the last half of the seventeenth century, they had been promoted as places of religious refuge, where besieged and distressed Protestants from the continent of Europe could find liberty of

¹⁸ *The African Repository* September (1841): 280.

conscience and free exercise of religion.”¹⁹ Though the colonies were imagined as places that would be “free of the social evils of other British American colonies,” they ultimately adopted practices of slavery and racial difference.²⁰ With the paradoxical twin developments of freedom and slavery, American colonizationists had shown an early idea of liberty that was not natural and inbuilt and had suggested that experiencing freedom and liberty meant enslaving others. As Greene explained, “they can’t give it up without becoming slaves.”²¹ This had become the driving force for land ownership as well as the basis for expanding political participation in early America. Going in opposite directions, race and religion employed in colonization rhetoric never worked out in the Americas. Europeans coming with religion to the Americas had created difference based on race. Blacks of the same race going to Africa created difference based on religion.

Like Americans, black migrants to Liberia counting their “advantages gained in slavery” towards their “special duties and glorious privileges” also thought they had much to teach the African indigenes. Barbadians had ascribed their significance to the African civilization project to their historical connection to both Africa and Europe. Placing this dual heritage construct at the core of African modernization efforts, West Indians had come to believe that they were especially valuable to the quest to recover Africa’s past and unlock its great destiny.²² This sense of nationalism had been resonant in other nation building efforts. Ernest Gellner argues about the importance of this kind

¹⁹ Jack P. Greene, *Imperatives, Behaviors, and Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992); 115.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 141.

²¹ Craig Yirush ed., *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire: The Roots of Early American Political Theory, 1675-1775* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 2.

²² *The Liberal*, February 17, 1841

of sensibility, highlighting that “[n]ationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist.”²³ Benedict Anderson further reasons that: “It is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny;” nations “loom out of an immemorial past” and “glide into a limitless future.”²⁴ Out of their own nationalistic fervor, Barbadians responded to African Americans' calls for blacks to "come over and help us", citing their own interest in emigrating to Liberia as being a “noble desire of assisting to elevate their fatherland, or building up a nationality, without which they consider their race can never attain their proper position in the family of nations.”²⁵ But the convergence of these different groups of blacks with their diverse imagination and expectations of Liberia would also add to the growing political divisiveness. Much of the future of the republic rested on reconciling these various interests.

From Colony to Nationhood

Despite their proclaimed belief in black abilities, the ACS had keenly held on to leadership and control of Liberia. This was evident in the first Liberian constitution, which while granting legislative powers to the governing councils of the various representative state colonies, made them subject to revocation by the ACS. The agents of colonization society possessed sovereign powers, which were only subjected to change by the board of managers of the ACS. In the initial political setup, ACS agents chose two

²³ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 141.

²⁴ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 4.

²⁵ *The African Repository* January (1865): 18.

Justices of the Peace who assisted them in the daily running of the settlement. This white leadership would merely aim for a majority of the vote of the black freeholders. Common law was applicable though not African inspired. The ACS noted that: "The Colonization Society shall, from time to time, make such rules as they may think fit for the government of the settlement, until they shall withdraw their Agents and leave the settlers to the government of themselves."²⁶ According to the ACS early digest of laws, "quarreling, rioting, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, profaneness, and lewdness are infractions of the public peace."²⁷ Though the migrants had ostensibly crossed the Atlantic to escape white racism and patriarchy, the presence of ACS officials in Liberia had created a black and white racial dynamic that often played out in politics.

By the 1840s, economic and diplomatic difficulties made Liberia a financial burden to the ACS.²⁸ Other more pressing reasons, however, ultimately drove the Liberian Commonwealth to pursue independence and to regularize its status in accordance with modern international law. According to Joseph Jenkins Roberts who had become governor of the commonwealth, the decision to become independent was a direct result of the "embarrassment we labor under with respect to the encroachments of foreigners, and the objections urged by Great Britain in regard to our sovereignty." Operating based on its established colonial relationship with neighboring Sierra Leone, Britain regarded Liberia and the ACS as "private persons not entitled to exercise

²⁶ *The African Repository* January (1835): 21.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Congress consistently refused to support the movement. Daring attempts were made by Henry Clay and his distribution bill to use the money from the sale of lands for the colonization enterprise much to the chagrin of those who opposed the scheme. For more see Frankie Hutton, Economic Considerations in the American Colonization Society's Early Effort to Emigrate Free Blacks to Liberia, 1816-36, *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Autumn, 1983), pp. 376-389.

sovereignty especially in the levying and collecting of customs duties."²⁹ The rhetoric of lack of recognition became one of the many of these criticisms by the British. This lack of recognition was a dual indictment for Liberia as a black community and a colony without sovereignty. With this, a kind of racism lurked in the shadows, buried behind the legitimate complaint about sovereignty. In 1843, a British minister in a note to ACS authorities in Liberia pointed out the problems that Liberia's status as an unrecognized American colony would create. British traders noted that Liberia did not possess an internationally recognizable diplomatic status. The British insisted that "in order to avert future serious trouble and contention in that quarter, her majesty's government should be accurately informed what degree of official patronage and protection, if any, the United States government extend to the colony of Liberia." British diplomats were keen to find out "how far, if at all, the United States Government recognized the colony of Liberia as a national establishment."³⁰

Border disputes as well as certain acts and laws further created friction between Liberia and European powers. The nation's territorial boundaries brought out existing tensions between settlers and indigenes. With this, the question of who is a part of the nation came to the fore. Britain forced Liberia to come to grips with the unsettled questions of the nature of the political relationship between the indigenes and the state. The natives and their territory now proved indispensable in important matters of trade, territorial boundaries, sovereignty, and diplomatic recognition. British merchants had often complained that the Liberian government "have shown a disposition to enlarge very

²⁹ *The African Repository August* (1845): 177.

³⁰ *American Journal of International Law, Supplement*, Vol. 4 (1910), 214.

considerably the limits of their territories; assuming to all appearance quite unjustifiably, the right of monopolizing the trade with the native inhabitants along a considerable line of coast, where the trade had hitherto been free."³¹ British capital operated in a variety of ways across different spaces and temporalities to exert dominance. Whereas land and labor were contested in other periods, boundaries were the new target of this time. In this instance, it created a new enclosure for domination and sought to subsume markets in new ways as the abolition of the slave trade freed the Atlantic coast from slavery. As European imperialism appeared in new guises, it created new forms of subordination for blacks who had sought to escape its reach. The social differences, tensions, and the ambiguous nature of the place of the indigenes had begun to manifest themselves in territorial, political, economic and diplomatic challenges within and without the republic.

Migrant blacks had based their sense of liberatory achievements on their formation of a community to carry out their civilizing and Christianizing missions and their abilities to return to Africa to build a nation. Yet, despite their efforts to flee Western hegemony, their sense of worth, respectability, and legitimacy depended on formal recognition by other countries. As Eliga Gould has shown, this process had also been necessary for other new nations such as America.³² This recognition was not only diplomatically imperative but also critical for Liberia's economic survival. Because Liberia was "neither a sovereign power nor a bona fide colony of any sovereign nation," British and French traders often refused to pay coastal trading taxes. The ways in which this affected the nation's revenue and commercial ventures and the fact that Liberia had

³¹ Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York: Macmillan Co, 19280), 707.

³² See Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012), 3.

no navy or gunboats to protect the coastline or trade thus drove the need to proceed with formalizing independence.³³ In order to assuage political threats and to solve some of these diplomatic issues, the colony needed to become independent.³⁴

On July 26, 1847, Gerard Ralston, along with others, moderated the diplomatic negotiations that transformed Liberia from a colony to an independent republic. *The Repository* noted, "Was that Republic to be formally received into the family of nations, a treaty of amity and commerce had to be negotiated, a postal arrangement effected, or a correspondence on its behalf to be conducted." In this regard, the Philadelphia colonizationist, "Mr. Ralston promptly appeared and ably acted and he probably signed more documents of this public and important character, as the representative of Liberia, than any of the distinguished men with whom he was thus brought in contact." In Ralston's view, political and economic independence was elemental to black progress. He considered diplomatic recognition to be the hallmark of black progress and the most sustainable objective of the Liberian colonization scheme. In subsequent years, Ralston's secured European diplomatic recognition of Liberia's independence. Even hesitation the US wavered under pressure from Ralston and eventually recognized the sovereignty of its stepchild by signing a treaty; an agreement that still shapes the contentious relationship of power, domination, political development, and dependence between the two nations.

Ralston further negotiated treaties that criminalized the slave trade and secured commercial agreements relevant to Liberia's economic development. On May 21, 1862, in a paper read before the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and

³³*The African Repository* August (1845): 20

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Commerce, "On the Republic of Liberia, its Products and Resources," Ralston sought to secure Liberia's economic viability by marketing agricultural and manufactured products.³⁵ The editor of the *Merchant Magazine and Commercial Review* pointed to the "commercial importance to the United States of a close friendship with Liberia cannot be over-estimated." Referring to how Liberian commodities factored into European trade, it was noted that "[e]ven the trifling article of ground nuts has become an important object of commerce for France, and it will doubtless henceforth prove very valuable to England for the manufacture of soap and also for oil for burning and for lubricating machinery." Ralston anticipated that America would soon "reap a portion of the great harvest which is already ripe in Africa to those who seek it. We know of no good reason why she should not reach forth her hand and pluck the rich and good fruit there awaiting her."³⁶

On July 16, 1847, Liberia became the first African colony to declare independence. Independence required commercial and diplomatic treaties. Like the United States in the post-revolutionary era relationships with other nations had to be established. Eliga Gould shows that as early as 1776, John Adams had begun to work on "a plan of treaties' to guide the new nation in its relations with other governments."³⁷ It essentially outlined how Americans traded and would operate during peace time. It also laid out the beginnings of early American foreign policy that brought the infant republic into the fold of nations. In the same way, Liberia would have to establish its relationship

³⁵ Gerard Ralston, "On the Republic of Liberia, Its Products and Resources." (1862). A paper read before the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, May 21st, 1862 by Gerard Ralston.

³⁶ *Merchants Magazine and Commercial Review* (1853): 200.

³⁷ Eliga H Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012), 1.

with other nations. That it was a black nation on a slave trading coast, however, meant recognition would be tangled up with race and a variety of other issues. This dynamic informing diplomatic recognition had been evident in Haiti, the first independent black nation, which had endured slights on these bases. Though Haiti had been independent since 1804, US' official recognition of the black republic would only come in 1862, the same year that the US formally recognized Liberia.³⁸

Liberia remained under the gaze of the British and French governments as well as anti-slavery societies the world over. Its independence, having grown out of a need to project blacks' civilization to the outside world, was used as a means of commanding respect. In 1849, Joseph Roberts, the country's first president, secured an invitation to the Peace Congress held in Brussels. In addition to addressing the Congress, Roberts also signed treaties with the English, French, and Belgians (See Appendix A).³⁹ Roberts' speech was considered to be "of excellent good sense and judgment, appropriate, mannerful, and the assembly made it the speech of the congress." Roberts presence in this crowd was not only diplomatically significant, but also necessary for the respect and recognition that blacks desired from whites. Establishing treaty worthiness through the diplomatic recognition of other civilized white nations also symbolically projected a sense of modernity for this newly created black nation. Following this appearance in Brussels, many would look upon "Gentleman Roberts and the new African republic with

³⁸ See Willis D. Boyd, James Redpath and American Negro Colonization in Haiti, 1860-1862, *The Americas*, Vol. 12 (1955), pp.169-182.

³⁹ *Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between Her Majesty and the Republic of Liberia. Signed at London, November 1848*. Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command and Her Majesty, 1850 (London: Harrison and Son) 4 Pp.

much hope for the future."⁴⁰ The English and French governments' recognition of Liberia's sovereignty highlighted the intersections of the nation-building process with abolition and colonization. The French government gave orders to their naval officers on the African Coast to put "two to three ships at Roberts' disposal when he needed to go on expeditions to destroy barracoons, break up slave trading parties, and otherwise promote the interest of humanity on the African Coast."⁴¹ Their recognition also became indicative of Liberia's efforts towards development, modernization, and respectability.

Negotiating Black Citizenship in a Black Republic

With independence the relationship with the ACS became invisible but did not disappear. Relationships dynamics, however, would now be among the various black inhabitants. By migrating to Liberia, especially in this post-independence period, blacks having ostensibly moved beyond the strictures of a race conscious society were viewed as finally receiving some measure of freedom. Nonetheless, freedom in Liberia remained a historical and social construct with various competing definitions at work. In some quarters freedom was viewed as a human entitlement while others thought individuals needed to prove that they deserved their freedom through conduct, morals, and behavior. Others saw freedom as emerging from one's labor and work. Indeed, much of free labor ideology was based on the principle of working for wages as the hallmark of freedom. Contrarily, others saw in the new post-slavery system evidences of coercion and the persistence of various forms of un-freedom. In post-Reconstruction US, many viewed

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Teah Wulah, *Back to Africa: A Liberian Tragedy* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2009), 281.

freedom as necessitating economic viability. This meant land was central to any material experiences of freedom and a militia was necessary to oversee this enforcement. In many post-emancipation and post-reconstruction societies, freedom for many would be politically constructed and legally defined. The inability to define freedom in clear terms often meant it would have to be made on the ground. With migration driving the unfolding of the Republic, freedom became a consistent process of contending the normative order. With these various contestations, the making of Liberia would be driven by the sort of exclusionary politics and hierarchical structures blacks had previously struggled against.

For blacks in the diaspora, pan-Africanism discourse implied commitment to inclusivity and equality one in which all blacks were citizens. In the post-independence era, however, experiences previously ideologically determined would take political shape as the lives of migrants became bound up with the struggle to sustain the state. This process would erect boundaries around citizenship. That blacks through migration and Liberia's independence were free of white racist elements did not mean the absence of competing interests, othering, and difference making. The struggle for rights and equality among the various diasporic ethnicities and their African counterparts would be played out in the political, religious, economic and social spheres in ways that would destabilize the foundations on which black and African identities were created. This too exposed pan-Africanism's underlying paradox.

Liberia's future as a state was dependent on the firmness of its political foundation. The convergence of the multiple migrant groups brought together a variety of ideas, options, and tools by which the country's future could be forged. This implicitly

created a debate on which political system was most suitable. The various political tools were already in place across the Atlantic, but the kinds of modifications and adaptations sought in their transposition to Liberia also reflected blacks' biases, undoubtedly shaped by experience about how freedom, citizenship, and nationhood should be enacted.

Transposing these ideas onto a African polity would mean rewriting aspects of the scripts to meet on-the-ground demands. What came out during the transposition process reflected blacks' beliefs, expectations, and rejections of the social and political systems they had left behind.

Some blacks, such as Edward Blyden favored non-Western forms of government and political organizations. In his work, "Mohammedanism and the Negro Race," Blyden showed his high regard for Islam as a political and civilizing force: "No one can travel any distance in the interior of West Africa without being struck with the different aspects of society in different localities, according as the population is Pagan or Mohammedan." Not only is there "a difference in methods of government, but in the general regulations of society, and even in the amusements of the people." He pointed out that "the love of noisy torpischorean performances, so noticeable in the Pagan communities, disappears as people come under the influence of Mohammedianism."⁴² The implicit Christian imperatives in the idea of civilizing Africa meant Blyden would not find much support for this Islamic vision for Liberia.

Unsurprisingly, rather than Islamic, indigenous, or seeking to forge new ground by syncretizing different systems, African Americans in the post-independence nation-

⁴² See Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1967), 27.

building efforts relied on the political traditions and precedents with which they were accustomed. Beyond the reasons of ideological strength, political and civil understandings of citizenship, an impulse for eradicating the slave trade, and a rationalization over territorial control, the idea of a republican state prevailed over Islamic, African, and other forms of political systems. Ultimately, in the choice of a republican style of government, the settlers established a political system and standards for citizenship independent of and in opposition to the customs and interests of the local Africans, re-captives, and the later Barbadian migrants.

Other debates over the constitution emerged. The ACS still held a perverse shadow over the colony on the eve of independence. Simon Greenleaf, a white colonizationist and jurist from Massachusetts, first offered his assistance and services in helping to prepare a draft constitution for the new state. In June 1846, the ACS sent Greenleaf's draft proposal containing clauses for the constitution. Joseph Tracy, secretary of the Massachusetts chapter of the colonization society, sought to make clear that they were only intended as a guide to the impending deliberations of the constitutional convention. However, there were evident tensions. Though the ACS would send "additional constitutional articles," the colonists in Liberia found much of Greenleaf's "proposals inappropriate" and the document altogether wanting.

On July 5, 1847, twelve African American representatives from the various states in Liberia met at the Constitutional Convention in Monrovia.⁴³ Hilary Teage was made

⁴³ The signers of the Declaration of Independence were: Samuel Benedict, Hilary Teage, Elijah Johnson, John Naustehlau Lewis, Beverly R. Wilson and J.B. Gripon (Montserrado County); John Day, Amos Herring, Anthony William Gardiner and Ephriam Titler (Grand Bassa County); and Jacob W. Prout and Richard E. Murray (Sinoe County).

chairman of the committee to draft the preamble and bill of rights and the declaration of independence. Others worked to draft various other parts of the constitution. The black colonists hoped to implement their own political and ideological vision on the independent republic. Historians have argued that while they desired to restrict ownership of property and citizenship rights to blacks only, the ACS and Greenleaf desired the exact opposite. Further arguments regarding women's rights seems to have appeared between the Americans who were yet to have women's suffrage and the Liberian colonists seeking to carve out new avenues of liberty. Through the constitution, the political questions African Americans asked, and the models of government they sought, it became evident that the idea of the nation, citizenship and freedom were informed by Western ideas. As the settlers constructed Liberia's identity as a black republic, they located it not within the traditions of African empires to which they had aspired, but within the context of European and American states.

In the aftermath of the convention, the True Liberian Party (TLP) formed along color lines, uniting light-skinned blacks. Ten years after, the party was renamed the Republican Party of Liberia. In opposition, darker skinned immigrants formed the Old Whig Party of Liberia, which they later renamed the True Black Man's Party before finally becoming the True Whig Party (TWP).⁴⁴ African Americans may have been unconscious about how deeply invested they were in the American racialized political structure from which they had "escaped." In 1847, the light skinned blacks of True Liberian Party won the first election. They would hold onto power until 1870 when they

⁴⁴ Julius Omozuanvbo Ihonvbere and John Mukum Mbaku, *Political Liberalization and Democratization in Africa Lessons from Country Experiences* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003), 201; John Mukum Mbaku and Julius Omozuanvbo Ihonvbere, *The Transition to Democratic Governance in Africa: The Continuing Struggle* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003).

were ousted by the dark-skinned blacks of the True Whig Party (TWP) who consolidated power by forming an opportunistic alliance with re-captives and the Natives. J.J. Roberts who had been governor of the commonwealth became president. In keeping with the tradition of using the US as a point of reference, his leadership of the Republic in its infancy would be compared to that of George Washington. Before coming together in Liberia, the diaspora in general and these immigrants particularly, had heard news about one another or had reason to believe they had similar stories. They had had few instances of being in the same space, let alone living and working together. In its contours and capacity, Liberian state building was an experiment, its results unsure in much the same way as the meaning of freedom was undefined in the Abolition Act of 1833 or the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. What indeed would give freedom meaning and determine how the formerly enslaved became citizens and a part of the body politic was not race but the forces of nation building.

African Americans had always had their own interpretations of democracy, but seldom had the power to define and impose it. Within their efforts to re-imagine and define their freedom and to build a nation, the imprints of their lives left behind would resurface. For decades thereafter, and particularly after independence, African American migrants in Liberia drew on their past experiences to articulate who would be Liberians. Created on the ideals of democratic government and on the original American Constitution, the Liberian constitution embraced principles such as centralism, which shored up issues surrounding the nation's territorial integrity and addressed citizenship. Unlike African political forms, power and authority in Liberia was now placed under an

over-arching national governmental structure.⁴⁵ All inhabitants in the area, whether political citizens or not, would have to accept the sovereignty of the Liberian government over their own forms of governments. They would also have to acknowledge the laws of Liberia as binding onto themselves. As such, inter-clan and inter-ethnic disputes would now have to be referred to the national government, and all offenders would be punishable under the new laws.

Independence necessitated defining the terms of citizenship. During this process, diasporic migrants sought to transform terms implied within broader pan-Africanist goals into nationally recognizable civil legislative language. The necessity of the civil law showed Liberia's socially pluralistic nature through the multiplicity of practices and normative identities, and values and issues that were imputed to legal order. From this, one of the articles of Liberia's constitution legally made citizenship in the Republic dependent on race, an attempt to imbue the concept with the shortcomings of their past. Article five section thirteen declared: "The great object of forming these Colonies, being to provide a home for the dispersed and oppressed children of Africa, and to regenerate and enlighten this benighted continent, none but Negroes or persons of Negro descent shall be eligible to citizenship in this Republic."⁴⁶

What made race legally prescriptive was directly related to the past experiences of the immigrants. This resolve had already been tested in the crucible of racially oppressive societies. Many African Americans had seen the workings of citizenship in American

⁴⁵ Elwood D. Dunn, Amos J. Beyan, and Carl Patrick Burrowes, *Historical Dictionary of Liberia: 2nd Edition* (Scarecrow Press, 2001), 84-6.

⁴⁶ The constitution of Liberia recorded in Frederick Starr, *Liberia: Description, History, Problems* (Chicago: s.n, 1913), 256.

democracy, and West Indians themselves excluded from the privileges of citizenship in Barbados and the British Empire would also have known why this clause was necessary. This method of reading race into political questions of citizenship reflected the persistence of republicanism across the Atlantic but with a radical reinterpretation. Article five section twelve further stipulated: “No person shall be entitled to hold real estate in this republic unless he be citizen of the same.”⁴⁷ This constitutional provision showed that Liberia’s architects did not want to subject themselves to uncertainties of customs where power was not expressly defined. Liberia’s political structure ensured that state power in all material aspects would “legally” be in the hands of blacks.

This racial aspect of Liberia's constitution was radical in many ways. This constitutional article reflected its architects determination to establish their country as models of racial equality based on laws that did not mandate racial discrimination. Nonetheless, the article masked very real patterns of inequality and social stratification. Though it seemed inclusive and all encompassing in its definition of citizenship, the article was also ambiguous and thus subjected to interpretation. This vague insistence on black national identity both opened up possibilities for inclusion as well as placed boundaries on the ways that participation could be thought about, claimed, and exercised. For those immigrants who had only imagined what freedom would be like, centralism and statehood would mean sentiments would become less self-defined and more institutionally based. Furthermore, unlike African's collectivist sense of citizenship, the modern nation state would make citizenship an un-mediated relationship between the

⁴⁷ Ibid

individual and the state. Despite the dreams and aspirations for these new experiences, tension quickly surfaced, taking its inhabitants and the governmental structure unaware.

In its unfolding, different groups of blacks played into the nation building process in different ways. Some came to believe that they had more claim to the nation than others. As the pioneers, African Americans saw themselves in the forefront and saw others as catching up. From the birth of the colony to the drafting of the constitution, the political sphere would be coded African American. Conversely, natives would be represented as opposed to any semblance of a rational political entity. African Americans had many ways to express their claims to the republic, among them the fact that the ACS had created the settlement for them. The expatriates, however, cited their suffering in the US and their inability to improve themselves under those conditions as their justification for establishing a free and independent state on the western coast of Africa. They used this pretext to further rationalize their leadership in the new political order in the preamble of the 1847 constitution:

We the people of the Republic of Liberia were originally the inhabitants of the United States of North America. In some parts of that country, we were debarred by law from all the rights and privileges of men--in other parts, public sentiment, more powerful than law, frowned us down. We were everywhere shut out from all civil office. We were excluded from all participation in the government. We were taxed without our consent. We were compelled to contribute to the resources of a country, which gave us no protection. We were made a separate and distinct class, and against us every avenue to improvement was effectually closed. Strangers from all lands of a color different from ours were preferred before us. We uttered our complaints, but they were unattended to, or only met by alleging the peculiar institutions of the country. All hope of a favorable change in our country was thus wholly extinguished in our bosoms, and we looked with anxiety abroad for some asylum from the deep degradation.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Starr, *Liberia*, 259.

With this, African American migrants not only legitimized their place in the republic, but further cemented their leadership of the new country. Along with the political foundations, the cultural moorings of the new nation would also be appropriated and tied to definitions of African Americans' identity. The identity and values of the new nation in many ways defaulted to the history and experiences of this diasporic group.

The natives did not disappear with the coming of the black immigrants or the legal statutes attaching the nation to its African American roots. For them, their place and attachment to the land was by custom, heritage, and ancestry. They held by prescription and customary right the land on which they lived and on which their ancestors were buried.⁴⁹ As I have shown in the previous chapter, they had repeatedly demonstrated the problematic nature of the African American presence, often burning their settlements and declaring war on them. Though Liberia was assumed to be black nation, and presumably all blacks and certainly Africans could be citizens, the presence of slave-trading in the area would add the first caveat that would complicate understandings and experiences of citizenship and become the source of national conflict. The haunting history of slavery and slave-trading created a disguised ethnic hostility that would take the place of race as known in America as a signifier of difference.

Indeed, ending the slave trade had been among the first order of business for blacks in Liberia and this received even more prominence with independence. The diaspora themselves being victim of the slave trade had direct reasons to try to criminalize slavery and slave-trading. Blacks had had a long track-record of attempts to restrain, limit and even eliminate the ideologies supporting slavery as well as slave-

⁴⁹ See Hendrik Hartog, "Pigs and Positivism," *Wisconsin Law Review* (1985).

trading practices. Before their arrival in Liberia, much of this debate and confrontation were with whites. In Liberia, the culpability of Africans became more obvious with their increasing visibility. The immigrants had come to show Africans the errors of slave-trading and, like other facets of social life, this was not left to custom or assumptions about blackness. Among the first set of laws in the constitution were those that strictly prohibited the “dealing in slaves by any citizen of the Commonwealth, either within or beyond the limits of the same.” This law, meant to completely divorce connections of slavery and the slave trade with blacks and the republic, not only dismissed the claims of the natives to equality but also reinforced their exclusion, and further made them a target of the national government.

Questions around slavery and the slave trade thus became one way of skirting the issue of inequality in the republic. Natives had to legally overcome the presumption that they were dealing in the slave trade to become a citizen. As a means of creating freedom, immigrants viewed these clauses as morally and ethically justified. However different slavery was in Africa, Africans by no means could make a claim for their customary practices. Such a claim conflicted with the social and political commitments of the members of the new nation. And there were legitimate authorities, including abolitionist and colonizationist, organizations, and nations to which the settlers could appeal to confirm the morality of these actions. But the impetus for this law was also thinly veiled justification for furthering Liberia's expansionist agenda. Smaller ethnic groups in Liberia such as the Deys and the Queahs would be anxious to secure Liberia's protection against powerful slave raiding chiefs further inland such as the Golahs and Condos. On this basis,

they signed formal treaties of cession with the Liberian government.⁵⁰ Many of these native chiefs also signed agreements with the central government hoping to profit from trade with the settlers and to have schools established in their territories.⁵¹

The settlers sought to further reduce the power of the indigenous groups. Although the cooperation of the Kru ethnic group had been appreciated, the government would enact a number of measures to reduce their economic and social influence. In the pre-independence decades, Krus were made to renounce their role in the slave trade. Failure on their part provided the ACS with justification to absorb their lands.⁵² The government further threatened Kru fishermen and other natives with manual labor and jail if they ran afoul of the law.⁵³ By the mid-1840s, having abolished their connections to slave traders in the area and with the introduction of "legitimate trade" through the state, settlers also replaced the Kru as coastal middlemen in other forms of commercial trade. The establishment of the nation state in many ways meant that the indigenous sense of identity as a group and their efforts to pursue their own goals would be routinely denied. By 1882, the Common Council of Monrovia would further intervene in the political affairs of Kru Town by allowing the mayor of Monrovia to appoint a headman with

⁵⁰ D.T.B Buchanan to Wilkerson, Monrovia, 13 December 180 as quoted in M.P Apkan, *Americo-Liberian Imperialism, 1841-1964*. CJAS, 217-36.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² See Lawrence Breitborde, "City, Countryside and Kru Ethnicity," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 61/2 (1991): 186-201; George Brooks, *The Kru Mariner in the Nineteenth Century: An Historical Compendium*, Newark, DE: Liberian Studies Association of America; Robert Burroughs, "[T]rue Sailors of Western Africa: Kru Seafaring Identity in British Traveler's Accounts of the 1830s and 40s," *Journal for Maritime Research* (2009) 11: 51-67.

⁵³ See Charles Henry Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia; A Documentary History of the Constitutions, Laws and Treaties of Liberia from the Earliest Settlements to the Establishment of the Republic, a Sketch of the Activities of the American Colonization Societies, a Commentary on the Constitution of the Republic and a Survey of the Political and Social Legislation from 1847 to 1944; with Appendices Containing the Laws of the Colony of Liberia, 1820-1839, and Acts of the Governor and Council, 1839-1847* (New York: Central Book Co, 1947), 506.

limited magisterial powers to settle disputes and maintain law and order among the natives.⁵⁴

The more Liberia expanded, the more the government came into contact and conflict with different ethnicities in the out-lying areas. Though excluded from being citizens, natives were routinely drawn into the nation specifically around issues surrounding land and commerce. Scholars such as M.P Apkan have argued that "the African peoples came into a protectorate relationship with the Liberian government, just as later in the nineteenth century African territories elsewhere became protectorates of European colonial powers."⁵⁵ Americo-Liberians' presence in Liberia was also an impetus to establish "legitimate trade" and to enact this meant putting up barriers between the hinterlands and the coast where natives traded. To further curtail British and French merchant trade with the indigenes living along the coast, the Liberian government sought to make the use of currency the only legal way in which goods could be exchanged. In retaliation, the local traders stopped trading with the settlers and devised a secret system of trading with foreign merchants. Under the national structure, settlers sought to stymie these efforts by passing a law prohibiting natives who had not first secured permission, from the government from trading with foreigners. The making of the nation state meant that while natives were not citizens they would have to pay excise duties.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ See Lawrence Breitborde, *Speaking and Social Identity: English in the Lives of Urban Africans* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998).

⁵⁵ Apkan, *Americo-Liberian Imperialism*, 222.

⁵⁶ Warren L. d'Azevedo, "A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism," *Liberian Studies Journal* (1969) 1-21.

To accommodate their “brothers” and the nation-building efforts, natives were continually pushed deeper into the hinterlands. Thus land also became an arena of conflict. The state reinforced these kinds of conflicts, often using land as a lure to attract more migrants. This exposed the differences between how Americans and Europeans viewed land and how it was perceived by natives. As with many African ethnicities, ownership of land was through kinship groups. In many ways, land mediated relationship between individuals, both the dead and the living. Conversely, Americans and Europeans viewed land in terms of personal property. This drove the settlers efforts to control land as well as the other means of production. Ownership of land broadly meant that individuals, peasants and yeomanry included, could reap the benefits of their labor. In countries like the US, land ownership was believed to unshackle individuals from dependent and corrupting relationships. Because of the level of independence and right that land provided, it acted as a measure of equality. The literal and figurative displacement of native Africans from land and their denial of citizenship in the new nation exposed the unevenness of nation building and the complexities of live pan-Africanism. While “Americo-Liberians” achieved political and economic prosperity, the natives who constituted the majority of the nation’s population, became a dubious appendage to the state, enjoying neither citizenship nor the franchise.

As different groups vied to wield the power of the state, national identity became increasingly narrow and unsettled. Fashioned in the mold of American republicanism, fitness for citizenship also became contingent on the attributes of character, industry, and western religiosity. The transference of this liberal democratic system to African soil ensured that access to citizenship would be made on the basis of predefined norms, which

often straddled both the political and the social sphere. The gendered basis of political citizenship reflected the gendered nature of relationships to the state and an additional tier of inequality that migrants experienced. Unlike pan-African ideology that had conflated freedom with nationhood, race, gender, and citizenship, the architects of the nation state embraced the notion of citizenship as gendered. By providing that “every male citizen of the age of twenty-one years shall have the right of suffrage,” the achievement of citizenship was transformed most rapidly for African American men.⁵⁷ Indeed, what the Liberian colonists were doing was not new. These means of defining subject-hood had been an enduring aspect of universalist ideologies. In time, with migrants following through on spreading Christianity, culture, and manners, the political barriers became porous. In other ways, however, the social barriers solidified.

The Liberian nation building project had grown out of a need to cement racial identity. However, the over-determined symbolic function of blackness would change in Liberia as racial identification failed to mean and do the same kinds of work it had done in the diaspora. Slavery, abolition, and colonialism had hinged on the question of whether black and modern were mutually exclusive. Black independence and nation building was meant to respond to this question by showing the ways in which blacks could transcend the deprivations associated with blackness and Africanness. The stain of inferiority associated with blackness was something to be overcome, and diasporic blacks saw themselves as achieving this with abolition and emancipation in the Americas and Liberia's independence. Following these achievements, the argument about black inferiority began to lose sway. The diasporic migrants to Liberia represented a group of

⁵⁷ The *African Repository* January (1869): 20.

blacks who had transcended the supposed innate inferiority of blackness by virtue of their suffering that had also brought about moral, cultural and religious regeneration and by independence that further liberated them.

Though attached to Africa, blacks' sense of civilization, modernity and progress were located in European behavior. The nation became invisible in the presence of native ethnic Liberians who were seen as participants in the slave trade. But they were a part of the African environment. Both diasporic blacks and whites began to reach into the hinterlands for African indigenes to locate black inferiority. In the quest for a nationality and black modernity, blacks effectively set up a distinction between the idealized motherland from which all blacks came and the depraved natives who had sold their "brothers" into slavery. The search for both the regeneration of the diaspora and the continent created ways for the diaspora to separate Africa as a space from the inhabitants, a move that served to separate diasporic black identity from African identity. Shoved in the shadows as other intra-black issues came to the fore, the question of race once again became opaque. The Atlantic crossing had complicated blacks' racial identity. Because of its proximity to power, diasporic identities would be reproduced while those of Africa would be erased.

West Indians and the Body Politic

West Indians and African re-captives further added to the complexity to the black mosaic and the unfolding nation building process. The republican foundation of Liberian politics as well as its religious orientation would come under threat from these new

emigrant groups. Though perhaps similar to African American families who migrated to Liberia in previous decades, Barbadians were in other ways initially marked as different. Barbadians, perhaps driven by their imperial frame of political reference, helped to consolidate the True Whig Party (TWP), largely made up of the darker skinned Americo-Liberians, that became increasingly connected to anti-light skinned African Americans' sentiments. They were believed to be more liberal in their politics than the mulatto Americo-Liberian group. The TWP also opportunistically formed an alliance with the "Congoes" and the indigenes. Indeed, after the 1870s, the Republican Party that created the political foundation on which Liberia was built, was defunct. Additionally, Liberia had been built on American religious foundations with Baptist and Methodism as the predominant denominational practices. Given this, Barbadians' Anglican religious orientation further unsettled the question of citizenship while also adding to the complexity of the multi-directional power struggle.

It is unknown whether Barbadians were made citizens upon arrival or whether they were naturalized based on race. On December 10, 1868, three years after their arrival, the sitting president James Payne explored the issue of naturalization in the annual message to the Legislature: "There is good reason to apprehend that the oath of allegiance to this government is being considered in the light of a custom house oath, sometimes regarded as allowing any amount of reservation; and to prevent the advantages which are taken of it, that a special act of the Legislature is necessary." Payne further pointed out that of those persons "coming from distant climes into Liberia and taking this oath there can be no apprehension; but it is an acknowledged fact that those who come from the colonies on the Western Coast of Africa, come principally for the purpose of

trading." On this account, Payne reasoned that special provisions would have to be made. "We have no objection whatever to their residing for this or any other legitimate purpose among us; but if they wish to assume the relations of citizens, they should be required to take an oath, make registry of themselves, and procure a uniform certificate by which their allegiance to any other government shall be rendered to their admission to citizenship in this republic."⁵⁸ Barbadians could not exercise both British and Liberian citizenship. Because of increasing tensions along the Sierra Leone border, Liberians viewed Barbadians old imperial relationship with suspicion.

Payne also addressed the question of the indigenes affiliation with the republic. The question of native citizenship and status in the Republic had far reaching implications beyond the question of Liberia's modernity. Payne pointed out, "if you Senators and Representatives should entertain my recommendation with regard to an act by which aborigines shall be formally acknowledged, then an additional act requiring masters of vessels, supercargoes, and agents taking them out of the jurisdiction of the Republic to obtain a passport for everyone, will become imperatively necessary."⁵⁹ Native affiliation complicated practical matters of movement and jurisdiction, but also issues surrounding trade and foreign relations with the Republic.

Barbadians further grappled with several issues that would redefine their new lives in Liberia. In Barbados, wage labor had defined economic life and their relationship to land. In Liberia, however, with national development at the fore, emigrants were

⁵⁸ James Spriggs Payne Annual Message to the Legislature December 11, 1865 in Elwood D. Dunn ed, *The Annual Messages of the Presidents of Liberia 1848-2010: State of the Nation Addresses to the National Legislature : from Joseph Jenkins Roberts to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 217.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

progressively drawn into a relationship with the land, with each other, and with the nation. The exigencies of nation building caused the central government to make new demands upon them. Issues regarding labor, law enforcement, education and Christianizing defined their role in the civilizing project.

As a group of skilled, educated, and professional migrants, the central Liberian government viewed the Barbadians as a valuable addition to the Republic. Their importance in agriculture was not only valued for development, but also for the image they created of civilized blacks diligently laboring. For this reason, Barbadians thrust to the forefront of the nation's image, often fell under the gaze of observers, particularly white missionaries. Many of these observers marked the labor and industrial sphere as largely the preserve of Barbadians. Their commentary often reflected on the Barbadians' institutions, industry, and character and the infusion of new material cultures. "Who in the world raises those fine yams why we never saw any like them for the many years we have been here," an observant missionary remarked in Liberia in 1867. "The Barbadians up the river," the companion responded, hastening to add more details: "So too in Krootown, maybe seen as good a tailor cutting and finishing as neat work as any man of the shears and needle ever made in any community. He too is a Barbadian!" Pointing to another of the Liberian newcomers, the friend further explained: "Go to that man's brother's shoe-shop in Monrovia and see him make as neat and nice a shoe or boot as ever came from the hand or from the last of any of his trade. He is a Barbadian!" The boot-maker was possibly Samuel Innis, who was listed on the ship manifest as practicing that profession in Barbados and was twenty-nine upon migrating to Liberia.

The friend of the missionary continued to outline his observations of the Barbadian newcomers: “Now and then we see beautiful pieces of furniture carried through our streets made of the unrivalled wood of the Liberian forests. These are made at Carysburg by a Barbadian, a first-rate cabinet maker [who] would shame a furniture warehouse in any city in the United States.” The Barbadian cabinet-maker in question was Charles Inniss, the brother of the boot-maker, Samuel Innis. Charles, who was listed as a cabinet maker in Barbados was twenty-three years on departing the island. A circular advertising his work in Liberia read: “Charles Inniss: Cabinet Maker Careysburg, near the residence of Mr. Mc.Dowell, all orders are entrusted to the care of the above named will be executed with neatness and dispatch and in the latest American and English style.”⁶⁰

Other reports noted that “[t]he small farms of the Barbadians are cultivated with great care. They keep down all the grass and noxious weeds, and thus produce from one acre twice the amount of product that is made by other farmers that we have noticed.” A letter written by Jacob Padmore, a Barbadian migrant "planter," dated May 27, 1871 noted that, “[t]he young crops look promising. We have sold about fifty thousand pounds of arrow-root and eight thousand pounds of ginger.”⁶¹ Observers unaware of the motivations of land and labor that had driven Barbadian emigration to Liberia reflected on the Barbadians’ work ethic. One worried that "they have no native apprentice boys around them, except as by chance they hire them. I think in this they are unwise. They must get the good-will of the natives, and induce them to bind their sons till of age, that

⁶⁰ Svend Holsoe Collection. University of Indiana. Bloomington.

⁶¹ *The African Repository* September (1871): 278.

they may be taught to labor and educated to read and write, that both parties may be mutually benefited." Without such a relationship "they cannot accomplish much beyond a bare subsistence by such a system of one-horse power as they now have. Besides, they need implements of agriculture and machinery, and then with their industrious habits and promptness they will be sure to succeed." These observers saw the ability to hire natives, often at a cheap rate, as the very embodiment of freedom, failing to understand the meaning of diasporic blacks who had experienced slavery working the land so as to own their own labor and have an independent source of wealth. Barbadians, unlike natives or re-captives, after contesting the notion of free labor in Barbados could not become hirelings, dependent on large market forces that determined the supply and demand of labor and the inclinations of landowners, black or white.

Observers were keen to point out the differences in social attitudes towards land cultivation between Barbadian migrants and Americo-Liberians. These kinds of observations were often used to set the Barbadian migrants apart from the African American emigrants who rather than working the land often used cheap native labor. The latter, on the one hand, became known for their disdain for agriculture while the Barbadians, on arrival in Liberia, set up an agricultural industry in Crozierville that rivaled the best in the world.⁶² The accelerated rise in the cultivation of sugar after the 1870s were largely attributed to the arrival of Barbadians. The socio-political and economic backgrounds of these two sets of immigrants ostensibly influenced their disposition towards agriculture, commerce and politics on their arrival in Liberia. In addition, the fact that slavery was abolished in Barbados in 1834 and blacks were still in

⁶² *Ibid.*

bondage in America at that time might have influenced their attitudes towards going back to a system of labor that closely resembled their experience under slavery.

As agriculturalists, Barbadians were viewed as invaluable to Liberia's development and nation-building. Their work, echoing American ideas of virtuous citizenship, was often politicized in these regards. One newspaper reported: "It was our intention when we commenced the publication of the *New Era* to visit all the agricultural districts in this county and to examine and learn what the chances are for success in this department of industry." This was a part of a broader campaign "to lecture to the citizens of the several districts on the importance of educating their children and native boys, improving themselves, and sustaining their families by an economical and judicious system of farming." After the tour of the Barbadian settlement in Crozierville commenced, the *New Era* reported that "[t]his district is made up of small farmers. ...Many of these people were first-class mechanics, some farmers, some teachers, and some small traders...The Barbadians are known to be the most intelligent and best-educated company of emigrants that ever came to Liberia, and equally industrious."⁶³

The Barbadians were noted for educating their children upon arriving in Liberia. Observers noted that "there were but few of their number that could not read, write, and cipher when they arrived in the country." Antoinette Hope Barclay, the first of the twelve of Anthony and Sarah Barclay's children who was a school mistress before migrating, continued working in education in Liberia. Observers noted that "[t]hey are more interested in the education of their children than any other community I have met with. They have one Episcopal school, taught by Mr. I. J. Thorpe, in their chapel, and one of

⁶³ *The New Era*, January 1878.

the so-called Government schools taught by Mr. Denny in a private house.” For Barbadians, education became a means of inculcating the character and qualities necessary for first class citizenship in Liberia and to ensure the kinds of social mobility the emigrants had desired in Barbados. But these qualities were also being held up as a model of behavior for the larger populace. Reports noted that the Barbadians were “strictly temperance people, and with all that they often have little quarrels among themselves, the nature of which I have never had time to understand. They seem to have been trained to promptness in the discharge of both public and private duties.” Observers often commented that “[t]hese people are of industrious habits, pious, seemingly, withal. I learn that many of them have already fine gardens coming on just about their present temporary home—the Receptacle on the road.” According to a report of the New York State Colonization Society, the Barbadians were to be seen as a lesson to future emigrants.⁶⁴

Within two years of their arrival, the Barbadians had begun to rouse approving comments which signaled the nature of their presence, impact, and shifting sociopolitical power dynamics of Liberian society. In the subsequent decades, the Barbadians continued to live up to their early reputation, but shifted concentration from agriculture to politics. Arthur Barclay, ten years of age upon leaving Barbados, would become the fifteenth president of Liberia; his brother Ernest Barclay Chief Justice; four other emigrants held the office of Secretaries of State; two others were Associate Justices; and others served in various capacities in the government as well as in other institutions. Naturally, news of their successes in Liberia circulated back to Barbados and created more interest on the

⁶⁴ The *African Repository* February (1866): 38.

island in Liberian emigration. J. T. Wiles, for example, wrote to inform the ACS in 1870 that there “are thousands of people in Barbados that would be glad to go to Liberia, but have not the means to do so.”⁶⁵

Conclusion

A comparative approach to Liberia’s nation building offers a way of understanding Barbadians' and other blacks’ experiences of post-emancipation. Over the course of centuries, blacks left various localities for an uncertain existence in what became Liberia. The Liberian nation-building project embodied a new frontier between slavery and freedom for black migrants as they attempted to live out their own ideas of freedom, citizenship, and nationhood. Much of their collective consciousness as blacks had long been articulated through a common history of enslavement, freedom, disenfranchisement, and the struggle for equality. Many assumed that from these experiences a collective vision of nationhood would be shaped within the homogenizing process of Liberia's black cosmopolitan society. However, the very act of migration and political developments within the state would put various facets of the migrants' lives into crisis.⁶⁶ While common oppression had broken down artificial boundaries of country and had allowed blacks to come together on the basis of race, the need to project a modern black nation exposed the artificiality of those prior connections. The assumptions of black homogeneity quickly evaporated as new issues of identity formed along the intersections of ethnicity, class, and religion.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Jaina C. Sanga, *Salman Rushdie's Postcolonial Metaphors: Migration, Translation, Hybridity, Blasphemy, and Globalization* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2001), 8.

Though creating some semblance of cohesion, the nation building process also produced many fault-lines that proved divisive, oftentimes leading to conflict. For blacks who had railed against white oppression before emigrating, the vindication offered in Liberia wouldn't be sweet. While life in Liberia provided liberation for many it simultaneously created subordination for others, an ironic replication of their former lives. Founded as a home for "dispersed and oppressed children of Africa and to enlighten and regenerate this benighted continent," it ignored native Liberians and created divisions between West Indians and re-captives who also sought freedom in Liberia. Notions of citizenship, color, and labor, exacerbated intra-black differences and played a role in establishing hierarchy and creating societal division.

The motivations that drove Barbadians and other migrants to emigrate were contingent on the pursuit of freedom, social mobility, and the building of a pan-African republic based on the assumption of the homogeneity of the black race. Barbadians had advocated a brand of pan-Africanism that was possibly more strategic than genuine, driven more by their socio-historical reality than deep personal convictions. The Barbadian imagination and that of other blacks about building a black republic was driven by the needs to bring blacks together under a racial identity so as to break through systems of subjugation. The duplicity of imagination and its transition into praxis revealed the differences between pan-Africanism as an intellectual objective and as a lived experience. The nation building efforts signaled the limits of pan-Africanism. In many ways, pan-Africanism proved its inability to transcend Africa as a point of reference in the diasporic imaginary. The traditional spatial framework based on Africa as the center and the diaspora as the periphery was outmoded as the Liberian nation

building process brought about new ideas about expressing African-ness. The very concept of pan-Africanism was transformed, not just culturally, but also practically. Conceived first in the west of the Atlantic as a monolith, the idea of diaspora was re-conceptualized in Africa.

The extraordinary nature of Barbadian and African American achievement in Liberia suggests that they had left the old structures of oppression behind but it did not necessarily mean the end of the caste system. As Ira Berlin showed through the relationship between salt water and Creole slaves, on the Liberian side of the Atlantic, caste had also taken a different form. The cyclical rebirths of caste in the Atlantic world turned on the evolution of rules for enforcing status as they were challenged over time. What changed in pan-Africanism with the move away from a racist society had less to do with the contours of the ideology and more to do with the basic unequal structures of the new society the migrants founded and the language they used to justify it. In Liberia, what was thought of as a diaspora consolidated under race, became a complex patchwork of interacting and dynamic agents. In a space where race no longer factored largely, race was no longer used as a means of justification, discrimination, and social contempt. Rather than rely on race, new measures were employed—color, history, class—to label people as second-class and then to engage in all the practices that were supposedly left behind. Competing interests, polarization, vying for space, and competition over resources quickly came to bear on emigrants. Dominance by the emigrant elites and other forms of authoritarianism distorted the sense of pan-African community that had motivated many of them to emigrate. In other cases, the values that were being fostered by the emigrants and by the other groups in Liberia failed to respond to the underlying

needs of all the members of the society. Indeed, the omission of some groups from the nation building process also meant their exclusion from the moral dialogue. In many cases, this resulted in not only antisocial behavior, but the diminishing of the very ethical order on which pan-Africanism had established itself.

CHAPTER VI

"This is Another National Experiment:" Barbadian Political Leadership in Liberia and the Scramble for Liberia

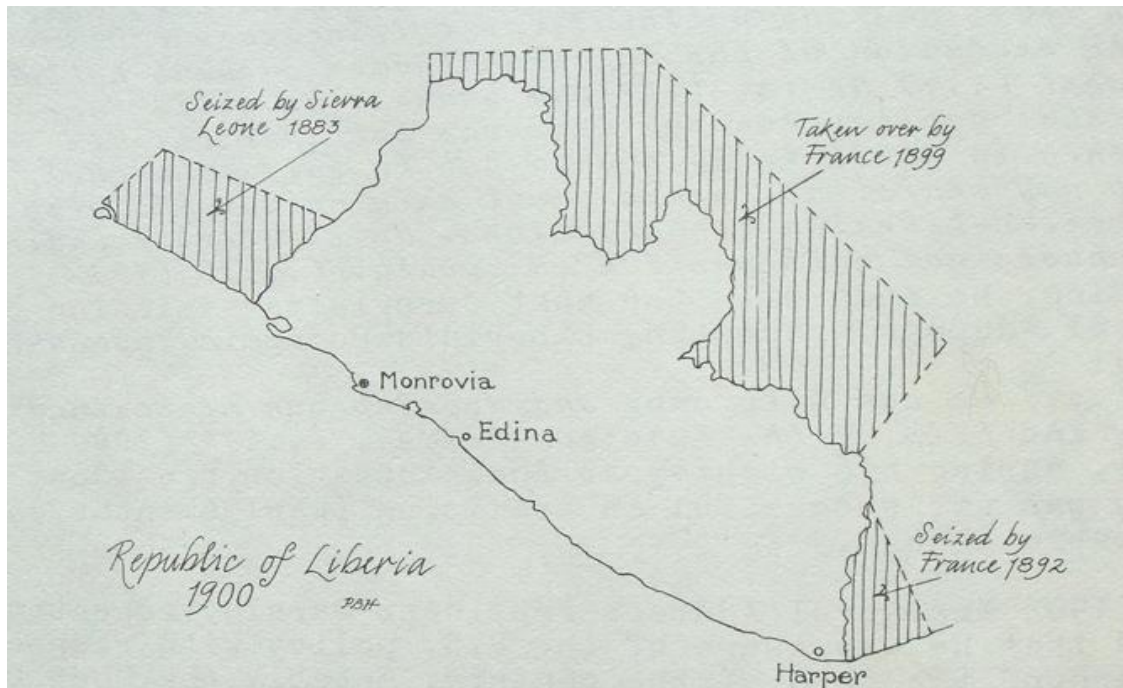


Figure 8 Liberian territories lost during the Scramble for Africa

In the years following the decline of the transatlantic slave trade, with growing budget deficits, and shrinking continental markets for industrial goods, Europeans began to re-imagine their relationship with Africa.¹ In the mid to late nineteenth century, the African continent would be viewed as a market for European trade surplus, a source of raw materials, and a site of cheap labor and capital investments.² New commodities,

¹ See George Neville Sanderson, *England, Europe & the Upper Nile, 1882-1899; A Study in the Partition of Africa* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1965), 4; Stig Förster, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Ronald Edward Robinson, *Bismarck, Europe, and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference 1884-1885 and the Onset of Partition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3.

² *Further Reports from Her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Agents Abroad Respecting the Condition of the Industrial Classes and the Purchase Power of Money in Foreign Countries* (London: Printed by Harrison & Sons, 1871), 17.

forms of labor, and mechanisms to create capital outlined the new mechanisms by which European dominance sought to operate. In 1884, the disputes that resulted from these renewed engagement with Africa led to the convening of several European nations in the Berlin Conference with a aim of settling the terms of trade, treaties, and the establishment of the African protectorates.³ In the aftermath of the conference, the delegates agreed that "in order for any nation to take possession or form a protectorate over territories on the African coast they had to inform the signatory powers of the Berlin Act and effectively occupy the space as proof of their authority to protect freedom of trade and transit."⁴

In this period of advancing European imperialism in Africa, Liberia's existence became a curious anachronism. In 1847, Liberia had become a sovereign African state. Before and following independence, like European nations, Liberia had also mediated native trade, pursued national expansion along the coast and into the hinterlands, making treaties, and laying claim to vast amounts of indigenous territory.⁵ Following the Berlin Conference, however, Liberia would be dragged unaware into a world economy dominated by outsiders and into a new international political system in which their claims to territories would come into question. Thus, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Liberia was at once at the center of both domestic and international colonization issues. Opening up its revolving door, the Scramble exposed Liberians as black colonists who feared European colonization. Efforts to address the country's position relative to European dictates opened up larger questions about the relationship between race, colonialism, imperialism, and Liberian nationalism.

³ See Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876-1912* (New York: Random House, 1991).

⁴ For acts of the Berlin Conference see Bruce Fetter, *Colonial Rule in Africa: Readings from Primary Sources* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979),

⁵ See Chapter Four.

In June 1887, in an effort to define Liberia's position relative to European imperialists, Liberia's Secretary of State, Edwin Barclay, in a letter to Charles Henry Taylor, a black US Minister in Monrovia, pointed out that "Liberia is neither a European power, nor a signatory of the decision of the Berlin Conference." Balking at Europeans' advances in Africa may have earned Liberia sympathy in the transnational black world, but it did not offer any real juridical protection from Europeans' efforts to enforce the Berlin Act. It had become particularly difficult for the Liberian central government to adhere to the "effective occupation" clause with decreasing migration of blacks from the diaspora and persisting native hostility. Seeking to find other loopholes through which Liberia's rights to territory would be legitimate, Barclay reasoned that Liberia "was not invited to assist in those deliberations and is therefore not bound by its decisions." Barclay further sought to differentiate Liberia's territorial acquisitions from European's by adding that the Berlin Conference's "decisions refer to further acquisitions of African territory by European powers and not to present possessions or future acquisitions of an African state."⁶ Evidently, for Barclay there was one set of rule for Europeans acquiring African territory and another for the same actions carried out by the black settler government in Liberia.

In addition to Europeans, Liberia had other immediate adversaries lurking just on the border. At a time when racial, cultural, and ethnic taxonomies were perhaps coalescing, the scramble re-opened gaps between the different groups of blacks in Liberia. African indigenes had been rejecting Liberia's claims to territories in the interior

⁶ USNA, Dispatches of United States Ministers at Monrovia, vol 10, diplomatic dispatch no. 12 enclosure. Barclay to Taylor, Monrovia 8, June 1887; See also Hanes Walton, James Bernard Rosser, and Robert L. Stevenson. *Liberian Politics: The Portrait by African American Diplomat J. Milton Turner* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2002).

from the very beginning of the settlement and repeatedly contested them throughout the nation's unfolding.⁷ That they too had not become Liberian citizens with independence in 1847 had only cemented their sense of alienation, non-identification, and contempt for the Liberian central government. During the "scramble," however, natives who were once subordinated by Liberian settlers now came to occupy an important bargaining position. Without their cooperation, the Liberian government would not be able to fulfill the effective occupation terms of the Berlin Act. At the same time, European speculators and merchants offered to trade and negotiate with them as well as settle their disputes with the Liberian central government. In the late nineteenth century, following the interactions of the government, Europeans, and indigenous groups, Liberia lost the Gallinhas territory in the northwest along the borders with Sierra Leone to the British and surrendered the Cavalla in the southeast to the French in Cote de Ivoire and Guinea (See Figure 1).

At the turn of the twentieth century, the clashing of competing interests surrounding Liberia found expression in internal presidential politics. In 1903, J.A. Tuning, a teacher in one of the common schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Cape Palmas pointed out that "the next important event that shall claim the undivided attention of the entire nation is the induction into the office of the newly elected president."⁸ The event in question was the inauguration of Arthur Barclay who had won the presidential bid of the True Whig Party (TWP). The extraordinary nature of the inauguration had little to do with the fact, as Tuning indicated, that Barclay had first been "the head of the financial department." Indeed, what was odd to Tuning was that the newly elected leader had "come *not* from the land of our forefather's nativity to fill that

⁷ See Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1928), 705.

⁸ *The Liberian Recorder*, December 1903.

exalted post of the executive chair."⁹ Tuning's skepticism perhaps animated the larger Liberian discussion about the rise of a leader who was not of American heritage in a country formed by and created for black Americans.

Arthur Barclay who was born in Barbados became the first non-American descended president of Liberia. Because no West Indian migrant had ever occupied the presidential position in Liberia, Barclay's election prompted much curiosity. Many like Tuning wanted to know: "Who is this man and from whence comes he to rule?" Indeed, as if speaking for the larger Liberian populous, Tuning pointed out that "this is the query going on in the circles, rounds, and claiming the attention of the most thoughtful Liberians whose interest in Liberia is most absorbing." This question of the identity and allegiance of Barclay and other West Indians in Liberia had become even more important during the scramble as British intrusion on Liberian territory increased. As the sovereignty of Liberia came into question so too did that of Barclay and other non-American descended migrants. Parodying the dilemmas of a nation caught in a critical turning point, Tuning noted: "The pessimist stands confronting the optimist in silent consternation watching with deepest interest the issue of the auspicious event." Still, Tuning remained hopeful in reaching out to his compatriots: "Fellow citizens, to you I appeal, silent your fears and cease to despond. Let us as loyal and patriotic citizens be hopeful and leave the result to God. Know you not that there is divinity which shapes the end of every nation, rough hew them as you may. As it did in David's day?"¹⁰ Barclay's election unearthed questions that had been raised in issues surrounding natives and

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ *The Liberia Recorder*, July 23, 1904.

European imperialism. What is Liberia? Who is Liberian? What does the nation and its citizens represent?

This chapter explores Liberia in its transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century and the parallel change in political leadership from African Americans to West Indians. It particularly focuses on how Barclay and other West Indian political leaders sought to modernize Liberia, negotiate European imperialism, and address the native question. The chapter looks at the background, policies, and rhetoric of Arthur Barclay and other West Indian political leaders in Liberia and reactions to their leadership during the era of the scramble to highlight the ways in which Liberia's national identity was remade during the period. The chapter also aims to look at Barbadian political leadership in Liberia in the context of a transatlantic, intergenerational post-emancipation experience.

Born out of early nineteenth century abolitionism, Liberia in the twentieth century would have to face a new period of predatory European hyper-imperialism. Critical readjustments were needed in Liberia to navigate transition from a period characterized by the ending of slave trade to a modern age of changing market demands, new loan structures, industrialization, and technological development. In these decades characterized by European colonialism, bad loans, and growing diasporic protests, Liberia's position relative to the question of race re-emerged. How leaders addressed these changes not only would determine the modern course of Liberia's national development but would also address the question of black inferiority, and define the state's nationalist and racialist goals.

With the exigencies of the period, leaders such as Barclay were often caught in multi-directional pressures. Whereas, in the early making of the nation the indigenous had been the enemy, Europeans became the new enemies at the dawn of the twentieth century. To address these early twentieth century challenges, Barbadian leaders, unlike their early African American counterparts, sought to strengthen the central government through political and social consolidation. Liberia adopted a strategy of defensive imperialism to preserve the nation's sovereignty against European imperialistic designs. Despite intentions for greater native integration into the body politic as a way to stave off encroaching Europeans, and save Liberia from colonization, these policies further abrogated the autonomy of indigenous cultural and political institutions by subordinating them to the suzerainty of the settler government. In many ways, efforts to consolidate the national government at the turn of the twentieth century only institutionalized violence against the indigenes.

Post-Independence Liberian Leadership

Early political leadership in Liberia established precedents that persisted throughout the unfolding of the nation. The mistakes and false-starts proved especially critical during the scramble for Africa. Barclay later remarked that at the time of independence Liberia had been formally recognized by the powers as a nation "*in posse* rather *in esse*;" as a possibility and potential rather than a state in actual existence. In the years following independence, the Liberian central government possessed only nominal authority, which rendered it weak. Joseph Roberts, the first president, spent his first year as a leader establishing Liberia's treaty worthiness in an attempt to garner recognition

from European countries and the United States.¹¹ Following Roberts, Stephen Allen Benson served as president for eight years. His biggest accomplishment was the annexation of Maryland country to the Republic of Liberia in 1857, bringing together the disparate colonial districts under national administration.¹² With the changing economies of the mid-nineteenth century, Liberia experienced marginal success in an earlier energetic merchant marine trade in coffee, palm oil, sugarcane, and other commodities that had peaked in the period from the late 1840s to the 1860s. However, with increasing native hostilities and the various European trade rivalries along the coast, trade in Liberian commodities later experienced severe decline.¹³

The main concern of Daniel Warner's presidency (1864 to 1868) was how the indigenous populations could be brought into the society as cooperating citizens. Throughout the period, Liberia had also been seeking to expand its territory with many expeditions into the hinterlands to establish treaties with local chiefs. Driven by these anxieties, Warner organized the first expedition led by J. K. Anderson to conclude treaties with the local chieftaincies.¹⁴ These moves created a grey area in race relations in the republic, effectively putting the black nation on similar colonizing footing as white European powers. In order to formalize the transitions from the slave trade to more legitimate forms of trade, Liberian leaders sought to establish laws for trading on the

¹¹ See Chapter Five.

¹² Jesse N. Mongrue, *Liberia: America's Footprint in Africa : Making the Cultural, Social, and Political Connections* (Bloomington, IN: Universe, Inc, 2011), 11.

¹³ See F. P. M. van der Kraaij, *The Open Door Policy of Liberia: An Economic History of Modern Liberia* (Bremen: Im Selbstverlag des Museums, 1983).

¹⁴ Benjamin Anderson, 'Narrative of a Journey to Musardu the Capital of the Western Mandingoes Together with Narrative of the expedition dispatched to Musahdu by the Liberian Government under Benjamin J.K. Anderson in 1874 (London, 1971; first edition 1870 respectively 1912).

coast that had previously been free. Warner enacted the 1864 Ports of Entry Act aimed at controlling trade between the Kru ethnic group and Europeans, particularly the British.¹⁵ This Act not only criminalized indigenous sources of livelihood but also became problematic for the ethnic groups who were not in close proximity to the six trading ports to which trade was limited.

In the 1860s, the British government began to put pressure on the government to settle the longstanding northwest boundary dispute between Liberia and neighboring Sierra Leone.¹⁶ The British had made treaties with the indigenous by offering them protection if they stopped the slave trade.¹⁷ The natives could choose either to go under the control of the Liberian central government or the British. However, antagonistic relationships between the Liberian government and coastal ethnic groups created a space for them to be more receptive to Europeans. Following Warner, James Spriggs Payne served as president for two years from 1868 to 1870 and again from 1876 to 1878.¹⁸ While important administrative policies were effected in these early periods, power resided with the small Americo-Liberian merchant class who jealously protected their own interests rather than those of the state. According to Amos Sawyer: "Not only was the president not always the most influential individual in the political process, but even

¹⁵ See Robert Kappel, Werner Korte, and R. Friedegund Mascher, *Liberia: Underdevelopment and Political Rule in a Peripheral Society* (Hamburg: Institut für Afrika-Kunde, 1986), 151.

¹⁶ Johann Büttikofer, Henk Dop, and Phillip T. Robinson, *Travel Sketches from Liberia: Johann Büttikofer's 19th Century Rainforest Explorations in West Africa : Annotated English Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

¹⁷ Captain L. Wildman, Minutes of Evidence taken Before the Select Committee on Africa (Western Coast). House of Commons Papers, Volume 5, British Parliament. May 3, 1865.

¹⁸ See Elwood Dunn and Svend E. Holsoe, *Historical Dictionary of Liberia*. Metuchen (N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1985).

when such a person was the president, he was constrained in the exercise of authority."¹⁹ Because of the self-interest of the merchant group, attention was not paid to how policies affected the indigenous population. In many cases, they were blatantly ignored. As a result, in the 1870s, many of the Grebo chiefdoms, a subgroup of the Kru ethnicity, encouraged by foreign traders, united to form a "kingdom" in a part of Maryland County and declared their independence from Liberia, and resumed trading on their own behalf with passing foreign ships. When war followed, the Liberian central government was almost overrun by the Grebos and had to be aided by an American war ship. This inability to control its own population and defend itself against domestic upstarts made it particularly vulnerable to European machinations.

The ascendancy of the True Whig Party (TWP), formed by a group of recently migrated farmers in 1869 marked the decline of early Americo-Liberian Republican leadership.²⁰ According to Carl Burrowes, the "TWP comprised new personalities with new interests."²¹ With the decline of the economy under the Republicans and the backing of important leaders such as Blyden, many Liberians supported the leadership of Edwin J. Roye who became the fifth president. One of the wealthiest Liberians, Roye was not popular. Unlike the majority of his predecessors he was of a dark complexion.²² His presidency, along with the rise of the TWP, thus represented a direct affront to the established racial, cultural, legal, and political norms. In an effort to consolidate power,

¹⁹ See Amos Sawyer, *Beyond Plunder: Toward Democratic Governance in Liberia* (Boulder: L. Rienner Publishers, 2005); Amos Sawyer, *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia: Tragedy and Challenge* (San Francisco, Calif: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1992).

²⁰ Carl Patrick Burrowes, *Power and Press Freedom in Liberia, 1830-1970: The Impact of Globalization and Civil Society on Media-Government Relations* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004), 88.

²¹ Ibid.

²² See J. Gus Liebenow, *Liberia; The Evolution of Privilege* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969).

Roye in violation of the constitution, extended voting rights to the property-less, including African re-captives, and to a number of African ethnic groups.²³ He also began a program of reconstruction in Liberia with the intent of building new roads and schools. With these efforts and from the vantage point of the nation state, blacks such as Roye and the Liberian nation state reentered the new system of capital and its geopolitical world. In an effort to secure funds for his projects, Roye sailed to London where, in 1871, he hoped to negotiate bank loans. The results proved ruinous. The terms of the loans were severe, among other things, carrying interest rates in excess of seven percent.²⁴ Roye hastily agreed to these terms without consulting the legislature. It is alleged that before Roye had even returned from London, approximately one hundred thousand dollars of the loan had been spent. Speculations included whether the subtracted amount was interest on the loan or money owed to Roye by the Liberian state.²⁵ Accusations of embezzlement resulted in widespread resentment and a dramatic loss of political capital. Roye further raised the chagrin of Liberians when he tried to extend the two-year term of office for the president.

Roye was deposed from office in October 1871 and summoned to stand trial. In an attempt to escape trial, Roye tried to swim to an English ship in the Monrovia harbor but drowned.²⁶ But even after his death, the loan from Britain continued to haunt Liberians.²⁷ In their efforts to meet payments on the loans, the country was plunged

²³ Burrowes, *Power and Press Freedom in Liberia*, 86-87.

²⁴ Nathaniel C. Moak, and John T. Cook, *Reports of Cases Decided by the English Courts [1870-1883]: With Notes and References to Kindred Cases and Authorities* (Albany, N.Y.: W. Gould & Son, 1873), 45.

²⁵ See Frederick Starr, *Liberia: Description, History, Problems* (Chicago: s.n, 1913), 199.

²⁶ *The African Repository* July (1872): 220-1; *African Times* (London), May 23, 1872.

²⁷ *The African Times*, March 23, 1872.

further into debt and into greater economic dependency. Pushing the country into a cycle of debt, the loan sabotaged Liberia's efforts to negotiate other loans, and attract needed investments. In 1874, interest on the three-year term loan came due. As the country bargained with its creditors over the legality of the loan, its credit status continued to deteriorate. With no legal or economic loopholes to escape this commitment, Liberia lost credibility in diplomatic and economic negotiations, a move that furthered the stereotype that blacks could not govern themselves.

Hilary R. W. Johnson became the first Liberian-born president, serving from 1884 to 1892. In an effort to renegotiate and revise the terms of the loan, Johnson was pushed to settle the boundary dispute with the British in the Gallinhas.²⁸ Edward Blyden who was then Secretary of State and Interior Secretary was sent to negotiate with the British government.²⁹ Blyden, who had lived in Sierra Leone for a number of years, successfully negotiated and signed the Havelock-Blyden Treaty with Arthur Havelock who had become governor of Sierra Leone in 1880, a treaty which demarcated the boundaries between Liberia and Sierra Leone and allowed the British to establish a rubber syndicate on those territories.³⁰ This would bring in much needed royalties to the Liberian government. With the terms of the contract stipulating that the authorization of the Rubber Company was needed for other forms of rubber trade, Liberia was again at the mercy of outside forces with little power to influence their growth and development. The treaty, however, was opposed by Americo-Liberians whom viewed Blyden as pro-British.

²⁸ Burrowes, *Modernization and the Decline of Press Freedom*, 94.

²⁹ Blyden to Coppinger, January 20, 1882, Papers of the American Colonization Society. Vol. 20.

³⁰ See *Liberia*, vol. 19 (27): 53 in Hollis Ralph Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912* (London: Oxford U.P., 1967).

These kinds of issues ultimately added to the complexity of growing West Indian political power and leadership in Liberia.³¹ Nonetheless, Americo-Liberians continued to rule until the turn of the century. Joseph James Cheeseman who died in office in 1898 was replaced by William David Coleman who took office with broad ideas of opening up the interior. He established Liberian influence in the interior northwest of the Saint Paul River and conducted an unsuccessful expedition into Gola territory with the intent to subdue the Gola ethnic group and their allies.

The established historical precedents of these early leaders haunted Liberia in a variety of ways. Indigenous hostility meant an inability to access resources, territory, and people needed to stave off continued European intrusion. Unfair loan agreements worsened inequalities that further contributed to Liberia's underdevelopment. At the end of the nineteenth century, Liberia found itself deeply entrenched in a world dominated by European outsiders. How leaders like Barclay addressed these problems would become an index of Liberia's modernization, civilization, and black progress.

Arthur Barclay and Transatlantic Post-emancipation

Arthur Barclay was born in Bridgetown, Barbados on July 31, 1854, the tenth of the twelve children of Anthony and Sarah Barclay.³² The West Indies had been ground zero for the generation of leaders who emerged in Liberia at the turn of the century. While this West Indian heritage served Barclay at different points in his life, it also hindered him in many ways. It was the assumed intelligence and industriousness of West

³¹ Frank Sherman, *Liberia: The Land, Its People, History and Culture* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: New Africa Press, 2011), 205.

³² *The Literary Companion*, Monrovia, Liberia, July 31, 1938.

Indians that had driven the ACS to support their move to emigrate from Barbados 1865. During the election of 1903, this background at times became a liability. While some raised questions about his loyalty to Liberia in light of his "English" heritage, others saw his background and upbringing as an asset.

In 1894, in attempt to contextualize and silence Barclay's critics, Alexander Crummell had noted that Barclay was "one of the youngest members of a more than ordinary family, for no one could see and converse with the parents and with their sons and daughters, eleven in all, without being struck with both their character and their intelligence."³³ Arthur Barclay's father, Anthony, had led the charge for migrating. Though a young man, Barclay must have learnt about the group's mission: "A noble desire of assisting to elevate their fatherland, or building up a nationality, without which they consider their race could never attain its proper position among the family of nations."³⁴ His family upbringing proved critical.

Crummell had effusive praise for Arthur Barclay's intellectual abilities and the Barclay's gene pool. In a nation concerned about appearance of modernity, the Barclay family was lauded for their moral fiber. This historical biography was also used to qualify Barclay's candidacy. In describing the family background and its belief system, Crummell stressed: "We put the word character first, for while indeed well freighted with knowledge, acquirements, and culture, they presented the unusual peculiarity of being heavy weighted with the moral excellence as with the intelligent brightness of right-

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *The African Repository* December (1864): 19

minded people."³⁵ As a group, Crummell perceived the Barbadians "at once to be a group of thoughtful, self-restrained, upright and orderly people, and their life and character during their long residence in Liberia have fulfilled the bright promise of their first coming."³⁶ He credited the success of the Barclay clan to the role played by the matriarch, Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay, noting "such was the strength of the motherhood in the bereaved widow that his children, under her guidance and direction, have passed from youth into manhood and womanhood, honorable in character and useful and beneficent in life and conduct. They have risen, without any exceptions, to high positions in church and state, as teachers, merchants, lay readers, vestrymen, and statesmen."³⁷ With this background, Crummell had anticipated great things from the leadership of Arthur Barclay.

Arthur Barclay received his education in the schools of Monrovia. Many of his contemporaries recorded that his oldest sister, Antoinette Barclay became his first tutor.³⁸ Following this early education, Barclay reportedly sold salt on the streets of Monrovia before entering the preparatory Department of Liberia College.³⁹ He was noted as holding a high position in his classes, both in languages and mathematics. Having completed his courses, he matriculated into Liberia College and graduated with a Bachelor in Arts in the class of 1873. This led Crummell to conclude that this "coupled with his manifest uprightness, have made him a necessary factor in the public affairs of the young

³⁵ *The Liberian*, February 4, 1894.

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, *The Life of Malvina Barclay*, "Barclay Women in Liberia – Two Generations: A Biographical Dictionary, The Archives of the University of Liberia.

³⁹ *The Crozierville Observer*, June 5, 1930.

nation."⁴⁰ But as a minority group in Liberia, Barbadians rise to office required more than educational training. It was also associated with extensive civil service and administrative experience. Barclay's own civil service positions was seen as a qualifying factor in his presidential bid. In the years following his time at Liberia College, Barclay held several government positions and as Crummell noted, he always acquitted himself with "intelligence and honor."⁴¹ He was appointed Principal of the Preparatory Department of Liberia College in 1877, a position he held for a number of years and served as Professor, Member of the Board of Trustees, and sometimes Acting President of the College in later years. During vacations, Barclay served as chief clerk of the House of Representative. He was called to the Bar of Monsterrado County in 1877 and after practicing law for three years attained the rank of counselor of the Supreme Court.

Barclay's political career began to take shape when he served as the private secretary to J.J. Roberts, the first president of the Republic. In 1883, Alfred F. Russell who had been the tenth president, appointed him as the second judge of the Court of Quarter Sessions and Common Pleas of Monsterrado County. He was appointed as sub-treasurer of Monsterrado County by R.W. Johnson in 1885, a post he held for five years. During the administration of President J.J. Cheeseman, Barclay was elected to the cabinet as Post-Master General and afterwards became Secretary of State. He also served on several diplomatic missions and was sent as a commissioner to the World's Fair at Chicago in 1897. Four years later, through his association with chief Justice Z.B. Roberts and Senator A.B. King, Barclay went on diplomatic missions to England and France.

⁴⁰ *The Liberian*, February 4, 1894

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

While in London, he arranged with the Council of Foreign Bondholders for the amortization of the 1870 loan contracted by President E.J. Roye, which had been in default for over twenty years. Upon the death of H.A. Williams in 1896, Barclay was appointed Secretary of the Treasury, a position he held continuously until his election to the presidency in May 1903. In addition to his extensive civil service experience, Barclay served as the Chairman of the True Whig Party. By 1903, he had civil service experience, practical knowledge of the functions of government and was the driver of the machinery of the TWP.⁴²

Other West Indians also occupied important political positions earning the Barbadians a reputation for service in education, journalism, and governmental service. Along with Arthur Barclay, Ernest Barclay, Edwin Barclay, Louis Arthur Grimes, and Joseph Rudolph Grimes served as Secretaries of State while James T. Wiles became Secretary of the Treasury. Both Joseph and Louis Arthur Grimes, became Attorney Generals while Wiles was named the first Postmaster General of Liberia. George S. Padmore served as the Secretary of War and the Secretary of Education as did Edwin Barclay. Richard N. Holder was appointed Secretary of the Interior. Edwin Barclay became Secretary of National Public Health Services while James Milton Weeks became a Director of the National Planning Agency. Everett Jonathon Goodridge served in the capacity of Administrative Assistant to the President. The Barbadians who served in the judiciary included, Louis Arthur Grimes who was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Richard S. Wiles became Speaker of the House of Representatives. The first Liberian President of the University of Liberia was Dr. Rocheforte L. Weeks. Colonel James B.

⁴² Swartz, *West African Culture Dynamics*, 572.

Padmore brought the Gola War in Crozierville to an end and George S. Padmore, who twice fought in the Cape Palmas wars, resigning in 1910 as Secretary of War to head a military mission into the hinterlands.

Though Barbadians had served in these various capacities, none had risen to president. In a country dominated by Americo-Liberians, the implications of another group attaining power was still an issue at the turn of the twentieth century. This had nothing to do with legalities. As Tuning pointed out, "there is no provision in our constitution prohibiting any but a natural born from aspiring to that position." All blacks who were legally citizens of the Republic could qualify as president. Yet, Barclay's presidential inauguration was historic, because as Tuning observed, "we are for the first time trying this experiment of an English-born subject." That a migrant of British heritage became the head of a nation established by America was evidently problematic. Tuning, in pointing out the geopolitical implications, noted that "the great American nation, the prototype of our constitution, would quake with fear to the risk." The new president with his West Indian and British orientation not only represented a changing of the political guard in Liberia but also a subversion of the established Americo-Liberian power structure.

Evidently, the migrants had yet to coalesce under a unified Liberian identity. Barclay had to live down the charge of not qualifying as a "true son of the soil," and was denounced as a black Englishman likely to betray the country to the British.⁴³ British imperialistic aggression towards Liberia might have served to make Tuning and others suspicious of the changing political leadership. To many, such as Tuning, Barclay's

⁴³ B. K., Swartz and Raymond E. Dumett, *West African Culture Dynamics: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives* (The Hague: Mouton, 1980), 572.

impending presidency depended on the track record of the West Indians who had risen to some of the highest levels of political leadership in Liberia. As Tuning noted, "we fondly hope that the outcome will not be a duplicate of that Honorable Wiles who enjoyed the full confidence of the nation in many of our important positions of trust, but in the end forsook us and fled to climates more congenial." J.T. Wiles, one of the 1865 Barbadian migrants, chose to return to Barbados in the late nineteenth century, dying there in 1897. Tuning was also guarded because of "the good old Dr. [Blyden] left us with the fifth chapter of Amos to read, after sharing our best gifts and blessings." Blyden who had migrated from the Caribbean Island of St. Thomas had served in various political capacities in Liberia, but had left the country lamenting like that "all that will remain will be worthless as a bit of animal seized back from the predator." He settled in Sierra Leone after he was nearly tarred and feathered for allegedly fornicating with the wife of President Roye.

Tuning saw these changes as "another national experiment" but insisted that Liberians were hopeful but would remain prayerful and watchful. Constantly watchful!"⁴⁴ In spite of his initial skepticism, Tuning likened Barclay's ascendancy to the second coming, a tradition within pan-Africanism which imbued leadership with a sense of providence and the prophetic fulfillment of national destiny. Tuning may also have been echoing a general skepticism, yet he sought to assuage these concerns by pointing to Barclay's background. In an address on the eve of Barclay's inauguration, he waxed poetic about the background of the leader: "The prophetic language which then tingled our fathers' ear quite eight years before young Barclay was born, and dangled a crowning

⁴⁴ Ibid.

laughing kid upon his mother's knees and heard the melodious strains of the nursery song, 'You are born to be the Negro ruler,' was the assertion made."⁴⁵ Given this prophetic view of Barclay's presidency, Tuning mused: "Is this another reason why we should not doubt and despair? Should we not hope to see great things brought out for the salvation of our race in this child of promise, this son of providence? Does not God move in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform? Those fearful clouds we so much dread; Oft showers blessings on our head."⁴⁶ Tuning created an image of a leader, who like Liberia had experienced great odds but had prevailed. Through his background and migration experiences, Barclay became a metaphor of the Liberian nation.

From all accounts, Barclay's rise had confirmed the necessity for West Indian and diasporic migration to Liberia. In keeping with the popular millenarian pan-African belief, Ethiopia had indeed stretched forth her hands. Barbadians had responded by migrating to Liberia, bringing the man who would become the nation's fifteenth president. Tuning sought to bring out the meaning of Barclay's election through his migration experience: "Old man Barclay immigrated with a number of his countrymen and family to Liberia in May 1865. And again saw the familiar faces of Payne, Russell, and Roberts on these shores," all presidents of Liberia who had preceded Barclay.⁴⁷ In describing Anthony Barclay's reaction upon arriving in Liberia, the author noted: "His

⁴⁵ *The Liberia Recorder*, July 23, 1903.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

heart leaped within with indescribable joy as he placed young Barclay on these sunny shores."⁴⁸

Despite their joy, the conditions under which they landed were less than ideal as they were "[h]ard pressed with hunger and woes but destined to rule. The *Brig Cora* landed here in the administration of President Warner in the rainy month of May an outlay of ten thousand dollars to the Colonization Society rendering them unable to provide them with sufficient food and comfort." As if cautioning the newly elected president as well as other Barbadians to remember their initial experiences, the author noted that it was the goodness of the Liberian settlers that helped: "President Warner appealed to the charity and liberality of the citizens to come to the aid of these destitute emigrants many of us contributed generously. He visited Palmas and brought their condition before the citizens generally with his old accustomed speech, 'If I can do no good, I will do no harm.'" Tuning recorded that J.T. Dimery who was Warner's private secretary said: "Now there is an opportunity to do good, if you scatter your seed in this direction, it may return to you a hundred fold. Palmas boldly came to their relief in aiding them, she little knew that she was aiding her future president."⁴⁹ The early seeds sown by the Americo-Liberians had blossomed in the form of West Indian leadership and service to Liberia. The writer concluded by asking, "[c]an Barclay forget all this and rashly cut from the body the hand that thus administered to his wants and comforts? Brutus may

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid

slay Caesar, but will he like Judas betray Liberia?"⁵⁰ Would Barclay forget the goodness of Liberia by betraying the nation to the British?

While Barclay tried to heed these warnings, his efforts to develop Liberia in many ways confirmed Americo-Liberians' anti-West Indian views. In his efforts to modernize Liberia, he felt the need to bring in outside help. He turned to the British Proconsul Harry Johnston. In these instances, European officials did not categorize him as Americo-Liberian. Consul Braithwaite Wallis, the key British official in Liberia, identified Barclay as a "West Indian not a Liberian," who still maintained his distinct Barbadian brogue.⁵¹ Henry Wilson has argued that Barclay, "once divested of Americo-Liberian status, with all its negative connotations, he could be recognized by Europeans as a statesman of goodwill and talent." He believed that Barclay was credited with transcending the "very American preoccupation with the politics of place, displaying real sympathy with native aspirations, and above all, being free from the 'blancophobia' thought to be characteristic of Americo-Liberians."⁵²

The twentieth century brought about experiences of nationhood to which the migrants had previously aspired. Whereas Barbadians aspired to leadership in Barbados, they could not have achieved those desires there. As people who had left Barbados under the duress of nineteenth century post-emancipation, migration to Liberia fostered the fulfillment of earlier aspirations. Achievements in Liberia thus became a culmination of previous Barbados post-emancipation aspirations. But though the twentieth century

⁵⁰ *The Liberia Recorder*, January 4, 1904.

⁵¹ Wallis to Foreign Office, February 4, 1908 - 367/113/7296

⁵² Henry Wilson in B. K., Swartz and Raymond E. Dumett eds, *West African Culture Dynamics*, 569.

proved rewarding, it also became challenging in a different set of ways. In Liberia, the specter of West Indian-ness still hung over Barbadians. Spatial and temporal transformations for the Barbadians also meant changes in understandings of post-emancipation. Given that the immigrants had contributed to the efforts to build up a black republic, the next generation would turn their attention to maintaining the sovereignty and independence of the nation. In seeking to address the challenges of the new era, they would again have to confront Western hegemony as they had in Barbados.



Figure 9 Photograph of Arthur Barclay⁵³

Arthur Barclay and Changing Liberian Presidential Policies

⁵³ Harry Hamilton Johnston, and O. Stapf. *Liberia* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1906), 337.

Barclay was inaugurated as the fifteenth president of Liberia in January 1904. He was the first non-Americo-Liberian to attain the office. As the first Barbadian elected president, Barclay ushered in a new era in Liberia not only in terms of identity but also through policies he implemented. Barclay was conscious of the demands of the new times, telling Liberians that it was essential to keep their fingers on the pulse of international public opinion. In the past, Liberians connections to Europeans and the outside world had been through church and missionaries, but this was a "material age," one in which the previous "philanthropic wave which moved and influenced the European world for over half a century seems for the present to have almost entirely ebbed."⁵⁴

At the beginning of his term, Barclay's challenges included an economic depression driven by overwhelming debt obligations and an empty treasury. Through the short-sighted policies of previous administrations, the country was almost bankrupt. Liberia's sovereignty hung in the balance with its independence tied to European financial institutions. In 1898, in his capacity as Secretary of the Treasury, Barclay had finally succeeded in reaching a settlement with British creditors, adjusting the principal on the loan contracted during the Roye presidency that had been in default for twenty years. But there were deeper implications to this kind of economic dependence. Impatient for expansion, European nations were looking for any pretext to annex and colonize portions of the republic. This left Liberia vulnerable. Negotiations for trade, loan or investment could only be made if Liberia offered concessions in exchange for protection against European colonialism, a move that created a cycle of debt and dependency.

⁵⁴ Swartz, *West African Culture Dynamics*, 565.

In an effort to address these issues, Barclay sought to strengthen the national government. For more than half of a century, the constitution of Liberia had limited the presidential terms to two years, rendering the position largely ineffectual. That President Roye in his efforts to change the term of the president had met his death did not deter Barclay. To address the country's economic sluggishness, debt, and colonial crisis, the Liberian government and the office of the presidency, in particular, had to become more influential in order to command and direct the country's available resources. Barclay sought and received legislative approval to extend the term of president from two to four years and thus was able to serve from 1904-1912. With increased national power Liberians started to coalesce around the political leaders attached to the TWP within whom power was concentrated and to move away from the Republican Party that had been formed by the African American settlers. Under the TWP, Liberia would become essentially a one-party state until the coup in 1980.⁵⁵

For Barclay, the 1864 Port of Entry Act was the source of Liberia's financial and national distress. The Act had been driven in part by Europeans' refusal to pay custom duties. In particular, British merchants had declined to pay import and export duties when trading with the natives. In response, the government had closed parts of the country to European trading, limiting it to only six areas along the coast which the central government controlled. Though it was meant to curtail trade and to show the force of Liberian sovereignty, the Port of Entry Act was perceived by many, including the indigenous whose trade and livelihood were being curtailed, as a move to merely protect the economic interests of the Americo-Liberian elite. This resulted in war between the

⁵⁵ Teah Wulah, *Back to Africa: A Liberian Tragedy* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2009), 436.

coastal Kru ethnic group and the Liberian government with interventions from the British. The cost to fund expeditions to put down these kinds of rebellions further exhausted the nation's diminishing treasury.

In 1904, the national debt stood at \$800,000, including the \$480,000 adjusted 1871 loan principal plus interest. In desperation, Barclay's government contracted a half million dollar loan arrangement with Sir Harry Johnston's Liberian Development Company. To further remedy these problems, Barclay sought the repeal of the Port of Entry Act and made efforts to usher in policies that would bring in more trade and tax revenue to the government.⁵⁶ The repeal of this act may have also been done to consolidate the TWP and as a show of force to the Republican party. Nonetheless, with its repeal, Barclay's era became known as the era of the "Open Door Policy" in Liberia.⁵⁷ Barclay searched for other options to address the growing economic issues and debt. He explored complicated currency regulations, swapping procurement orders for custom revenues. In previous administrations, this had only enriched the foreign merchants and devalued the paper currency. In 1910, in an effort to raise revenue, Barclay imposed a one dollar per hut tax on the indigenous population. This was similar to hut taxes introduced by the British in other parts of Africa and in post-emancipation West Indies. As the primary source of revenue, this put great stress on the indigenous population and provoked the Grebo-Kru uprising. This unrest provided more evidence of the multi-tiered tensions that Liberian leaders had to navigate. Peace returned to the Cape Palmas area

⁵⁶ Kraaij, *The Open Door Policy*, 150-190.

⁵⁷ United States Department of State, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States with the Annual message of the president of the transmitted to Congress, December 6, 1910.

after the "USS Birmingham" forced an end to hostilities and assisted the government in reaching a negotiated settlement with the Grebo leadership.⁵⁸

These issues further aggravated the border issues with Britain. Were Liberia to be to maintain its sovereignty, leaders would have to effectively protect its borders and contain its citizens. In 1907, in a treaty with the French, it was agreed that a frontier force was needed to protect the established boundaries between Liberia and the French territories of Guinea and the Ivory Coast. Inability to establish this force would lead to a claim by the French to place their own forces on Liberian territories. The British also requested a trained police force. Barclay was approached by Major MacKay Cadell, who had served in the South African War, to be the head of the Frontier Force. Cadell was employed to create a force that would comprise of established army personnel in Sierra Leone and Liberian indigenes. Many speculated about the "English" makeup of the force and the French even described it as "a British Army of occupation."⁵⁹ With Cadell's increasing power in Liberia, many sought to get rid of him. Liberia almost lost her sovereignty when Cadell refused to resign, instead engineering a coup that almost succeeded.

Faced with British imperialism, Barclay turned to the United States for help, dispatching a diplomatic mission for the purpose of "soliciting aid in negotiating arbitration treaties and securing the integrity of the Republic, and ascertaining the

⁵⁸ See Jeremy I. Levitt, *The Evolution of Deadly Conflict in Liberia: From 'paternalitarianism' to State Collapse* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 63.

⁵⁹ Starr, *Liberia*, 122.

possibility of floating a new loan."⁶⁰ In asking for the US to essentially extend a protectorate over Liberia, Barclay's bid for assistance to sustain Liberia's independence further complicated the relationship between the two nations and the country's quest for respectability. Barclay wrote to the president of the United States: "It is necessary to argue that the duty of the United States towards the unfortunate victims of the slave-trade was not completed by landing them upon the shore of Africa, and that our nation rest under the highest obligation to assist them, so far as they need assistance, toward the maintenance of free, orderly and prosperous civil society."⁶¹ Barclay hoped that by establishing a relationship with the US he would not only get help in the border disputes with Europeans but also be able to take advantage of the rich resources in the hinterland. President Taft proved surprisingly sympathetic, sending a three-man delegation to Liberia "to investigate the interests of the United States and its citizens in the Republic of Liberia."⁶² The American Commission arrived in Liberia in 1909. It reported to the American Congress in 1910 with an accompanying memoranda going to President Taft.

The commission made six recommendations to the Liberian government. In light of the historical relationship between the two countries, it recommended that the US extend aid to Liberia promptly. In settling the boundary dispute with the British, and French, the US would help to ensure the country's continued sovereignty. The Commission further called for the establishment of a customs department, using the funds collected to pay off its debt, an initiative similar to "dollar diplomacy" in the Caribbean.

⁶⁰ Elwood Dunn, *The Annual Messages of the Presidents of Liberia 1848-2010: State of the Nation Addresses to the National Legislature : from Joseph Jenkins Roberts to Ellen Johnson Sirleaf* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 450.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Wulah, *Back to Africa*, 436.

It also called for to the US to assist Liberia in overhauling its internal finances as well as lend tactical support in establishing Liberia's own Frontier Police Force. It believed that the largest aid that could be rendered Liberia was the establishment of scientific research. This kind of aid would improve Liberia's position in the world, generate interest in agricultural production, help with disease inoculation, and further open up the hinterlands to productive enterprises. The Commission saw the need for the establishment of a naval coaling station. Mindful of America's diplomatic relationship with Europe, Congress, however, refused to interfere in the question of sovereignty as it related to encroaching Europeans.

The assistance the US rendered Liberia was cosmetic at best. Unlike Europeans, US assistance was tinged with racism. "The constitutional government by negroes was an experiment," declared the US Secretary of State, Francis Bacon, "one which so far had failed but which should not be allowed to collapse altogether." Bacon pointed out that, "with a little help and tutoring we might help them work out their own salvation." In doing so, he concluded that "once secure to these countries regular income, free them from the pressure of foreign debt, and establish them on a sound financial basis, and there was good hope that they might succeed in governing themselves."⁶³

Ultimately, the relationship would profit the US more than it would Liberia's efforts towards robust growth, development, and independence. The US eventually provided an agricultural director, which became a part of the early beginnings of the

⁶³ Henry Wilson in B. K., Swartz and Raymond E. Dumett eds, *West African Culture Dynamics*, 571.

establishment of the Harvey Firestone rubber corporation.⁶⁴ The US further extended military support by sending officers to establish a Frontier Force, which became the machinery that enforced coercive labor tactics on Firestone plantations.⁶⁵ It was further agreed that the US, Britain, France, and Germany would altogether consolidate and liquidate Liberia's debt with a guarantee that they would have joint control over the country's custom's department. Liberia's development continued to hinge on the signing of these kinds of unequal contracts. In one instance, France proposed to take over all of Liberia's public debt in exchange for establishing a protectorate over the country. When Liberia refused, France claimed jurisdiction over an area of ninety miles of coastline, east of Cape Palmas, as well as other areas surrounding Cape Mount and Grand Bassa.⁶⁶

Barclay sought other ways to modernize the country, by developing its agriculture-dependent economy. In the efforts to transition from the earlier nineteenth century economic systems, Liberia struggled even more at the dawn of the twentieth century as it entered the uneven global market economy. In countries like Liberia, agriculture was needed to reduce the costs of imports, service debt, and as a source of revenue. As a distorted and dependent economy, Liberia's dependence on agriculture and the production of primary materials for the developed world re-enforced the gap between itself and developed economies. As a country tied to the production of primary products, Liberia came to reflect the widening gap between Africa and the west and black and white economic inequalities.

⁶⁴ See James Capers Young, *Liberia Rediscovered*. Garden City (N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co, 1934).

⁶⁵ *The Firestone Liberian Rubber Scheme: Mr. Harvey S. Firestone, Jnr, in London* (S.I: s.n, 1926), 3.

⁶⁶ Kraaij, *The Open Door Policy*, 27.

At the very core of Liberia's dilemmas at the turn of the century were the issues of race, civilization, and modernity, problems that had defined the challenges of post-emancipation for Afro-Barbadians. Liberia had always been represented as a primitive black utopia, unable to modernize, and prone to only mimic the ways of Europeans. African Americans watching from afar as the country slid into bankruptcy and possible annexation, noted, "Liberia is a mighty lens through which the world is looking at the Negro race."⁶⁷ Liberians too recognized their growing sense of importance in the black world and that their continued independence mattered far beyond the disputed territorial boundaries of the small Republic. Toiling to finalize territorial negotiations with both British and French officials while simultaneously struggling to repay financial loans to the British bank, Barclay reminded the legislature exactly what was at stake. "It is a fact," he noted in 1905, that "we do not represent ourselves alone, in this national experiment. Consider what our success or failure will mean for the race."⁶⁸

One columnist in the *Crozierville Observer*, likely a Barbadian, noted: "There have been arguments advanced by loyal Liberians that high officials of government should not be severely criticized by citizens because the eyes of the outside world are set upon her and if the men in high positions are found incompetent either from dishonesty, inefficiency, or lack of patriotism the whole citizenry will be considered dishonest, disloyal, inefficient, and a set of grafters."⁶⁹ He further noted that "[t]hese citizens, loyal to individuals rather than to the constituted authority of the state, contend that the white

⁶⁷ Henry Wilson in B. K., Swartz and Raymond E. Dumett eds, *West African Culture Dynamics*, 571.

⁶⁸ Arthur Barclay, "Message of the President of Liberia Communicated to the First Session of the Thirteenth Legislature," December 14, 1905,"Despatches from United States Ministers to Liberia, 1863-1906, Volume 14, Roll T-14. The National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁶⁹ *The Crozierville Observer*, February 1930.

world will welcome any such proof of dishonesty, inefficiency, or disloyalty on the part of high officials of the only Negro Republic in the world, to substantiate their argument that the Negro is incompetent of self-government."⁷⁰ Given that Liberia was one of two self-governed black sovereignties in Africa, the other being Ethiopia, he believed that Liberia served as a symbol of black progress.⁷¹ Liberia existed under the gaze of both the broader black and white worlds. Turn-of -the-century Liberians felt the demise of Liberia would be detrimental not only to its inhabitants, but also to black people throughout the Atlantic World. Still labeled as an experiment, a failed Liberia would only reinforce the prevailing idea among Europeans and white Americans that blacks were inherently inferior and incapable of self-government.

In a letter to Harry Johnson, Arthur Barclay, who had assumed the presidency one year earlier, reminded him of a cultural adage: "An African proverb put into the Sierra Leone patois, says, 'Poor man cant vex'." To Barclay, "Liberia represents the poor man among the nations. She must not get veced [*sic*]. Patience and perseverance must be the watchword of her policy, internal as well as external."⁷² Barclay was keenly aware of Liberia's place among modern nations, but he also knew how important the globalized world had become to Liberia's survival. As he also told the Liberian Legislature: "We need external help to develop Liberia."⁷³ Barclay's remarks embodied the turn of the century tensions surrounding the internal native question, development, modernity, and

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Laura Elizabeth West, "The Negro Experiment": Black Modernity and Liberia, 1883-1910 (Thesis: Virginia Polytechnic University, April 25, 2012), 1.

⁷² Arthur Barclay, Letter to Sir Harry H. Johnson, August 26, 1905. Box 3, Liberian Government Archives I, Holsoe Collection.

⁷³ Dunn, *Liberia Presidential Papers*, 450.

the country's desire for the acceptance by developed nations.

The racialized nature of power structures and dynamics operating to dominate the globalized community, however, worked to restrict Liberians and the nation state in many ways. This was the crux of Liberians' dilemma. They sought to use the success of the nation to prove that blacks were not at odds with ideas of civilization, modernity, and progress that seemingly were the preserve of white nations. As Paul Gilroy suggested, Liberians desired to transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and particularity.⁷⁴ As much as this was a story of changing Liberian leadership and a larger global sphere where Liberia's place as a nation would be determined, it is also a story of factors that shaped racial unity. Rather than asking under what terms Liberia would be accepted in the larger family of nations, this story revealed how European hegemony continued to shape transnational racial identities at the turn of the century.

Barclay and the Indigenous

In order to demonstrate a sense of civilization, modernity, and progress, Liberia would have to repair its relationship with the indigenes. By their actions, the indigenous had been perceived as sabotaging blacks' post-emancipation progress. Portraying the indigenes in this way reduced their humanity and justified their conquest and colonization. By the turn of the twentieth century, the same beliefs was reassigned and reinterpreted to highlight how they were stymieing Liberia's modernity and progress.

⁷⁴ See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 8.

Furthermore, by colluding with the Europeans to the detriment of the Liberian central government and the race, the ambiguous status and relationship between the indigenes and the central government had proven financially and politically ruinous in a number of ways. For example, in 1879, a German trading ship was attacked by coastal tribes. The German Navy responded by bombarding the Liberian coastline. In the end, the Liberian government was forced to pay indemnities for the stolen, damaged, and lost goods, which amounted to over five thousand dollars.⁷⁵ Such actions confirmed in the eyes of many that the indigenous were still acting contrary to the country's interests. They were dangerous to national stability. Edward Blyden alluded to this with a cautionary note: “Let Liberia now consider whether she elects to continue to move with the agencies of civilization or to retire to the bush. If she elects the advantages of civilization, she must accept its responsibilities...The world around us, as I have said, is moving, and we must move with it.”⁷⁶

In addition to financial woes, Liberia also experienced internal unrest. The economic hardships had crippled the government's ability to maintain control over troubled portions of its territory, mainly the southeastern coastal region where the indigenes had rebelled following earlier governmental legislations. Unlike his efforts to address the country's economic woes and growing indebtedness, Barclay sought more direct ways to tackle its domestic troubles. In his first inaugural address, Barclay set the tone for his administration: “We often neglected to make good on our promises, but the

⁷⁵ Kraaij, 27.

⁷⁶ “A Diplomatic Function at the American Legation,” 7. April 13, 1905. *Dispatches from United States Ministers to Liberia, 1863-1906*, Volume 14, Roll T-14. The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

native citizen has a very retentive memory and knows exactly what he wants.”⁷⁷ The president urged the Republic to set to work to repair the cause of the domestic problems.

In the Second Session of the Twenty Ninth Legislature, Barclay mourned the death of H.G. Moore. In 1892, Moore had been appointed Secretary of the Interior by President Cheeseman and subsequently directed that department for about twelve years. Barclay said that “[d]uring your recess death has deprived the State of an able, devoted and capable public servant, the Honorable H.J. Moore, Secretary of the Interior.”⁷⁸ One of the 1865 Barbadian migrants, Moore had had a long social, economic and political relationship with the native populations in the interior. His father, G. Moore had been “a prominent merchant largely interested in the interior trade for many years before the foundation of the interior Department was recognized as the Agent of the Government of Liberia and among the tribes of the hinterland of Montserrado, among whom he was widely known.”⁷⁹ Barclay recalled that Moore's “attitude toward the native population was sympathetic and his policy conciliatory. It is to be regretted that his ideas were not always popular, especially among the less thoughtful section of our civilized population.” Still, Barclay declared that “Secretary Moore made a lasting contribution of the country's prosperity and progress when he succeeded in eventually convincing the community that the policy he advocated and invariably followed was and is the correct one.”⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Dunn, *The Annual Messages of the Presidents of Liberia 1848-2010*, 431.

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Arthur Barclay, “Message of the President of Liberia Communicated to the First Session of the Thirteenth. Legislature,” December 14, 1905.

⁸⁰ Messages of the President of Liberia, Monrovia, 1904. Liberia Collection. University of Indiana, Bloomington.

Barclay acknowledged that Moore's "tactful management maintained the peace of a great part of the province for many years, especially of the districts contiguous to the Americo-Liberian townships." This was Moore's achievement. As Barclay pointed out, it was through neglect of his advice that "the country between the little Cape Mount and the St. Paul's Rivers has been for over twenty years in a disturbed condition." Barclay contended that Moore had "received from his father much useful information and sound advice as to the manner in which the native population ought to be controlled and governed."⁸¹ To address the challenges with the indigenous, Barclay would have to navigate this historic relationship between the settlers and the indigenous as well as consider the necessities of development.

In his inaugural address to the senate and the House of Representatives, in January of 1904, Barclay noted that a number of questions have "agitated and vexed the minds of thinking citizens." Among them were the best ways to "develop and utilize the resources of the hinterland" and how to best "satisfy, control and attach the native populations to the interests of the state." These two questions came to dictate Barclay's policies towards native assimilation and internal development. As with the post-emancipation aspirations of the Barbadian migrants to civilize and develop Liberia, what made the indigenous visible and subjects to be regenerated again was the pressures of imperialism and colonial expansion. If race was muted in Barclay's approach, nativity became a more pronounced obsession. He acknowledged that prior administrations led by Americo-Liberians had focused on the best way to assure "material prosperity." He, however, planned to turn his attention to bringing the natives more fully into the national

⁸¹ Ibid.

fold. As Barclay noted, the development of Liberia could not be divorced from native incorporation. "We cannot develop the interior effectively," he concluded, "until a satisfactory understanding with the resident population is arrived at."⁸²

Apportioning blame to his predecessors for their failed policies, Barclay noted that: "The efforts which we have made in the past, made to coerce these populations by arms, have deservedly failed. Government must rest on the consent of the governed." The founders miscalculated: "We sought to obtain, and did not succeed in grasping an enormous mass of territory by neglecting to conciliate and attach the resident populations to our interests. Our present narrow and jealous trade policy initiated in the 60's has had the worst possible effects on our political relations with outlying native populations. Take for instance the Manna and Gallinas territories, formerly part of Liberia. Why did we lose these?" Answering his own questions, he reasoned that: "Because we neglected to look after and conciliate the populations. We thought their wishes and desires unworthy of serious consideration, and after enduring the situation for many years, they detached themselves from the interest of Liberia, and carried their territories with them." Barclay pointed to other territories, particularly those below the Cavalla, that the nation had also lost because of the treatment of the natives. The country, he insisted, had not learned the lessons of that "great national loss" and have continued to follow the same "mistaken lines." Barclay reminded the legislature that "our attitude of indifference toward the native populations must be dropped." In its place, he advocated "[a] fixed and unwavering policy with respect to the natives, proceeding on the lines of interest in local

⁸² Ibid.

affairs, protection, civilization, and safeguarding their institutions when not brutal or harmful should at once be set on foot."⁸³

Barclay was also keenly aware of the duplicity of the Americans and Europeans. He critiqued issues of debt, colonialism, and imperialism. After all, he noted, Liberia was bought "from its native inhabitants by the Europeans." The colony, in effect, was "founded by the European. Its expenses paid by the money of the European until it declared its independence. They lavished their money on the establishment of schools, churches and other agencies for the elevation of successive bodies of Negro colonists. It was a European, too, who made possible the annexation of the State of Maryland in Liberia to the Republic."⁸⁴ In doing so, the indigenes, "[b]y organic law we shut him out from citizenship and denied him the right of holding real estate in fee simple." Having "stood shoulder to shoulder with us in the organization and building up of this state," the Europeans naturally expected his reward. Upon independence, Liberians would exclude whites from ownership of property in Liberia.⁸⁵ But while they were shut out from "privilege and property," Europeans were compensated with what Barclay called "commercial freedom." To Barclay, with this coming to an end in 1862, "our policy of commercial freedom to the European lasted but fifteen short years."⁸⁶

The strengthening of the central government and its authority would extend into the hinterland. Barclay proposed the most extensive policy for assimilation arguing that

⁸³ Inaugural address of Arthur Barclay, President of the Republic of Liberia; Delivered January 4th, 1904, before the Senate and House of Representatives. Printed by Authority. Monrovia R.A Phillips, Chief Printer, Government Printing Office, Monrovia 1904, 29p.

⁸⁴ Dunn, *The Messages of the Liberian President*, 480.

⁸⁵ See Chapter Five.

⁸⁶ Dunn, *The Messages of the Liberian President*, 480

once the peoples of the hinterlands had been caught up in modernization and the resulting prosperity, they would attach themselves to the central government. This would transform Liberia from being a mere potential into an actual nation-state. Barclay's style of native assimilation closely resembled the British colonial policy of "indirect rule." The President invited the chiefs to his 1904 inauguration and called the first council of chiefs that same year. Barclay used the findings of Benjamin J. K. Anderson's 1888 explorations to organize the interior for administrative purposes and applied the term Liberian to the unassimilated population for the first time. "What we need," Barclay said in his inaugural address of 1904, "is wider and deeper culture, and more intimate intercourse with our interior brethren."⁸⁷

Barclay knew that the new century called for different approaches to modernization, ones in which the natives would play a significant role. His style of native incorporation depended on a perception of the indigenous that was decidedly different from that of early Americo-Liberian leaders. Like Blyden, Barclay shared a deep respect for and understanding of indigenous cultures.⁸⁸ He possessed encyclopedic knowledge of local ethnography and anthropology and sought to incorporate the natives through their political and legal administration, an approach later popularized by the British colonial official, Frederick Lugard in his work, *Dual Mandate in Tropical Africa*.⁸⁹ His aim was to extend the central government and absorb the hinterlands by working through native leaders and using their existing social structures. Barclay consulted regularly with the

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ See Chapter Five.

⁸⁹ See Frederick John Dealtry Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: F. Cass, 1965).

chiefs of the interior and involved himself in the appointments of paramount and clan chiefs.

Barclay proposed that native districts be considered and treated as townships under the government of the native authorities. Under the proposal, the power to subdivide local authorities was to be the preserve of the president. The native chiefs were to be treated as the local authority.⁹⁰ He closed the Second Session of the Twenty Ninth Legislature noting: "I hope the Legislature will not adjourn before passing a bill to regulate the government of the native communities of the country. This matter cannot be any longer delayed. A national policy in this regard ought to be initiated." In putting forward his definition and method of incorporating the natives, Barclay noted that "[t]he territory should be controlled through the leading native families. We ought to make it a point to recognize and support them and get them to work with us." With the establishment of this new approach to the natives -- a form of internal colonialism-- Liberia came to mirror colonial policies adopted by the French in Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire, and the British in Sierra Leone and elsewhere in Africa.

It was perhaps these developments in the neighboring European colonies that prompted Barclay to adopt this new approach. As he noted, "the Americo Liberians are possibly the greatest travelers of all civilized people of West Africa. It is a pity, however, that they pay little attention to the contiguous colonies and protectorates." If they did, Barclay argued, they would "probably have formed a correct idea of the great improvements and enormous development which have taken place around them and

⁹⁰ Ibid

would not be inclined to criticize but rather applaud and assist the efforts of their own government to keep pace, however lamely with the times."⁹¹ Barclay was very specific about his plans for native absorption. He recommended that tribal territory would be assimilated into the townships; inhabitants would have a right to land "within a specified area." They were guaranteed "local self-government" and "customary native law" would be recognized both "locally and by courts of the Republic." This approach, he predicted would do much to correct the usurpation of native politics by an encroaching Western style government. Under these measures, local authorities seemed to be guaranteed autonomy. But the promise of full self-sufficiency was illusory. Instead Barclay ordered the "[s]upervision of native population by commissioners living among them."⁹²

Barclay recommended "[t]he creation of two new courts: the courts of the native chief, and that of the District Commissioner." In native communities, the former would take the place of the "Justice of the Peace in the townships inhabited by the civilized population." The District Commissioners would hear "appeals from the court of the native chief" and "settle disputes between members of different sections of the same tribe, or persons of different tribes" within their jurisdiction. Handling money was an entirely different matter; it fell outside the realm of native leadership. In this regard, "[j]ails, fees and costs" were subjects which were to be regulated through the Attorney-General. Appeals of District Commissioners' decisions were to heard in the "Court of Quarter Sessions of each County, which courts should also deal with crimes of a serious character." Barclay also gave the executive additional power. But in his efforts to be

⁹¹ Barclay cited in Swartz, *West African Culture Dynamics*, 565.

⁹² Dunn, *The Messages of the Liberian President*, 531.

inclusive, Barclay subordinated the leadership of the native groups to that of the settlers. His proposed bill gave "the Executive the power of issuing such regulations as it may be requested or advised by the native chiefs, which regulations would of course, have the force of law until expressly disallowed by the Legislature." He, however, added the caveat that "[i]t should also be made a misdemeanor for any chief or other person to refuse to obey the summons of the President, Secretary of the Interior or the Superintendent of the County or District when it becomes necessary to investigate matters and things tending to disturb the peace of the country."⁹³ Indirect rule effectively made the local chiefs of the various ethnicities junior partners in the new order by creating an effective alliance between state bureaucrats in Monrovia, and local rural elites and as a consequence, served the political objectives of the Whig Party hegemony over Liberia's politics until its collapse in 1980.

Barclay, Liberia, and the League of Nations

Barclay served as president until January of 1912. After his retirement, he frequently acted as Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, and Secretary of the Interior and War. But his most important and most challenging assignment came at the age of eighty. Barclay was then in semi-retirement serving on the legal staff of the Firestone Company of Liberia. In 1929, he was nominated by the C.D.B King administration to be the country's representative to the League of Nations commission of

⁹³ Ibid.

inquiry into the existence of slavery and forced labor in the Republic.⁹⁴ Fisk University President Charles S. Johnson was the United States Representative in the investigation of Liberia. In *Bitter Canaan: Story of the Negro Republic*, Johnson highlighted how Barclay handled of the international scrutiny and charges. Fascinated by "old man Barclay," Johnson wrote: "As the sole ex-public official whose record inspired international confidence, he was expected to examine impartially those charges against the Republic which he well knew were in very large measure true; he was expected through some miracle of his wisdom to defend the integrity of the state before the world."⁹⁵ The chief US Diplomat in Monrovia, Clifton Wharton described the ex-president in a memo to his State Department superiors as: "The confidential advisor of the present administration and in times of stress, the government invariably calls upon him...at present he is practicing law in Monrovia, Dean of the Liberian Bar, best known lawyer in the Republic, is attorney for the Firestone Plantations Company-great experience on commissions."⁹⁶

Due to age, Barclay was not able to accompany the other members of the Commission on their investigatory trips into the interior, but he participated in hearings held in or close to the Liberian capital.⁹⁷ Cuthbert Christy, England's representative on the Commission, was fascinated by Arthur Barclay's role, which he noted was initially

⁹⁴League of Nations. *International Enquiry into the Alleged Existence of Slavery and Forced Labour in Liberia*. 1930.

⁹⁵ See Charles Spurgeon Johnson, *Bitter Canaan: The Story of the Negro Republic* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1987), 87.

⁹⁶ Nathaniel R. Richardson, *Liberia's Past and Present* (London: Diplomatic Press and Pub. Co, 1959), 5.

⁹⁷ International Commission of Inquiry into the Existence of Slavery and Forced Labor in the Republic of Liberia, and Cuthbert Christy. *Communication by the Government of Liberia Dated December 15th, 1930, Transmitting the Commission's Report*. 1930.

one of Defense Counsel, questioning procedure: "His first attitude was one of cheerful non-cooperation on the matter of seating the first witness. His argument on the first day of discussion of testimony was, "There is nothing before the Commission." Christy was convinced that Barclay was "[d]isposed to defend the name of President King and to construe any unfavorable reference to the administration as disloyal, he raised objections to the definition of forced labor, maintaining that there would be no force so long as there was consent of the laborer, however, secured."⁹⁸

In their various diplomatic communications with Britain and the US, both Christy and Johnson pointed out that it was evident that Barclay knew the history and details of much that was discussed, but he offered no explanations except in defense.⁹⁹ They noted that he later changed his stance: "As the proceedings developed and he sensed the fervor and the persistence of the charges, he dropped his defense; still later he showed surprise at the consistency of the revelations made; and finally he shook his hoary head in disgust." Cuthbert was convinced that the proceedings had helped Barclay come to grips with the state of the legal and political systems in Liberia: "On one of his final objections that the chiefs and their people were bringing to the Commission matters which should have been carried to the appropriate departments of government, he was asked to assist a complaining citizen privately to get action on his grievance. Although it was a relatively small matter, Barclay discovered that it took four days merely to get a hearing for the man. He saw the man was intimidated and the case handled between departments with no ultimate effective action taken." Barclay came to recognize that "[w]hat he with all his

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

power and prestige could not do for a common citizen, it was clear to him that a common citizen could not do for himself." Following from this episode, Cuthbert surmised that "[t]he stern logic of the situation eventually overcame his emotional loyalties. With the air of an attorney who has exhausted every reasonable defense, he signed the full report of the Commission without offering amendments." According to Cuthbert, "Barclay faced the new future of Liberia with characteristic courage."¹⁰⁰

Arthur Barclay died on July 10, 1938, in Monrovia. In his obituary, Charles S. Johnson wrote: "The Old Man, as he is affectionately called, belied his eighty years with his brisk step, firm bearing, active erudition and incredibly incisive wit...He probably had read every book that came into Liberia and had a retentive and continuous memory. The laws of Liberia, its international problems, the native question, he knew in detail, and discoursed with familiar knowledge on the activities of the various African societies, archaeology, legal procedure in England and America, aviation, President Hoover's government by commissions etc..."¹⁰¹ Barclay's body lay in state at the Trinity Memorial Church until the morning of July 13th, the day of the burial. Reports pointed out that "thousands of persons in all walks of life signed the register and passed paying respects. A military escort comprising the first, fifth and sixth regiments and a detachment from the frontier force under the command of General James Boyer McGill was in attendance." The funeral oration was delivered by the honorable Dr. G.W. Gibson, who took as his text second Samuel three verse thirty-eight: "Know ye not that there is a Prince and a Great man fallen in Israel? Gibson also composed a poem for the occasion.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *Liberia Official Gazette*, July 11, 1938

(See Appendix B). Barclay was remembered as “Friend of the People, and “Liberia’s Grand old man.”¹⁰² Many believed Barclay left an important legacy, including the creation of the modern state machinery, a number of reforms, and a thorough over-haul of the country's bureaucracy to raise what was once a nineteenth century colony to the standards of effective twentieth century governance.

Conclusion

Unlike their predecessors whose post-slavery challenges had been land, labor, and citizenship in Barbados, the issues for twentieth century West Indians in Liberia proved to be debt, increasing European territorial encroachment, and challenges to national development. In a period characterized by African territorial divisions and where subordination was explicitly racialized, un-equalitarian terms of loans and increasing terms of interest became a disciplining factor for Liberians. To court and accommodate investors for development purposes and, in many cases, for their very survival, Liberians became not only mired in debt, but further internalized the disciplinarian culture of Europeans and Americans.

If they had not been colonialists before, the policies adopted by Barclay in the twentieth century would seemingly make Liberia an accomplice in the broader European imperial colonial system. Yet, Liberia's expansion in this period was driven by motives that were different from those of the European powers. Migration to Liberia, particularly by the Barbadians was driven by the desire to build up a black nation that would bring

¹⁰² Ibid

respectability to the black race. Through Liberia, blacks worldwide were to unite and fight against their true enemies in the west. This loyalty to the black race ended with Liberian efforts to incorporate African ethnic groups into the nation state in ways that mimicked white imperialism. What drove these initiatives and replaced previous ideas surrounding black solidarity was the idea that African ethnic groups were not passive victims of the transatlantic slave trade and European imperialism but collaborators who were deserving of Liberian conquest and civilization. Blacks were not necessarily opposed to the imperialism and inequities of the emerging capitalistic geopolitical system. They sought to be recognized by it, enter it by harnessing the power and shield of the nation state, and survive. What appeared to be Liberian imperialism were efforts to create a bulwark against European aggression and, in doing so, maintain the sovereignty of the country and the respectability of the black race. In continuing their earlier missions, Liberia was forced to control and civilize the natives before they could begin to defend them against oppressive forms of white racism that accompanied European imperialistic designs in Africa.

EPILOGUE

Liberia in the Imaginary of Twentieth Century Pan-Africanists

Different geographies have occupied significance in the black imagination at various times. Historically embedded in specific circumstances and responding to changing diasporic demands, black Zionism and ideas of Eden have taken varied ideological shapes and co-opted different geographical terrain over time. In many ways, these shifting geographical landscape have indexed the changing ideological thrust of African diaspora identity politics. If in the nineteenth century Haiti featured prominently in the black imagination as a symbol of black revolutionary triumph, Liberia, by contrast, represented black national achievement. In its unfolding as a place of black liberation, the image of Liberia has played a variety of roles in the different temporal crises of the African diaspora. Like its nascent beginnings in the early nineteenth century, pan-Africanists would again look to Liberia in the twentieth.

In the 1920s, blacks' efforts to organize themselves consolidated in what became the largest global movement organized under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican immigrant living in New York City.¹ From that base, Garvey created the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the Black Star Line, a fleet of ships, and *The Negro World*, a newspaper through which pan-Africanist ideas circulated.² Through his various organizations, Garvey renewed the call for a back to Africa movement,

¹ Charlotte Phillips Fein, "Section C: Marcus Garvey: His Opinion About Africa," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol.33, No.4, (Autumn, 1964), pp. 446-449; Ben F. Rogers, "William E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, and Pan-Africa," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 40, No.2. (April, 1955) pp. 154-165.

² See Robert A., Hill, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

passionately reminding diasporic blacks: "We are men, we have souls, we have passions, we have feelings, we have hopes, and we have desires like any other race in the world. The cry is raised all over the world of Canada for Canadians, of America for Americans, of England for the English, of France for the French, of Germany for the Germans."³ Garvey thus surmised: "Do you think it is unreasonable that we the blacks of the world should raise the cry of Africa for the Africans."⁴

Much time separated had early nineteenth century pan-Africanists from their twentieth century counterparts. The dawning of the twentieth century and the attendant changing social, psychological, and political terrain had also engendered a transformation in the ideological core of pan-Africanism. Whereas slavery and post-emancipation circumstances had provided the drive for pan-Africanism in the nineteenth century, anti-colonial movements served as its new impetus in the twentieth. But while the circumstances had changed, much of the underlying experiences in many ways had remained the same. In the early twentieth century, African Americans and West Indian immigrants living in America who were disillusioned with rising Klu Klux Klan activities, racism, and colonialism in Africa were receptive to Garvey's promotion of black pride and self-sufficiency. As in the nineteenth century, the specter of oppression renewed the black millenarian rhetoric of "Ethiopia stretching forth her hands to God", calling for blacks to return to the continent to build up a nation. With the plight of the diaspora and that of Africa, the idea of repatriating to Africa to build a nation that would protect blacks worldwide became appealing to many. Garvey not only promoted Black Nationalism and separatism, but further propagated ideas of black economic

³ Ibid, 58.

⁴ Ibid, 78.

independence. By the early 1920s, the UNIA became the largest movement of blacks yet, registering over two million members.

Garvey believed it was of paramount importance to support the continued independence of African nationalities. As one of the only two independent African sovereignties, Liberia became the focus of Garveyism. In keeping with ideas of national and economic independence, Garvey set his sight on Liberia with plans of educational, industrial, and infrastructural development. Arthur Barclay, a known supporter of Marcus Garvey, often attended UNIA meetings in Monrovia, and the mayor of Monrovia allegedly held the title of High Potentate of Africa in Garvey's provisional government setup.

Garvey sought to cement the relationship with Liberia in many ways. Charles Dunbar Burgess King whose father was a West Indian, who had first settled in Sierra Leone and later immigrated to Liberia, became President of Liberia in 1920. King's West Indian connection perhaps made Garvey hopeful that a relationship could be established and that his plans for African nation-building would materialize.⁵ In 1920, John Bruce, a member of the UNIA, took steps to establish the relationship with the West African Republic. In a letter to King, he addressed him "[m]y dear sir and brother" and went on to him to introduce Hubert H. Harrison, a West Indian political activist. Bruce described Harrison as "a warm and personal friend of mine who is the duly accredited chairman of a deputation visiting Liberia, and representing the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, and its subsidiary branches—the Black

⁵ David L. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: H. Holt, 1993), 67.

Star SS Line and Negro Factories Corporations."⁶ According to Bruce, the delegation was in Liberia "at the direction of its President, Marcus Garvey, to confer with its leading public business men and prominent private citizens for the purpose of strengthening the bonds of amity between the two English speaking branches of the Negro race." The expressed purpose of the visit was "for closer business union, stronger and more diversified commercial relations, and a better understanding of the relations which ought of right to exist between us, [who,] though widely separated by distance, have a common destiny."⁷

While racial unity was thought to be a foregone conclusion, Garveyites were still careful to point out to Liberian leaders that their goals would benefit the whole race. As Bruce told King in his letter, "[t]hese gentlemen come to Africa in the spirit of friendship and brotherhood, bearing a message of goodwill and filled with desire to render in so far as they may be permitted through the good offices of the first citizen of the Little Republic in the West and his associates in office." For the UNIA, "such service for Africa as may be in the power of the great Organization which they represent, for the mutual benefit of both branches of our great Negro family."⁸ Bruce commended the visitors "to your Excellency's most gracious favor," noting that among the delegation were "gentlemen of culture and refinement, character and ability...[who] represent three million of our race on this side of the Atlantic, the West Indies, Central and South

⁶ John E. Bruce to J. J. Dossen, Chief Justice, Liberian Supreme Court, Brooklyn, New York, April 3, 1920. The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers.

⁷ John E. Bruce, *Masonic Quarterly Review*, NN-Sc, JEB, BL 41. TLS.

⁸ Ibid.

America."⁹ Their main purpose in Liberia was to "study the condition of its people and in cooperation with its men of light and leading to open wider the door of opportunity in Africa, commercially, industrially, and intellectually for the sons of Africa throughout the world." Bruce presumed he would have King's support, noting "I am sure that you are at one with them in their mission, and I bespeak for them the friendly and generous hospital[it]y which Liberians always extend to the stranger within their gates."¹⁰

King later headed a commission that also included John L. Morris and the associate chief justice, F. E. R. Johnson, brother of the UNIA potentate Gabriel Johnson who visited the US to negotiate a loan agreement and is alleged to have met with Garvey. King also addressed the Grand Lodge of the Prince Hall Masons of New York where Bruce was a member. He addressed issues surrounding the future relations between American blacks and Liberians. King was thought to have left the US deeply impressed with the depth of black interest in Liberia and their plans to emigrate to the Republic, telling Liberians that "most of the masses" were "enthusiastic in their desire to return to Africa. Everywhere I went, I met an earnest desire for specific information with reference to this country."¹¹ King, however, believed that migration to Liberia should be planned carefully so as to ensure that the Republic would be able to absorb the large numbers of migrants. "Before Liberia could accept sizable numbers of immigrants," King realized that, "roads, railroads, and harbors must be built and improved." He figured that "black laborers were needed at this stage, but once this infrastructure was created, new

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ *Inaugural Address of Charles Dunbar Burgess King, President of the Republic of Liberia, Delivered January 5, 1920* [Monrovia: College of West Africa Press, 1920].

possibilities in farming and industry would attract skilled workers as well as cultured, educated, and wealthy blacks."¹² King explored efforts for the Liberian government to establish its own emigration agencies in the US to supervise black immigration.

On June 8, 1920, Elie Garcia, a Haitian migrant in New York who was the commissioner of the UNIA, wrote to King. He described the organization and outline a series of aims that strikingly resembled its nineteenth century counterpart. According to Garcia, the aim of the UNIA was "to establish a universal confraternity among the races; to promote the spirit of pride and love; to administrate to and assist the needy; to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa; to assist in the development of Independent Negro Nations and Communities."¹³ Furthermore, it was to establish "Commissionaries for the representation and protection of all Negroes irrespective of nationality; to promote a conscientious spiritual worship among the natives of Africa." With their education aspirations, the UNIA also sought "to establish universities, colleges, and academies for the racial education and culture of the people; to conduct world-wide commercial and industrial intercourse for the good of the people; to work for better conditions in all Negro communities."¹⁴

Garcia backed up the goals of the U.N.I.A. with its vast membership network and the growing finances of its various enterprises. Not only did Garcia remind King that the UNIA had "a membership of three millions scattered in the United States of America,

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, ed. Robert A. Hill (Columbia, S.C.: Model Editions Partnership, 2000). Electronic version based on *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, ed. Robert A. Hill, Volume 8, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). On the Web at <http://mep.blackmesatech.com/mep/> [Accessed 5 May 2013]

¹⁴ Ibid.

South and Central America, the West Indies, Great Britain and Africa," but also pointed out that it controlled the Black Star Line Steamship Corporation, which Garcia noted, "capitalized at ten million dollars in the United States of America, as also the Negro Factories Corporation, capitalized at one million dollars under the laws of the United States."¹⁵ Garcia outlined the centrality of Liberia to the accomplishment of the organization's goal, outlining that the organization was "desirous to transfer its headquarters to the City of Monrovia or any other convenient township of Liberia." It would also "bring with it a well-equipped medical and scientific unit for the development of higher science in Liberia, to build hospitals, sanitariums and other institutions for the benefit of the people of Liberia." There were rumors, according to Garcia prevalent, about "the unfriendly attitude of the people of Liberia to persons of other Negro communities." He thus hoped for "a written assurance that it will afford us every facility for procuring lands for business, agricultural or industrial purposes and that the Government will do everything in its power to facilitate the work of the Association along these lines."¹⁶

Given Liberia's financial challenges, the Republic stood to directly benefit from this venture. As Garcia pointed out, "In return, it is the intention of the organization with its membership of three million members to lend financial and moral assistance in building and subsidizing institutions for the highest education of Liberia, for improving generally the international prestige of the country by organizing outside of the country, developing corporations backed by the entire membership of the U.N.I.A." Furthermore,

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

"The U.N.I.A. would be prepared to do anything possible to help the Government of Liberia out of its economic plights and to raise subscriptions all over the world to help the country to liquidate its debts to foreign governments." As in earlier decades, blacks aimed to restore Africa by finding their way back to the continent. In addition to encouraging migration to develop Liberia, Garcia pointed out the organization's efforts "to establish a trade route between America, the West Indies and Liberia through a line of steamships of the Black Star Line Steamship Corporation."¹⁷ Having co-opted the support of finance capital, Garvey had presented credible plan to holistically address the subordination of Africans worldwide.

As in early periods, these efforts would soon be derailed by the larger forces of an interconnected and globalized system of capital and distrust between the different groups of blacks. Abraham H. Butler, a Liberian journalist educated in New York who edited the *Commercial Bulletin*, was often critical of the UNIA and American loans to the Liberian government, as well as African-Americans' presence in Liberia. For Butler, it was "interesting to note how apparently apprehensive the American Negroes [who] are Satel[l]ites of Marcus Garvey are over the STILL MYSTERIOUS U.N.I.A. We wonder if their Motto is "Speech is Silver but Silence is golden[?] If you should become a "would-be-member[.]" ask no questions, seek no explanations." Butler was convinced that "Garveyites seem determined to CHOKE the Liberians, a people whose steady and sober habits, for over half a century, for self control, with brilliant imaginations of Universal Negro Development." Indeed, Butler questioned: May we ask what part of the development program does the singing of South American Camp Meeting songs form in

¹⁷ Ibid.

Liberia? May we also be informed under what Nationality are the Ships of the Black Star Line being registered? We would like to know from the Officials of Government if [a]t this moment when the relationship of Liberia with other Foreign Powers have become more lasting and enduring? Can Liberia in the face of her compact which must be kept, can she encourage or promote any movement calculated to embitter feelings between the White and Negro Races? We should like to know if the Liberians are to be improved by the class of Negroes from the States that we are in contact with on our shores? Indeed, can we say that improvement is still improvement? When surro[u]nded by so little sign of respect?"

Many things about Garvey and the UNIA were an affront to Liberian nationals like Butler. For his part, Butler noted that "What offends us is not the proximity of the Garveyites, it is the thousand un-definable things which necessarily accompany the compact. Painful as the conditions are, the Liberians[,] accustomed to live in an atmosphere of deference and dignity, could not tolerate or countenance any improvement from outside sources." Butler worried about the sentimental aspects of the UNIA's plans, wondering, "under what nationality are the ships of the Black Star Line being Registered? And would it not be wiser to have them registered in Liberia and have them sail under the Liberian Flag which would seem to be a more tang[i]ble proof of Negro Development?" Butler was, however, specifically concerned about how the finances of the UNIA would affect Liberia's sovereignty, specifically asking, "Into what Banks are the funds of the Negro Improvement Association deposited? May we ask, when shares are bought, to what Branch of the various Companies as sub-Incorporated in the Improvement Association [do] the funds thus paid become a charge on?" Without satisfactory

information from the UNIA, Butler's conclusion became "Away with this Mysterious Association."¹⁸

Liberia had been actively seeking loans for national development from the US since the turn of the century. Butler also opposed American loans to Liberia. It is likely that his opinion was informed by an article from the *Crisis* that had outlined the hegemonic outcomes America's loan to Haiti had caused. Butler urged the Liberian legislature to reject the loan on the basis of the degree of political intrusion that would be extended to the US. Butler noted that were Liberians to sign the loan agreement, the US would become an "everlasting Lord of our Country, interfering into our political aspiration and with powers of a veto over the laws of the land."¹⁹ On July 14, 1920, the US chargé d'affaires in Monrovia in a letter to US secretary of state pointed out that during his rant about the US loan, Butler was "egged on by members of the present administration, including President King," and that he was "in the pay of British interests in Liberia."²⁰ In June 1920, after details of the conditions for an American loan were revealed, the Liberian legislature rejected the provisions on the basis that they interfered too profoundly in Liberian internal affairs. The legislature voted to send a plenary commission to the United States to renegotiate the provisions. The American chargé d'affaires in Monrovia sent another dispatch to the U.S. secretary of state, outlining that "practically every comment made in his bulletin about the United States or Americans is hostile. . . . Butler . . . is a man of very little education but he talks loud and much. The

¹⁸ *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, ed. Robert A. Hill, Volume 8, (Berkeley: University of California Press, [2000]). On the Web at <http://mep.blackmesatech.com/mep/> [Accessed 4 May 2013]

¹⁹ *Commercial Bulletin*, May 28, 1920.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

opinions he expresses are supposed to represent what the ordinary and less than ordinary citizens in Monrovia are thinking. As a matter of fact he voices readymade opinions transmitted to him by persons who are simply using him as a tool to serve their own ends."²¹

On May 27, 1920, Elie Garcia arrived in Monrovia. He acknowledged Butler's criticism, mentioning it during an UNIA meeting in Monrovia on the same day. In spite of the criticisms, Butler sought to interview Garcia who had become even more leery of the encounter having discovered that Butler's paper was "subsidized by firms." Garcia surmised that "soon after they learned of my coming, they started the propaganda against us." This no doubt interfered with his efforts to sell the shares of the Black Star Line." Garcia's speculations about the influence of corporations in Liberian affairs, and certainly Butler's views, were substantiated by the various colonial powers seeking to establish a foothold in Liberia. Butler's *Commercial Bulletin* was acknowledged as an affiliate of the British run *Africa World* newspaper whose leading editor, Leo Weinthal, was at the helm of the Anglo-Liberian Syndicate, a noted Lever Brothers firm. The UNIA as well as the US posed a threat to the interest of the Anglo-Liberian Syndicate that had been acquiring vast tracts of land and in 1910 was granted special dispensations of commercial, financial, and railway rights under the designation of the Liberian American Produce Company. Liberian and American investors in the organization included Booker T. Washington, J. J. Dossen, and Arthur Barclay. As supporters of the UNIA and its plans as well as stockholders in the Liberian American Produce Company, the Liberians had

²¹ Chargé d'affaires ad interim to the secretary of state, Washington, D.C., 14 July 1920, DNA, RG 59, file 882.00/667

expressed displeasure with the way in which managerial control of the transfer to the Anglo-Liberian Syndicate had been handled.

On January 25, 1922, Butler in a move against the UNIA presented King and his cabinet with a file containing Elie Garcia's "secret" communication to Marcus Garvey. Among other things, the report noted that after a strong foothold was established in the country, Garcia had suggested that the UNIA would not be prevented from acting "as we see best for their [the Liberians'] own betterment and that of the race at large." Edwin Barclay, Liberia's Secretary of State reported that "Garcia's secret and confidential report . . . gave a clear picture of the revolutionary purposes of the UNIA in Liberia, and determined the Government's irrevocable attitude of opposition."²² The leaking of the document did much to ruin the image and integrity of the UNIA for Liberians. On 21 January 1922, the Monrovia correspondent for the *African World* commented:

After the revelations made by the Commercial Intelligence Bureau of the work of the special commissioner working on behalf of Marcus Garvey in Liberia and of the proof of the real motives behind his labours on the "Provisional President's" behalf, the movement is now without support here and its prospects hopeless. On the surface fine and altruistic, it has been proved that the aims are not really the sincere advancement of the Negro, but apparently one of graft for the leaders, who profit at the expense of the easily gulled. It is hoped that the report of the American detective making the discoveries, rumours of which have thrown Monrovia into considerable unrest these last few days, will be published in full.²³

As these reports surfaced the Liberian government commissioned Butler to organize a detective force. By February 1924, Butler released a press release to the "Associated

²² *African World*, August–September 1924.

²³ *African World*, February 25, 1922.

News-Papers of the World" publicizing President King's refusal to meet with a UNIA delegation to Liberia.²⁴

The loan terms that the commission negotiated were approved by the Liberian legislature in January 1922, but the U.S. Senate refused to approve the loan. The senate rejection was a setback for King's plans to rescue Liberian government finances from bankruptcy and promote economic development. It is clear that King and the other Liberians came out against the UNIA following their meeting in the US and interference from the various corporations in Liberia. In a meeting with representatives of the US Department of State, both King and Morris "declared that the time had come to announce publicly and definitely that the Liberian Government disapproved" of the UNIA." This was despite the Liberian government's approval of the UNIA's plans that were outlined by Garcia.²⁵ In an issue of the NAACP magazine, *Crisis*, King reiterated his position on black emigration, stating, "Our present need is especially for strong young men trained as artisans, engineers, and merchants who can bring with them some capital for investment."²⁶ In a thinly veiled reference to the UNIA, King further noted that Liberia respected her neighbors and that "under no circumstances will she allow her territory to be made a center of aggression or conspiracy against other sovereign states."²⁷

²⁴ *Commercial Bulletin*, ca. 25 May, 3 and 13 July, and 4 September 1920; *African World, Special West African Monthly Supplement*, 30 September 1920, regular edition, 4 March 1922; *NW*, 23 October 1920; *Crisis* 24, no. 6 [April 1924]: 51; Liberian Department of Justice, *Reports and Opinions of the Attorney General of the Republic of Liberia* [New York: Central Book Co., 1947], 1:11–12).

²⁵ DNA, RG 59, file 811.41065/55 in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, ed. Robert A. Hill, Volume 8, (Berkeley: University of California Press, [2000]). On the Web at <http://mep.blackmesatech.com/mep/> [Accessed 4 May 2013]

²⁶ *Crisis* 22, NO 2, June 1921: 53

²⁷ *Ibid.*

In February 1924, King met unofficially with the third UNIA delegation, consisting of Henrietta Vinton Davis, Robert L. Poston, and James Milton Van Lowe. King was reported to have offered them a trial concession of five hundred acres on which to build settlements for the new migrants.²⁸ By April of 1924, he would however begin negotiations with representatives of the Firestone Company for a private loan in exchange for an offer of official business concessions in Liberia.²⁹ On July 1924, King would deport three members of the UNIA who had arrived in Liberia to initiate UNIA-colonies on the Cavalla River, a scheme that King claimed never to have approved. In defense of his deportations the president declared that “the apparent intention of that association [UNIA] to use Liberia as its base for the dissemination of its propaganda of racial hatred and ill will, compelled the Executive Government . . . to place a veto upon the proposed operations of the association in Liberia, by deporting from the country certain of its emissaries who had been sent out to start the founding of the first of their proposed colonies. . . The landing in Liberia of a special commission, sent thereafter by the association, was also prohibited by us.” He went on to add that “Liberia’s immediate objective is toward a *nationalism* and not *racialism*; the making of a nation and not a race. . .” He concluded that “[i]f Negroes, in America or elsewhere, desire to come as settlers in Liberia to assist us in our great work, they will receive a hearty and cordial welcome, provided they come with the right spirit, take the oath of allegiance to the

²⁸ See David L. Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois--the Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963* (New York: H. Holt, 2000), 7.

²⁹ See Frank Chalk, Anatomy of Investment: Firestone's 1927 Loan to Liberia. *Canadian Journal of African Studies/ Revue Canadienne de Etudes Africaines*. Vol.1. No. (March 1967), pp 12-32.

Republic, and sincerely repudiate all former allegiances. Liberia cannot recognize dual citizenship."³⁰

King remained firm in his opposition to the UNIA throughout the remainder of his administration. During an official visit to Sierra Leone in January 1925, he was given a hero's welcome by the colonial government and praised by Governor Slater of Sierra Leone for his strong stance against the UNIA. The governor noted that King had earned "the gratitude not only of every West African government but of all who have the true welfare of the African at heart."³¹ During a 1927 tour of European capitals, King was praised for his opposition to Garvey's ideas. King believed that Liberia's viability as an independent state depended on the influx of American and European capital in the development of its resources. Imperial governments saw Garvey's movement as a threat to their colonial interests. Garvey's pan-Africanism, built on anti-colonialism, disrupted Liberia's plans to establish economic relationships and diplomatic treaties with European governments. In Hamburg, King declared that he was president of Liberia and not of all "negroes. I intend and wish to produce a cultured nation by elevating the population of Liberia to be a cultured, civilized people. For this reason, we have rejected all Pan-African endeavors forming in the United States, including that of Marcus Garvey."³²

The foibles of black racial consciousness once again became evident as the relationship between Garvey and Liberia deteriorated. Garvey must have had King in

³⁰ King, "Presidential Message," 1925.

³¹ Speech of His Excellency the Governor at the Banquet at Government House on January 22nd, 1925, in Honour of Their Excellencies the President of Liberia and Mrs. King," PRO, CO 267/607).

³² DNA, RG 59, file 088.8262 in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, ed. Robert A. Hill, Volume 8, (Berkeley: University of California Press, [2000]). On the Web at <http://mep.blackmesatech.com/mep/> [Accessed 4 May 2013]

mind when he told supporters at a rally, "[t]he Negro who lives in patronage to philanthropists is the most dangerous member of society because he is willing to turn the clock on progress when his benefactors ask him to do so." According to the historian Tony Martin, "[h]ad Garvey succeeded in his attempt to transfer headquarters from Harlem to Liberia, his followers would, at one swoop exceeded the total Liberian electorate." The would have exceeded "the less than 5,000 persons allowed to vote in Liberia at that time."³³ Also, having appointed himself provisional President of Africa and surrounded himself with newly created African nobility Garvey intimidated Liberia's leadership. At a time, when Liberia was still striving to form a Frontier Force, the UNIA and Garvey had formed a private army, the African Legion, who were often seen at UNIA parades outfitted in dark blue uniforms with red stripes.

As Ben F. Rogers suggests, the Liberian government had become worried and feared that the U.N.I.A. would take over their country so much so that they warned all of their American consuls to deny visas to any of Garvey's followers. Rogers thus deduced that this twentieth century attempt at Liberian colonization failed "not so much because of American Negro's apathy as because of the Liberian government's opposition which Garvey called 'treachery of the lowest order.'³⁴ Rather than race as suggested by many as a superficial and fragile basis on which to form solidarities, the failure of racial unity in the twentieth century was compounded by European colonialism in Africa and Liberia's economic dependence on Europe and the US. As it had in the earlier periods of slavery and post-emancipation, the far-reaching influence of global capital in the twentieth

³³ Tony Martin, "The International Aspect of The Garvey Movement," *Afro-American Red Star*, Washington D.C.: February 20, 1993. Vol. 101, Iss 26, p. A6.

³⁴ Ben Rogers, "William E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, and Pan-Africa," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 40, No.2. (April, 1955), pp. 154-165.

century disconnected the intellectual and lived realities of ideologies of pan-Africanism and black liberation.

Exploring nation building in Liberia not only offers a comparative look at blacks' experiences of freedom but further provides an avenue for reframing our understanding of the dynamics black nation building in Africa. Liberia's position and place in blacks' historical consciousness has been a double-edged sword. In the same way Liberia has been central to the more constructive views of the diaspora, its more destructive circumstances illustrated by its persistent failures at racial solidarity, have also become fodder for some of the harshest criticism of blacks and African republics. But Liberia has never been portrayed as a place with a deep and involved story about black aspirations but rather as a failed political system that epitomizes the follies of African tribalism. This kind of narrative has rendered context, complexity, and nuance impossible, and obscured the trans-Atlantic history of African states such as Liberia.

As a nation, Liberia has evolved through a series of migrations, acts that according to Salman Rushdie, "puts into crisis everything."³⁵ With the influx of West Indians, African Americans and Africans from a variety of ethnic groups, the demographic character and political visions of nationhood was imagined to be shaped within the homogenizing process of what had become a cosmopolitan black society. While much of the collective consciousness of the black emigrants had long been articulated through a common history of centuries of enslavement, freedom, disenfranchisement, and the struggle for equality, different waves of Liberian emigrants had experienced different circumstances that created diverse interests. The idea of

³⁵ Salman Rushdie, "The Satanic Verses," the Fatwa, and a Life Changed," *The New Yorker*, September 12, 2012.

African and black identity thus lost their meanings and new identities quickly formed along different lines. The nation building process exposed the many fault-lines within black experiences. Rather than seen as particularized to Africans and African nation as it is often portrayed, Liberia's difficulties should be seen through the issues of exclusion and subordination that often haunts the making of communities.

APPENDIX A

Resolutions unanimously passed by the Committee, of the Barbados Colonization Society for assisting in the suppression of the slave trade and the introduction of Christianity into Africa

First. Resolved, That this meeting have, for some years past, watched with deep anxiety the efforts of Her Majesty's Government to suppress the slave trade, put down slavery, and civilize the untutored inhabitants of the continent of Africa.

Second. That although these efforts have not altogether been crown led with success, owing in some measure, to the generally received opinion, that the climate of that portion of the continent, to which Great Britain has directed her attention, is pernicious to the constitution of the inhabitants of Europe, yet there is room for the hope, that Her Majesty's government have not abandoned their original designs, but will continue to employ those means, which occasionally present themselves, of attaining their object, and which are now abundantly offered by the capacity and disposition of the descendants of Africa, inhabitants of the British West India colonies.

Third. That the philanthropic objects which Her Majesty's Government have in view, and the measures which they have adopted for the carrying out of the same, have, for some time, engaged the attention of a considerable portion of Her Majesty's loyal subjects in the Island of Barbados, and awakened in them, not only a deep feeling of gratitude for the great measure of emancipation, whereby their brethren in bondage were generally raised from a state of abject slavery to the proud position of British freemen, but also a disinclination to remain passive spectators of the great work of moral regeneration already commenced for the benefit of their brethren on the continent of Africa, to whom they are closely bound by the ties of consanguinity, affection and sympathy.

Fourth. That whilst this meeting deeply deplore the wrongs that are continually inflicted on the helpless inhabitants of Africa, the atrocities which are daily perpetrated on them by the continuance of the slave trade as well as the dark clouds of ignorance and superstition which overspread the land, they cannot but conceive it a duty which they owe to God, the British Government and themselves to make a voluntary offer of their personal efforts, to advance as far as in their power lies, the grand work of the moral regeneration and civilization of Africa, by proceeding with the assistance of the Government to the scene of action, by planting a colony, or settling a district in the Colony of Fernando Po, or on any other or more suitable spot which the Government might select, by introducing amongst the inhabitants our manners and customs, by studying the language of the surrounding nations, by making known to them the folly and wickedness of continuing the slave trade, by establishing schools of general instruction, by instilling into their minds the knowledge of the benefits to be derived from the

cultivation of their lands, by introducing systematic culture, by endeavoring to establish the most friendly relations with the native tribes, by opening a mart for British commerce, and by our examples, moral, religious, and social, to form a nucleus from which instruction may be radiated around, and the well disposed be induced to amalgamate with us.

Fifth. That under the protection, and with the assistance of the British Government and people, we are of opinion that success will attend our efforts, because we are certain that if liberal grants of land be made, proper encouragement given to industry, and a regular communication be opened between the western coast of Africa and the British West India colonies; but more especially with the Island of Barbados, a stream of emigration will commence to flow hence to Africa of numberless persons who are already civilized, and who will carry with them their various trades and professions, and their capabilities of every degree of instruction necessary for the formation of a newly settled colony.

Sixth. That emigration from this Island cannot at all interfere with the measures of Government now in progress for facilitating emigration from Africa to the colonies in the West Indies, inasmuch as the want of labor is not known here, this country being over stocked with inhabitants, who are increasing in such a degree, that it will be morally impossible, in a short time, for them to find adequate employment; in fact, in the present depressed state of the Island, there are hundreds who are in this predicament, and who could well be spared; and, therefore, in the event of our meeting with attention in the proper quarter, through which alone, under God, success can attend our efforts, the said emigrants must ultimately benefit themselves as well as others, as the means will thus be afforded of effecting a mutual interchange of the already civilized to a place where civilization and industry are required, and of the uncivilized to already civilized countries.

Seventh. That for all the foregoing important considerations, we forthwith form ourselves into a committee for the purpose of addressing a memorial to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the colonies, through the medium of His Excellency Governor Reid, therein stating our wants, wishes, and suggestions, and earnestly and sincerely offering ourselves a devoted band (considering no sacrifice too great) to proceed to the continent of Africa, for the accomplishment of the object of our] wishes, the British Government assisting us, and Providence being our guide. On behalf of the Committee:

ANTHONY BARCLAY, *Chairman*. CHARLES PHIPPS, EDWARD W. ARCHER, J
* BARBADOS, *April* 12, 1848.

APPENDIX B

Emigration From Barbados To Liberia

Barbados has a population more dense than any other portion of the civilized world. It has a surface of only two hundred and fifty-two square miles—being twenty-one, by twelve miles—with one hundred and sixty thousand souls. This gives an average of six hundred and thirty-five people to the superficial mile. It is the most industrious population under the sun. It produces fifty thousand hogsheads of sugar (of one ton—2,240 pounds each) per annum, independently of rum and molasses, which two pay the expense of manufacturing the sugar. There is not an uncultivated acre of land in the island; every part not devoted to these products is cultivated with vegetables, fruit, cattle, and poultry. Land near Bridgetown rents for twenty-four dollars per acre. The secret of this astonishing prosperity is that there are no Crown lands (vacant fields and districts belonging to the Government) on which idle people squat, and with the aid of the gun and the fishing-rod or line, together with a shabby cultivation of a little ground for gardens, earn a precarious and uncertain living, as is customary in Tobago, Antigua, St. Kitts, Dominica, Trinidad, and other islands where Crown lands abound.

Hundreds of respectable negro families of Barbados are reported to be desirous of emigrating to Liberia. The latter needs an increase of civilized and industrious population. Exiled Africans who understand and sympathize with her people are invited from all parts of the world to unite with them in their great work. To encourage the removal of West Indians the Legislature of Liberia recently enacted a law providing that each family emigrating from those islands to that Republic shall receive, instead of ten acres of land, as heretofore, twenty-five acres, and each single or unmarried individual ten acres instead of five.

Here, then, are a people kindred in race, analogous in institutions and language, sympathizing in principles and views, anxious to join the Liberians and help to fill up, protect, and improve the vast African continent. But they need foreign aid to do this. Liberia is not able to do more than she has, and the Barbadians will require all they can command for their proper outfit. The Constitution of the American Colonization Society specifies "the object to which its attention shall be *exclusively* devoted is to promote and execute a plan for colonizing, with their own consent, the free people of color residing *in our country* in Africa." It could, however, essentially assist the new comers in the Republic by allowing them the free use of its commodious reception and acclimating buildings.

The expense of transportation to and for six months support after arrival in Liberia will cost, owing to the existing high rates of labor and provisions, at least one hundred dollars per capita, old and young. It is suggested in the excellent letter which we append, from Gerard Ralston, Esq., that agriculturists and employers of laborers, cultivators of coffee, sugar, cotton, and other staple products, with their families, should now be selected and aided to remove to Liberia. For the proper colonization of three hundred such persons a special fund of thirty thousand dollars would be necessary.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF LIBERIA,

APPENDIX C

Gerard Ralston Letter to the Members of the Barbadian Company for Liberia

London, September 30, 1864.

To Messrs. John W. Worrell, Chairman; Charles H. Lawrence, Vice Chairman; Samuel T. Griffiths, Secretary, Committee of the Barbados Company for Liberia:

GENTLEMEN: I have great pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your communication to me under date of Bridgetown, September 9, 1864. I have attentively considered this interesting letter, and I am rejoiced that as many respectable inhabitants of Barbados are willing to emigrate to Liberia to strengthen the negro nationality on the West Coast of Africa in conjunction with their African brethren of the United States of America, who have preceded them in establishing a highly vigorous representative republican Government, made treaties with many of the nations of Europe and America, formed social and commercial relations with all the neighboring tribes, and are enjoying a successful progressive career, but which we wish to accelerate and render more expansive by an increase of well-disposed, intelligent, and enterprising immigrants from Barbados, who, we feel confident, will be sure of success, and by their good conduct and industry can turn the manifold advantages of a most fertile country and genial climate (for blacks, though unsuitable for whites) to the best account.

I repeat, the enterprising pioneers from the United States have made all the preliminary arrangements in Liberia for the reception of and the comfortable residence of a large and constantly increasing number of immigrants of colored people from all parts of the Western Hemisphere, the desire being to construct a vigorous nation from the Americo-African portion of the race, who will enjoy all the blessing of free and constitutional government with all the privileges which Protestantism, laws, customs, manners, language, and other peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxons can alone bestow. Such a nation cannot exist in the United States, neither in Jamaica, nor Trinidad, nor Demarara, nor Hayti, nor Cuba, nor Central America, nor in short in any other country but Liberia. Whatever country the white man inhabits the black man ought to avoid. I write this in the interest of a negro nationality which is the cherished wish of my heart to succor. The experience of two hundred and forty-five years proves that whites and blacks cannot live comfortably together. The whites dominates the blacks, and it is important they should live separately if both is to prosper. In no other country but Liberia can colored people live comfortably and be self-governing, and become a mighty nation to diffuse the blessings of civilization and Christianity over the innumerable peoples of the immense African peninsula.

Inasmuch as the difficulties of the times in the United States during the awful civil war prevailing there necessitates the utmost economy in preparing an expedition for Liberia, and also to confining the emigrants to exactly the class of persons most needed in that new country, it is important that none should go out but those who can contribute something by themselves or by the aid of friends to find their way to Monrovia. It is desirable that families should go whose chief members are agriculturalists, competent to cultivate sugar, coffee, cotton, and other articles important to swell the exports of the country. Any number of cultivators and directors of agricultural pursuits will be welcomed as beneficial to the country.

The Rev. John Seys, who is appointed Agent of the Government of Liberia to proceed to Barbados, is in every way qualified to carry out the intentions of all concerned, Mr. Seys being for more than thirty years connected with Liberia and having filled the important offices of

Missionary among the Aborigines, of being Superintendent of Missions, of being United States Government Agent for Recaptured Africans in Liberia, and of United States Commercial Agent at Monrovia; and also being a most energetic man of just and excellent character and of true piety, is, I repeat, the proper man to go to Barbados to advance this interesting measure; and I hope your Committee and all well disposed persons in Barbados will aid and countenance him and do all that is possible to facilitate the beneficial object of his mission to Bridgetown.

I am, gentlemen, with great regard and respect, and a strong desire that your commendable enterprise should have the most abundant success,

Yours, GERARD RALSTON.

APPENDIX D

Barclay Genealogy

Source: *Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman, The Life of Malvinas Barclay, "Barclay Women in Liberia – Two Generations: A Biographical Dictionary."*

1. Antoinette Hope Barclay, daughter of Anthony Barclay and Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay. The first of twelve children, eleven of whom emigrated from Barbados, with their parents in April, 1865 and arrived in Liberia, May, 1865. Born in Bridgetown, Barbados June 11, 1836. She grew up and was educated in Bridgetown, Barbados. Age twenty-eight and a school mistress at the time of emigration, she continued to work in education in Liberia. She never married or had children. She however had a great influence on her younger siblings. She taught those nieces and nephews living in the Monrovia area through elementary school in a private school which she ran. She died in Monrovia, Liberia January 8, 1909.
2. Ella Mai Gilbert Barclay, daughter of Anthony Barclay and Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay. The last of twelve children, eleven of whom emigrated from Barbados with their parents in April, 1865 and arrived in Liberia May, 1865. Born in Bridgetown, Barbados on May 23, 1856. Educated in Bridgetown, Barbados and in Monrovia, Liberia. Spent the first eight years of her life growing up in Bridgetown, Barbados, and from then to adulthood in Monrovia, Liberia. She married Henry Waldron Grimes in Monrovia, Liberia on January 29, 1883, a union which lasted until he predeceased her June 4, 1894. They had two children, Louis Arthur Grimes and Florence Mai Isabel Grimes and one foster son, Frank Tarr Grimes. She died in Monrovia, Liberia on May 11, 1934.
3. Elizabeth Ann Barclay, the daughter of Anthony Barclay and Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay. The third of twelve children, eleven of whom emigrated from Barbados with their parents in April, 1865, and arrived in Liberia May, 1865. Born in Bridgetown, Barbados on May 6, 1839. Grew up in Bridgetown, Barbados and was educated there. She was nearly twenty-five years of age and a school teacher at the time of emigration. She never married or had any children. She died in Monrovia, Liberia on September 5, 1865, almost four months after the family arrived in Liberia.
4. Florence Emiline Barclay the daughter of Anthony Barclay and Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay. The eleventh of twelve children, eleven of whom emigrated from Barbados with their parents in April, 1865, and arrived in Liberia May, 1865. A twin to her brother Arthur, she was born in Bridgetown, Barbados on July 31, 1854. Grew up in Bridgetown, Barbados and was educated there up to age ten, and thereafter in Monrovia, Liberia. She never married or had children. She died in Monrovia, Liberia on May 7, 1905.

5. Laura Ann Barclay, the daughter of Anthony Barclay and Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay. The ninth of twelve children, eleven of whom emigrated from Barbados with their parents in April, 1865, and arrived in Liberia May, 1865. Born in Bridgetown, Barbados on January 5, 1852. Grew up through childhood years in Bridgetown, Barbados and teenage years to adulthood in Monrovia, Liberia. She was educated in Bridgetown, Barbados and in Monrovia, Liberia. She married Alford Morgan in Monrovia, Liberia on December 30, 1878. Sometime thereafter, moved with him to Grand Bassa, Liberia. They had three children, Frances Alice Hope, Emma Alberta and Edwin Alford Morgan. She taught her three children and her niece, Georgia Ann Barclay, whom she reared through elementary and high school. She died in Grand Bassa, Liberia on April 13, 1925.

6. Malvina Barclay the daughter of Anthony Barclay and Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay. The fourth of twelve children, eleven of whom emigrated from Barbados with their parents in April, 1865, and arrived in Liberia May, 1865. Born in Bridgetown, Barbados on August 31, 1840. Grew up in Bridgetown, Barbados and there. She was twenty-four years of age and a fancy worker at the time of emigration. She never married or had children. She however contributed a lot to the upbringing of the four youngest of her eleven siblings, Laura Ann, Florence Emiline, Arthur, and Ella Mai Gilbert, and also had a strong influence on the lives of her nephews and her nieces. She lived the longest of the children of her parents and was for a number of years at the centre of the Barclay family. In her life sketch written at the time of her death by her nephew, Louis Arthur Grimes, she was described by him as an “ideal housewife, pastry cook, fine needle-worker, and disciplinarian.” She died in Monrovia, Liberia on May 6, 1936, the seventh anniversary of the birth of her younger sister, Elizabeth Ann.

7. Mary Augusta Barclay, the daughter of Anthony Barclay and Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay. The second of twelve children, eleven of whom emigrated from Barbados with their parents in April, 1865, and arrived in Liberia May, 1865. Born in Bridgetown, Barbados on August 11, 1837. Grew up in Bridgetown, Barbados and was educated there. She was twenty-seven years of age and a confectioner at the time of emigration. She married Samuel S. Herring in Grand Bassa, Liberia in 1887. She had no children. She died in Grand Bassa, Liberia in Liberia, September 24, 1898.

8. Sarah Helena Barclay the daughter of Anthony Barclay and Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay. The sixth of twelve children, eleven of whom emigrated from Barbados with their parents in April, 1865, and arrived in Liberia May, 1865. Born in Bridgetown, Barbados on August 21, 1844. Grew up in Bridgetown, Barbados and was educated there. Was twenty years of age and a music teacher at the time of emigration. On May 17, 1873, she married Joseph J. Blyden, an emigrant from the Virgin Islands and the brother of Liberia’s Secretary of State, Edward Blyden. She had no children. She died in Monrovia, Liberia on May 22, 1902.

9. Sarah Elizabeth Braxton Cooper, daughter of Carter Braxton and Adeline Braxton. Born in Monrovia, Liberia, August 6, 1869. She married Jessie Cooper at the age of twenty-one. She also became the fourth wife of Arthur Barclay, marrying him on the death of her first husband, Jessie R. Cooper, and after the death of his third wife, Florence Alice Lane Cooper King. Their Union lasted until his death on July 10, 1938. All of her children were for her first husband, Jessie R. Cooper, Henry, Adeline, Anna, and Magdalene. She also had one stepson, Charles Cooper. She was a leader in the Pentecostal Church in Liberia. An ardent worker for this church, she provided accommodations in Monrovia for their missionaries, who were based outside of Monrovia, and played a leading role in building a modern concrete structure on Front Street, Monrovia for the church, to replace the old structure which they were using for worship. She died in Monrovia, September 1955.

10. Florence Alice Lane Cooper King, the third wife of Arthur Barclay and his wife throughout his years and as President of Liberia, 1904 to 1912. She married him in 1903 on the death of her second husband, Senator Alfred B. King, and after the death of Barclay's second wife, Jane Euphemia Seton Davis Barclay. Her first husband was Samuel Ford Cooper, for whom she bore the only child she had, a son, whose name was John W Cooper. After her husband's death, she married Alfred B. King, a leading politician who served as Senator from Monterrado County from 1892-1901. He predeceased her on December 12, 1901. While married to King, they resided in Clay-Ashland, St. Paul River. At the time, she was regarded as one of the leading teachers on the St. Paul River and a prominent citizen. William H. Heard in his book, *The Bright Side of African Life*, described her as a "companionable, intelligent, industrious, and a lover of race." She was known in Liberia as a powerful and influential woman, an asset to Arthur Barclay in the election campaign of 1903 for his bid to the presidency of the nation. She died in Monrovia, Liberia, several years after Barclay's presidency ended.

11. Jane Euphemia Seton Davis Lomax, daughter of Samuel W. Tobe Kade Seton and Harriet Vaughan Seton, both of the Grebo ethnic group was born in Cape Palmas Liberia. The second wife of Arthur Barclay. She was educated in Cape Palmas, Liberia, and Freetown, Sierra Leone. She graduated from the Annie Walsh Girls' School in Freetown, Sierra Leone. She married William McCall Davis in 1882. He predeceased her on February 17, 1892. Children from this union, William, Alfred, Euphemia Mary. Married after death of Davis of Colonel Thomas C. Lomax who also predeceased her. Children from this union, Thomas C. Lomax, Jnr. She married after the death of Lomax to Arthur Barclay. She died in Monrovia, Liberia.

12. Mary Louise Marshall, daughter of John Francis Marshall, one of the 346 persons who emigrated from Barbados, West Indies in April 1865. Born in Barbados, she spent the early years growing up there. She was the first wife of Arthur Barclay and the only

wife who bore him children: Anthony, Gerald, Sarah Elizabeth and Mary Louise Barclay. She died in Monrovia, Liberia.

Generation Three of Barclay Women in Liberia

13. Georgia Ann Barclay, daughter of Anthony Barclay II, the fifth of the twelve children of Anthony Barclay and Sarah Ann Bourne Barclay. She was probably born in Schiefflin, Liberia and reared in Grand Bassa Liberia by her aunt, Laura Ann Morgan, and her husband Alford Morgan. She was taught through high school by her aunt, Laura Ann Morgan, along with her aunt's three children, Frances Alice Hope, Emma Alberta, and Edwin Alford. She moved to Monrovia, Liberia at the age of eighteen or nineteen to attend Liberia College, but did not enter. She never married and had no children but fostered several children. She died in Monrovia in October 1971.

14. Mary Louise Barclay, daughter of Arthur Barclay and Mary Marshall Barclay, both of West Indian descent. Born in Monrovia, Liberia, she grew up and was educated in Monrovia, taught by her aunt, Antoinette Hope Barclay. She married James Stanley Padmore and had two children Antoinette Louise and George Arthur Padmore. She died in 1919 of the influenza plague which engulfed the world at the close of World War I.

15. Sarah Elizabeth Barclay, daughter of Arthur Barclay and Mary Marshall Barclay. She was born in Monrovia, Liberia and grew up and was educated in Monrovia taught by her aunt Antoinette Hope Barclay. She married Reginald A. Sherman and moved with him to Robertsport, Cape Mount, Liberia. She had four children, Arthur, Reginald, Florence, Ann Lucretia. She died in March 1927.

16. Victoria Elizabeth Jelloh Cheeseman, daughter of Ambollai Fahnbulleh and Jarsie Fahnbulleh of the Vai ethnic group. She was the foster daughter of Joseph James Cheeseman and Mary Ann Crusoe Cheeseman, both of Americo-Liberian descent. She was born in Jondu, Cape Mount, Liberia, February 1889. He spent the first six years of her life in Jondu; seventh year in Monrovia in the Executive Mansion with her foster parents, President and Mrs. Cheeseman. She grew up from eight years old in Edina, Grand Bassa, Liberia, with her foster mother, Mrs. Cheeseman. Attended Brierly Memorial in Harper, Cape Palmas, Liberia. She married Louis Arthur Grimes in Edina, Grand Bassa, December 11, 1911 and moved with him to Monrovia. The marriage lasted until he predeceased her December 14, 1948. She had five children, Louis Arthur, Henry Waldron, Joseph Rudolph, Ernest Marbue, and Mary Antoinette Hope. She reared her first grandchild, James Rudolph Grimes, and fostered twenty children, eleven boys and nine girls. Her Christian faith was strong and she was active in the Episcopal Church (Trinity) from the time of her marriage until the final years of her life. She was also active in the Eastern Star, a sister organization of the Ancient Free and accepted masons,

and in community service organizations such as the Antoinette Tubman Children's Welfare Foundation and the Y.W.C.A. She died in Monrovia on April 19, 1970.

17. Harriet Lylian Crayton, daughter of Lylian Davis Crayton and her husband. Born in Sinoe, Liberia, August 19, 1913. She grew up and was educated in Grand Bassa, Liberia. She attended Hartzell Academy, later renamed Bassa High School. The second wife of Edwin A. Morgan. He married her after his divorce from Sarah Woods Morgan, They had one child, Laura Allen. The marriage ended in divorce in 1955. She died in 1991 during the civil war in Liberia at LAMCO Hospital, Buchanan, Grand Bassa, Liberia.

18. Euphemia Mary Davis, daughter of William McCall Davis of Americo-Liberian descent and Jane Seton Davis of the Grebo ethnic group. Born in Monrovia, Liberia, July 19, 1884. She grew up and was educated in Monrovia. She graduated in 1905 with the Bachelor of Arts degree from Liberia College, now University of Liberia. This was the first class in the history of the institution to graduate girls, four girls out of a total of eleven persons. She married Edwin James Barclay in Monrovia July 18, 1906. During much of the marriage, her husband was in significant positions in the Liberian Government, among them, Secretary of State, 1920-1930, and President of the nation, 1930-1944. Thus she was in the limelight of the nation for more than two decades. Their union lasted until his death, November 6, 1955. She had no children but fostered a number of children. She died in Monrovia on January 15, 1967.

19. Etmonia Diggs, daughter of William Henry Diggs and Sarah Worrell Diggs. She was born in April 7, 1906 in Monrovia. The third wife of Anthony Barclay III. He married her in 1939 after his divorce from Cecelia Phelps Barclay, and their union lasted until his death. She grew up in Monrovia and attended the College of West Africa up to grade eleven. She had no children but reared two stepsons, Anthony Barclay IV and Emmanuel Barclay, and also fostered a number of children, among them Osborne Diggs and several other close relatives of hers. A nurse, she served a number of years at the Liberia Government Hospital in Monrovia, now the J.F.K Medical Center. She was also a humanitarian, founding with her husband the Barclay Mission School, which contributed to the free education of many children. She died in Paynesville, Liberia February 2, 1969.

20. Florence Mai Isabel Grimes, daughter of Henry Waldron Grimes and Ella Mai Gilbert Barclay Grimes, both of West Indian descent. Born in Monrovia, March 16, 1885. She grew up and was educated in Monrovia. In 1905, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Liberia College, now University of Liberia. This was the first class in the history of the institution to graduate girls. She married Richard Stanley Wiles in Monrovia on August 7, 1907, a union which lasted until her death, and which produced eight children Florence Lducia, Ella, Irene, Mai, Stanley, Reid Page, Richard Jones, and Louis Wiles. She also fostered a number of children. She was active in church. In the mid-1950s, she became President of what was at the time called the General Auxiliary,

the organization of women of the then Episcopal Diocese of Liberia, now Episcopal Church of Liberia. She was also active in the Eastern Starr, the sister organization of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. She died in Monrovia on November 26, 1962.

21. Rhoda Manly, daughter of Edward Manley and Etta Jolly Manly. The third wife of Edwin Morgan, born in Lower Buchanan, Grand Bassa, Liberia, May 15, 1927. She received her elementary education at Suehn Mission; high school education in the then Preparatory Department of Liberia College. She also did two years of collegiate studies at Liberia College. She married Edwin Morgan on May 19, 1956, after his divorce to Harriet Lylian Morgan. The marriage lasted until his death in October 1959. Children from this union included Roland, Edwin and Marie. She also reared three girls Henrietta Page, Julia Moore, and Doris Yukoyu. She was a housewife but also managed the family farm in Owensgrove, Grand Bassa, Liberia.

22. Emma Alberta Morgan, daughter of Alford Morgan and Laura Ann Barclay Morgan. Born in Edina, Grand Bassa County, Liberia in 1887. She grew up in Grand Bassa County. She was taught through high school with her siblings, Frances Alice Hope and Edwin Alford, and her first cousin, Georgina Ann Barclay by her mother, Laura Ann Barclay Morgan. She married Zacharia Burch Russ in Lower Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, in 1907. Children from this union, two sons, Alford Cornelius and Zacharia Roberts Russ. She also fostered a number of children. She was a housewife. She died in Greenville, Sinoe County, Liberia in 1923 at a relatively young age when her older son, Alford was fifteen years old, and her younger son Zacharia, ten years old.

23. Frances Alice Hope Morgan, daughter of Alford Morgan and Laura Ann Barclay Morgan. She was born and grew up in Grand Bassa County. She was taught through high school with her siblings Emma Alberta and Edwin Alford, and her first cousin Georgia Ann Barclay, by her mother Laura Ann Barclay Morgan. She married Reverend Joshua Davis, a clergyman in the Episcopal Church. She had seven children all of whom died in infancy except one son Warrick, who died around age twenty-two, also predeceasing her. She taught in schools in Buchanan, Grand Bassa. She succeeded Professor Dayrell in the 1930s as Principal of Hartzell Academy, later renamed Bassa High School, and served in this position until 1942. She died in Grand Bassa.

24. Cecelia Phelps, the third wife of Anthony Barclay III. He married her after his divorce to Sarah Raynes Barclay. This union also ended in divorce.

25. Sarah Raynes, daughter of Samuel Raynes and Eliza Fuller Raynes. Born in Greenville, Sinoe County, Liberia October 15, 1895. She grew up in Greenville and Monrovia and was also educated in Liberia. She married Anthony Barclay on April 17, 1917. Children from this union included three girls, Malvina, Elizabeth, and Mary. She also fostered a number of children. The union with Anthony Barclay, III, was dissolved

by divorce. She subsequently married Sir Harold Fredericks. She was a successful business woman for years. She died in Monrovia on January 16, 1992.

26. Sarah Euphemia Woods, daughter of E. Tyson Woods and Maria Liberty Woods. The first wife of Edwin Morgan. She was born on July 21 1895 in Harper, Cape Palmas. She grew up in Harper. On the death of her father, her uncle Stephen Liberty, father of Maggie Dingwall, the family moved them to Edina, Grand Bassa. She was then about eight or nine years old. She spent some time there and moved to Monrovia to continue school. She attended Bromley Mission, St. Paul River, Clay-Ashland, during which period she spent her vacations in Monrovia with Mrs. Lucretia Johnson, a relative. From the union with Edwin A. Morgan, five children were born, three girls, Frances, Christine, and Florence and two boys, Lawrence and Edwin. This union ended in divorce. She died in Lower Buchanan, Grand Bassa, on January 21, 1941.

APPENDIX E

TRANSCRIPT OF COURT CASE of RICHARD J. Wiles, Appellant, vs. FLORENCE J. Wiles, Appellee

RICHARD J. Wiles, Appellant, vs. FLORENCE J. Wiles, Appellee

[January Term, A. D. 1904.]

Appeal from the Court of Quarter Sessions and Common Pleas, Montserrado County.

Partition— Homestead.

A homestead set apart under and by virtue of the "Homestead and Household Exemption Act" answers to an estate in coparceny. The estate constituting such homestead cannot be devised while there are living heirs of the original householder.

This case was brought in the equity jurisdiction of the Court of Quarter Sessions and Common Pleas of Montserrado County, at its March term 1903, by Florence J. Wiles, appellee (petitioner in the court below), upon a petition in equity, for the partition of certain real property; to wit, lots 96 and 97, situated in the city of Monrovia, of which James T. Wiles, the father of appellee, was once seized, and which, during his residence thereon, that is to say, in May, 1899, he had set apart from the rest of his estate as a homestead for himself and his family, agreeable with the Homestead Exemption Act of 1889.

The pleadings appear to have stopped here, but when the petition was called up for hearing, Richard J. Wiles, the appellant before this court, appeared by counsel and objected to the granting of said petition, upon the ground that the said property which constituted the subject-matter of the petition had been devised by the will of James T. Wiles, unto Richard J. Wiles, the appellant, and W. S. Wiles, his brother. The court below overruled the objections of the appellant and rejected the claim sought to be set upon said property by virtue of the will of James T. Wiles, and gave the following decree in the premises, to wit:

"That no one taking advantage of the said Homestead Exemption Act can afterwards dispose of said property by will or otherwise without having first applied to a court having competent jurisdiction and annulling his said act with regard to said homestead. Therefore this court decrees that the said homestead of J. T. Wiles, viz., lots 96 and 97, be held by the said Florence J. Wiles, and Richard J. Wiles, heirs of the said J. T. Wiles, equally between them, as they are the only surviving heirs of J. T. Wiles."

To this decree appellant excepted and has brought the case before this tribunal for review.

It having been admitted in the arguments by the learned counsels, first, that the said J. T. Wiles did place the estate in question under the Homestead Exemption Act, and secondly, that the said J. T. Wiles did afterwards devise said estate unto his two sons, W. S. and Richard J. Wiles there remains no question on the facts averred on both sides for this court to consider, and therefore we proceed to examine and construe the law bearing on the case. To enable us to

consider systematically the several doctrines of law involved, we deem it convenient to arrange the case under the following heads:

1. What is the legal status of an estate upon which a homestead has been declared under the Homestead Exemption law of the country?
2. Who are the parties whom the statute contemplates shall enjoy an interest and derive a benefit out of a homestead estate?
3. What kind of an estate, as between the parties interested, does a homestead create?
4. Does an ancestor or "head of family" who may place property under the above cited act still retain an absolute fee therein?
5. If not, can he at his option alienate such an estate by will or otherwise?

Before going further we would remark that the law of homestead exemption is of comparatively recent origin. Anterior to the last century this species of real estate was unknown to the law. It is one of the two great doctrines which have been introduced into the law during the nineteenth century and which have marked the development of the legal science in the United States. This species of real property was first brought forward under the constitution and statutory enactments of Texas, when it existed as a separate and distinct Republic. A doctrine founded upon such a sound and judicious basis, instituted not for the purpose of encouraging and stimulating a tendency to fraud, but, on the contrary, with a view to protecting the honest and upright landholder against failures in the ordinary affairs of life,— failures which may at any moment dispossess the honest.

APPENDIX F

Map of Liberia



APPENDIX G

Treaty Declaration of the President of Liberia

WHEREAS, a treaty of friendship and commerce between the Republic of Liberia and Her Britannic Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, was concluded and signed by their plenipotentiaries at London on the 21st day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight, which treaty being word for word as follows:

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Republic of Liberia, being desirous to conclude a treaty of peace and friendship, and to regulate thereby the commercial intercourse between the dominions and subjects of Her Majesty, and the territories and citizens of the Republic; Her Majesty has for this purpose named as Her Plenipotentiaries, that is to say:—

The Right honorable Henry John Viscount Palmerston, Baron Temple, a Peer of Ireland, a member of Her Britannic Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, a Member of Parliament, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, and Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and (he Right Honorable Henry Labouchere, a Member of Her Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, a Member of Parliament, and President of the Committee of Privy Council for Affairs of Trade and Foreign Plantations.

And the Republic of Liberia, having, by resolutions of the Legislature, bearing date the 4th of February, 1848, authorized and empowered Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the President of the Republic, to conclude such Treaty on behalf of the Republic.

The Plenipotentiaries of Her Majesty, and the said President of the Republic, after having communicated to each other their respective powers, have agreed upon and concluded the following articles:

ARTICLE I.

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Her heirs and successors, and the Republic of Liberia, and between their respective subjects and citizens. ARTICLE n.

There shall be reciprocal freedom of commerce between the British dominions and the Republic of Liberia. The subjects of Her Britannic Majesty may reside in, and trade to, any part of the territories of the Republic to which any other foreigners are or shall be admitted. They shall enjoy full protection for their persons and properties; they shall be allowed to buy from and to sell to whom they like, without being restrained or prejudiced by any monopoly, contract, or exclusive privilege of sale or purchase whatever; and they shall moreover enjoy all other rights and privileges which are or may be granted to any other foreigners, subjects or citizens, of the most favored nation. The citizens of the

Republic of Liberia shall, in return, enjoy similar protection and privileges in the dominions of Her Britannic Majesty.

ARTICLE III.

No tonnage, import, or other duties or charges, shall be levied in the Republic of Liberia on British vessels, or on goods imported or exported in British vessels, beyond what are or may be levied on national vessels, or on the like goods imported or exported in national vessels; and in like manner, no tonnage, import, or other duties or charges, shall be levied in the British dominions on vessels of the Republic, or on goods imported or exported in those vessels, beyond what are or may be levied on national vessels, or on the like goods imported or exported in national vessels.

ARTICLE IV.

Merchandise or goods coming from the British dominions in any vessel, or imported in British vessels from any country, shall not be prohibited by the Republic of Liberia, nor be subject to higher duties than are levied on the same kinds of merchandise or goods coming from any other foreign country, or imported in any other vessels.

All articles the produce of the Republic may be exported therefrom by British subjects and British vessels, on as favorable terms as by the subjects and vessels of any other foreign country.

ARTICLE V.

It being the intention of the Government of the Republic of Liberia to trade in certain articles of import, with a view to raising a revenue by selling them at a fixed advance upon the cost price, it is hereby agreed that in no case shall private merchants be absolutely prohibited from importing any of such articles, or any article in which the Government of the Republic may at any time see fit to trade; nor shall such articles, or any article in which the Government of the Republic may at any time see fit to trade, be subject to a duty of a greater amount than the amount of the advance upon the cost price at which the Government may from time to time be bound to sell the same.

In case the Government of the Republic shall at any time fix the price of any article of native produce, with a view to such article being taken in payment for any articles in which the Government may trade, such article of native produce shall be received into the treasury at the same fixed price, in payment of taxes, from all persons trading with the Republic.

ARTICLE VI.

The protection of the Government of the Republic shall be afforded to all British vessels, their officers and crews. If any such vessels should *be* wrecked on the coast of the Republic, the, local authorities shall succour them, and shall secure them from plunder,

and shall cause all articles saved from the wreck to be restored to their lawful owners. The amount of salvage dues in such cases shall be regulated, in the event of dispute, by arbitrators chosen by both parties.

ARTICLE VII.

It being the intention of the two Contracting Parties to bind themselves by the present Treaty to treat each other on the footing of the most favored nation, it is hereby agreed between them', that any favor, privilege, or immunity whatever, in matters of commerce and navigation, which either Contracting Party has actually granted, or may hereafter grant, to the subjects or citizens of any other State, shall be extended to the subjects or citizens of the other Contracting Party, gratuitously, if the concession in favor of that other State shall have been gratuitous, or in return for a compensation as nearly as possible of proportionate value and effect, to be adjusted by mutual agreement, if the concession shall have been conditional. . . . ,

ARTICLE VIII.

Each Contracting Party may appoint Consuls for the protection of trade, to reside in the dominions of the other; but no such Consul shall enter upon the exercise of his functions until he shall have been approved and admitted, in the usual form, by the Government of the country to which he is sent.

ARTICLE IX.

Slavery and the Slave Trade being perpetually abolished in the Republic of Liberia, the Republic engages that a law shall be passed, declaring it to be piracy for any Liberian citizen or vessel to be engaged or concerned in the Slave Trade.

The Republic engages to permit any British vessel of war which may be furnished with special instructions under the treaties between Great Britain and Foreign Powers for the prevention of the Slave Trade, to visit any vessels sailing under the Liberia flag, which may, on reasonable grounds, be suspected of being engaged in the Slave Trade; and if, by the result of the visit, it should appear to the officer in command of such British vessel of war that the suspicions which led thereto are well-grounded the vessel shall be sent without delay to a Liberian port, and shall be delivered up to the Liberian authorities to be proceeded against according to the laws of the republic.

ARTICLE X.

The Republic of Liberia further engages to permit any British vessel of war which may be furnished with special instructions as aforesaid, to visit, on the coast within the jurisdiction of the Republic, or in the ports of the same, any vessel which may be suspected of being engaged in the Slave Trade, and which shall be found sailing under any flag whatever, or without any flag; and if the suspicions which led to the visit should appear to the officer in command of such British vessel of war to be well grounded, to

detain such vessel, in order to send it as soon as possible before the competent court for adjudication.

Duly constituted ports of entry in the Republic of Liberia shall be excepted from the operation of the stipulations of the present article; and no vessel shall be visited by a British cruiser within the limits of such ports, except on permission specially granted by the local authorities.

ARTICLE XI.

The present treaty shall be ratified, and the ratifications shall be exchanged at London within the space of twelve months from the date hereof.

In witness whereof the Plenipotentiaries of Her Britannic Majesty, and the President of the Republic of Liberia, have signed the same, and have affixed thereto their respective seals.

Done at London, the twenty-first day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-eight.

PL. s.T = PALMERSTON.

FL. s.j H. LAROUCHERE.

[I. s.] J. J. ROBERTS.

And whereas the said treaty has been duly ratified on both parts and the respective ratifications of the same were exchanged at London on the 1st day of August, 1849, by Thos. Hodgkin, agent for this Republic, and the Right Honorable Viscount Palmerston, &c. &c. &c.

Now therefore be it known, that I, Joseph J. Roberts, President of the Republic of Liberia, have caused the said treaty to be made public, to the end that the same and every clause and article thereof, may be

observed and fulfilled with good faith by the Republic and the citizens thereof.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic to be affixed. Done at the Town of Monrovia, this 25th day of September, A. D. 1849, and of the Independence of the Republic the Third.

By the President,

J. J. ROBERTS. J. N. LEWIS,

Secretary of State, ad interim.

APPENDIX H

Letter From Gerard Ralston to Edward Everett

To the HON. EDWARD EVERETT:

DEAR SIR— I see by the admirable speech which you made to the American Colonization Society on the 18th of January, 1853, that you are an advocate for the recognition by our country of the independence of Liberia. Most sincerely do I hope this net of justice may speedily be effected. In a recent letter from President Roberts, he informs me that Mr. Van de Weycr, has announced to him the recognition of Liberia by Belgium. Thus Liberia is now acknowledged by two imperial governments, Brazil and France, and three royal ones, Great Britain, Prussia, and Belgium. Several other European powers are soon expected to do likewise. Our great republic refuses, still refuses acknowledgment of this daughter republic! This may with great propriety be called a daughter republic, because all the Liberians (except the most youthful,) are native-born Americans, and they have our laws, language, religion, and institutions. I fear this refusal, or rather this negligence to do this act of justice, will be productive of bad consequences. I fear an alienation of feeling from the mother country. I apprehend from the neglect of the government at Washington to own this infant republic, not only the loss of affection in a tender relative to our country, but also the loss of influence and of trade. Mr. Roberts, in his letter to me, mentions that the trade between Liberia and England is increasing with astonishing rapidity, and the British government is sparing no pains to increase British interests in Liberia. Mr. Roberts' words are, "Indeed they are laying the foundation of a trade between Liberia and England, that will in a few years astonish the most sanguine," and he also says—" And is it not clear that, when commercial intercourse and business relations shall have been once established between Liberian and English merchants, it will be exceedingly difficult to divert them into other channels!" To my knowledge, from a close observation of things here, I am satisfied that the trade between this country and Liberia is becoming of the utmost importance. The establishment of a line of steamers going to and coming from Liberia once a month, has been in existence more than eight months. This regular line, independently of the Cape of Good Hope steamers, and the Australian steamers calling at Liberia occasionally, is stimulating trade in the most extraordinary manner. In the course of a few months there will be established another line of powerful steamers running to Liberia from Liverpool, thus making a fortnightly regular communication for the conveyance of letters, merchandise, and passengers between Africa and England. Already the consumptive demand for palm-oil, arrow-root, ginger, pepper, camwood, ivory, gold, and other African products, is far in excess of the supply, and there has arisen within a short time a greatly increased demand for palm-oil, —and in consequence a greatly enhanced price—owing to the announced intention of the chancellor of the exchequer to abolish the excise duty on soap. In consequence of this wise measure—the abolition of excise duty on soap— the consumption of the oil of ground-nuts, which has hitherto been almost unknown in England, will now become almost as important as that of palm-oil. It is in France hitherto that the great consumption in ground-nut oil has occurred. It is there used to mix with olive-oil for the table, but principally in the manufacture of soap, which, though preferred abroad, is very little used

in England, principally because of the excise. The specific gravity of soap made from groundnut oil is higher than the excise law permitted, and in consequence the English could not use this oil for soap, either for domestic consumption or for foreign export, and thus France has substantially had a monopoly of the soap trade of the world. By the repeal of the excise duty, England will be enabled to compete in this, as in all other trades, with France in foreign countries. The importation of ground-nuts from the coast of Africa into Bordeaux, Marseilles, and other French ports, has been exceedingly great for twelve or fifteen years past, and has been constantly augmenting most rapidly. Captain Lynch saw fourteen vessels at Goree loading with ground-nuts for France, when he called at that port a few weeks ago. The English are doing everything in their power to induce the Liberians to pay attention to the growth of cotton, which being an indigenous and perennial (not annual, as in our country,) production, must become an article of large export before many years. The dearest object of an Englishman is to get clear of any contact with slavery, and hence the exertion to become independent of the supply of cotton from our country.

I have lately seen Captain Lynch of the American Navy, on his return from Liberia, who represents the trade with England as increasing very fast. He says the steamer he came in from Monrovia, although of one thousand tons burden, could have been filled with merchandise if she had been double the size. She was compelled to leave a large quantity of freight behind her. If our government would promote the establishment of the ebony line of steamers (not larger than 1,500 tons each) from a port in the Chesapeake Bay, and acknowledge the independence of Liberia, there would flow the greatest advantages not only to the admirable cause of colonization, and increased Commerce with Africa, but to the well-being of that promising and interesting republic Liberia. I exceedingly regret that while you and Mr. Filmore were at the head of the late government at Washington, the recognition of Liberia could not be made, but I suppose there were reasons for this of which I am not aware. I have no doubt that when the opportunity arrives, as a member of the United States Senate, this important matter will have your hearty support.

Captain Lynch told me with regret that Maryland in Liberia has declared herself independent. This very small community I fear cannot exist as an independent State. As a county of Liberia she might with great propriety be annexed to the elder republic. I hope the American Colonization Society will use their influence with both the Liberians and the Marylanders in Liberia to bring about this desirable Amalgamation. As Mr. Latrobe is now elected President, and you, sir, Vice-President of the American Colonization Society, I hope the desirable measure may be effectuated. I know President Roberts thinks there are great difficulties in the way of annexation, but I trust they may be overcome.

Captain Lynch told me, and Mr. Roberts, repeatedly, during his sojourn in London, confirmed the information, that the great want of Liberia is respectable emigrants from our country; colored emigrants cannot go in numbers too great, provided they be really well disposed, industrious, and energetic people. The American Colonization Society has done me the honor of electing me a Vice-President for many years past, (since 1840.)

although I have been continuously absent from home for the last twelve years. I am sorry I have so little opportunity of showing my "high appreciation of the distinguished honor conferred upon me, but I beg that whenever my services may be useful in any way, either to the Society at Washington, or to the Republic of Liberia, I may be called upon without reserve. Your obedient and humble servant,

GERARD RALSTON.

APPENDIX I

British and Foreign State Papers, Volume 52 (Great Britain. Foreign Office); 925 - 929

POSTAL CONVENTION between the British and Liberian Governments.—Signed in London, January 20, 1858.

THE Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Government of the Republic of Liberia, being desirous to promote the friendly relations existing between the two countries, and to regulate, by means of a Convention, the communication by post between the British dominions and the territories of the Republic, have named for this purpose, that is to say :

The Postmaster General of Her Britannic Majesty has named Rowland Hill, Esquire, Secretary of the General Post Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and his Excellency the President of the Republic of Liberia has named Gerard Ralston, Esquire, Consul General of the said Republic for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, who, after having communicated to each other their respective full powers, found to be in good and due form, have agreed upon the following Articles:

ART. I. The total amount of postage to be collected in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland upon ordinary letters posted in the United Kingdom addressed to Liberia, and conveyed between the United Kingdom and Liberia, by British mail packet, shall be as follows :

For every letter not exceeding the weight of half an ounce British, one rate of 6rf., of which 5*d.* shall represent the British postage, and 1*d.* the Liberian postage.

Reciprocally, the total amount of postage to be collected in the Republic of Liberia upon ordinary letters posted in Liberia, addressed to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and conveyed between Liberia and the United Kingdom by British mail packets, shall be as follows

every letter not exceeding the weight of half an ounce British, one rate of 12 cents United States' currency, of which 2 cents shall represent the Liberian postage, and 10 cents the British postage.

With respect to the charge upon letters above the weight of half an ounce British, the following scale of progression shall be adopted in both countries :

For every letter above the weight of half an ounce British, and not exceeding one ounce, two rates :

For every letter above the weight of one ounce British, and not exceeding two ounces, four rates ;

For every letter above the weight of two ounces British, and not exceeding three ounces, six rates j

And so on, two rates being added for every additional ounce or fraction of an ounce.

The prepayment of these rates of postage shall be compulsory.

II. In exception to the concluding stipulation of Article I preceding, it is agreed that every letter posted in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland addressed to Liberia, or posted in Liberia addressed to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, upon which letter an amount of postage insufficient for its prepayment has been paid, shall be forwarded to its destination provided the postage has been prepaid to the extent at least of one rate of *6d.*, or 12 cents. Upon such letter there shall be collected by the office which delivers it the amount of the difference between the postage prepaid and the postage which should have been prepaid, together with a fixed additional rate of *1/2d.*, or 12 cents as a fine.

The whole amount collected on the delivery of insufficiently paid letters shall be divided between the Post Offices of the two countries in the same proportion as the postage which is prepaid.

III. The Post Offices of the two countries shall mutually account to each other for the portion of the postage which is due to each upon the letters dispatched from one office to the other.

The Post Office of Liberia shall pay to the British Post Office for all paid letters forwarded from Liberia addressed to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland the sum of *5d.* for every letter not exceeding the weight of half an ounce.

The Post Office of Liberia shall further pay to the British Post Office the postage due to Great Britain for insufficiently paid letters forwarded to Liberia, according to the basis laid down in Article II preceding.

Reciprocally the British Post Office shall pay to the Post Office of Liberia for all paid letters forwarded from the United Kingdom addressed to Liberia the sum of *1d.* for every letter not exceeding the weight of half an ounce.

The British Post Office shall further pay to the Post Office of Liberia the postage due to Liberia for insufficiently paid letters forwarded to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, according to the basis laid down in Article II preceding.

IV. The Post Office of Liberia shall pay to the British Post Office for paid letters originating in Liberia, and transmitted by way of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to British colonies or countries beyond sea, as well as for unpaid letters originating in British colonies or countries beyond sea, and forwarded by way of the United Kingdom addressed to Liberia, as follows:

1st. The sum of *5d.* per single letter, viz., *4sd.* for the sea conveyance between the United Kingdom and Liberia, and *1/2d.* for the transit over the territory of the United Kingdom :

2ndly. The sea rate paid by the British public upon letters exchanged between the United Kingdom and British colonies or foreign countries beyond sea:

3rdly. The foreign or colonial rate or rates paid by the British Post Office to the Post Offices of the foreign countries or British colonies to or from which the letters are forwarded.

Table A annexed to this Convention shows the total amounts to be accounted for by the Post Office of Liberia upon letters of this class.

Y. The Post Office of Liberia shall pay to the British Post Office for every letter not exceeding the weight of half an ounce forwarded from a port in Liberia by the British mail packets to any other port on the west coast of Africa, or to any port at which those packets may touch on their voyage to and from the United Kingdom, the sum of 4rf., and for heavier letters in proportion, according to the scale laid down in Article I preceding.

For every newspaper forwarded in like manner the Post Office of Liberia shall pay to the British Post Office the sum of *Id.*

VI. The British Post Office may send registered letters from the United Kingdom addressed to Liberia, and the Post Office of Liberia may, on its side, send registered letters from Liberia addressed to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

A fee, or additional charge, the amount of which the dispatching office shall fix, may be levied and retained in the country from which the registered letters are dispatched; but no postage, duty, or tax whatever shall be levied on the delivery of registered letters forwarded from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland addressed to Liberia, or forwarded from Liberia addressed to the United Kingdom.

VII. The Post Office of Liberia may also send to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland registered letters addressed to the following British colonies, viz.:—Malta, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, the British "West Indies, the Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, South Australia, Western Australia, Canada, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Natal, and Mauritius.

Upon every registered letter so forwarded, the Post Office of Liberia shall account to the British Post Office for the sum of *6d.*, in addition to the postage due to the British Post Office.

VIII. The addresses of registered letters sent from one country to the other shall be entered by the dispatching office in the Table which is provided for the purpose in the Letter Bill, with, such particulars as are pointed out by the said Table.

These letters shall be tied together with a cross string, the ends of which shall be made fast to the bottom of the letter bill by means of a seal made of sealing-wax.

IX. Upon every British newspaper duly registered at the General Post Office for transmission abroad, posted in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, addressed to Liberia, a postage of *Id.* only shall be collected in advance by the British Post Office, and no charge whatever shall be made on its delivery in Liberia.

Reciprocally, upon every newspaper posted in Liberia addressed to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, a postage of 2 cents only shall be collected in advance by the Post Office of Liberia, and no charge whatever shall be made on its delivery in the United Kingdom.

X. Upon every newspaper originating in any British colony or country beyond sea forwarded through the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, addressed to Liberia, and upon every newspaper originating in Liberia addressed to any British colony or country beyond sea, the

Post Office of Liberia shall pay to the British Post Office the sum of *Id.*; and, in addition, any foreign transit postage with which the newspaper may be chargeable when conveyed by way of any foreign country.

XI. Subject to the following conditions, book packets may be sent from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to Liberia, and *vice versa* :

1st. The postage must be prepaid, but the dispatching office may, if it think proper, permit a book packet, prepaid to the extent at least of one rate, to be forwarded to its destination; in such case the packet shall be charged with the deficiency, together with one additional rate of postage as a fine.

2ndly. Every packet must be sent either without a cover or in a cover open at the ends or sides, so as to admit of the enclosure being removed for examination.

3rdly. A book packet may contain any number of separate books or other publications, prints, or maps, and any quantity of paper, parchment, or vellum; and the books or other publications, prints, maps, &c., may be either printed, written, or plain, or any mixture of the three. Further, all legitimate binding, mounting, or covering of a book, publication, Ac., or of a portion thereof, shall be allowed, whether such binding, &c., be loose or attached ; as also rollers in the case of prints or maps, markers (whether of paper or otherwise) in the case of books ; and in short, whatever is necessary for the safe transmission of literary or artistic matter, or usually appertains thereto ; but no patterns or books of patterns (unless consisting merely of paper) shall be allowed.

APPENDIX J

The First Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony Drawn Before 1780.

The seal depicts a dejected Indian/Native American with his arrows turned down. He is saying “Come over and help us.” In the Bible, in Acts Chapter 16, Verse 9, Christians are told “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.”



APPENDIX K

Poetry Composed by Dr. Gibson for Arthur Barclay

He died at his post of duty,
And the Nation's heart is wrung.
No death of greater beauty
By poet has ever been sung,
In silence deep, he shares the sleep
That falls on young and old

What are thy thoughts, O nation,
As he lies calmly dead;
Who filled thy highest station,
Thy oft elected head;
Does despair and grief thy bosom fill?
Or sadness reign instead

Out of our grief and sadness,
Out of our anguish and pain
Out of our hearts' deep sorrow
The message of God is plain
That this nation rise through sacrifice
And turn her loss to gain.

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