

## **The Journal of Sierra Leone Studies**

**Editor: John Birchall**

Welcome to The Journal of Sierra Leone Studies. This is the first Journal dedicated solely to Sierra Leone to have been published for a long time.

We hope that it will be of use to academics, students and anyone with an interest in what for many is a rather 'special' country.

The Journal will not concentrate on one area of academic study and invites contributions from anyone researching and writing on Sierra Leone to send their articles to: John Birchall for consideration.

Prospective contributions should be between 3500-5000 words in length, though we will in special circumstances consider longer articles and authors can select whether they wish to be peer reviewed or not. Articles should not have appeared in any other published form before.

The Editorial Board reserves the right to suggest changes they consider are needed to the relevant author (s) and to not publish if such recommendations are ignored.

We are particularly interested to encourage students working on subjects specifically relating to Sierra Leone to submit their work.

Thank you so much for visiting The Journal and we hope that you (a) find it both interesting and of use to you and (b) that you will inform colleagues, friends and students of the existence of a Journal dedicated to the study of Sierra Leone.

John Birchall

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### **Important Notice**

As we were working on this edition of The Journal of Sierra Leone Studies the world became aware of an Ebola outbreak in the South-East of the country. Such a deadly disease was rare in 2014 but its impact on any community could be devastating. Those reading of such events in years to come may live in a time when such diseases are rare or even no longer a threat to human life.

At the time this edition was posted to the internet, Ebola was a disease from which only a minority recovered. As we edit the edition so we think of those affected, their relatives and friends and those brave people who are working with the affected and trying to contain the outbreak

John  
Autumn 2014.

## Articles

### Peer Reviewed

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## Reviews

**Olayinka, A Woman's View: The Life of an African Modern Artist** by Simon Ottenberg. New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2014. 327 pages, 40 colour plates, 15 monochrome plates, and 15 photos. ISBN 1-59221-832-6 (hardcover), 1-59221-833-4 (paperback)

Among the Mende in Sierra Leone – The letters from Sjoerd Hofstra, (1934-36) – Edited by Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra – African Studies Centre, Leiden. ISBN: 978-90-5488-138-6

Justice and Security Reform – Development Agencies and Informal Institutions in Sierra Leone – Lisa Denney – Routledge – ISBN 978-0-415-64250-7

Youth-traditional authorities 'relations in post-war Sierra Leone – Patrick Tom – Children's Geography, 2014 – <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2014.922679>

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**Lieutenant Macormack Charles Farrell Easmon: A Sierra Leonean Medical Officer in the First World War**  
**By Nigel Browne-Davies**



**Figure 1. M.C.F. Easmon at the Sierra Leone Museum (far right)<sup>1</sup>**

**Author and Editor's note:** *M.C.F. Easmon was a notable Sierra Leonean historian who served as the chairman of the Sierra Leone Society and significantly contributed to the Sierra Leone Studies (New Series) a scholarly publication that re-emerged in the 1950s. This article is intended to provide a brief overview of the military service of M.C.F. Easmon, as a medical officer in the Cameroons Campaign of the First World War.*

In scholarly works examining the First World War, the service of African, Asian, and African-Caribbean combatants and non-combatants during the Great War has often been marginalised or over looked.<sup>2</sup> Although some recent academic studies on World War I mention the military service of Africans during the War, African participation in the conflict has largely been neglected.<sup>3</sup> However, the centenary of the First World War has led to greater focus on the contributions and service of non-European servicemen during the Great War.<sup>4</sup> This recent academic focus on the non-European contribution is important; for although the

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<sup>1</sup>Photograph provided courtesy of Mr. Gary Schulze. From left to right: Gary Schulze, one of the first Peace Corps Volunteers to go to Sierra Leone and one time acting curator of the Sierra Leone Museum, Dr Davidson Nicol, the first African Fellow of Cambridge, and Sir Milton A.S. Margai, the first Prime Minister of Sierra Leone.

<sup>2</sup>Farwell, Byron, *The Great War in Africa, 1914-1918*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989) p. 14. Stapleton, Timothy J., *No Insignificant Part: The Rhodesia Native Regiment and the East Africa Campaign of the First World War*, (Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), p. 6. Rogers, Simon, 'The forgotten soldiers', *Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/nov/10/first-world-war-colonial-soldiers-racism>

<sup>3</sup>Farwell, *The Great War*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989), pp. 14-15. Young, Derek Rutherford, 'Great Britain, Colonies', Tucker, Spencer C. (Ed.), Roberts, Mary Priscilla (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of World War I: A Political, Social, and Military History*, (California: ABC-CLIO, 2005), pp. 508-509. As Farwell notes, the African Campaigns of the Great War are little known because of the 'exiguity of information.' According to Farwell, a significant portion of the African participants were illiterate and literate participants did not always record their experiences in memoirs.

<sup>4</sup>Cooper, Charlie, 'A History of the First World War in 100 Moments: The officer who fought prejudice with valour', *Independent*, 29 June 2014, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/world-history/history-of-the-first-world-war-in-100-moments/a-history-of-the-first-world-war-in-100-moments-the-officer-who-fought-prejudice-with-valour-9570581.html>. 'Folkestone names road after

Great War was largely fought in the European Theatre, men from the British West African colonies comprised of the Gambia, Gold Coast,<sup>5</sup> Nigeria and Sierra Leone were among the fifty-five thousand Africans who served as combatants in the Allied Powers' military campaign.<sup>6</sup> These West African soldiers, a significant number of whom served in the West African Frontier Force, fought honourably for the British campaign to capture German Togoland and the Cameroons.<sup>7</sup> However, although many West African soldiers served the Allied Forces during the conflict, few if any of these soldiers were commissioned as officers or were promoted to a higher rank deserving of their significant contribution in the African theatre of the conflict.<sup>8</sup>

One black African who was commissioned as a British Officer in the First World War was Dr Macormack Charles Farrell Easmon, a Sierra Leonean medical doctor who served as a temporary lieutenant in the West African Medical Staff<sup>9</sup> and was officially posted with the Cameroons Expeditionary Force in the Cameroons between 13 November, 1914 and 29 July, 1915.<sup>10</sup> Macormack Easmon, popularly known to family and friends as 'Charlie' and to the Sierra Leonean public as M.C.F.,<sup>11</sup> was probably the only black African to serve as an officer during the First World War.<sup>12</sup> Easmon's service during the War is an important achievement, as he

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black Army pioneer Walter Tull', *BBC News England*, 10 June 2014, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-27775999>. Scholars and journalists have noted that Dr James Samuel Risien Russell, (1863-1939) and Walter Daniel John Tull, (1888-1918) both mixed-race Britons of Afro-Caribbean descent, served as officers in the First World War. Russell, a Guyanese doctor resident in Britain, was a captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps and Tull, born in England to a Barbadian father and an English mother, served as a second lieutenant with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment.

<sup>5</sup>The Gold Coast is now the independent nation of Ghana.

<sup>6</sup>Young, 'Great Britain, Colonies', in Tucker, Spencer (Ed.), Roberts (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of World War I*, pp. 508-509. According to Young, several hundred thousand West Africans served in the carrier corps for British forces during the First World War.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. pp. 508-509

<sup>8</sup>Turay, Edward Dominic Amadu, Abraham, Arthur, *The Sierra Leone Army: A Century of History*, (United Kingdom: Macmillan, 1987), p. 48. Cole, Festus, 'The Sierra Leone Carrier Corps and Krio Responses to Recruitment in World War I', in Dixon-Fyle, Mac (Ed.) Cole, Gibril Raschid (Ed.), *New Perspectives on the Sierra Leone Krio*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 78. However, although Africans were not commissioned as officers, African servicemen were decorated with honours and were also awarded campaign medals. To an extent this was also the rule for non-whites who enlisted in Britain. Black Britons who were not commissioned, but served with distinction include Francis 'Frank' Sydney Dove, (1897-1957). Dove, a teenage law student at Oxford, served in the Royal Tank Corps in the 'E' Battalion (Dove's service record survived the Second World War). As a driver under Second Lieutenant Johnson, Dove received the Military Medal for bravery at the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917. Afterwards, Dove received a commission in the Cadet Unit of the Royal Air Force. Dove was the son of Francis 'Frans' Thomas Dove (1869-1949), a Sierra Leonean barrister from a prominent Creole family, who gained fame as a legal doyen in Accra. Frank Dove was the brother of Evelyn Dove (1902-1987), the famous singer, and was the half-brother of Genevieve Dove (b. 1921), a well-known dress maker of Accra, who married Dr Charles 'Charlie' Odamtten Easmon, (1913-1994), the nephew of M.C.F. Easmon. See *Stand To!: The Journal of the Western Front Association*, Issues 45-50 and Stephen Bourne's *Black Poppies: Britain's Black Community and the Great War*, (United Kingdom: History Press Limited, 2014), p. 46

<sup>9</sup>The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, (TNA), WO 372/6/145110, 'Macormack Charles Farrell Easmon', British Army World War I Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920. Contrary to what was written in Easmon's obituary in *the British Medical Journal* and by Dr Davidson Nicol, Easmon did not serve in the Royal Army Medical Corps, but was placed on special assignment with the West African Medical Service.

<sup>10</sup>TNA, WO 372/6/145110, 'Macormack Charles Farrell Easmon', British Army World War I Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920. *The London Gazette*, Issue 29583, 16 May, 1916, p. 4855, *The Gazette*, URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29583/page/4855>. *The London Gazette*, 27 June, 1916, Issue 29646, p. 6479, *The Gazette*, URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29646/supplement/6479>. *The London Gazette*, Issue 29759, 22 September, 1916, p. 9214, *The Gazette*, URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29759/supplement/9214>, Patton, Adell, *Physicians, Colonial Racism, and Diaspora in West Africa*, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1996), p. 171. It appears as though Easmon saw active duty with the Cameroons Expeditionary Force until 29 July, 1915, but his temporary commission was officially relinquished on 11 August, 1915 when he returned to Freetown.

<sup>11</sup>Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1996), p. 159

<sup>12</sup>Fyfe, Christopher, 'Easmon, McCormack Charles Farrell (1890-1972)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76276>, accessed 26 June 2014]. Fyfe, Christopher, *A Short History of Sierra Leone*, (London: Longmans, Green, and Co. Ltd, 1967), p. 163. Based upon the author's research the statement given by Fyfe is accurate; Easmon appears to be the only black African to have served as an officer during the Great

would be the first, if not the only, black African to serve as a British officer in the Great War and he received a temporary commission three years before the commission of Walter Tull, a mixed-race British football player who served as a second lieutenant in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment.<sup>13</sup>

However, although the service of M.C.F. Easmon in the First World War has been highlighted in academic publications focusing on Easmon's life and other aspects of Sierra Leonean history,<sup>14</sup> recognition and acknowledgement of Easmon's service during the Great War has not been as widespread given the significance of his achievement.<sup>15</sup> This paper will focus on the life and service of M.C.F. Easmon during the First World War by providing a brief outline of Easmon's service in the Cameroons Campaign.

### **A tradition of military service**

In order to appreciate the significance of M.C.F. Easmon's service in the Allied Powers campaign in the Cameroons, it is important to examine the service of Sierra Leoneans in the British military in the century preceding the Great War.<sup>16</sup> Although M.C.F. Easmon's service was unique in that he was likely the only black African to see active duty as an officer in the First World War, Easmon was not the first Sierra Leonean to serve in a major military conflict or to be commissioned with a high rank in the British military.<sup>17</sup>

M.C.F. Easmon was a Sierra Leonean who belonged to a small ethnic group known as the Sierra Leone Creoles, the descendants of freed slaves and freemen from the Americas, Great Britain, and West Africa.<sup>18</sup> The Creoles were primarily based in the city of Freetown and in the surrounding settlements around the coastal peninsula area of Sierra Leone, which was then known as the Colony of Sierra Leone.<sup>19</sup> However, although the Creoles were primarily descended from ex-slaves and free blacks from the

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War. Even if it is the case that other black African officers served, almost certainly Easmon received a temporary commission before any other black African officer who could have possibly served.

<sup>13</sup>Vasili, Phil, 'Tull, Walter Daniel John (1888–1918)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/62348>, accessed 29 June 2014]. However, Easmon's commission in 1914 does not diminish the importance of Walter Tull's commission in 1917; medical doctors are distinct from non-commissioned officers promoted to higher ranks; as commissions were automatically given to a significant number of, if not all, medical doctors who enlisted or were assigned to serve in the Great War. Furthermore, as a medical officer, Easmon served as a non-combatant, in contrast to Tull who served as a combatant in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment. However, James Risien Russell, a medical doctor, was possibly the first non-white British officer and served as a non-combatant; George Edward Kingsley Bemand (1892–1916), a Jamaican-born, mixed-race second lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery, who was classified as being of 'pure European descent', may have been the first non-white officer to serve as a combatant.

<sup>14</sup>Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, p. 171. Turay, A.K., *Sierra Leonean Heroes: Fifty Great Men and Women who Helped to Build Our Nation*, (London: Commonwealth Printers, 1988), pp. 102–103

<sup>15</sup>Fyfe, Christopher 'Easmon, McCormack Charles Farrell (1890–1972)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76276>, accessed 26 June 2014]. Although Easmon, was most likely the only black African to serve as a lieutenant in World War One, his achievement has not received widespread attention.

<sup>16</sup>The term 'British military' in this article also refers to those regiments under the imperial and colonial governments that served in the various British colonies, rather than exclusively referring to the regular British military regiments stationed in Britain.

<sup>17</sup>Fyfe, Christopher, *Africanus Horton: West African Scientist and Patriot*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 141, Peterkin, Alfred, *Commissioned Officers in the Medical Services of the British Army, 1660–1960 Part 1*, (Great Britain: Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1968), p. 425

<sup>18</sup>Fyfe, Christopher, *A History of Sierra Leone*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 237. The Liberated African ancestors of the Creoles were ethnically diverse. Although most Liberated Africans were from modern Benin, Cameroon, the Congo, and Nigeria, some Liberated Africans were from the Sierra Leone hinterland and others from as far afield as Mozambique.

<sup>19</sup>Fyfe, *A Short History of Sierra Leone*, (London: Longmans, Green, and Co. Ltd, 1967), pp. 134–136, 178. The Colony of Sierra Leone was established on 11 March, 1792 by the Nova Scotian Settlers under the auspices of the Sierra Leone Company. The annexation of the hinterland of Sierra Leone in 1896 created the Sierra Leone Protectorate. The unification of the Colony and the Protectorate created the independent nation of Sierra Leone on 27 April, 1961. In the post-colonial era, the former Colony of Sierra Leone was

Americas and across West Africa, a significant number of the ancestors of the Sierra Leone Creoles had served in major British military conflicts dating back to the American Revolutionary War and the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, with a natural harbour and as a major British naval base, Freetown, the principal settlement in Sierra Leone, was an important military hub for British forces. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the West India Regiment,<sup>21</sup> West African Frontier Force, and the West African Regiment were at one period or another stationed in Freetown.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the inhabitants of the Colony of Sierra Leone had a century's long tradition of serving the British military in various conflicts in Africa and abroad.

A significant number of the early black colonists who established the first ex-slaves colonies in Sierra Leone were African Americans who had served in the American Revolutionary War.<sup>23</sup> Some of the Black Poor who established the Province of Freedom in 1787 and the Nova Scotian Settlers who established the second Colony of Sierra Leone in 1792, had escaped to British lines during the American Revolutionary War, and some had seen active duty in the military ranks.<sup>24</sup> M.C.F. Easmon's paternal ancestors were among those African Americans, known in Sierra Leone as the Nova Scotian Settlers, who escaped from slavery and fled to the British lines during the War.<sup>25</sup> These African Americans such as Thomas Peters, a Nova Scotian Settler regarded by some scholars as a founding father of Sierra Leone, served in regiments such as the Black Pioneers where Peters was promoted to the rank of Sergeant.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the military service of some of the early settlers including M.C.F. Easmon's ancestors, some of the soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> West India Regiment and the 4<sup>th</sup> West India Regiment, who were stationed or disbanded in Freetown, served in British conflicts abroad including the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>27</sup> Soldiers such as Thomas Maitland and John Ashley served as sergeants in the West India Regiment, and James Davies, a Sierra Leonean who joined the Regiment as an army schoolmaster, was promoted to Warrant Officer.<sup>28</sup> A significant number of these soldiers settled permanently in Freetown on pension and established settlements such as Wellington and Waterloo.<sup>29</sup> Some of these soldiers also left notable progeny and prominent Sierra Leoneans such as

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designated as the Western Area of Sierra Leone and the Provinces of Sierra Leone constitute the former Protectorate of Sierra Leone.

<sup>20</sup>Walker, James St. George., "Myth, History and Revisionism: The Black Loyalists Revisited," *Acadiensis* Vol. 29, No.1 (Autumn 1999), p. 91

<sup>21</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 135-136. A number of these soldiers in the West India Regiment settled permanently in Sierra Leone and married Sierra Leonean women.

<sup>22</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, (United Kingdom: Macmillan, 1987), p. 38. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the West India Regiment served in the Cameroons Campaign during the First World War. L Jordon, a Sergeant in the 1<sup>st</sup> West India Regiment received the Distinguished Conduct Medal based upon his display of bravery in the Cameroons Campaign. The West African Regiment was stationed in Freetown and served to defend the Colony.

<sup>23</sup>Wilson, Ellen Gibson, *The Loyal Blacks*, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976), pp. 300-309

<sup>24</sup>Walker, "Myth, History and Revisionism," *Acadiensis*, p. 91. As Professor James St. George Walker noted, 45% of the Nova Scotian blacks listed in the 'List of Blacks who gave their names for Sierra Leone in November 1791' served in the British military as 'soldiers' or in other capacities during the American Revolutionary War. It should be noted that these black Americans may have fought out of a desire for liberty rather than 'genuine' loyalty to the British Crown.

<sup>25</sup>Fraser Ian, 'Father and son--a tale of two cities', *Ulster Medical Journal*, 1968 Winter Vol. 37, No. 1, p. 4. Hannah Cuthbert, M.C.F. Easmon's paternal great-grandmother, was a member of the Cuthbert family that had escaped from slavery in Savannah, Georgia and fled to the British lines in 1779.

<sup>26</sup>Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks*, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976), p. 100

<sup>27</sup>A.B.C. Merriman-Labor, 'The Late Father Merriman', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 24 February, 1900.

<sup>28</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 168, 173, 348-349

<sup>29</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 119. In addition to these settlements outside Freetown, soldiers of the Royal African Corps, also comprised of Liberated African soldiers, established huts in an area eventually designated as 'Soldier Town'. The Royal African

Augustus Boyle Chamberlayne Merriman-Labor, a Holborn based barrister, were the descendants of African soldiers who had served in the Napoleonic Wars.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the tradition of military service displayed by blacks in the American Revolutionary War and the West India Regiment, Sierra Leone had an established militia, with 'green bottled' uniforms, dating back to the early nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> Although the militia and its ranks were perhaps more reflective of the aspiring status of the settler population rather than demonstrable military prowess,<sup>32</sup> the militia engaged in small-scale military engagements such as the Cobolo War,<sup>33</sup> and also actively served in conflicts outside the Colony area.<sup>34</sup> A familial relation of M.C.F. Easmon served in the militia and George William Nicol, (1810-1883), a Nova Scotian Settler descendant attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Militia in 1858.<sup>35</sup>

Sierra Leoneans had also served in the Sierra Leone Frontier Police which would later become re-organised as the Sierra Leone Battalion of the West African Frontier Force.<sup>36</sup> The Frontier Police served in areas outside the Colony in what was then known as the hinterland of Sierra Leone.<sup>37</sup> Some Creoles served as officers in the Frontier Police, and some of these officers were trained at Hythe and at the Guards' School of Instruction in Chelsea, London, England.<sup>38</sup> The re-organisation of the Frontier Police into the Sierra Leone Battalion of the West African Frontier Force in 1902 also saw Abraham Broughton Davies and Jacob Benoni Johnson, two Sierra Leoneans who had served honourably in the Frontier Police, commissioned as second lieutenants.<sup>39</sup> Thousands of Sierra Leoneans from the Protectorate and the Colony area served honourably in the West African Frontier Force. The Sierra Leone Battalion of the West African Frontier Force, largely comprised of Sierra Leoneans from the Protectorate, would see active duty in the Cameroons Campaign.<sup>40</sup>

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Corps was distinct from the Royal African Colonial Corp; for more information on the Royal African Colonial Corps see the WO 12 series held at the National Archives.

<sup>30</sup>A.B.C. Merriman-Labor, 'The Late Father Merriman', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 24 February, 1900. Cole-Wellesley, Robert, *An Innocent in Britain, or, The missing link: documented autobiography*, (London: Campbell Matthews, 1988), pp. xvi, 67. Merriman-Labor stated in the obituary of his grandfather, John Merriman, (1830-1899), a prominent teacher, that Merriman had been born in Leicester village, Sierra Leone as the "son of a Liberated African-a soldier who fought for His late Majesty King George the Third in the Wars against Napoleon Bonaparte." The Wellesley-Cole family also descend from an African soldier who served in the British military and adopted the name 'Wellesley' after Arthur Wellesley, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Wellington, an Anglo-Irish General and British hero of the Napoleonic Wars.

<sup>31</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 91-92, 107, 179

<sup>32</sup>Walker, James, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783- 1870*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 261

<sup>33</sup>Sibthorpe, Aaron Belisarius Cosimo, *The History of Sierra Leone*, (1868. 1906. Reprint, United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 1970), p. 45. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 186-87. The Cobolo Expedition or 'War' was a small-scale conflict between colonial forces including the volunteers of the Sierra Leone Militia and a group of Aku who had travelled outside the colony to fight for Thomas Stephen Caulker, a Sherbro chief of the Plantain Islands. Chief Caulker had recruited the Aku to fight against the Temne and had promised to assist the Aku in returning to Yoruba land. Prominent Sierra Leoneans such as John Meheux, (1812/13-4 June, 1886), served in the militia and saw active duty in expeditions in Cobolo.

<sup>34</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 179. Benjamin Leigh, a Sierra Leonean clerk born to a Nova Scotian mother and William Henry Leigh, (1780/1781-1818), a former English slave trader and merchant, joined the militia and served in an expedition of the militia in the Gambia where he died fighting. Fyfe noted that two tablets in St. George's Cathedral commemorate Benjamin Leigh's service in the Gambia.

<sup>35</sup>Fifty Years Ago: From *The African*, 18 February, 1858', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 8 February, 1908.

<sup>36</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, pp. 11-12, 31-32

<sup>37</sup>Fyfe, *A Short History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 134-136. This region known as the Sierra Leone hinterland would later form the Sierra Leone Protectorate in 1896.

<sup>38</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 11

<sup>39</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, pp. 30-31. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 615

<sup>40</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, pp. 39-48

The tradition of Sierra Leonean medical doctors serving as officers in the military did not begin with M.C.F. Easmon's service in the First World War. The tradition of Sierra Leonean medical doctors serving in the British military was established by the first West African medical graduates, Dr William Broughton Davies (1833-1906) and Dr James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883), both Sierra Leoneans who attained the rank of Surgeon-Major.<sup>41</sup> Both Doctors Davies and Horton had distinguished medical careers in the British Army that included service in the Gold Coast.<sup>42</sup>

However, in addition to the broader tradition of the service of Sierra Leoneans in the British military, M.C.F. Easmon's family history is also reflective of a tradition of military service.<sup>43</sup> The genealogical background, distinguished medical career and scholarly contributions of M.C.F. Easmon have been examined in the works of scholars such as Professor Adell Patton in *Physicians and Colonial Racism*, and briefly in Adelaide Cromwell's biography of Adelaide Casely-Hayford.<sup>44</sup> Thus, it is not the intention of this article to focus intensely on the family background or the medical career of M.C.F. Easmon, but it is important to briefly detail Easmon's family and professional background which was the backdrop to his service in the Cameroons during World War I.

### Early life and family background

M.C.F. Easmon was born in Accra, Gold Coast on 11 April, 1890 to Dr John Farrell Easmon, (1856-1900) and his wife, Annette Kathleen Easmon, née Smith, (1870-1951).<sup>45</sup> M.C.F. Easmon was the scion of three prominent Sierra Leonean families that had distinguished themselves in law, medicine, and in the colonial civil service during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>46</sup> J.F. Easmon's ancestors were among those African Americans who had escaped to the British lines and served the British military during the American Revolutionary War.<sup>47</sup> J.F. Easmon had a distinguished medical career in the Gold Coast where he served as the Chief Medical Officer of the colony and contributed to medical science by producing a ground breaking pamphlet on Blackwater Fever.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 141. The rank of 'Surgeon-Major' was equivalent to 'Lieutenant-Colonel'.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 141. Horton was particularly proud of his medical service in the British Army, and it is said that when in casual dress, he passed by a European subordinate officer who did not salute him. Horton immediately returned home and put on his military uniform and walking past the same officer, Horton received the recognition of his rank that he had deservedly earned.

<sup>43</sup>R.M.B. MacKenna, 'Henry MacCormac, M.D. 1879-1950', A.M.A. archives of dermatology and syphilology 63(4) 544 (1951), Henry MacCormac, C.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.P. *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 4694 (Dec. 23, 1950), p. 1449, Published by: BMJ, Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25359405>. Easmon was a paternal descendant of the MacCormac family of Lurgan in County Armagh, Northern Ireland. Easmon's paternal great grandfather was John MacCormac (1791-1865), a timber merchant who left an inheritance for M.C.F. Easmon's father which financed J.F. Easmon's studies in Britain and Belgium. A distant relative of Easmon was Dr Henry MacCormac, (1879-1950) C.B.E. M.D., F.R.C.P. who served as a captain and Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the First World War.

<sup>44</sup>Cromwell, Adelaide, *An African Victorian Feminist: The Life and Times of Adelaide Smith Casely Hayford*, 1868-1960, (United States: Howard University, 1999), pp. 30-31, 35-36. Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, pp. 159-162. M.C.F. Easmon wrote a paper on his paternal family history entitled 'A Nova Scotian Family' in *Eminent Sierra Leoneans in the Nineteenth Century* produced by the Sierra Leone Society.

<sup>45</sup>TNA, CO 96/296, 'Report of Commissioner of Enquiry', page 267, paragraph 2418. Based upon the statements given by Dr John Farrell Easmon during the Enquiry, for at least four years during his time in Accra, M.C.F. Easmon lived in Victoriaborg, Accra, as this was where the government quarters for the Chief Medical Officer were located. After the early retirement of J.F. Easmon, M.C.F. Easmon attended school in Cape Coast.

<sup>46</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 348, 423. Namely the Easmon, Smith and Spilsbury families, all of whom produced medical doctors during the nineteenth centuries.

<sup>47</sup>Easmon, M.C.F., 'A Nova Scotian Family', *Eminent Sierra Leoneans in the Nineteenth Century*, (Sierra Leone: Department of Information for the Sierra Leone Society, 1961), p. 60. These African Americans were known as the Nova Scotian Settlers in Sierra Leone because they arrived in West Africa after a nine year sojourn in Nova Scotia.

<sup>48</sup>Death of Dr J. Farrell Easmon: To the Editor of the Weekly News', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 July 1900



Easmon featured prominently in Gold Coast society and he served as a Medical Officer in the Accra Volunteer Corps.<sup>49</sup>

M.C.F. Easmon's maternal lineage was equally distinguished and his maternal uncle was the first West African to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh while another uncle served as Senior Puisne Judge of the Gold Coast Supreme Court, where his work as a jurist received recognition from the Law Lords of the Privy Council.<sup>50</sup> M.C.F. Easmon was also a nephew of Surgeon-Major Broughton Davies, one of the first West African medical graduates, through Davies' marriage to Mary Smith, (1843-1884), the elder half-sister of Easmon's mother.<sup>51</sup> Another one of M.C.F. Easmon's maternal uncles had served as an Ensign in the Sierra Leone Militia during the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> Thus, in addition to a tradition of civil service or practicing medicine and law, active military service was not a new development within Easmon's paternal and maternal family.

### Education in England

The unexpected death of J.F. Easmon in 1900 led to the Easmon family leaving the Gold Coast and settling with members of the Smith family in Freetown, Sierra Leone.<sup>53</sup> During this period, M.C.F. Easmon attended a school opened by his maternal aunts and shortly after, he entered the Church Missionary Society Grammar School, the alma mater of his father.<sup>54</sup> The C.M.S. Grammar School had been founded in 1845 to provide a sound education for the 'Colony-born' children of the various repatriated Africans who had been settled in Sierra Leone during the nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup> It was at the Grammar School, at a young age, that Easmon demonstrated the promise that marked him out for a distinguished career in medicine.<sup>56</sup> However, although the Grammar School had produced distinguished West African professionals, Easmon was not to remain at the school for long. In 1900, Annette Kathleen Easmon and her sister, Adelaide Smith, decided to return to England, where the sisters had lived during their formative years, in

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<sup>49</sup>Easmon, M.C.F., 'A Nova Scotian Family', *Eminent Sierra Leoneans in the Nineteenth Century*, (Sierra Leone: Department of Information for the Sierra Leone Society, 1961), p. 60. J.F. Easmon was a highly respected member of the Gold Coast elite in Accra and Cape Coast and he participated in the social and recreational activities of the community such as the Accra Jockey Club. Easmon was a keen horse racer and won the 'Governor's Cup' on numerous occasions with his horse, "His Lordship".

<sup>50</sup>Dee Tee, 'Some Notables of Sierra Leone In The Past: Early Impressions: V. Dr. Robert Smith, F.R.C.S., J.P.', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 14, January, 1890. Doortmont, Michel, *The Pen-pictures of Modern Africans and African Celebrities by Charles Francis Hutchison: A Collective Biography of Elite Society in the Gold Coast Colony*, (The Netherlands: Brill, 2005), p. 412. These uncles of M.C.F. Easmon were Dr Robert Smith (1839/40-1885) and Justice Francis 'Frans' Smith (1846/47-1912).

<sup>51</sup>Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist*, (United States: Howard University Press, 1999), pp. 32-33. Mary Davies, née Smith was the daughter of William Smith Jr., J.P. (1816-1896), who served as Registrar of the Mixed Commissions Court for adjudication of slave ships. Smith, who was of Fante and English parentage, was married three times and Mary Smith was a twin daughter from Smith's first marriage to Charlotte Macaulay.

<sup>52</sup>Fifty Years Ago: From *The African*, 18 February, 1858', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 8 February, 1908. This was William Henry Smith, (1836/38-1871) the eldest son of William Smith Jr, and the half-brother of Annette Kathleen Easmon, the mother of M.C.F. Easmon.

<sup>53</sup>'Mrs. O'Farrel Easmon', *The Sierra Leone Times*, 11 August, 1900. By a Correspondent, 'City Notes', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 11 August 1900. Casely-Hayford, Gladys, Casely-Hayford, Adelaide, *Mother and Daughter: Memoirs and Poems*, (Sierra Leone: Sierra Leone University Press, 1983), Edited by Lucilda Hunter, p. 22. Kathleen Easmon and her two children, M.C.F. and Kathleen Mary Easmon, arrived in Sierra Leone aboard the steamship *Axim* on 4 August, 1900.

<sup>54</sup>G.O., 'Dr. Albert Whiggs Easmon', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 3 May 1913. Easmon, Dr. M.C.F., 'Auntie Dad: An appreciation of the late Adelaide Casely-Hayford of Sierra Leone', *West Africa Review*, Volume 31, (1960), p. 52. Easmon attended Miss Smith's School; Miss Smith being his noteworthy maternal aunt Adelaide Casely-Hayford, (1868-1960), affectionately known to Easmon and his cousins as 'Auntie Dad' or 'Aunt Addie'. Emma Smith, (1864-1928) also operated the school that Easmon initially attended in Freetown.

<sup>55</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 237-238

<sup>56</sup>G.O., 'Dr. Albert Whiggs Easmon', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 3 May, 1913. At a banquet partly in honour of M.C.F. Easmon's achievements, Dr Albert Whiggs Easmon (the paternal uncle of M.C.F. Easmon) related how during M.C.F. Easmon's Grammar School days, Whiggs Easmon had once approached Canon Obadiah Moore, the Principal of C.M.S. Grammar School and "asked him...what he thought of the boy's [M.C.F. Easmon's] ability," Principal Moore smiled and at once responded, 'I have never known an Easmon who was a fool.'"

order to provide a better education for M.C.F. and his sister, Kathleen Mary.<sup>57</sup> The return to England provided M.C.F. Easmon with the opportunity to attend some of the most prestigious schools in Britain including Colet Court School, the preparatory school for St. Paul's School, and Epsom College, a public school known for educating the children of medical doctors.<sup>58</sup>

As a student at Epsom College, Easmon distinguished himself as a member of the First XV rugby team and excelled in his academic studies where he won lower school prizes in divinity and perhaps most presciently in history.<sup>59</sup> Easmon also earned the Lower Certificate of the Oxford and Cambridge Examination Board and took the London Matriculation examination.<sup>60</sup> As a result of his academic brilliance, Easmon won two scholarships to study medicine at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, University of London.<sup>61</sup> It was Easmon's medical training at St. Mary's that would see him specially selected to serve in the Cameroons during the Great War.

At St Mary's Hospital Medical School, Easmon qualified as a medical doctor by earning the B.S. in 1911 and after being appointed as a resident house doctor at Huntingdon Hospital, London, earning the M.B., M.R.C.S., and L.R.C.P. in 1912.<sup>62</sup> In April, 1913, he earned a certificate from the London School of Tropical Hygiene<sup>63</sup> and passed with 73% of the marks.<sup>64</sup> Similar to his father, who had won several prizes as a medical student at University College London,<sup>65</sup> Easmon had a distinguished career as a

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<sup>57</sup>"England and Wales Census, 1911," index, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XW2F-F2C> : accessed 04 Sep 2014), Charles Easmon, Kensington, , London, England; citing "1911 England and Wales census," index and images, findmypast.co.uk ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) : Brightsolid, n.d.); PRO RG 14, county, registration district, sub-district, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, Surrey. Casely-Hayford, Casely-Hayford, *Mother and Daughter: Memoirs and Poems* Ed. Hunter, pp. 22, 30. Margai, Sir Milton Augustus Strieby, *Achievements in Sierra Leone*, (Sierra Leone: Department of Information, Sierra Leone, 1961), p. 6. Kathleen Mary Easmon, (1892-1924) would become the first West African to earn a diploma from the Royal College of Arts in South Kensington, London, England. Kathleen Easmon received a Special Talent Scholarship to study at the Royal College of Arts and subsequently became the first West African Associate of the College.

<sup>58</sup>Casely-Hayford, Casely-Hayford, *Mother and Daughter* Ed. Hunter, p. 23. Fyfe, Christopher, 'Easmon, McCormack Charles Farrell (1890–1972)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76276>, accessed 26 June 2014]. Easmon was enrolled at Colet Court School from 1901 to 1903 and at Epsom College from 1903 to 1907.

<sup>59</sup>A.L.B.C., 'Progress of An African In The University of London', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 10 February, 1912. In light of the historical contributions made by Easmon, it is unsurprising that he demonstrated an interest in history at an early age. Easmon also won at least three other lower and upper form prizes during his studies at Epsom.

<sup>60</sup>A.L.B.C., 'Progress of An African In The University of London', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 10 February, 1912. According to the *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, Easmon also took the examinations for the Preliminary Scientific 1<sup>st</sup> MB Part D.

<sup>61</sup>Fyfe, Christopher, 'Easmon, McCormack Charles Farrell (1890–1972)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76276>, accessed 26 June 2014]. Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, p. 163. St. Mary's Hospital was an independent medical school within the University of London Federal System until it merged with Imperial College in 1988. When Imperial College gained independence from the University of London in 2007, St. Mary's Hospital (by then forming part of the Imperial College School of Medicine) also left the University of London System and remains part of an independent Imperial College.

<sup>62</sup>A.L.B.C., 'Progress of An African In The University of London', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 10 February 1912. Mr. C. Easmon', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 17 February 1912. 'Mr. M.C.F. Easmon', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 27 April, 1912. 'General News', *Gold Coast Leader*, 18 May 1912. 'News In Brief', *Gold Coast Nation*, 23 May, 1912, 'Editorial Notes', *Gold Coast Leader*, 25 May, 1912. *Sierra Leone Year Book*, (Sierra Leone, Daily Mail Publication, 1973), p. 157. Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, p. 163. Easmon also served as a prosector in anatomy at St Mary's Hospital in 1909 before serving as a prosector in anatomy to the examining boards of the Royal College of Surgeons and the Royal College of Physicians in 1910. He also served as a junior clinical assistant in the ophthalmic department at St. Mary's Hospital Medical School between 1910 and 1911.

<sup>63</sup>Universities and Colleges: 'London School of Tropical Medicine', *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 1. No. 2728, 1913, p. 797, Published by: BMJ, Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25301120>. M.C.F. Easmon is listed as a medical student in the *British Medical Journal* between 1909 and 1913 and some of the volumes of the Journal that mention Easmon can be accessed on Jstor.

<sup>64</sup>Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, p. 163.

<sup>65</sup>'Death of Dr. J. Farrell Easmon', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 16 June, 1900. J.F. Easmon won numerous prizes as a medical student at University College London including the highly prized Liston Gold Medal for Clinical Surgery.

medical student at St Mary's Hospital.<sup>66</sup> He won four prizes in histology, psychological medicine, practical and operative surgery, and anatomy, in addition to certificates in seven other medical subjects.<sup>67</sup>

In 1912 and 1913, having qualified as a medical doctor with great distinction, Easmon applied twice to join the West African Medical Staff (W.A.M.S.), the colonial service for qualified medical doctors in West Africa.<sup>68</sup> However, Easmon's applications were rejected on the basis that he did not meet the necessary criteria for employment in the W.A.M.S.<sup>69</sup> With such a distinguished academic record, Easmon should have been guaranteed employment in the West African Medical Staff. However, the West African Medical Staff was reflective of the new form of imperial racism that created a colour bar between Africans and Europeans, as the W.A.M.S. regulations prohibited the employment of Africans and Asians on an equal level with that of doctors of 'pure European descent' regardless of the qualifications of these 'coloured' doctors.<sup>70</sup>

The West African Medical Staff had been formed in 1902 and effectively created a two-tier system comprised of doctors of 'pure European descent', who could serve in the Medical Service, and black doctors who could only serve as 'Native Medical Officers' in the "local service" and who were subordinate to the lowest ranking officer in the W.A.M.S.<sup>71</sup> Easmon's qualifications were on par if not higher than many of his European counterparts who served in the West African Medical Staff. Yet in a period of increasing emphasis on skin colour over academic qualifications or ability, Easmon would face difficulty in gaining high positions reflective of his skills and distinguished academic career. The rejection of Easmon's application to serve as a medical officer in the W.A.M.S. was only the beginning of a series of slights that occurred during the course of his medical career.

#### **Easmon's return to Freetown and early medical career**

In May 1913, M.C.F. Easmon returned to Sierra Leone amid much fanfare as his medical achievements had been published in local newspapers in the Sierra Leone Colony and in the Gold Coast.<sup>72</sup> A columnist writing for the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* lauded Easmon's achievements by stating that "never...in the history of Western Africa has there been such an excellent career within the

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<sup>66</sup> 'Dr. C.F. Easmon', *Colony and Provincial Reporter*, 10 May, 1913

<sup>67</sup> A.L.B.C., 'Progress of An African In The University of London', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 10 February 1912. Patton, Adell, *Physicians, Colonial Racism, and Diaspora*, p. 163. These subjects included medicine and pharmacology.

<sup>68</sup> Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, pp. 164-165, 168-169. Easmon, M.C.F., 'Medical Future of the Colonies', *British Medical Journal*, 9 February 1946, p. 219, Published by: BMJ, Article Stable URL: <http://www.ijstor.org/stable/20365466>. Easmon first applied to join the West African Medical Staff in the Gold Coast before applying to join the West African Medical Staff in Sierra Leone. Although newspapers and other sources during the period often used terms such as the 'Gold Coast Medical Service' and the 'Sierra Leone Medical Service' in reference to the branches of the West African Medical Staff in those colonies, the local 'Sierra Leone Medical Service' and 'Gold Coast Medical Service' were distinct from the branches of the West African Medical Staff in these colonies. Both of Easmon's applications to join the W.A.M.S. in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone were rejected on the basis of his skin colour.

<sup>69</sup> Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, pp. 164-171, 'Gold Coast Medical Service', *Gold Coast Leader*, 2 August, 1913

<sup>70</sup> Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism, and Diaspora*, pp. 164-171

<sup>71</sup> Spitzer, Leo, *Creoles of Sierra Leone: Responses to Colonialism, 1870-1945*, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), pp. 66-68. The West African Medical Staff, also known as the West African Medical Service, was formed in 1902 based upon recommendations given by the British Medical Association to Joseph Chamberlain, (1836-1914) the Secretary of State and father of British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, (1869-1940). Following the establishment of the West African Medical Staff, the employment of doctors of African descent in the W.A.M.S. was effectively prohibited although not necessarily completely banned. The treatment of medical doctors varied depending upon the British West African Colony; the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Nigeria apparently had slightly more favourable conditions for doctors of African descent than Sierra Leone.

<sup>72</sup> Dr. C.F. Easmon', *Colony and Provincial Reporter*, 10 May, 1913. A.L.B.C., 'Progress of An African In The University of London', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 10 February, 1912. 'Editorial Notes', *Gold Coast Leader*, 25 May, 1912. 'News in Brief', *Gold Coast Nation*, 23 May, 1912. Easmon travelled to Sierra Leone aboard the *S.S. Mende*, the same vessel that he would use on his return to Freetown from the Cameroons Campaign.

age of majority as that shewn by Mr. Charles Farrel [sic] Easmon of St. Mary's Hospital London."<sup>73</sup> Prior to his arrival in Sierra Leone, M.C.F. Easmon's achievements were the occasion of a banquet given in honour of his paternal uncle and upon arriving in Freetown, as a former Old Boy of the C.M.S. Grammar School,<sup>74</sup> M.C.F. Easmon was invited to give a speech to pupils at the school.<sup>75</sup>

In May, 1913, Easmon was appointed as a Native Medical Officer in the local service and was stationed in Freetown and at Kissy village before being posted to Moyamba, in the Sierra Leone Protectorate.<sup>76</sup> Surrounded by his maternal and paternal relatives, including Dr Albert Whiggs Easmon, a popular gynaecologist,<sup>77</sup> Easmon carried out his duties superbly and gained the respect and trust of the communities in Freetown and Moyamba. The Freetown public and West African press hailed Easmon as the natural successor to his father, and Easmon fulfilled the promise he had shown as a medical student by demonstrating his great skill as a physician.<sup>78</sup>

However, Easmon's success and popularity within the Colony was not met with fanfare by all. Some members of the local British administration and mercantile community had increasing disdain for the local Sierra Leonean professional elite and demonstrated this frustration by physical attacks on the local elite.<sup>79</sup> In early January 1914, Harold Honeysett, a British resident in the Colony, used an air-gun to shoot Easmon in the head.<sup>80</sup> Although Honeysett was successfully prosecuted,<sup>81</sup> his actions reflected the changing relationship between the British and the local Sierra Leonean population and toward blacks across the British Empire. The treatment of African medical doctors during the Great War itself would in many ways reflect the increasing divide and inequality between 'protected peoples' and 'British Subjects' in the colonies and 'British Subjects' of 'pure European descent' in the 'Mother Country'.

### **The Great War and the British West Africa Colonies**

Although the conflict between the Allied Powers and Central Powers was largely a European affair, the British West African

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<sup>73</sup>A.L.B.C., 'Progress of An African In The University of London', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 10 February 1912

<sup>74</sup>Old Boys of the C.M.S. Grammar School are also known as the Regentonians.

<sup>75</sup>G.O., 'Dr. Albert Whiggs Easmon', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 3 May 1913. 'C.M.S. Grammar School', *The Colony and Provincial Reporter*, 28 June 1913. Easmon's speech was said to have made a 'great impression' on the young pupils of the Grammar School.

<sup>76</sup>'Dr. Charles Farrel Easmon As Medical Officer', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 10 July, 1913, 'A New Medical Officer Of The Colony', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 12 July 1913, 'General News', *Gold Coast Leader*, 19 July, 1913

<sup>77</sup>'The Late Mrs. Buckle', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 24 January, 1914. Easmon, M.C.F., 'Sierra Leone Doctors', *Sierra Leone Studies (New Series)*, No. 6, June 1956), p. 83. Easmon, M.C.F., 'Sierra Leone Doctors in the Nineteenth Century', in *Eminent Sierra Leoneans in the Nineteenth Century*; (Department of Information for the Sierra Leone Society: Freetown, 1961), p. 50. Albert Whiggs Easmon, (1865-1921) was the half-brother of Dr John Farrell Easmon.

<sup>78</sup>'Pension To Mrs. Colridge-Taylor [sic]', *Gold Coast Leader*, 9 August 1913. 'The Late Mrs. Buckle', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 24 January, 1914

<sup>79</sup>'The Police Court', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 15 April, 1899. 'Assault On Sir Samuel Lewis', *Sierra Leone Times*, 15 April, 1899. 'Reuters Liverpool West African News', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 27 May, 1899. 'Assault On The Mayor of Freetown', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 3 June, 1899. 'The Assault on Sir Samuel Lewis', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 24 June, 1899. 'The Assault on Sir Samuel Lewis', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 1 July, 1899. Wyse, Akintola, *H.C. Bankole-Bright and Politics in Colonial Sierra Leone, 1919-1958*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 65. Sir Samuel Lewis and Emmanuel Henry Cummings, both prominent Creoles who served as Mayors of Freetown, were physically attacked by European soldiers on different occasions.

<sup>80</sup>'Court Freetown', *Colonial and Provincial Reporter*, 10 January, 1914, 'Shooting Incidents in Sierra Leone', *Colonial and Provincial Reporter*, 10 January 1914, 'Another Shooting Case At The Police Court Freetown', *Gold Coast Leader*, 24 January, 1914. Honeysett was an employee of Messrs. G.B. Ollivant & Co, a European mercantile firm in Africa.

<sup>81</sup>'Court Freetown', *Colonial and Provincial Reporter*, 10 January, 1914. 'Another Shooting Case At The Police Court Freetown', *Gold Coast Leader*, 24 January, 1914. Honeysett was fined twenty shillings by the magistrate.

colonies and French Equatorial Africa were heavily involved in supporting the cause of the Allied Powers.<sup>82</sup> In the African Theatre of the conflict, British colonies such as Nigeria and Sierra Leone were important military bases as a consequence of the strategic location of these West African colonies.<sup>83</sup> Freetown, Sierra Leone was of particular importance to the Allied Powers' campaign because of the city's coaling station and the deep water port that allowed for troops and provisions to be despatched to the war front.<sup>84</sup>

Furthermore, in addition to the strategic importance of colonies such as Sierra Leone and Nigeria, the British West African colonies supplied troops for the Allied Campaign; of the 7,733 African soldiers of the West African Frontier Force, 5426 soldiers were from Nigeria, 1,553 came from the Gold Coast,<sup>85</sup> and 617 were from the Sierra Leone Battalion.<sup>86</sup> The Sierra Leone Battalion, mainly recruited from the Protectorate,<sup>87</sup> was among the battalions of the West African Frontier Force that served in the War during the Cameroon Campaign. Sixty-nine soldiers in the Sierra Leone Battalion were wounded and forty-one soldiers of the Battalion died during the campaign.<sup>88</sup> In addition to these African troops, thousands of West African non-combatants served as carriers with the Allied Forces in the First World War.<sup>89</sup> Based upon the highly commendable service of Sierra Leonean carriers in the Cameroons Campaign, the Sierra Leone Carrier Corps was formed and served honourably in the East African Campaign of the Great War.<sup>90</sup>

The First World War and its aftermath would also have a significant economic effect on the inhabitants of the British West African colonies.<sup>91</sup> The economic effect of the War on Africans in the British West African colonies was severe as the price of food and other commodities rose sharply during the War and its aftermath.<sup>92</sup> In Sierra Leone, the War not only had an effect in Freetown, but also had ripple effects in the Protectorate. A significant number of migrants from the Protectorate went to Freetown

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<sup>82</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, pp. 38. Strachan, Hew, 'The Cameroons', in *The First World War in Africa*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp vii-viii, 3-4

<sup>83</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 38. Moberly, Frederick James, *Military Operations Togoland and the Cameroons, 1914-1916, (Official History of the Great War)*, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1931), p. 425

<sup>84</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 38. Freetown

<sup>85</sup>Alhaji Grunshi, an Ashanti soldier in the Gold Coast Regiment was reportedly the first British soldier to fire a shot in the First World War. Grunshi, a Regimental Sergeant-Major, would later receive the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Military Medal for bravery. See Moberly, *Military Operations*, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1931), facing p. 8.

<sup>86</sup>Farwell, *The Great War*, pp. 35-36

<sup>87</sup>Moberly, *Military Operations*, p. 426. Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, pp. 48-49. The distinguished record of service exemplified by Sierra Leoneans such as Sergeant-Major Sorie Bangura who was awarded the Long Service Medal are some of the lesser known narratives of the Great War.

<sup>88</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 41. Upon arriving in the Cameroons, the Sierra Leone Battalion was attached to the two other battalions of the Gold Coast Regiment in the Cameroons.

<sup>89</sup>Cole, Festus, 'The Sierra Leone Carrier Corps and Krio Responses to Recruitment in World War I', in Dixon-Fyle, Mac (Ed.) Cole, Gibril Raschid (Ed.), *New Perspectives on the Sierra Leone Krio*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 62. According to Professor Festus Cole, between August 1914 and August 1917, Sierra Leone supplied 13,023 non-combatants to the war effort in the Cameroons and in East Africa; of these non-combatants, 11,890 were carriers and 220 were gun carriers. The majority, if not all, of these Sierra Leoneans were from the Sierra Leone Protectorate.

<sup>90</sup>Lucas, Sir Charles Prestwood, *The Empire at War*, Volume 4, (Oxford: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 18. Cole, Festus, 'The Sierra Leone Carrier Corps and Krio Responses to Recruitment in World War I', in Dixon-Fyle, Mac (Ed.) Cole, Gibril Raschid (Ed.), *New Perspectives on the Sierra Leone Krio*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 58. Sierra Leoneans, mainly from the Protectorate, served bravely as carriers in the Cameroons Campaign. In January 1917, the Sierra Leone Carriers Corp was formed to serve in the East African Campaign. The recruitment policy by British colonial officials focused on recruiting Sierra Leoneans in the Protectorate and excluded the Creoles from service as carriers in the East African Campaign.

<sup>91</sup>Wyse, H.C. Bankole-Bright, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 33. Strachan, 'The Cameroons', in *The First World War in Africa*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp vii-viii, 3-4, Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, pp. 38

<sup>92</sup>Wyse, H.C. Bankole-Bright, p. 33. Cole, Festus, 'The Sierra Leone Carrier Corps and Krio Responses to Recruitment in World War I', in Dixon-Fyle, Mac (Ed.) Cole, Gibril Raschid (Ed.), *New Perspectives on the Sierra Leone Krio*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 58

and found employment loading coal and working on Royal Navy ships in the Atlantic.<sup>93</sup> Young men from the Protectorate also came to Freetown in order to enlist in the military.<sup>94</sup> Following the War, the population surge in Freetown continued, reflecting the changing demographics that occurred as a direct result of the Great War.<sup>95</sup> However, in spite of the austere colonial regulations that prohibited or limited the advancement of Sierra Leonean professionals based upon skin colour, or the increasingly poor economic conditions in the Colony, a significant number of Sierra Leoneans remained fiercely supportive of the British campaign against Germany.<sup>96</sup>

### Sierra Leoneans and the First World War

In the aftermath of the 1898 Hut Tax War in which hundreds of Sierra Leoneans and Europeans were killed, Anglo-Creole relations had significantly ebbed and deteriorated.<sup>97</sup> The policies of Governors Arthur Edward Kennedy and John Pope-Hennessy that contributed to the inclusion of Sierra Leoneans in the colonial civil service were reversed in the aftermath of the Hut Tax War.<sup>98</sup> Although in 1892 the Creoles held eighteen out of forty posts, by 1912, the Creoles held only fifteen posts out of ninety-two posts, and five of these posts were abolished after their holders retired.<sup>99</sup> Thus, Sierra Leoneans such as Second Lieutenants Abraham Broughton Davies and Jacob Benoni Johnson were pensioned shortly after receiving their commissions in the Sierra Leone Battalion.<sup>100</sup> However, in spite of the increasing discrimination that Sierra Leoneans faced in the professional sphere and elsewhere, the Creoles remained optimistic and strongly supported the Entente Powers campaign against the Central Powers comprised of Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Hungary.<sup>101</sup>

As British Subjects, equal in law to their white counterparts born and bred in Britain, the Creole community engaged in the wartime fervour. In local newspapers, Sierra Leonean journalists vocalised their disdain for the Central Powers and espoused their devotion and loyalty to the British Crown.<sup>102</sup> One Sierra Leonean journalist quoted from a letter he received from a fellow Sierra Leonean who stated that "his blood fairly boils at the news of the German atrocities...and he sometimes dreams that he is taking part in an attack against one of the Kaiser's crack regiments."<sup>103</sup> The Sierra Leonean Muslim community, uniformly denounced the Ottoman Empire for joining the Central Powers in opposition to Great Britain, and declared that the Ottoman

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<sup>93</sup> Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 39

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., pp. 38-39

<sup>95</sup> Spitzer, *Creoles of Sierra Leone*, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), pp. 159-160

<sup>96</sup> 'The King's Own Creole Boys', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November 1914, 'Loyal Sierra Leone', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November, 1914, Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 39

<sup>97</sup> Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 615, 617. Spitzer, *Creoles of Sierra Leone*, p. 106, 108. Browne-Davies, Nigel, 'The role of the Sierra Leone Creole people in the Hut Tax War of 1898: Aggressors or Victims?', *Journal of Sierra Leone Studies (JSLs)*, Volume 3, Edition 1, pp. 62-64. The Hut Tax War was a military conflict in the Protectorate that led to the decline of Anglo-Sierra Leonean relations. The Creoles were blamed by the colonial authorities for fomenting the rebellion and although the official enquiry by Sir David Chalmers broadly contradicted this notion, the imperial government accepted the viewpoint that the Creoles had been instrumental in the rebellion and subsequently the colonial government sought to curtail the 'rights' of the Creoles.

<sup>98</sup> Browne-Davies, 'The role of the Sierra Leone Creole people in the Hut Tax War', *JSLs*, Vol. 3, Ed.1 pp. 62-64

<sup>99</sup> Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 615

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p. 615

<sup>101</sup> Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 39

<sup>102</sup> Wyse, H.C. Bankole-Bright, p. 32. 'The King's Own Creole Boys', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November 1914. 'Loyal Sierra Leone', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November, 1914. As A.J. Shorunkeh-Sawyer noted, the Creoles were 'identified in interests with the English people...particularly in reference to the existing war.'

<sup>103</sup> 'Loyal Sierra Leone', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November, 1914

Empire had acted against the teachings of the Koran.<sup>104</sup> A special set of constables was formed to patrol the streets of Freetown and to prevent German captives from escaping from where they were held at Mount Aureol and the Government Model School.<sup>105</sup> Thus, the aftermath of the Hut Tax War and the increasing disownment of the Creoles by the British administration had not diminished the Creole elite's dedication and loyalty, often derided by commentators and modern scholars, to the British Empire.<sup>106</sup>

The imperialistic fervour led to calls by some newspaper editors and journalists for the enlistment and commission of Sierra Leoneans or even the creation of a special regiment called the 'King's Own Creole Boys.'<sup>107</sup> A Sierra Leonean journalist writing for the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* under the pseudonym 'Rambler' noted that:

'the Creole boy love [sic] the soldier life. He loves the smart uniform and the swaggering gait of the "so jer man." But he wants a chance of promotion to induce him to join the colours. Give him the hope of an epaulet, a star and a sword and by Jingo! you'll see what stuff he is made of."<sup>108</sup>

Some Sierra Leoneans enlisted in the military such as Isaac Wallace-Johnson, who served as a clerk in the Carrier Corps in the Cameroons.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, some Sierra Leoneans who served in the Cameroons Campaign received honours such as Lance Corporal Sorie Kanu, 2,900 Private Samba Keita, 3,194 Private Santigie Kanu, and 3,367 Private Mondeh Yeraia who all were awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for exceptional bravery.<sup>110</sup> However, the imperial government and the colonial authorities were not prepared to commission or promote Sierra Leoneans, or any West Africans, who enlisted in the British military.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, British colonial officials were particularly disinclined to recruit Creoles who sought to enlist in the military.<sup>112</sup> As some Sierra Leoneans increasingly realized, promotion in the British military during the conflict was only open to servicemen of 'pure European descent'.<sup>113</sup> However, although the colonial government<sup>114</sup> was reluctant to commission Africans as officers in the military, a shortage of medical doctors in the African Theatre of the War in the Cameroons, would force the colonial

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<sup>104</sup>Rambler, 'Rambling Talks: Muhammadan Feeling', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 14 November 1914. Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 39

<sup>105</sup>Spitzer, *Creoles of Sierra Leone*, pp.152-153. Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 39

<sup>106</sup>Browne-Davies, 'The role of the Sierra Leone Creole people in the Hut Tax War', *JSL*, Vol. 3, Ed. 1, pp. 62-64,

<sup>107</sup>'The King's Own Creole Boys', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November 1914. 'Loyal Sierra Leone', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November, 1914

<sup>108</sup>'The King's Own Creole Boys', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November 1914,

<sup>109</sup>Christopher Fyfe, 'Johnson, Isaac Theophilus Akuna Wallace- (1894-1965)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/75249>, accessed 6 Sept 2014]. Some sources state that Isaac Wallace-Johnson enlisted as an army clerk in the West African Regiment or in the Sierra Leone Carrier Corps. However, the Sierra Leone Carrier Corps were formed after the conclusion of the Cameroons Campaign.

<sup>110</sup>Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, pp. 48, 49. In a despatch to the War Office, General Dobell paid tribute to West African soldiers who served in the Cameroons when he stated that "to them no day seems to be too long, no task too difficult. With a natural aptitude for soldiering, they are endowed with a constitution which inures them to hardship; they share...an inexhaustible fund of good humour!"

<sup>111</sup>Fyfe, *A Short History of Sierra Leone*, p. 163

<sup>112</sup>Cole, Festus, 'The Sierra Leone Carrier Corps and Krio Responses to Recruitment in World War I', in Dixon-Fyle, Mac (Ed.) Cole, Gibril Raschid (Ed.), *New Perspectives on the Sierra Leone Krio*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 57-58. The attitude of the colonial government toward the Creoles in the professional sphere was translated into the military. Some British colonials believed that the Creoles were not as physically capable to serve in the military, in contrast to colonial opinion regarding the physical capabilities of Sierra Leoneans in the Protectorate.

<sup>113</sup>'The King's Own Creole Boys', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November 1914, 'Loyal Sierra Leone', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 7 November, 1914

<sup>114</sup>Colonial government in this article refers to all aspects of the colonial establishment. The imperial government refers specifically to the British Colonial Office that oversaw the affairs of British colonies and other territories.

authorities to specially select African medical personnel for service in the Cameroons Campaign.

### Lieutenant Easmon to the Cameroons

In August 1914, the Cameroons Expeditionary Force was formed to serve in the Allied Campaign to capture strategic areas in the German colony of Cameroons.<sup>115</sup> The Expeditionary Force was comprised of British and French troops<sup>116</sup> under the command of Brigadier-General Charles Macpherson Dobell, the Inspector-General of the West African Frontier Force and the highest ranking officer in British West Africa.<sup>117</sup> In addition to the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C.), the West African Medical Staff, a civil medical service without military experience, was subsequently assigned to serve with the Cameroons Expeditionary Force in the Cameroons.<sup>118</sup> Thus, a significant number of the European medical doctors in the W.A.M.S. were commissioned as officers.<sup>119</sup>

However, in spite of the commission of medical officers in the W.A.M.S., there remained a dearth of medical doctors available to serve in the Cameroons Campaign, and the Expeditionary Force required the assistance of additional medical officers and personnel including M.C.F. Easmon.<sup>120</sup> Thus, in late October 1914, Easmon was specially selected for service with the British forces in the Cameroons Campaign.<sup>121</sup> Easmon's medical qualifications and service as a Native Medical Officer should have resulted in him receiving a full commission as an officer in the West African Medical Staff. However, the colonial government were perhaps unwilling to fully commission him as an officer because he was not of 'pure European descent'.<sup>122</sup> Beyond the fact that Easmon was excluded from service in the W.A.M.S. based upon his colour, British military regulations outlined in the *Manual of Military Law, 1914* stated categorically that 'aliens' and impliedly blacks were not to be placed in positions of command or power during the

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<sup>115</sup>Farwell, *The Great War*, pp. 40-41. The 'Cameroons Expeditionary Force' and the 'West African Expeditionary Force' were terms that were used interchangeably.

<sup>116</sup>O'Neill, Herbert C., 'Chapter V: German Kamerun', *The War in Africa, 1914-1917 and the Far East, 1914*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918), p. 48. According to Herbert C. O'Neill, Dobell's army was comprised of 4,500 "first-rate" troops; half of these were of the West African Frontier Force and the rest were Senegalese Tirailleurs, a French colonial infantry corps, led by Colonel Mayer.

<sup>117</sup>Macpherson, Sir William Grant, *Medical Services: General History: Medical services in the United Kingdom, in British garrisons overseas and during operations against Tsingtau, in Togoland, the Cameroons and South-West Africa*, Volume I, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1921), p. 282. Brigadier-General Charles Macpherson Dobell, (1869-1954) was a Canadian-born military commander who was the highest ranking British officer in West Africa. A native of Quebec and a fluent speaker of French, Dobell was indeed the best possible candidate to lead the Expeditionary Force. Following his service in the War, Dobell was promoted to Lieutenant-General.

<sup>118</sup>TNA, WO 33/781', 'Enclosure No. 6 Report on Medical Arrangements on Arrival At Duala, By the Director of Medical Services, Allied Forces', J.C.B. Statham, 8 October 1914'. Macpherson, *Medical Services*, (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1921), p. 284.

<sup>119</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 284

<sup>120</sup>'Medical Requirements At The Cameroons', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 31 October 1914. The 'African Theatre' of the Great War was the battle between Anglo-French forces and German forces for control of the German colonies of the Cameroons, Togoland, German Southwest Africa, and German East Africa, the latter colony being arguably the most prized colonial possession of Germany.

<sup>121</sup>'The Colonial Secretary', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 16 January, 1915. Medical Requirements At The Cameroons', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 31 October 1914.

<sup>122</sup>Fyfe, Christopher, 'Easmon, McCormack Charles Farrell (1890-1972)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76276, accessed 26 June 2014]. Vasili, Phil, 'Tull, Walter Daniel John (1888-1918)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/62348, accessed 29 June 2014]. This point is somewhat debatable; some of Easmon's fellow medical officers such as Dr Norman Scarborough Deane and Dr Frank Edred (Edward) Whitehead, both European medical doctors of the West African Medical Staff, received temporary commissions as lieutenants. However, both Scarborough and Whitehead received their temporary commissions in the early stages of the Campaign and appear to have been promoted during the war, which was not the case with Easmon. Although it may be that Easmon did not satisfy the 'criteria' for promotion, there is no evidence to suggest that anything other than his skin colour was a barrier to further promotion and the receipt of a full commission.



War.<sup>123</sup> Thus, Easmon was not the only medical doctor of Sierra Leonean descent to possibly be discriminated against based upon his skin colour. In England, Dr Ernest Jenner Wright, (1892-1957), a London-born medical doctor of Sierra Leonean-English parentage had attempted to enlist in the Royal Army Medical Corps only to have his application rejected because Wright was not of 'pure European descent'.<sup>124</sup>

Thus, similar to the rationale of imperial and colonial figures who sought to prevent highly qualified medical doctors such as Easmon from serving alongside or above their white counterparts in the W.A.M.S., so the imperial and colonial governments were unwilling to see a 'coloured' doctor serve with distinction as an officer in the First World War. However, instead of refusing to commission Easmon which would have caused a public outcry in Freetown,<sup>125</sup> Easmon received a temporary commission and was given the rank of temporary Lieutenant in the West African Medical Staff.<sup>126</sup> Although some of Easmon's European counterparts in the W.A.M.S. would also receive temporary commissions, Easmon appears to be the only officer who was not promoted to a higher rank or who did not receive a full commission while on active duty.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *Manual of Military Law 1914*, (London: H.M. Stationery, 1914), pp. 198, 242, 471. Vasili, Phil, 'Tull, Walter Daniel John (1888–1918)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/62348, accessed 29 June 2014]

The extent to which blacks who were British subjects, such as Easmon, were excluded from commissioned rank is somewhat debatable. Certainly it is unclear whether the stipulation relating to aliens was applicable to individuals such as Easmon. Although certainly the requirement of 'pure European descent' for the Special Reserve of Officers excluded non-whites, it is unclear whether this stipulation similarly applied to commissioned medical officers. Furthermore, although the regulations in the *Manual of Military Law*, 1914 were generally enforced, each colonial setting had some leeway in relation to the enlistment and commission of non-white men. Colonial authorities in Sierra Leone appear to have taken a conservative approach to the enlistment and commission of Sierra Leonean men.

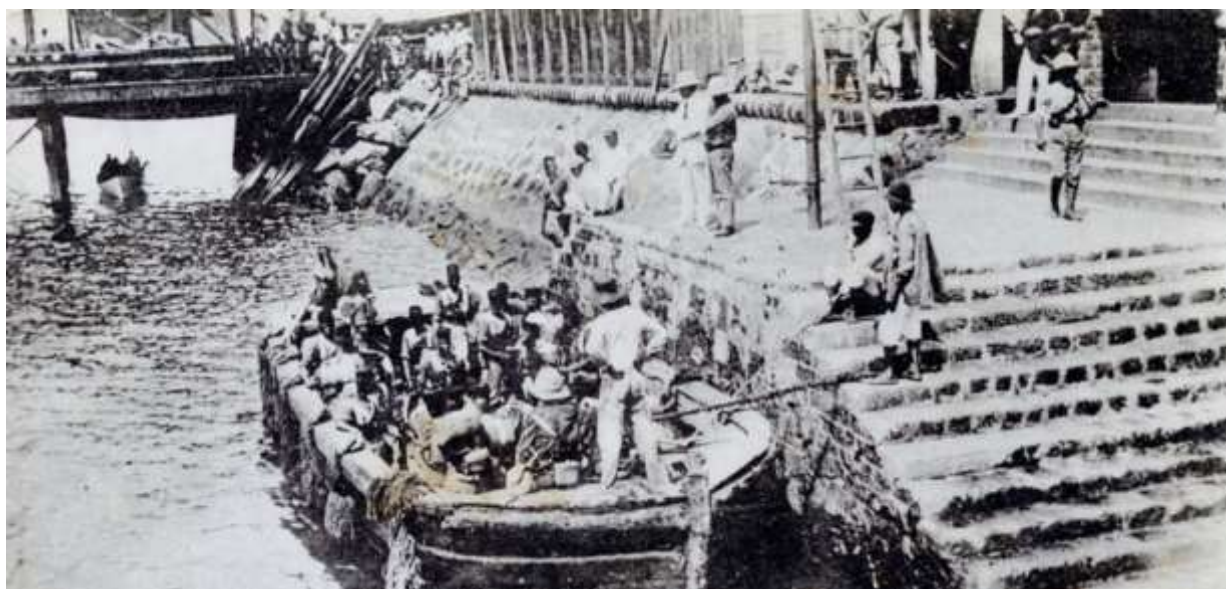
<sup>124</sup> Pegg, Ian, Lotz, Rainer E., *Under the Imperial carpet: essays in Black history, 1780-1950*, (England: Rabbit Press, 1986), p. 172, Liddle, Peter, Bourne, J.M., Whitehead, Ian, *The Great War, 1914-1945: The peoples' experience*, (London: HarperCollins, 2001), p. 259. See also Paul Reed's article in *Stand To!: The Journal of the Western Front Association*, Issues 45-50. Ernest Jenner Wright, (1892-1955), born in South Kensington, London of mixed English and Sierra Leonean descent, had attempted to enlist in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Britain but was told to 'go home' to Sierra Leone. In 1916, having decided to return to Sierra Leone, the land of his father's birth, Wright became a successful medical doctor and was the first chairman of the Sierra Leone Society. Wright was also a contemporary of M.C.F. Easmon through the Sierra Leone Society. Wright's brother, Claude Emile Wright, (1890-1952), who had also been born in England, was one of the foremost lawyers in Sierra Leone. Claude and Ernest Wright married two Smith sisters, who were the maternal cousins of M.C.F. Easmon.

<sup>125</sup> Fyfe, Christopher, 'Easmon, McCormack Charles Farrell (1890–1972)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76276, accessed 26 June 2014].

<sup>126</sup> TNA, WO 372/6/145110, 'Macormack Charles Farrell Easmon', British Army World War I Medal Rolls, Index Cards, 1914-1920. TNA, WO 329/2305, 'British War Medal and Allied Victory' Medal Rolls. TNA, WO 329/2956, '1914/1915 Star' Medal Rolls. Fyfe, Christopher, 'Easmon, McCormack Charles Farrell (1890–1972)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76276, accessed 26 June 2014]. 'Medical Requirements At The Cameroons', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 31 October 1914. Easmon's medal card states he served with the 'Sierra Leone Medical Service' and in another margin, the 'West African Medical Service'. The Sierra Leone Medical Service was the local medical service comprised of 'Native Medical Officers' of African descent and the West African Medical Service refers specifically to the West African Medical Staff to which only Europeans were appointed. Although in some instances the terms, 'Sierra Leone Medical Service' and 'West African Medical Service' were referred to interchangeably or were somewhat blurred, there was a distinction between these two terms representative of the disparity between the colonial and local medical services in the British West African colonies. The section of Easmon's medal card listing his regiment states that he served in the Sierra Leone Medical Service. This may be due to the fact that the individual who completed Easmon's medal card was not aware of the distinction between the Sierra Leone Medical Service and the West African Medical Service. It could also be the case that the individual who completed the card may have been attempting to state that Easmon served in the Sierra Leone Medical Service, or the branch of the West African Medical Service based in Sierra Leone. However, it is equally, if not more likely, that the individual who completed Easmon's medical card was aware of the distinction between the Sierra Leone Medical Service and the West African Medical Service, and intended to highlight the unusual circumstances in which Easmon, a Native Medical Officer had been required to serve with the West African Medical Staff in the Great War. Based upon the author's research, Easmon's medal card is the only card to record the regiment as the 'Sierra Leone Medical Service'.

<sup>127</sup> *The London Gazette*, 16 May, 1916, Issue 29583, p. 4855, *The Gazette*, URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29583/page/4855>. Although Fyfe states that Easmon received an "ungazetted [sic]" rank, Easmon's receipt of a temporary

In early November 1914, Easmon was officially posted on special duty with the Ambulance Department of the Cameroons Expeditionary Force to the Cameroons.<sup>128</sup> Fourteen other medical officers from the W.A.M.S. and several other medical personnel including white nurses, black assistant nurses and black dispensers were also assigned to serve in the Cameroons.<sup>129</sup> On 2 November, 1914, Easmon boarded the *S.S. Abbinsi* and left Sierra Leone for service in the Cameroons.<sup>130</sup> In those days, Easmon would have taken a small boat from the Freetown dock which would have ferried himself and other medical personnel and soldiers out to the *S.S. Abbinsi*.<sup>131</sup> After orientation in Nigeria, Easmon would have been assigned to serve the Allied Forces in the Cameroons.<sup>132</sup>



**Figure 2. Photograph of British soldiers embarking at Freetown. The boats in the picture are similar to what M.C.F. Easmon would have used to embark on the *S.S. Abbinsi*.<sup>133</sup>**

### The Cameroons Campaign

commission was noted in the *London Gazette*. Furthermore, Easmon himself stated in his article, 'Sierra Leone Doctors' that he saw "active service as a Lieutenant (General List) in World War I (Cameroons)" indicating that he was also listed in *Hart's Annual Army List* for 1915. Nor can Easmon not receiving a regimental number necessarily be connected to discrimination; the medal cards for medical officers of the W.A.M.S. generally do not list regimental numbers. This is perhaps because the W.A.M.S. were assigned to serve in the Cameroons under special circumstances and were not a regular military medical service.

<sup>128</sup>Dr Farrel Easmon [sic], *Sierra Leone Guardian*, 6 November, 1914

<sup>129</sup>'Medical Requirements At The Cameroons', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 31 October 1914. 'Mr. E.G. Luke', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 20 November 1915. 'Along the Color Line: Personal', *The Crisis* (Chicago Number) Vol. 10 No. 5, Whole No. 59, September 1915. TNA, WO 372/12/160644, 'Ebenezer George Luke', British Army World War I Medal Rolls, Index Cards, 1914-1920. Among the Sierra Leonean dispensers who served in the Cameroons were Ebenezer George Luke, a dispenser at the Colonial Hospital in Freetown who returned to Sierra Leone in November 1915. Luke served as a storekeeper with the Medical Department of the Sierra Leone Battalion and the West African Frontier Force. Luke who was said to have received the 'appreciation of his superior officers', returned from the campaign invalided and was placed on the sick list upon arriving in Sierra Leone. He was awarded the three main campaign medals, the Allied Victory Medal, British War Medal, and the 1914/1915 Star Medal. Similarly, S.B. Palmer, a Sierra Leonean dispenser at Victoria Hospital in Bathurst, Gambia, also saw active duty in the Cameroons from September, 1915.

<sup>130</sup>Dr Farrel Easmon [sic], *Sierra Leone Guardian*, 6 November, 1914

<sup>131</sup>Information provided by Mr. Ahovi Kponou, (Communicated: 8 June, 2014)

<sup>132</sup>Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, p. 171

<sup>133</sup> Photograph (taken from a postcard) provided courtesy of Mr. Ahovi Kponou.

The Cameroons that M.C.F. Easmon arrived at on 13 November, 1914 was surrounded by Allied territories such as Nigeria and French Equatorial Africa and also the neutral colony of Spanish Guinea.<sup>134</sup> With territory that was forty percent larger than Germany,<sup>135</sup> the terrain of the Cameroons consisted of the mountainous region in the north and thick forests and numerous rivers in the southern region.<sup>136</sup> There were 2000 German soldiers based in the Cameroons with a local colonial force of Schutztruppen comprised of 205 German officers and 1,650 African soldiers organised into twelve companies of 120 soldiers.<sup>137</sup> However, British forces in the region numbered nearly triple the number of German forces and French forces were possibly even larger.<sup>138</sup>

Prior to the Allied campaign, the German Colonial Service had realized that German forces in the Cameroons were outnumbered, and attempted to mitigate this situation by invoking the neutrality provisions of Articles 10 and 11 of the General Act of the Berlin Conference.<sup>139</sup> Observance of the neutrality provisions of Article 10 and 11 by the British and French forces would have prevented the extension of the War into German colonial territories including the south-eastern and eastern Cameroons.<sup>140</sup> However, as some scholars note, the French forces were eager to regain territory in the Cameroons that had been ceded to Germany in 1912 with the Treaty of Fez,<sup>141</sup> and the British Colonial Service refused to recognise the neutrality provisions on the basis it would be advantageous to Germany in the War.<sup>142</sup> Thus, on 6 August, 1914, the French forces led by General Aymerich invaded the German Cameroons from French Equatorial Africa and a three pronged attack by three small British columns followed some weeks after on 25 August, 1914.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Reynolds, Francis Joseph, Churchill, Allen Leon, Miller, Francis Trevelyan, 'Part IX-The War in Africa: Chapter XCVI: Campaign in Togoland And The Cameroons', *The Story of the Great War*, Volume 2, (New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1916), p. 569. Strachan, 'The Cameroons', in *The First World War in Africa*, p. 19. From 1884, as a result of the Scramble for Africa, the Cameroons were colonial possessions controlled by Germany, the principal aggressor among the Central Powers. Germany retained control of the Cameroons until February 1916, and this territory included the modern Republic of Cameroon, parts of Chad, the Central African Republic, eastern Nigeria, and the northern area of the Congo and Gabon.

<sup>135</sup>O'Neill, 'Chapter V: German Kamerun', *The War in Africa, 1914-1917 and the Far East, 1914*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918), p. 43

<sup>136</sup>Reynolds, Churchill, Miller, 'Chapter XCVI: Campaign in Togoland And The Cameroons', *The Story of the Great War*, Volume 2, (New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1916), p. 569. Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 40

<sup>137</sup>Moberly, *Military Operations*, p. 53. Morrow, John Howard, *The Great War: An Imperial History*, (Sussex: Psychology Press, 2005), p. 59, Strachan, 'The Cameroons', in *The First World War in Africa*, p. 21. African soldiers in the Cameroons Campaign were known as 'Askaris.' Although the German forces also maintained a policy of not recruiting local Africans, in light of the Anglo-French invasion in the Cameroons, the German military commanders in the Cameroons recruited 6000 local Africans for service in the military. However according to British sources, the German colonials had mistreated the indigenous population, who were more favourable to the Allied Forces. The hostility of the indigenous peoples toward German colonial forces would apparently jeopardise German military operations during the Campaign.

<sup>138</sup>Morrow, *The Great War: An Imperial History*, (Sussex: Psychology Press, 2005), p. 59, Farwell, *The Great War*, p. 35. However, although French and British forces in the region were approximately triple the number of German forces, the latter had a better trained colonial force, which was suited for the Cameroon Campaign.

<sup>139</sup>O'Neill, 'German Kamerun', p. 45. Connaughton, Richard, 'The First World War in Africa, 1914-1918', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, (A Frank Cass Journal), Volume 12, No. 1, 2001, p. 112. Farwell, *The Great War*, pp. 34-35. This Act is also known as the Congo Act or the Berlin Act. After it was clear that Britain and France would not observe the Act, the German military strategy soon shifted to attempts to maintain a defensive position in the Cameroons.

<sup>140</sup>Strachan, 'The Cameroons', in *The First World War in Africa*, p. 20

<sup>141</sup>Also referred to as the Treaty of Fes.

<sup>142</sup>Connaughton, 'The First World War in Africa', in *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, p. 112. Farwell, *The Great War*, p. 36. Strachan, 'The Cameroons', in *The First World War in Africa*, p. 31. Britain also sought to destroy the powerful wireless cable system in Douala, a major commercial city in the German Cameroons.

<sup>143</sup>Farwell, *The Great War*, pp. 36-38. Strachan, 'The Cameroons', in *The First World War in Africa*, p. 34. General Aymerich would remain in command of the French contingent throughout the entire Campaign. General Aymerich and his troops undertook military operations in the east and south-eastern region of the Cameroons, see Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 290.



**Figure 3. African soldiers of the German forces in the Cameroons<sup>144</sup>**

These three small British columns entered the German Cameroons from Nigeria, and the first column, led by Captain Fox, attacked Mora, a German hill fort in the northern region of the Cameroons. The second British column, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Maclear, entered Garua in the north-central region of the Cameroons, and the third column, led by Lieutenant-Colonel G.T. Mair, attempted to capture Nsanakong, a town with a fort which was further south in the northern Cameroons.<sup>145</sup> The British column attempting to capture Mora in the central Cameroons was the first to fully engage the German forces on 27 August, 1914.<sup>146</sup> However, this column suffered a heavy defeat and was forced to retreat back into Nigeria.<sup>147</sup> On 29 August, 1914, the British forces were subsequently defeated at the First Battle of Garua, and this would delay the British forces from pushing further into the northern region of the Cameroons.<sup>148</sup> Although the column attacking Nsanakong had successfully occupied the town, at the Battle of Nsanakong on 6 September 1914, the British Forces were surrounded by German forces and suffered a disastrous defeat.<sup>149</sup> Seven officers and at least 180 troops of other ranks were killed, wounded or captured at the Battle of Nsanakong.<sup>150</sup>

These early stages of the Cameroons Campaign had been disastrous for the British forces.<sup>151</sup> Brigadier-General Dobell, the highest ranking British military officer in West Africa, had been away on leave in Britain at an Anglo-French conference to discuss preparations for a joint British and French military operation in the Cameroons. The three pronged attack by British columns in the Cameroons had been ordered by Colonel C.H.P. Carter, the commander of the Nigeria Regiment. As a result of the British defeats, Colonel Carter was subsequently relieved of his duties and was replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick H.G. Cunliffe, the assistant commander of the Nigeria Regiment.<sup>152</sup> Acting Commander Cunliffe would continue to lead the Nigeria Regiment column

<sup>144</sup>Moberly, *Military Operations*, facing p. 53

<sup>145</sup>Farwell, *The Great War*, p. 37

<sup>146</sup>Moberly, *Military Operations*, pp. 86, 89. The first engagement or skirmish between British and German forces took place at the Battle of Tepe on 25, August 1914, and the outcome of the battle resulted in a German withdrawal from the area.

<sup>147</sup>Farwell, *The Great War*, p. 37

<sup>148</sup>Reynolds, Churchill, Miller, 'Chapter XCVI: Campaign in Togoland And The Cameroons', Farwell. *The Great War*, pp. 37-38. British casualties included Colonel Maclear, whose personal diary is among the collection held at the Imperial War Museum.

<sup>149</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 282. Reynolds, Churchill, Miller, 'Chapter XCVI: Campaign in Togoland And The Cameroons', pp. 570-71

<sup>150</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 282. In total, 150 officers were killed during the attack by the three British columns.

<sup>151</sup>Reynolds, Churchill, Miller, 'Chapter XCVI: Campaign in Togoland And The Cameroons', p. 570

<sup>152</sup>Strachan, 'The Cameroons', p. 35. Farwell, *The Great War*, p. 39

throughout the campaign and would capture Garua and win other important victories against German forces near the Nigerian frontier in the northern Cameroons.<sup>153</sup> However, it was the arrival of Brigadier-General Dobell in September 1914 that would change the course of the British campaign in the Cameroons.<sup>154</sup> General Dobell, an experienced and brilliant military commander, returned to West Africa with an Expeditionary Force at his command and the objective of capturing key strategic areas in the south-western region of the Cameroons such as Douala, Buea, and Victoria.<sup>155</sup> It was during this period that Easmon arrived in the Cameroons.

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<sup>153</sup>Reynolds, Francis Joseph, Churchill, Allen Leon, Miller, Francis Trevelyan, 'Part VIII-The War in Africa: Chapter LXCII-The Cameroons', *The Story of the Great War*, Volume 3, (New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1916), pp. 426-27. Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 291. O'Neill, 'German Kamerun', pp. 55-7. Moberly, *Military Operations*, pp. 305-306

<sup>154</sup>Farwell, *The Great War*, p. 39

<sup>155</sup>Strachan, 'The Cameroons', p. 32. General Dobell's Expeditionary Force would attack from the south-western coastal region and moved inland toward Yaoundé. Commander Cunliffe's troops remained separate from the West African Expeditionary Force and were based in the northern Cameroons near the Nigerian border. Cunliffe's troops would launch attacks in the northern region of the Cameroons.



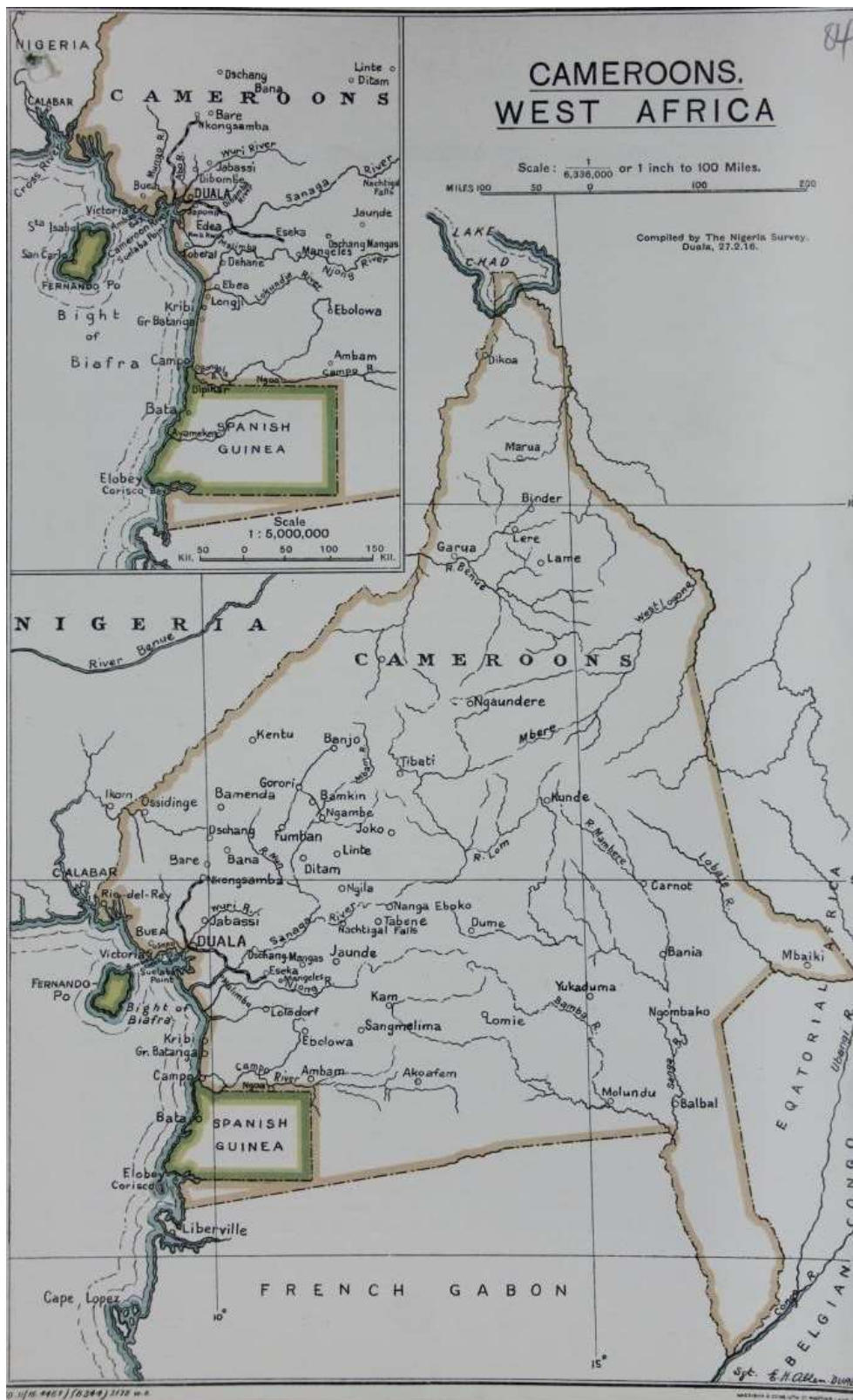


Figure 4. Colonial Map of the German Cameroons<sup>156</sup>

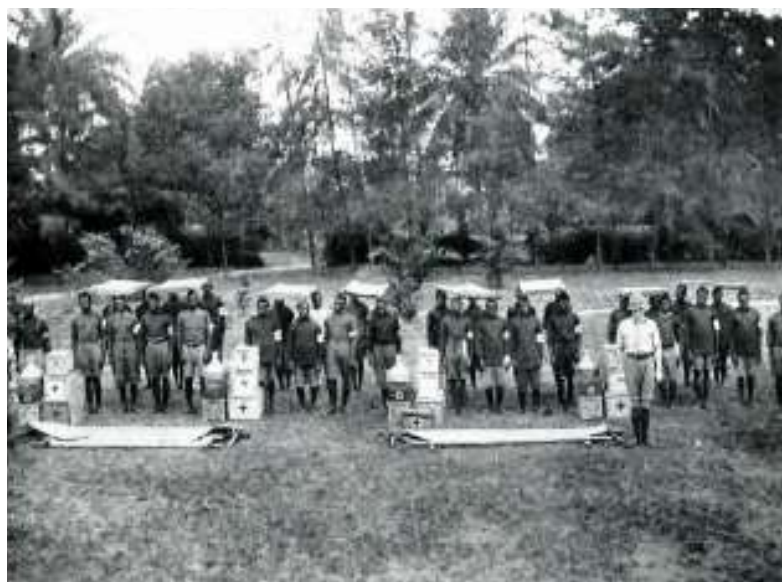
#### M.C.F. Easmon's Service in the Cameroons

M.C.F. Easmon arrived in the Cameroons a few weeks after the capture of *Edéa*, a town along the Sanaga River, on 26

<sup>156</sup>TNA, WO 33/781, 'Appendix L'

October, 1914.<sup>157</sup> British forces under the command of Dobell had already captured the port city of Douala, the commercial centre of the Cameroons, on 27 September, 1914.<sup>158</sup> Following the capture of Douala, the new objectives given to Brigadier-General Dobell included a plan to capture the entire colony of the Cameroons.<sup>159</sup> The Cameroons Expeditionary Force attempted to penetrate inland from Douala, in order to capture towns of strategic importance where German forces were generally based.<sup>160</sup> A land and naval attack was launched to capture Buea, a hill station on the Cameroon Mountain, and the adjoining area including the coastal town of Victoria.<sup>161</sup> This mission was complete by 15 November, 1914 shortly after Easmon's arrival in the Cameroons.<sup>162</sup>

General Dobell's hasty arrangements for forming an Expeditionary Force led to what one military commander called the 'unusual conditions' for the formation of the campaign's medical services.<sup>163</sup> Upon Dobell's return to West Africa, civil medical officers of the West African Medical Staff had been selected from the British West African colonies alongside non-commissioned officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps and other medical personnel.<sup>164</sup> British and French medical personnel were often reinforced or replaced during the campaign and Easmon was among the fifty-seven additional British medical officers who arrived to reinforce or relieve medical officers already serving in the Cameroons.<sup>165</sup>



**Figure 5. Section of Field Ambulance on a light scale<sup>166</sup>**

General Dobell appointed Major J.C.B. Statham of the Royal Army Medical Corps as the Director of Medical Services for the Cameroons Campaign.<sup>167</sup> Statham, who received a temporary commission as a Lieutenant-Colonel, was responsible for

<sup>157</sup> Reynolds, Churchill, Miller, 'Chapter XCVI: Campaign in Togoland And The Cameroons', p. 573.

<sup>158</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 283. Turay, Abraham, *The Sierra Leone Army*, p. 41. Farwell, *The Great War*, pp. 41. 47-48

<sup>159</sup> Farwell, *The Great War*, p. 48

<sup>160</sup> Reynolds, Churchill, Miller, 'Chapter XCVI: Campaign in Togoland And The Cameroons', pp. 572-74

<sup>161</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 286. Following the establishment of the Republic of Cameroon, Victoria, Cameroon, a seaside city, is now known as a Limbe.

<sup>162</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 289

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. p. 284

<sup>164</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 285. TNA, WO 33/781, 'Enclosure No. 6 Report on Medical Arrangements on Arrival At Duala, By the Director of Medical Services, Allied Forces', J.C.B. Statham, 8 October 1914'

<sup>165</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 285

<sup>166</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, facing p. 292

<sup>167</sup> Moberly, *Military Operations*, p. 124. Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 284

organising the medical personnel for duty in the Cameroons.<sup>168</sup> However, the traditional organisation of British medical personnel in bush warfare was adjusted based upon the limited number of medical staff and the conditions of the Cameroons Campaign.<sup>169</sup> According to Statham's orders, field ambulances were organised and attached to each battalion of the Expeditionary Force.<sup>170</sup> These field ambulance sections consisted of two medical officers, two non-commissioned officers of the R.A.M.C., four to six orderlies, and carriers consisting of thirty-two or forty-eight stretch bearers and thirty-two or forty-eight carriers of equipment.<sup>171</sup> Each field ambulance section was further sub-divided into four smaller groups called 'equipments [sic]' which were led by a medical officer or a non-commissioned officer in the R.A.M.C.<sup>172</sup> These equipment sections of the field ambulance were further divided into heavy equipment sections and light equipment sections, both expected to be transferable to assist the battalions that required greater medical attention.<sup>173</sup> An evacuating field ambulance was also organised to serve as an independent medical unit behind the field ambulance sections attached to the battalions.<sup>174</sup> These evacuating field ambulances had a larger set of medical equipment but had less medical personnel than the other field ambulances and were comprised of two medical officers, one non-commissioned officer and forty-eight carriers.<sup>175</sup> Although Statham's arrangements for the medical service were altered toward the latter end of the Campaign, for the majority of Easmon's active duty, the medical personnel were organised into these divisions.<sup>176</sup> Easmon, who had been assigned to the Ambulance Department of the Expeditionary Force, would have probably served with one of the field ambulance sections as a medical officer.

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<sup>168</sup> TNA, WO 33/781', 'Enclosure No. 6 Report on Medical Arrangements on Arrival At Douala, By the Director of Medical Services, Allied Forces', J.C.B. Statham, 8 October 1914.' Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 284. Statham had to organise medical officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps and former civil medical officers of the W.A.M.S. into an effective medical service during the Campaign.

<sup>169</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, pp. 285-286. Before disembarking from the S.S. *Appam*, Colonel Statham had initially organised a field medical service fitted for a land attack on Douala from a base on the Dibamba Creek in the Cameroons. Statham arranged a regimental medical service for each battalion comprised of a medical officer, eight carriers with medical equipment and a trained orderly, and eight hammock bearers with four stretchers of hammocks for each company. Each field ambulance had four sections with either a bearer or hammock division and a tent division was also organised. The bearer divisions were comprised of a medical officer, a non-commissioned officer in the R.A.M.C., 68 carriers for stretchers or hammocks, and the tent division was comprised of a medical officer, a dresser, and 24 carriers for medical stores and tents. A medical officer was also appointed to superintend convoys and evacuations to the Allied base on the transport S.S. *Appam* in Cameroon Bay and from there to a hospital in Calabar, Nigeria.

<sup>170</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, pp. 284-286.

<sup>171</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 286

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. p. 286

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. p. 286. Light equipment sections generally served alongside evacuation field ambulance sections and heavy equipment sections were also expected to serve those battalions without evacuation field ambulance sections.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. p. 286.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. p. 287. The medical equipment of the evacuating field ambulance service included two surgical dressing boxes and operating case, two medical field cases and two comfort boxes, two loads of blanks and two loads of water carriers and sterilizing apparatus. Following the capture of areas around the railway line, the line was used to transport medical equipment and patients to the base hospital in Douala.

<sup>176</sup> Macpherson, *Medical Services*, pp. 295-297. In the campaign, the British forces had a higher number of medical officers in comparison to the French forces. During the Allied Forces advance from *Edéa* to Yaoundé, an Allied field ambulance with a British and French section was formed in addition to the field ambulance section attached to British troops and the regimental medical service attached to French troops.





Figure 6. British Ambulance Convoy in the Cameroons Campaign<sup>177</sup>

In addition to organising the medical staff for the campaign, arrangements for hospitals were also a priority for Major Statham.<sup>178</sup> The Allied Forces had arrived in the Cameroons with plans to use the *S.S. Appam* as the base hospital for the Expeditionary Force.<sup>179</sup> However, following the Allied capture of Douala, the abandoned buildings of the European General Hospital were used to establish three Allied hospitals which comprised the base hospital in Douala.<sup>180</sup> The base hospital consisted of two separate European divisions for British and French troops, two divisions for African troops serving British forces and one division for African troops serving French forces.<sup>181</sup> The base hospital was equipped with the medical equipment of the Allied Forces and equipment that had been removed by German forces to the German war hospital in Deido,<sup>182</sup> a suburb of Douala.<sup>183</sup> Eventually, the base hospital was equipped with a laboratory, x-ray machine, and an operating theatre.<sup>184</sup> In addition to the equipment for the hospital facilities, depots of medical stores were brought from the British West African colonies and were organised in Douala and

<sup>177</sup>Moberly, *Military Operations*, facing p. 320

<sup>178</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 288

<sup>179</sup>Ibid. p. 288. During the first month of the Cameroons Campaign, the *S.S. Appam* was used as a base hospital and was equipped for 800 European and 300 'native' or African sick and wounded servicemen.

<sup>180</sup>Moberly, *Military Operations*, p. 136. Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 288. These three Allied 'base hospitals' formed a solitary 'base hospital' and were referred to in the singular in official correspondence and in Macpherson's *Medical Services* but are referred to in the plural in Moberly's *Military Operations*. This article has referred to the base hospitals in the singular, similar to the official correspondence and Macpherson's *Medical Services*. For a more detailed account of the formation of the base hospital, see Macpherson, *Medical Services*, pp. 288-89.

<sup>181</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 289. The various divisions of the base hospital contained 1,500 beds in total. Initially the hospital contained twelve beds for Europeans in the European hospital building, and seventy beds for African troops, with eighty beds for African carriers in an adjoining building. Only six weeks later, the hospital had eighty beds for Europeans and 310 beds for African troops and carriers. There was also a hutted hospital in Douala which was separate from the base hospital. Macpherson noted that there was an auxiliary French hospital with twenty European and 400 African beds in Aqua Town, a division of Douala, an Indian hospital with fifty beds at Bonaberi, and smaller British and French hospitals at other places in advance of the base in Douala. Reflective of the time period, European and African patients were placed in separate wards in the various hospitals.

<sup>182</sup>Also known as Dido.

<sup>183</sup>Moberly, *Military Operations*, p. 136. Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 288. When the Expeditionary Force arrived in the Douala, the European General Hospital and 'native' or African hospitals had been stripped of medical equipment as all the equipment had been removed to Deido by German forces before or shortly after the arrival of the Expeditionary Force. After visiting the German war hospital, Major Statham ordered the medical equipment to be removed to the base hospital in Douala.

<sup>184</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, pp. 288-89

Ngwe.<sup>185</sup> Aid posts and bush hospitals were organised along the lines of communication,<sup>186</sup> and following the advance of the Expeditionary Force, clearing hospital units were also established at railheads in Déhané and Edéa.<sup>187</sup>

Medical officers were assigned to serve at the base hospital and it was to the various Allied hospitals that the evacuation field ambulance sections transported the injured and invalided servicemen during the campaign. Furthermore, field ambulance sections treated the sick and wounded in their hospital tents and at the Allied medical aid posts.<sup>188</sup> It could have been Easmon's assignment to treat the sick and wounded at the base hospital or at the various aid posts along the Allied Forces advance. Although medical duties in the field ambulance sections had its own difficulties,<sup>189</sup> service at the base hospital was equally arduous and in the early months of the campaign, Major Statham noted that the 'strain...has fallen mainly on those working at the base hospital.'<sup>190</sup>

The varying duties of medical officers, who could be attached to the hospitals or field ambulance sections, creates difficulties in attempts to trace the activities of medical officers who are not specifically mentioned in the voluminous War diaries.<sup>191</sup> M.C.F. Easmon's military service record does not appear to have survived among the War Office records, and thus it is not entirely certain whether he was stationed at the base hospital in Douala or if he was assigned to one of the field ambulance sections.<sup>192</sup> However, according to the *Sierra Leone Guardian*, Easmon had been specially assigned for service with the Ambulance Department, perhaps an indication that he served in the field ambulance sections and was attached to one of the battalions.<sup>193</sup> Certainly Easmon's colleague, Lt. Norman Scarborough Deane, a medical officer in the W.A.M.S. who was similarly commissioned as a temporary lieutenant, was attached to the West African Rifles.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>185</sup>Ibid. pp. 289, 298, 303. These medical stores were mainly brought from Nigeria, reflective of the importance of that former West African colony to the Allied campaign. The stores received monthly and quarterly consignments from England which included hospital clothing and bedding, field medical equipment, field medical stores and comforts, base hospital supplies and medical stores for the cocoa plantations and for the civil population.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid. pp. 287, 306. There were also hospitals established for the civil population following the reopening of the German cocoa plantations which were worked by thousands of Cameroonian labourers. These hospitals were equipped with medical staff to assist the numerous medical cases among the civil population in the Cameroons.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid. pp. 288, 295, 298. The clearing hospital at Edéa was equipped for eight European and 150 'native' or African beds, and was serviced by a medical officer, a non-commissioned officer of the R.A.M.C. and a dresser.

<sup>188</sup>Ibid. pp. 287, 297, 306. Macpherson noted that the aid hospitals and posts were serviced by medical staff of the field ambulance sections.

<sup>189</sup>Ibid. p. 306. For example, medical officers in the field ambulance sections, with limited supplies in comparison to officers at the base hospital, had to care for officers afflicted by persistent bouts of diseases such as malaria.

<sup>190</sup>TNA, WO 33/781', 'Enclosure No. 6 Report on Medical Arrangements on Arrival At Duala, By the Director of Medical Services, Allied Forces', J.C.B. Statham, 8 October 1914'.

<sup>191</sup>See the TNA, WO 95/5382-88 series. The Medal Cards provide some information on servicemen in the First World War, including M.C.F. Easmon. Further records detailing M.C.F. Easmon's service in the Cameroons are also held in the Sierra Leone National Archives which the author did not visit to conduct research.

<sup>192</sup>The service records of a significant number of military personnel in the First World War were destroyed by fire in the Second World War. The author attempted to search for Easmon's service record in the Cameroons Campaign but was unable to locate any service record in the holdings of the National Archives of the United Kingdom. The author briefly consulted the WO 95 War diaries of the Cameroons Campaign which do not appear to make specific mention of Easmon. The author did not have the opportunity to examine the diary of Norman Scarborough Deane, a contemporary of Lt. Easmon, who served in the West African Medical Service during the Cameroons Campaign between 14 September, 1914 and 1916. Deane, who witnessed the S.S. *Appam* incident, was awarded the 1914/1915 Star and qualified for the Allied Victory Medal and the British War Medal. Deane's diary and photograph were donated by his daughter and are held in the Special Collections catalogue at the Library of the University of Leeds.

<sup>193</sup>'Dr Farrel Easmon [sic]', *Sierra Leone Guardian*, 6 November, 1914

<sup>194</sup>'Deane, N.S.', LIDDLE/WW1/AF/02, *Special Collections, University of Leeds*, URL: <http://library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections-explore/26178>. The West African Rifles were of the West African Expeditionary Force.



Figure 7. Allied Forces Base Hospital, Douala, Cameroons.<sup>195</sup>



Figure 8. Ward at Allied Base Hospital, Douala, Cameroons<sup>196</sup>

However, regardless of Easmon's specific assignment during the campaign, it would have been his duty as a medical officer serving with the Ambulance Department, to treat the sick and wounded, an arduous task given the number of servicemen who suffered from disease during the Cameroons Campaign.<sup>197</sup> Historians of the First World War have often noted the insanitary and disease-ridden conditions that soldiers in the European theatre were exerted under in trench warfare.<sup>198</sup> Although these conditions were not replicated in the Cameroons, disease contributed more to fatalities within the Expeditionary Force than death

<sup>195</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, facing p. 287

<sup>196</sup>*Ibid.* facing p. 305

<sup>197</sup>TNA, WO 33/781', 'Enclosure No. 6 Report on Medical Arrangements on Arrival At Duala, By the Director of Medical Services, Allied Forces', J.C.B. Statham, 8 October 1914'. Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 284. According to Macpherson, following the capture of *Edéa*, the advance of General Dobell's Expeditionary Force toward Yaoundé, a German stronghold in the centre of the Cameroons, was along the unhealthy coastal region of the western Cameroons. This may have contributed to the spread of disease in the Expeditionary Force.

<sup>198</sup>Strachan, Hew, *The First World War: A New History*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), pp. 159-160. Ellis, John, *Eye-deep in Hell*, (United States: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 51

in action during the Cameroons Campaign.<sup>199</sup> Many of the carriers suffered from tropical ulcers and during the wet season, some carriers suffered from pneumonia.<sup>200</sup> Dysentery also spread among European and African troops<sup>201</sup> and the spread of malaria was a persistent and perhaps pervasive problem, although it led to few deaths among Dobell's troops.<sup>202</sup> Medical officers were not immune from the disease-ridden conditions in the Cameroons; thirteen medical officers were invalided during the course of the Campaign.<sup>203</sup> It was in these conditions that Easmon would be expected to give unrelenting care to the sick and wounded, whilst trying to prevent himself from being invalided.

Considering the disease-ridden conditions and the composition of the medical services, the duties undertaken by medical personnel such as M.C.F. Easmon was indeed remarkable.<sup>204</sup> Civil medical officers such as Easmon, who had not seen active military duty prior to the campaign, were tasked with operating the daily affairs of a military medical service in unhealthy conditions. However, in spite of the difficulties and challenges, the medical staff operated an effective medical service during the campaign. Major Statham noted that 'the sanitation of the troops' lines has been effected through the exertion of the medical officers of the battalions.'<sup>205</sup> Water sterilization, the destruction of mosquitoes and rats, and the removal of latrines and garbage disposals were among the measures taken to prevent the spread of disease.<sup>206</sup> The work of the West African Medical Staff in battling the 'unusual' and 'onerous nature' of medical requirements during the campaign was also commended by General Dobell, who expressed gratitude to Major J.C.B. Statham, the commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the R.A.M.C., the nursing sisters, the African carriers, and the medical officers of the West African Medical Staff.<sup>207</sup> Although his duties did not necessarily receive special attention in official despatches, there is no doubt that Easmon was among the medical officers whose service contributed to the

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<sup>199</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 308. In total, the Expeditionary Force led by General Dobell suffered 680 deaths from disease in comparison to 513 men who were killed in action.

<sup>200</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, pp. 305-306, 307. Although the carriers wore foot protection, they did not receive boots or leg protection, and this most likely contributed to the spread of tropical ulcers among the carriers. In total, 309 African carriers from the British West African colonies died of disease during the campaign. This figure was more than triple the number of African soldiers in the British army who died of disease during the campaign, and was higher than the number of African soldiers in the British army who were killed in action. For further information on injuries and deaths resulting from battle and disease, see Macpherson *Medical Services*, pp. 304-309

<sup>201</sup>Ibid. p. 307. During the course of the campaign, 1,850 troops were admitted into the base hospital for treatment of dysentery. According to Macpherson, only 100 of these patients were European.

<sup>202</sup>Moberly, *Military Operations*, pp. 275, 277, 279, 303, 306-307. For example, between June and September of 1915, dysentery spread among General Mayer's column. Although it was a persistent problem, it is unclear how pervasive the spread of malaria was among European troops; Macpherson does not appear to make any reference to African troops suffering from malaria. As Macpherson noted, the medical statistics for the Cameroons Campaign are incomplete, and the only near complete statistics are for the Western column of the Expeditionary Force led by General Dobell. Malaria was certainly a persistent problem, with Europeans often suffering several bouts of the disease over the course of the campaign. However, as Macpherson notes, death was probably less frequent because European troops consistently administered prophylactic quinine to combat the disease.

<sup>203</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, p. 308

<sup>204</sup>TNA, WO 33/781, 'From Brigadier-General C.M. Dobell to the Colonial Office, Government House, Duala, 2 December, 1914'. Moberly, *Military Operations*, p. 136. The important role of medical doctors and other personnel in the Great War has been examined by scholars such as Mark Harrison and Ian R. Whitehead. See Mark Harrison's *The Medical War: British Military Medicine in the First World War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Ian R. Whitehead's *Doctors in the Great War*, (United Kingdom: Pen & Sword Military, 2013).

<sup>205</sup>TNA, WO 33/781, 'Enclosure No. 6 Report on Medical Arrangements on Arrival At Duala, By the Director of Medical Services, Allied Forces', J.C.B. Statham, 8 October 1914'

<sup>206</sup>Macpherson, *Medical Services*, pp. 303-304

<sup>207</sup>Moberly, *Military Operations*, pp. 136, 426. According to Moberly, Dobell also expressed gratitude to all the 'subordinate ranks' (which included the 'native carriers') for their 'unrelenting care of the sick and wounded, and for their marked contempt for life in their endeavors to save that of others.'

expression of gratitude offered by General Dobell. Although Easmon's superiors and comrades may not have officially acknowledged the performance of his duties, his service in the campaign was certainly not overlooked by the wider press outside West Africa.<sup>208</sup>

However, in spite of the unhealthy climate and disease-ridden conditions, the Anglo-French campaign in the Cameroons was not characterised by the deadly warfare experienced by servicemen in other theatres of the First World War. The campaign was protracted after Anglo-French objectives shifted toward the complete capture of the Cameroons, but the Allied Powers did not face stiff opposition by German forces, who sought to maintain a defensive position. In some instances, it was coordinating Anglo-French efforts and trekking through dense forest and inaccessible terrain with limited access to supplies that jeopardised operations rather than the Allied Forces engaging with German troops.<sup>209</sup> Thus, although the Cameroons Campaign would officially end with surrender by the German forces on 18 February, 1916, the Allied Forces were in a more advantageous position than German forces by July 1915.<sup>210</sup> German forces had been pushed further inland toward Yaoundé with limited supplies and it was only a matter of time before the entire Cameroons was captured.<sup>211</sup> During the rainy season between the end of June and the beginning of October 1915, there was a 'lull' in active operations by the Expeditionary Force led by General Dobell.<sup>212</sup> This provided a period of rest for British forces and also allowed some servicemen in the British ranks and in the Nigerian and Gold Coast regiments to return home on leave.<sup>213</sup> Thus, by 29 July, 1915, Easmon's tour of duty had ended and alongside other servicemen he was sent home to Sierra Leone aboard the *S.S. Mende*.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> 'Along the Color Line: Personal', *The Crisis* (Chicago Number) Vol. 10 No. 5, Whole No. 59, September 1915

<sup>209</sup> O'Neill, 'German Kamerun', p. 51. Reynolds, Churchill, Miller, 'Chapter XCVI: Campaign in Togoland And The Cameroons', p. 572.

<sup>210</sup> Reynolds, Churchill, Miller, 'Chapter LXCII-The Cameroons', *The Story of the Great War*, Volume 3, (New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1916), pp. 425, 427-28

<sup>211</sup> O'Neill, 'German Kamerun', p. 51. Reynolds, Churchill, Miller, 'Chapter XCVI: Campaign in Togoland And The Cameroons', p. 574. However, although German forces generally retreated into the interior of the Cameroons, the German forces did attempt to recapture Edéa. Herbert C. O'Neill described the German attempt to recapture Edéa as their "only attempt at serious offensive operations during the campaign."

<sup>212</sup> Moberly, *Military Operations*, p. 303, 307. Haywood, Austin Hubert Wightwick, Clarke, Frederick Arthur Stanley, *The History of the Royal West African Frontier Force*, (United Kingdom: Gale & Polden, 1964), p. 151. This cease in active operations was due to the rainy season in the south and south-eastern Cameroons. General Dobell's forces were based in the south-western region of the Cameroons, now known as the 'Littoral Region' of the Republic of Cameroon.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.* p. 307

<sup>214</sup> 'Dr Easmon', *Sierra Leone Guardian*, 14 August, 1915



**Figure 9. Lieutenant Macormack Charles Farrell Easmon, (1890-1972)<sup>215</sup>**

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<sup>215</sup>Photograph provided courtesy of Mr. Ahovi Kponou, a grandson of Dr M.C.F. Easmon. The photograph was taken by Alphonso Lisk-Carew, (1887-1969) and Arthur Lisk-Carew of Lisk-Carew Brothers Studio in Gloucester Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone. The Lisk-Carew brothers were well-known photographers in Sierra Leone and the photograph was possibly taken on the day that Easmon returned to Freetown after his service in the Cameroons (Information provided by Mr. Ahovi Kponou, Communicated: 6 June, 2014). For more information on the Lisk-Carew brothers see Macmillan, Allister, *The Red Book of West Africa: Historical and Descriptive, Commercial and Industrial, Facts, Figures and Resources*, (1920. Reprint: London: Routledge, 1968). 267 and Viditz-Ward, Vera, 'Photography in Sierra Leone, 1850-1918', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 57, No. 4, 1987, pp. 514-15.

The *S.S. Mende* arrived in Freetown in early August 1915.<sup>216</sup> In spite of his medical service in the Cameroons, the colonial establishment was unwilling for Easmon to celebrate his achievements.<sup>217</sup> The colonial authorities, perhaps hesitant to allow an African officer to be paraded through the streets of Freetown and saluted by white officers, ordered Easmon to surrender his officer's uniform and sword upon the demobilisation of soldiers aboard the ship before landing.<sup>218</sup> But Easmon refused to allow the colonial authorities to dictate the terms upon which he returned to Freetown. When he disembarked from the *S.S. Mende* in August, 1915, he dressed in his full-uniform with sword and scabbard and was jubilantly received by friends and family who triumphantly walked with him through the streets of Freetown where he was duly acknowledged by the public at large.<sup>219</sup>

However, Easmon's return to Freetown was not entirely victorious as the imperial government did not note Easmon's service in the Cameroons on the official record of the Medical Officers in Sierra Leone.<sup>220</sup> Furthermore, the imperial government refused to provide duty allowances or war bonuses to Native Medical Officers such as Easmon, even though in Easmon's case he had seen active duty as an officer in the Cameroons.<sup>221</sup> The treatment of Easmon was in stark contrast with his European counterparts in the West African Medical Service who, in addition to a substantial increase in pay received from their duty allowance, were designated with a 'C' next to their names on the staff list of medical officers, in recognition of their service in the Cameroons.<sup>222</sup> Although Easmon would write to the Secretary of State concerning the lack of recognition he received on the W.A.M.S. staff list based upon his service in the Cameroons, the imperial Government did not provide a satisfactory response to Easmon's concerns.<sup>223</sup> Thus, even after serving honourably in the Cameroon Campaign, the imperial and colonial authorities still attempted to marginalise the service of Easmon.

However, in spite of the slights suffered at the hands of the colonial authorities, Easmon was awarded the three major campaign medals, the British War Medal, the Allied Victory Medal and the 1914/1915 Star,<sup>224</sup> based upon his length of service

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<sup>216</sup>'Dr. Easmon', *Sierra Leone Guardian*, 14 August, 1915

<sup>217</sup>Nicol, Davidson, 'Brazil, Canada, Nova Scotia and the Guinea Coast: A Literary and Historical Overview of the African Diaspora,' *Presence Africaine*, (Paris, 1984), 17, pp. 144-145. According to Dr Nicol, it was reported that the colonial authorities did not want to have an African officer saluted by the white soldiers garrisoned in Freetown. This would certainly have broken the code found in the *Manual of Military Law*, 1914.

<sup>218</sup>Nicol, 'Brazil, Canada, Nova Scotia and the Guinea Coast', pp. 144-145.

<sup>219</sup>'Dr. Easmon', *Sierra Leone Guardian*, 14 August, 1915, Nicol, "Brazil, Canada, Nova Scotia and the Guinea Coast, pp. 144-145

<sup>220</sup>Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, pp. 172-173

<sup>221</sup>*Ibid.* pp. 172-173. There was no staff list for the 'Native Medical Officers' and thus Easmon would not have received recognition as a veteran of the Cameroons Campaign. Thus, the unique circumstances in which Easmon was required to serve in the Great War is exemplified in the lack of recognition he received in some official documents in Sierra Leone following the War.

<sup>222</sup>*Ibid.* pp. 172-173

<sup>223</sup>Patton, *Physicians, Colonial Racism and Diaspora*, pp. 172-173. According to Professor Patton, even Easmon's comrades who had served with him in the Cameroons agreed that Easmon should receive the 'C' in recognition of his service.

<sup>224</sup>TNA, WO 372/6/145110, 'Macormack Charles Farrell Easmon', British Army World War I Medal Rolls, Index Card, 1914-1920. TNA, WO 329/2305, 'British War Medal and Allied Victory Medal' Medal Rolls. TNA, WO 329/2956, '1914/1915 'Star Medal' Rolls. The 1914-1915 Star Medal was awarded to those soldiers who served in the First World War during 1914 or 1915. Easmon served in the Cameroons Campaign after the period of eligibility for the 1914 Medal, but because of his service in 1915, he was eligible to receive the 1915 Star Medal. After 1915, the Star Medal was no longer awarded as a campaign medal.



abroad in the Cameroons.<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, although Easmon had received a temporary commission that had been relinquished shortly after his disembarkation on 11, August, 1915,<sup>226</sup> in 1920 the British War Office further recognised his service and he retained the rank of Lieutenant.<sup>227</sup> Easmon would continue to serve as a medical officer in Sierra Leone until his retirement in 1945.<sup>228</sup> During the Second World War, he was commissioned in the Sierra Leone Defence Force.<sup>229</sup> Undismayed by the refusal of the imperial and colonial governments to recognise the often superior qualifications of African medical doctors, Easmon became the first West African to earn a Medical Doctorate from the University of London in 1925.<sup>230</sup> Easmon would also eventually serve as the President of the British Medical Association branch in Sierra Leone.<sup>231</sup> He could be satisfied that after years of struggle against the colonial government, the segregated West African Medical Staff was finally desegregated and re-organised as the Colonial Medical Service in 1943,<sup>232</sup> a development for which Easmon could justly claim substantial credit.<sup>233</sup>

Following his retirement as Senior Medical Officer, Easmon would contribute toward historical scholarship on Sierra Leone

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<sup>225</sup>TNA, WO 372/6/145110, 'Macormack Charles Farrell Easmon', British Army World War I Medal Rolls, Index Card, 1914-1920. TNA, WO 329/2305, 'British War Medal and Allied Victory Medal' Medal Rolls. TNA, WO 329/2956, '1914/1915 'Star Medal' Rolls. These three campaign medals were awarded to a significant number of servicemen who served in the First World War and were known as 'Pip, Squeak, and Wilfred, after a popular British comic strip during that period. Easmon successfully applied for all three medals he had earned in 1919 after the medals had been sent to No. 13 Gloucester Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone. However, Easmon was not the only Sierra Leonean to receive all three campaign medals, as Ebenezer Luke George, the dispenser and store-keeper, also received three campaign medals.

<sup>226</sup>*The London Gazette*, Issue 29646, 27 June 1916, p. 6479, *The Gazette*, URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29646/supplement/6479>, *The London Gazette*, Issue 29759, 22 September 1916, p. 9214, *The Gazette*, URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/29759/supplement/9214>. The *London Gazette* of 29 June 1916 initially reported that Easmon's temporary commission was relinquished on 29 July, 1915; however the *London Gazette* of 22 September 1916 corrected the initial report by stating that Easmon's temporary commission had been officially relinquished on 11 August, 1915.

<sup>227</sup>*The London Gazette*, Issue 31824, 12 March 1920, p. 3290, *The Gazette*, URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/31824/supplement/3290>. The *London Gazette* of 12 March, 1920 corrected or 'substituted' the previous report in the *Gazette* on 22 September 1916 and reported that Easmon retained the rank of Lieutenant upon completion of his service even though his temporary commission had been relinquished as previously reported. Since Easmon completed his service on 11 August 1915, he retained the rank of Lieutenant in 1920. This development may have been the result of protestations by Easmon in relation to his rank during the War.

<sup>228</sup>Cummings, Dorothy A., 'Easmon, M.C.F.', in Ofosu-Appiah, L.H., *The Encyclopaedia Africana: Dictionary of African Biography*, Vol. 2: Sierra Leone, Zaire, (United States: Reference Publications, 1979), p. 63.

<sup>229</sup>'Dr Mc C. F. Easmon, [sic]' *Times*, 9 May, 1972. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 28 November, 2012. A number of Sierra Leoneans served in the Second World War including Edward Adesanya Hyde, C.B.E., an RAF pilot who served in the Battle of Britain and received a Citation Award and John Henry Smythe, QC, O.B.E., who served in the Sierra Leone Defence Corps, before he was commissioned as a pilot officer in the RAF.

<sup>230</sup>Fyfe, Christopher, 'Easmon, McCormack Charles Farrell (1890-1972)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76276>, accessed 26 June 2014]. According to late Professor Christopher Fyfe, Easmon was the first African to qualify with an M.D. from the University of London. Based upon the information available on African medical doctors of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (incidentally compiled by Easmon in a seminal academic paper), Easmon was indeed the first West African to qualify with an M.D. from the University of London.

<sup>231</sup>Members Elected To The British Medical Association', *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2716 (Jan. 18, 1913), pp. 69-73, Published by: BMJ, Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25300149>. 'Sierra Leone Branch', *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 1. No. 377, 1933, p. 189, Published by: BMJ, Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25317413>. 'M. C. F. Easmon, O.B.E., M.D.', *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 5821 (Jul. 29, 1972), p. 297, Published by: BMJ, Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25419602>. Easmon had been a member of the British Medical Association since 1912 and he was Vice-President of the Sierra Leone branch by 1933. It was following his retirement in 1945 that he served as the President of the British Medical Association in Sierra Leone. He was also the local secretary of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in Sierra Leone, see Cummings, 'Easmon, M.C.F.', in Ofosu-Appiah, L.H., *The Encyclopaedia Africana: Dictionary of African Biography*, Vol. 2: Sierra Leone, Zaire, (United States: Reference Publications, 1979), p. 63

<sup>232</sup>Easmon, M.C.F., 'Medical Future of the Colonies', *British Medical Journal*, 9 February 1946, p. 219, Published by: BMJ, Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20365466>. Cummings, Dorothy 'Easmon, M.C.F.', p. 63.

<sup>233</sup>Cummings, 'Easmon, M.C.F.', p. 63. Easmon, M.C.F., 'Sierra Leone Doctors', *Sierra Leone Studies (New Series)*, No. 6, June 1956), p. 91. Easmon played a vital and instrumental role in ending the discrimination against African and Asian doctors in the West African Medical Service. Following the amalgamation of the medical services, M.C.F. Easmon's maternal cousin, Dr Edward Awunor-Renner (1894-1955) would become the first African Director of the Colonial Medical Service in Sierra Leone.



through his work as a member of council and chairman of the Sierra Leone Society that oversaw the publication of *Eminent Sierra Leoneans in the Nineteenth Century*.<sup>234</sup> He was also a Fellow of both the Royal African Society and the Royal Commonwealth Society, the latter being an organisation to which his father had been elected as a Fellow in 1880.<sup>235</sup> Easmon also contributed to public awareness and acknowledgement of Sierra Leone's unique cultural heritage through his distinct roles as chairman of the Monuments and Relics Commission and curator of the Sierra Leone Museum.<sup>236</sup> He also carried out civic duties and in the newly independent Sierra Leone, Easmon was appointed to serve as the first director of the Sierra Leone National Bank and as the chairman of the Labour Board.<sup>237</sup> In recognition of his medical service, he was also invested with an Order of the British Empire Award in 1954.<sup>238</sup> Thus, by the time Easmon passed away in Croydon, England on 2 May, 1972, his career as a distinguished medical officer, lieutenant in the First World War, and as a historian, had earned him widespread recognition, honour and great respect.

In order for scholars to have a complete and accurate account of the First World War, the service and contributions of soldiers of African, Asian, and Caribbean descent must receive greater academic focus. Although British military regulations outlined in the *Manual of Military Law 1914* stipulated that aliens and black African subjects in the Empire, should generally not serve as officers, it is evident that the necessities of war required the service of temporary officers such as Dr Macormack Easmon and other non-white officers who served during the Great War.<sup>239</sup> These officers served honourably, although they faced stiff barriers and in the case of Easmon, clearly suffered discriminatory treatment based upon their skin colour. It is hoped that future accounts and scholarly works on the Great War will include the narratives of African, Asian and African-Caribbean servicemen such as Lieutenant M.C.F. Easmon.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

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<sup>234</sup>Cummings, 'Easmon, M.C.F.', p. 63. 'M. C. F. Easmon, O.B.E., M.D.', *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 5821 (Jul. 29, 1972), p. 297, Published by: BMJ, Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25419602>. The role of 'chairman' of the Sierra Leone Society was also known as 'President'.

<sup>235</sup>*Sierra Leone Year Book*, (Sierra Leone, Daily Mail Publication, 1973), p. 157. *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute 1880-1881*, Volume 12, (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1881), p. 39. M.C.F. Easmon's father, J.F. Easmon, had been elected as a Non-residential Fellow of the Royal Colonial Institute, which was the previous name of the Royal Commonwealth Society.

<sup>236</sup>Abraham, Arthur, Fyle, Cecil Magbaily, 'Report of Bunce Island Rehabilitation Camp, 6-10 December, 1976,' *Africana Research Bulletin*, Volume 7, Number 2, (Sierra Leone: Institute of African Studies, Fourah Bay College, 1976), p. 75. M.C.F. Easmon was nicknamed 'Ancient Easmon' based upon his work for the Monuments and Relics Commission. Dr Easmon was among the first scholars to note the importance of Bunce Island, the former slave fort, and he wrote an article entitled, 'Bunce Island Where History Sleeps', which remains a phrase used to describe Bunce Island. Easmon also led an expedition to Bunce Island and conducted the first archaeological survey of the island in 1947. Considering the recent importance given to Bunce Island by scholars such as Professor Joseph Opala, it would be accurate to state that Easmon was a pioneer who ignited modern interest in Bunce Island.

<sup>237</sup>*Sierra Leone Year Book*, (Sierra Leone, Daily Mail Publication, 1973), p. 157. 'The Society's Activities', *African Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 210 (Jan., 1954), pp. 70-71, Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society, Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/718730>. In honour of his Nova Scotian and Maroon heritage, Easmon was also a member and Chairman of the Nova Scotian and Maroon Descendants Association alongside his paternal cousin, Edna Elliott-Horton (1904-1994).

<sup>238</sup>*Supplement To The London Gazette*, 1 January, 1954, Issue 40053, 29 December, 1953, p. 24, *The Gazette*, URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/40053/supplement/24>. 'Medical New Year Honours', *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 4853 (Jan. 9, 1954), pp. 95-96, Published by: BMJ, Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20313643>. Sandiford, Keith A.P., *A Black Studies Primer: Heroes and Heroines of the African Diaspora*, (London: Hansib Publications, 2008), p. 164

<sup>239</sup>*Manual of Military Law 1914*, (London: H.M. Stationery, 1914), pp. 198, 471

Allied Victory Medal, World War One<sup>240</sup>

Appendix A

Allied Victory Medal, World War One<sup>241</sup>



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<sup>240</sup>'A Guide to British Campaign Medals of WW1', *The Great War 1914-1918*, URL: <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-campaign-medals.htm>

<sup>241</sup>'A Guide to British Campaign Medals of WW1', *The Great War 1914-1918*, URL: <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-campaign-medals.htm>



#### Appendix B

#### British War Medal<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>242</sup>'A Guide to British Campaign Medals of WW1', *The Great War 1914-1918*, URL: <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-campaign-medals.htm>

## Appendix C

### The 1914-1915 Star<sup>243</sup>



#### Select Bibliography of sources (cited and consulted)

**Note on sources:** The military service record of M.C.F. Easmon was not located by the author at the National Archives. However, the Medal Cards and Medal Rolls in the WO 329/2305 and WO 329/2956 series provide insight into the service of Easmon during the 1914-1915 Campaign in the Cameroons. Although the author consulted the seven set collection of WO 95 war diaries for the Cameroon Campaign and the WO 33/781 collection relating to the West African Expeditionary Force, these documents did not appear to contain direct references to Easmon.

Special acknowledgement is given to Mr. Ahovi Kponou, a grandson of M.C.F. Easmon, for providing personal information on his grandfather and for proofreading the final draft, and also Ms. Jane Rosen and Ms. Sarah Paterson, both of the Imperial War Museum, who kindly offered their insight and advice.

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The photographs of Lieutenant M.C.F. Easmon and the loading of boats in Sierra Leone at the Freetown dock in 1914 were provided courtesy of Mr. Ahovi Kponou. The photograph of M.C.F. Easmon at the Sierra Leone Museum was provided courtesy of Mr. Gary Schulze.

The photographs of the Cameroon Campaign were reproduced from *Medical Services: General History*, Volume 1 by Sir William Grant Macpherson and *Military Operations Togoland and the Cameroons, 1914-1916 (Official History of the Great War)* by

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<sup>243</sup>'A Guide to British Campaign Medals of WW1', *The Great War 1914-1918*, URL: <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-campaign-medals.htm>

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## A case study exploring the relationship between mobile phone acquisition and use and adolescent girls in Freetown-Kristel Lai



I thank Save the Children for allowing us to re-produce this article. They currently work in over 140 countries assisting young people in many ways. They have long been an essential part of the health and other sectors of Sierra Leone

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## Introduction

This study seeks to provide a platform of information-rich, qualitative data exploring the sexual behaviours of teenaged girls in relation to mobile phone acquisition and use. The study objective is to gain an understanding of these behaviours in the Freetown context and to subsequently proffer recommendations that could contribute to controlling harmful behaviours. The findings of this study will contribute qualitative data to a body of evidence that will be used to inform national programmes that endeavour to reduce the rate of teenage pregnancy. This study presents itself at a critical time in Sierra Leone, given recent efforts recognizing the high rates of adolescent pregnancy in the country.

The relevant literature provides a wealth of data on transactional sex, including its causes and consequences, but provides little data on how this relates to mobile phone acquisition or use. Considering this significant gap in the literature, this review examines the relevant literature around transactional sex, as well as a rather separate body of literature on young people's relationship with mobile communications.

## Background

## Mobile phones: impact

In the last decade, mobile telephony has transformed communications, globally. Sierra Leone, like the majority of African countries has leap-frogged infrastructure demanding communication methods, such as the fixed line phone, and have opted instead for mobile phones (James 2007). In 2012, a report entitled “Sub-Saharan Africa Mobile Observatory” was commissioned by the GSM Association, and for the first time, focussed on highlighting mobile telephony advancements in the region (GSM Association 2012). The report identifies sub-Saharan Africa as having the highest growth rate in mobile phone connections internationally, with a 44%

increase in the number of connections, since 2000 (GSM Association 2012).

Mobile phone penetration rates, calculated from the number of subscribers per 100 inhabitants, is one of few parameters that can be used to assess mobile phone coverage. In Sierra Leone, the mobile phone penetration rate is 48% (GSM Association 2012). Critics argue that penetration rates considerably underestimate the actual number of users, given the way in which mobile phone subscriptions are often shared between family members or friends in African contexts, thus greatly increasing the actual user ship (James 2007). Indeed, a household survey in Botswana found that as many as 62.1% of phone owners share their phone with other family members (James 2007).

The discourse around the impact of mobile telephony in sub-Saharan African countries has largely been positive. Academics and practitioners alike have heralded mobile telephony as being a positive contributor to economic growth, empowerment, and overall development (Waverman L. 2005; James 2007; GSM Association 2012). The recognition of the positive effects of mobile telephony has been reflected in a number of international development targets. Perhaps the most significant of these is the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which, under Goal 8F, seeks to “increase the number of cellular subscribers, per 100 population” (UN no date). In light of this, there are numerous programmes being implemented internationally, claiming to reduce and ultimately, eradicate the ‘digital divide’.

While this study focuses on mobile telephony in urban areas, it is nonetheless interesting to note that the impact of mobile telephony is often even greater in rural areas, where mobile phones represent the first form of modern telecommunications (GSM Association 2012).

### **Mobile phone practices: beeping and flashing**

There has been a considerable amount of research exploring specific practices around mobile phone use, including “beeping” or “flashing” – a practice involving terminating a call before the receiver answers (Donner 2008). It has been well documented that such practices, which are essentially free to engage in, are widespread, particularly in low-income country contexts. Experts suggest that it is due to such widespread, low cost practices that mobile phone accessibility has such far reach, regardless of the economic status of the individual (Ellwood-Clayton 2006; Donner 2008).

Research in Finland found beeping, or “bomb calling” as it is commonly referred to in Finland, to be a popular practice among teenagers as a money saving tactic (Oksman 2004). Nkrumah-Boateng’s (2004, in Donner 2008) study in Ghana, found beeping to be particularly attractive to teenagers, because it allows romantic expression of interest without having to compose a customised message. Following his study exploring mobile phone practices in Rwanda, Donner (2008) argues that preliminary evidence in mobile phone practices substantiate the need for further research to understand the prevalence and frequency of certain practices. In Sierra Leone, little is known about such behaviour practices; this study seeks to shed light on some of the mobile phone practices adolescent girls engage in.

### **Mobile phone practices: sexting**

The UK based Mobile Life Report, argues texting is a safe and unthreatening medium of communication which allows “sexual advances to be made with the minimum of risk and the maximum of discretion”, particularly among young, often timid adolescents. Ellwood- Clayton’s (2006) study in the Philippines, revealed that texting resulted in “inversions of gender roles”, allowing women to express “erotic love” and initiate relations. In a study of 800 American teenagers, 30% of 17 year olds were found to have received a “sex”, or “sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images” while 8% admitted to sending such messages (Pew Research Centre. 2009).

While sexting itself may not be deemed as a risky sexual behaviour, studies have shown that there is a correlation between sexting and sexual behaviour. In Rice’s (2012) study, which considers a sample of 1839 adolescents in the US, 15% reported either sending or receiving a sext, and interestingly, sexting was associated with increased sexual behaviour and was found to be part of a cluster of risky sexual behaviours. Indeed, sexting is often considered to be the initial step in creating a sexual relationship. In a study conducted in 2002, 27% of Filipino males and 24% of females were found to have “flirted” through a mobile phone, with a stranger (Ellwood-Clayton 2006). In this study, most of the study participants who initially engaged in “text flirting” or sexting, reported building sexual relationships subsequent to this initial contact.

### **Transactional sex, a cash channel to modernity?**

“Transactional sex” is commonly characterised by age-disparate relationships, whereby money or gifts are transacted for sexual

acts. There is a substantial and growing body of evidence that identifies the demand for mobile phones as being among the key drivers for young girls in low-income countries to engage in transactional sex. It is, however, important to consider that premarital relationships in many societies are deemed highly materialistic; the literature provides an array of case studies demonstrating the inextricable nature of sex and monetary transactions, with women expecting to be lured and kept with cash or gifts (Leclerc-Madlala 2003).

Relevant literature of the last decade has challenged earlier reports that purported transactional sex as the “only option” for poverty affected young girls to meet their basic needs (Hunter 2002). While earlier literature around transactional sex was closely linked to discourses of violence against women (VAW) and others that aligned poverty related abuse, there is now growing literature that identifies young women as “active social agents” who manage multiple sexual relationships to access the latest consumables and maximise material gain (Hawkins, 2008). Indeed, transactional sex is increasingly seen as a means of accessing goods and materials in what Leclerc-Madlala (2003) describes as the “*pursuit of modernity*”, be it alcohol in South African drinking venues (Watt M. 2012) latest fashion trends in Trinidad (Hawkins 2007), or cars in urban Atlanta (Rosenbaum J. 2012).

In Hawkins’ (2008) study, having the latest model of mobile phone was part of the social identity of the “modern urban woman” – an image that represents the prevalent aspirations of young women in Maputo. Whilst studies such as Coinco’s (2010), provide significant evidence to suggest that transactional sex is highly prevalent in Sierra Leone, in particular Freetown, little is known about the role that mobile phones are having in this interaction.

Increased rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, have been attributed to age-disparate transactional sex. In transactional sexual relationships, economic power is unbalanced, and thereby influences bargaining power around condom use. In Hawkins’ (2008) study of transactional sex in Maputo, refusing sex without a condom ran “counter to the explicit economic goal” of the transaction.

The consequences of transactional sex are grave. In seven of 35 countries covered in a recent review of DHS reports, at least one in five female adolescents between the ages of 15 and 19 who ever had sexual intercourse indicated that they had an STI or symptoms of one in the past 12 months (Kothari, Wang et al. 2012). In many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, elevated HIV rates among young women in the 15-24 years bracket has been attributed to age disparate sexual relationships between young girls and older men (UNAIDS 2004; Lalor 2008). Various studies have revealed that young women in this age bracket have HIV infection rates of up to three or four times that of their male counterparts (Hawkins, Price et al. 2009).

It is plausible that transactional sexual relationships are also the cause of increased rates of teenage pregnancy. UNFPA’s Motherhood in Childhood (2013) report asserts teenage pregnancy as a human rights issue, arguing that childhood pregnancies reduce girls’ opportunities and increase vulnerabilities to poverty and exclusion. From a human rights perspective, the report asserts that “a girl who becomes pregnant – regardless of the circumstances or reasons – is one whose rights are undermined” (UNFPA 2013). For teenage mothers, the health risks are severe, particularly when social barriers act to reduce the likelihood that timely health care is sought. The risk of maternal death for mothers under the age of 15 years in low and middle income countries is double that of older females (UNFPA 2013).

International actors have recognised the pertinence of reducing the prevalence transactional sex. In 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development, 179 governments agreed on the need to promote the rights of adolescents to reproductive health education, information and care and greatly reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies. In Sierra Leone, the Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy was established in 2013, and informants reveal that this is an issue closely monitored by the President himself, Ernest Bai Koroma. The Secretariat have been instrumental in the authoring of the national strategy for the reduction of teenage pregnancy, entitled “*Let Girls Be Girls, Not Mothers!*”

In regards to age disparate transactional sex, the Sexual Offences Act of Sierra Leone defines anybody aged under 18 years as a child, and identifies any form of sexual relationship with a child as an offense warranting between 5 to 15 years imprisonment (Government of Sierra Leone 2012).

### **Child protection and parental control**

In most societies, young people tend to be faster adopters of technology than older generations, and can indeed drive the market to produce new concepts and products. Rapid uptake of new technology coupled with an acceleration in technological advances, results in young people often finding themselves navigating risks involving technology that were largely unknown to previous generations. Various studies show that while mobile phones increase the freedom of adolescents by providing a private means of communication, mobile telephony has also extended parental control by providing a constant channel of communication between parent and child (Williams 2005). This can have important implications for parental monitoring of mobile phones (Bond 2010).



While there is a plethora of available data and subsequent programming around the protection of children from the social dangers of mobile telephony in Europe, and the United States, little has been done in low-income countries such as Sierra Leone. The research on the potential harm facilitated by mobile phones is scant, and there is largely an absence of programming around child protection and mobile telephony. Furthermore, there is a significant lack of data exploring how mobile phones are acquired and maintained in the region.

## **Conclusion**

The introduction of more affordable smart phones to the African market means that many people, including adolescents, can now access a variety of internet applications, not just conventional calls and SMS. In what Giddens coined as the “double edged sword of modernity”, modern communications, including mobile telephony has brought a multiplicity of benefits, but not without drawbacks. Few data exist concerning the potential social harm associated with mobile phone use, in particular, smart phone use in low-income country contexts. The determination to achieve a sense of modernity is driving adolescent girls to engage in risky sexual behaviours. Moreover, ownership of the latest mobile phone technology is considered fundamental to being “modern”, and adolescent girls face multiple familial and peer pressures to engage in this lifestyle. There is a dearth of data that examines the man’s role in age disparate transactional sex, however, these root causes of early sexual debut of adolescent girls and subsequent risky sexual behaviour need to be addressed if meaningful solutions are to be proposed. This study seeks to highlight some of the potentially harmful behaviours associated with mobile telephony, including transactional sex, and suggest ways in which mobile telephony can be used to combat these.

## **Research Methods**

The fundamental objective of this study was to provide a preliminary snapshot of sexual behaviours associated with adolescent girls’ access to and use of mobile phones in Freetown. A qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate to generate information rich data to produce this snapshot, because of the sensitivity of the topic, and because of the nature of the data required.

As an operational piece of research with a relatively short time allocation, it was not feasible to conduct traditional methods of qualitative research – typically lengthy anthropological based data collection. While in-depth interviews and focus group discussions can be used as rapid data collection tools, they require a significant level of trust to be built prior to data collection to ensure data reliability. This is particularly true when researching behaviours of adolescents, who often feel a heightened need to conform to prevalent behaviours, and may consequently provide invalid or inaccurate narratives (Brady 2011; UNFPA 2013). Qualitative researchers have argued that the validity of adolescents’ responses, particularly those aged 10 – 14 years, can be flawed due to difficulties in obtaining accurate information in contexts where stigma exists around premarital sexual activity (Chong, Hallman et al. 2006; Brady 2011). In order to negate against this effect, studies whose objectives pertain to adolescents and sexual health must employ methodologies that acknowledge the importance of building trust to increase study validity (Brady 2011).

Taking this into consideration, and following a discussion with one of the method’s designers on the appropriateness of the method in the study context, our research employed the peer ethnographic method. The peer ethnographic methodology was created by UK based Options Consultancy and is an innovative, participatory approach to qualitative research. The method is an anthropological approach of ethnographic fieldwork, which perceives trust to be central to the extraction of reliable data, particularly when researching sexual behaviours of young people (Price 2002).

Peer researchers are trained to conduct “in-depth, conversational interviews” with members of their social network, through a process where they are supported in designing interviews and data collection and analysis. Peer ethnography is a rapid methodology that provides a means of gaining in-depth understanding of sensitive issues such as reproductive and sexual health, and among hard to reach groups (Options Consultancy Services Ltd. 2012).

## **Peer Ethnography in Freetown**

For our study, six peer researchers underwent two days of intensive training using participatory learning methods. Peer researchers were trained on the basics of peer ethnography, and enacted role-plays prior to data collection.

Peer researchers then commenced a data collection period of two weeks, where each researcher engaged five adolescent girls, aged 13 – 18 years, in their social network. A peer researcher met each respondent on three separate occasions. The theme for each meeting comprised a list of up to 15 questions. The study facilitator compiled each theme, with heavy input from peer researchers. Preliminary data from each theme was used to inform questions for the subsequent theme. Each peer researcher debriefed with the study facilitator after each theme was conducted. These debrief notes form the data set for this study. At the end of the data collection period, the peer researchers came together for a final workshop. This workshop provided space to share

overall findings and interpret data.

## **Results**

This section is divided into three sections, according to the research themes discussed in the previous section. Whilst quotes have been translated and written here in English, some particular phrases or words are provided in both languages to avoid meaning being lost in translation.

### **Theme 1: Relationships and daily life**

Theme 1 served as a conversation starter, where respondents were asked to speak about their relationships and how they coped with financial problems.

#### **Problems faced by adolescent girls**

Young girls identified social issues relating to high poverty levels as the most important issue affecting them, and other girls in their community. Respondents were able to identify poverty as a driver of transactional sex, and a subsequent cause of public health concerns such as teenage pregnancy and early marriage.

*“Poverty is a problem because families don’t have enough money to give them [girls] so they have to go the extra mile to get things they want”*

*“My friend dropped an onion, she didn’t have money to replace it, so she had to beg from a boy. The boy gave her Le1000 and then he asked for sex. She lost her virginity to buy an onion”*

*“Teenage pregnancy is a problem. Some parents bring their children to Freetown from up-country, telling the child that they will come to have a better life, but when they arrive in Freetown, because of poverty, the parents will give the child to marry instead”*

The need to satisfy materialistic desires identified as being a social problem among adolescent girls in Freetown, who are exposed to costly material goods on a daily basis. Girls describe this as “mille”, in Krio, which roughly translates as having ambitions related to greed. One respondent described what she saw happening in her community: “fashion and mobile phones and all those things make young girls ‘mille’ and then they do all sorts of things to satisfy their own minds”.

#### **Coping mechanisms of adolescent girls**

Engaging in some form of sexual relationship was the most common coping mechanism mentioned when respondents were asked what adolescent girls do when they have money problems. The scope of a sexual relationship described at this stage is wide; some respondents mentioned prostitution, while others mentioned asking boyfriends for cash.

One respondent gave the impression that the problem would have to be assessed, and solutions given appropriately.

*“Some go to relatives or boyfriends. Later they have sex with them as payment. But like, for school fees, they go to their teachers for sex so they can continue their education.”*

Some mentioned having more than one boyfriend to help in such situations.

*“most girls have more than one boyfriend – so if one cannot solve the problem, the other one will”*

Overall, this seemed to be a common and accepted practice.

*“you have to give what you have to get what you want”*  
*“gi wetin yu get fo wetin yu want”*

#### **Motivations for engaging in “man business”**

Results from this study suggest that adolescent girls target men who are at least ten years older than them. Respondents also spoke of the importance of aesthetics when finding a boyfriend – a man well-presented and dressed was deemed as important in gaining respect from peers. While aesthetics were deemed important, wealth was seen as paramount. Most respondents associated men being older and well dressed with wealth.

*"They don't like boys their own age – they want to be with older men who can help them to solve their problems"*

*"girls want a 'big man" – those are the older ones who have money. They are usually aged 25 and above"*

*"Older men have that intention to spend money on girls, not like the young ones"*

While not all respondents equated an age differential with financial capacity to provide in a relationship, all respondents reported that girls want to be with men who have money to spend on them.

*"Men should be an answer to financial problems – some men even help whole families to get out of poverty"*

Apart from material gain, one of the other most significant motivating factors for girls to be in relationships with older men is peer pressure, though this is not necessarily completely separate from material gain. Girls reported that pressure from other girls within their peer group pushed them to find boyfriends to fit in. Many girls reported that other girls would show off goods that their boyfriends had furnished them with, at school or in the broader community, to jeer other girls into doing the same.

*"Peer pressure makes girls have boyfriends. Girls admire girls with boyfriends"*

*"If your friend comes and shows you a new phone that her boyfriend bought her, and you don't have, you will want too. Anyway, girls show off these things, because it shows that their boyfriends love them."*

### **Concurrent Partners**

The predominant reason given for having concurrent sexual relationships was related to material gain; one boyfriend could not satisfy all the needs of one girl.

*"if you have just one man, you can't manage to get everything you want. You need one for school fees, one for clothes....."*

*"one girl at school was in love with three boys. One of them did her assignments, one would buy her clothes, and the other one bought her phone and other things like money. One man won't do"*

*Krio: "wan man no de ful op boks"*

Some respondents reported that often, a girl would use a "big man" to gain money to support not just her, but also her boyfriend that she loves – these boyfriends tend to be younger, often boys their own age.

*"one girl has sugar daddy and uses his money for top up that she then sends to her boyfriend that she loves"*

Girls also reported that oftentimes girls are unsure if they are their partners sole girlfriend, therefore as a means to secure their own emotional wellbeing prefer to also keep several boyfriends.

*"You can't be sure that your boyfriend is only having one girlfriend, so you have to also keep more than one boyfriend. That way, if he has another one, it won't hurt you because you have a backup plan."*

*KRIO: "wi kip tik bihen dormot"*

*"girls don't want to look stupid. So if they find out their boyfriend is cheating, she can say 'well, I was expecting that, that's why I had another one [man]."*

One respondent summarised the need to have more than one sexual relationship:

*"One man can't fulfil all your financial needs. And that one man won't be faithful anyway."*

### **Theme 2: Getting the goods**

Theme 2 sought to shift the conversations more towards mobile phone acquisition and use, including maintenance, and how this affects sexual behaviours of young girls.

#### **Transactional sex, a means to acquisition**

Mobile phones are seen as a status symbol. One respondent commented that, "if you don't have a phone, you're not part of the

civilised world". The demand, then, to be part of this 'civilised' world of modernity, drives girls to engage in transactional sexual relationships. The research findings suggest that the level of interaction and sexual engagement varies according to the category of man that is involved in the transaction; and the amount of cash required by the girl. Overall, study findings indicate that young girls are engaging in multiple forms of sexual relationships, concurrently, in order to access cash to purchase mobile phones.

*"she had a boyfriend, but he wasn't able to buy it, so she had to sleep with three other men for this phone."*

*"there are different types of man. The 'old pa' can be over 50 or 55 years old, the 'big man' is between 25 to 50 and then there are the young guys – those are they ones the girls actually love. The 'old pa' asks for touch, they ask the girls to just touch them (KRIO: touch en lef) but usually no sex. The 'big men' ask for everything, kiss, oral sex (mot sex) and sex."*

Other girls reported a prolonged engagement with the same man in order to access cash.

*"depending on the kind of phone that you want or how much cash you need, you will go Monday 6pm after the man is home from work will 12 in the night – then you come back the next day. Sometimes they get paid in tranches."*

Girls are more inclined to ask and take money from men who they do not love because these are the men who have financial capacity, but also because they do not want to burden their boyfriends who they actually love with financial demands.

*"girls don't ask the boyfriend that they like for phones because they don't want to bother or burden them"*

*"it's not the boyfriend they like that buys the phones. They would rather take money from the one that they don't like because they don't want to chop the money of the one they like"*

Girls reported that sex was not a good way to access financial support, but that ultimately, it remained a means to an end. Some also reported that it has become a habit, albeit an unhealthy one, in order to generate an income.

*"most girls don't think transactional sex is ok, because when they do it, they feel regret, because they are scared of those sicknesses and pregnancy. But they still do it."*

*"now it's a habit for them, whenever they want anything, they have to do this, they don't care anymore. This is what they depend on, they don't go to school, they don't do business, they just use their bodies"*

#### **Phone maintenance costs**

In terms of maintaining phones and buying top up, most girls reported that they manage to save money from lunch money given by their parents. They rarely go to boyfriends for this because the cash needed does not warrant a sexual act. Some girls save money from what their "big man" or "sugar daddy" gives them to buy top up.

Some girls reported that having a mobile phone greatly increased opportunities for young girls to find men in which to engage in transactional sex.

*"the better your phone, the easier it is to find a man. Like if you have a iphone, it is easier because you have facebook. Then you can chat online. At one point, he will definitely say 'let's meet up'."*

*"phones make it easy to just meet without even planning anything. The man just calls the girl and says let's meet at this place..."*

#### **Parental influence**

Theme two also sought to examine parental management of transactional sex. Most respondents reported that there was a divide between mothers and fathers, with fathers being completely intolerant of these behaviours, but mothers often times ignoring it, and sometimes even encouraging it.

*"some of the mothers who don't have money will say it's good because they can't afford it, so at least someone else will buy it for their child"*

Some girls also commented on parental pressure to find money to support the household as a motivation to engage in sexual behaviours. One respondent explained that when a mother asks her daughter to go and "find something" she means to go out and

find money, in whichever way possible.

*"If there is nothing at home, the mother will ask the girl to go out and find something. This word is very common in the community. If your mother says this, you know what she means."*

### **Theme 3: Different, different ways**

Theme 3 engaged girls in more in-depth discussions concerning their mobile phone use and associated risky behaviours.

#### **Communication codes**

Adolescent girls circumnavigate the wide range of features on basic smart phones to communicate with parents, boyfriends and friends in the most appropriate and cheapest way.

*"Most girls have to use units to call their parents because they can't read SMS. Girls also have to think about how much battery they have and the amount of units they have..."*

There is a specific set of social norms associated with how adolescent girls communicate to different types of men that they are engaging sexually.

*"for the sugar daddies, girls just flash them. They have wives so they don't like to be disturbed."*

*"girls never text or call their sugar daddy. The wives might see and get angry and then they cannot see the sugar daddy again"*

*"for the boyfriends that they [adolescent girls] really like, the girls will call them as often as they can, to show their concern and love"*

*"sometimes, girls just have a secret way of speaking to their boyfriends to let them know that they are thinking of them. Like flashing."*

#### **Camera Phones and Blues Pictures**

Respondents reported that sharing pornographic pictures – commonly referred to as "blues" in Freetown – was common amongst their peers. These pictures, taken of the sender, by the sender, are usually sent to boyfriends via SMS or Bluetooth upon request. Some peer researchers suggested that this practice was elevated amongst girls who had boyfriends and were in situations that did not allow for sexual encounters.

*"the man asked her to send a picture of her whole body naked. He said that it was just because she was too far away from him."*

*"this girl had such strict parents, so no chance to have sex. The boy asked her to snap her vagina and send it."*

While girls have to trust the person they are sending "blues" to, occasionally, this system of trust is betrayed, and this, according to peer researchers, is seen as the ultimate form of embarrassment.

*"one of the boys she had sex with asked for her naked picture. So she sent it. Then the boy shared the picture widely! All over. The girl nearly wanted to kill herself. She locked herself inside for three days."*

#### **Bluetooth and Pornography**

Internationally produced pornographic materials, including films, are shared widely amongst adolescents of both sexes. Bluetooth facilities, available on even the most basic of smart phones, are used to share pornographic material for free.

*"it's everywhere. They get them through Bluetooth. Some boys download them at a communication centre and then they share. Or they get the DVD plates on the street."*

*"there are boys in town who do different technical things, you can go to them in town and they will send you whatever you want"*

*"in my school, anyone who has a memory card, has a phone with Bluetooth, definitely must have some of these things [pornography]."*

While peer researchers reported that many girls within their social network are asked to watch pornography by their boyfriends, there are three other predominant motivations for adolescent girls to watch pornography. Peer researchers described a sense of peer pressure among girls, who do not want to be marginalised for being the anomaly who has not engaged in this behaviour. Others reported that pornographic films are the main medium in which adolescent girls learn sexual techniques, including positioning, in order to satisfy men. Nearly all peer researchers commented that girls "learn styles" from pornographic films. And lastly, adolescent girls reportedly watch pornography to be aroused, as one girl mentioned, "some young girls watch blues because then they feel like they're having sex too".

Most girls access pornography from their boyfriends who, in an attempt to arouse their girlfriends, share films via Bluetooth.

*"some men make their girlfriends watch so they get that feeling"*

*"boys want the girls to initiate the sex, and the blues help with the feeling"*

### **Internet and making 'new friends'**

Facebook and Whatsapp were repeatedly quoted as being favourite Internet downloadable applications for smartphone users, though there was some evidence suggesting that younger adolescent girls engaged less with these applications.

Adolescent girls are using mobile telephony in a range of ways to initiate contact with men they do not know. Two peer researchers gave details of a common game, popular among adolescent girls. The game involves a group of girls writing random phone numbers on a piece of paper – and then between them, they call every randomly generated number. If a man answers, the girl will try to meet up with him, depending on the information that he provides about himself. This information can detail his geographic location, employment situation and subsequent wealth level. According to peer researchers, *"they call it phone love"*.

Peer researchers also detailed stories of adolescent girls actively seeking male relationships through social networking and communication applications – as aforementioned, the most common being Facebook and Whatsapp, respectively.

*"Facebook is a place to meet old friends and make new friends".*

On Facebook and Whatsapp, adolescent girls "target" men who are Sierra Leonean, living overseas, usually in the UK or USA. These men are perceived to be wealthy by adolescent girls. As in many African countries, December is a popular month for members of the Sierra Leonean Diaspora to return to their countries. Adolescent girls capitalise on this, making demands on men in the Diaspora, with promises of sexual engagement upon their arrival.

*"Girls target men who are out – the number one target is Salone man who is out. In December, when they come as JC\* they meet and have sex. A lot of girls ask these men for money or phones when they come."*

\*JC is a common slang term for those from the Diaspora, who have "Just Come".

The marital status of Diaspora men returning to Freetown is not a point of consideration for most girls, and in fact is a point of celebration for most girls. One respondent explained how adolescent girls perceive this practice:

*"some are married, and then they come in December for their 'Salone baby'. The other young girls will be jealous! They will say 'you have luck o!'."*

Many respondents described how adolescent girls initially identify men on Facebook whom they wish to engage:

*"Girls browse through men's profile pages. They look at where they work, and if they have good jobs, they use sweet words to make the man fall in love."*

Many respondents recalled stories of girls in their social groups who "got lucky" by finding a man on Facebook who then facilitated visas and eventual transitions to Europe or the USA. This experience was seen to be the pinnacle of adolescent girls' aspirations.

*"The best case is when you find a man on Facebook and then they come and take you over there. This is what all the girls want! All the girls will say – well done, you found the one to pull you from poverty!"*

## **Discussion**

The findings from this study suggest that adolescent girls in Freetown use sex as currency to access a range of material goods, including mobile phones. While mobile telephony was the focus of this particular study, findings reveal that girls are also engaging in transactional sex to access a range of other amenities and merits including, for example, school grades – in the aptly termed "sexually transmitted grades (STG)". Transactional sex is also seen as a reliable coping mechanism in times of financial hardship. These results echo study findings in other sub-Saharan African countries, including for example, Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa, (Silberschmidt 2001; Hawkins, Price et al. 2009; Watt M. 2012).

Even in so-called 'love relationships', adolescent girls in Freetown are attracted to men with an ability to provide financial support and material gifts. This was also the case in a study conducted in Dar es Salaam, where it was found that girls saw little point in initiating relations with a man who could or would not dispense cash on demand (Silberschmidt 2001). Findings assert that adolescent girls assess men according to their dress sense, which gives an indication of wealth. Hawkins' (2008) study findings reflect this, with young girls in Maputo making similar assessments in nightclubs.

### **Peer pressure, parental pressure**

In Freetown, adolescent girls gain respect from their peers by 'bluffing' with material goods gifted by 'boyfriends'. Here, love is measured by the cost of the phone acquired, or by the amount of cash dispensed. As documented by Silberschmidt (2001) and colleagues in Tanzania, men who are willing to provide give prestige among peers as a status of a girl is often dependent on having the latest fashion or mobile phone. This behaviour has become socially acceptable to the extent that girls who do not partake are seen to be anomalies and, as our study finds, likely to receive ridicule in the school yard.

In Freetown, 15.5% of girls in the Western region live in a single parent household headed by their mother (Population Council 2010). Study findings suggest that poor households headed by single-mothers could be considered a risk factor for early sexual debut or transactional sex. Mothers who feel inadequate because they cannot furnish their children with sufficient cash to access desirable material goods turn a blind eye to the practice of transactional sex, while some in more desperate situations drive their daughters to the street in search of cash, and inadvertently sex. This was also the case in Dar es Salaam, as Silberschmidt (2001) writes "they choose to close their eyes because it relieves them of their financial responsibilities". Similar findings were reported by Chatterji and colleagues, who reviewed studies from twelve sub-Saharan African countries, and found that parental pressure to engage in transactional sex is often implicit rather than explicit (Chatterji, Murry et al. 2004). However, analysis from Freetown based data suggests that there is a difference in reaction between mother and father; the data suggests that parental pressure comes only from the mother of the adolescent, and hardly from the father. Additionally, findings suggest that while mothers may turn a blind eye, fathers are more likely to take a more forceful approach to disciplining daughters out of this behaviour. This finding was not reflected in other studies, though is an important point for further research.

### **Different behaviours, different types of relationships**

Data from this study suggest that girls proactively seek partners in which to engage for transactional sex, using internet applications on their phones. Study findings suggest that the girl is often the one to call the man when she is in need of cash, and thus controls, to some extent, the relationship. Girls talk about transactional sex using terminology such as "you must know how to play the game", and "give what you have to get what you need" to demonstrate their control over these relationships. Our findings suggest that girls have a certain amount of power to influence situations with men through texting or calling at times to show affection, or by using "sweet words". Similar reports come from Mozambique, where girls were seen to be in control through "exploiting a man's wealth under the guise of a relationship".

Girls manage concurrent partners in order to maximise material gain. In these situations, they manage a complex, unwritten set of rules around how communications should occur with each partner. Such practices, particularly around the nature of 'flashing' are well documented by Donner (2008), in his seminal piece, 'the Rules of Beeping'. Often times, it is the girl who is in control of choosing when to communicate, depending on when the need for cash arises.

Adolescent girls in this study demonstrated a low, and often incorrect, understanding of the health risks surrounding concurrent sexual relationships. Unlike findings from a similar study in Maputo (Hawkins, Price et al. 2009), this study indicates that girls in Freetown have a relatively low level of knowledge regarding STIs including HIV. This study found that girls are much more concerned with avoiding pregnancy, and try to take precautions against this; however, findings suggest that girls do not have accurate knowledge on how to use modern contraceptives correctly. Findings suggest that adolescent girls may be taking the 'morning after



pill’ as a contraceptive following oral sex – a behaviour which suggests significant inaccuracies in knowledge of basic mods of conception and contraception. Some narratives also suggested traditional contraceptives, including bathing in salt water following sexual intercourse, and the use of ‘waist beads’ – a string of beads worn around the waist to prevent pregnancy.

Though not specifically examined in this study, findings suggest that adolescents’ perceptions of other risk are also relatively low. Girls in Freetown meet men who are, at a minimum, ten years older in private spaces, usually hotel rooms. Within these private spheres, girls put themselves at serious risk for sexual abuse. In a setting where rape and coercion often go unrecognised, further research is needed to ascertain how adolescent girls perceive sexual risk, and what constitutes sexual abuse for them.

### **Mobile phones, the internet, and risky sexual behaviours**

Sexting, is commonplace in Freetown, predominantly between boyfriend and girlfriend. While studies from high-income countries (Pew Research Centre. 2009) indicate that sexting is a practice that both boys and girls engage in, our study indicates that girls are the senders and boys the receivers of such messages. Adolescent girls in Freetown send sexts when requested to by their boyfriends, and further, see sexting as a way to please their partners. While some studies suggest that sexting is a compromise for young adolescents who are not yet ready to engage in sexual intercourse, this is not the case in Freetown. Though some adolescent girls send sexts because there are barriers to accessing spaces in which to have intercourse – strict parents or long distance, for example – most engage in this behaviour in addition to actual sexual intercourse. Data from Sierra Leone’s Demographic and Health Survey reveal that some 69% of girls have had sexual debut by age 18, confirming that mobile phone related sexual activity is probably happening in parallel to actual sexual intercourse (Statistics Sierra Leone and ICF Macro 2009).

As Bond’s (2010) study found, Bluetooth has enabled fast and free sharing of sexually explicit material, including pornographic films made internationally. There is a dearth of data concerning adolescent girls motivations to view pornography in African country contexts. Our data indicates that pornographic material is prolific in Freetown, with adolescent girls consuming for personal pleasure, or to arouse themselves for their boyfriend’s pleasure, but also to learn ‘styles’ including sexual positions. This study does little but scratch the surface of young people’s consumption of pornography; further research must be conducted on the types of pornography being shared, and how this is impacting the sexual behaviours of adolescents. This will further reveal the gravity of the child protection issues that need to be managed.

Internet applications on mobile phones, including Whatsapp and Facebook are common sites that adolescent girls use to connect with men previously unknown to them. Here again, there are low levels of perceived risk, and instead adolescent girls celebrate being given opportunities to meet men from overseas who are willing to have sex with them whilst holidaying in Freetown. This study also revealed evidence suggesting that impoverished parents would also welcome such opportunities for the daughters. There is a lack of data that examines risk around internet use for young people in low-income settings; in particular, there is a dearth of data on how internet use is facilitating sexual interaction. While internet speed in Freetown is rapidly improving, it is still not sufficiently fast for the use of webcams. When this does happen, it is plausible that adolescent girls will start engaging in ‘internet sex’ through webcams, thereby opening doors to further abuse, including paedophilia. Further research is urgently needed to gain a deeper understanding of adolescent’s use of the internet, and associated risky sexual behaviours to safeguard against further abuse.

### **Conclusion**

This study provides a snapshot of some of the behaviours and practices of adolescent girls in relation to mobile phone acquisition and use. The narratives generated by this study demonstrate the intricate web of behaviours at the intersection of poverty and modernity. While mobile phone access is deemed an essential component of economic empowerment and development, little is known about the negative consequences of mobile telephony. This study highlights some of the adverse effects of mobile phone use, and presents the ensuing child protection and public health concerns.

Adolescent girls, who wish to engage in popular consumerism, see transactional sex as the most rapid and assured way to acquire cash. Considering the concurrency of relationships had by adolescent girls, coupled with a lack of accurate knowledge around contraception, it is plausible that transactional sexual relationships are contributing significantly to the high prevalence of teenage pregnancy in Sierra Leone. For effective behaviour change communication programmes to be developed, it is essential that stakeholders gain a thorough understanding of the motivation of young girls to engage in risky sexual behaviours, including transactional sex.

## Study Limitations

1. PEER ethnography provides rich qualitative data, which illustrates some of the practices that Freetown adolescents engage in. This study does not, however, provide any estimate of the prevalence of such behaviours in Freetown. Follow up quantitative data should be conducted to provide such statistical data.
2. Due to the sample population being selected by peer researchers themselves, it is possible that a respondent bias was introduced. Having said this, the objective of this study was to generate information rich data, in the form of narratives, which we believe this methodology succeeded in providing.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made in light of the study findings and seek to address issues pertinent to the reduction of harmful sexual behaviours among adolescent girls in Freetown.

- **Harness the role of mobile telephony as a communication channel:** Adolescents are used to sharing data and information with peers rapidly through Internet applications such as Facebook or Whatsapp and Bluetooth. To maximise impact, Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) programmes that seek to reduce risky behaviour associated with mobile phone use, should harness the use of mobile telephony. Agencies wishing to engage adolescents must harness these technologies to communicate through youth friendly channels for increased efficacy.
- **Ensure that behaviour change communication messaging does not stigmatise girls:** An effective BCC strategy should recognise the roles of both adolescent girls and men in transactional sexual relationships. Adolescent girls should never be the sole focus in communication campaigns that seek to reduce transactional sexual relationships, as this perpetuates the idea that girls are to blame for this practice.
- **Work with justice sector to reduce impunity:** BCC campaigns should reinforce that legally; men can be fined or imprisoned in Sierra Leone for having sexual relations with a child (any person aged 18 years or under). Effective BCC campaigns must seek to change the social norm around sex with minors, and create an environment where this is no longer seen as acceptable. Particular attention should be drawn to community members who are theoretically recognised as 'child protectors', eg teachers and police.
- **Incorporate positive deviance strategies:** positive role models should be incorporated to provide an alternative vision for adolescent girls who are facing peer pressure to engage in transactional sex. Social norms need to be altered in order to change attitudes towards early sexual debut.
- **Further research on behaviour prevalence:** while this study provides a snapshot of sexual behaviours around mobile telephony in Freetown, further research is necessary to estimate prevalence of these behaviours. In order to gain relevant data, from which strategies can be built, we must seek to understand more about the men who chose to engage in this practice.
- **Ensure youth friendly sexual health service provision for adolescent girls:** MoHS and NGO services must be confidential, whilst perceptions of confidentiality must be increased. Services should have opening hours that are respectful of young people's routines, and staff must be trained on creating a non-judgmental atmosphere.

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## Other Articles

### **William Smith, Registrar of the Courts of Mixed Commission: A Photograph of an African Civil Servant** By Nigel Browne-Davies

There are few surviving portraits of African colonial figures who served in Sierra Leone during the mid to late Victorian era.

Historians of Sierra Leone do not always have the benefit of reproducing a photograph for publication that may enhance the

biography of notable African citizens in the Colony of Sierra Leone. However, the meticulous record keeping reflected in the family

albums and bibles belonging to Sierra Leonean families has allowed some scholars to reproduce photographs of prominent citizens

of Sierra Leone during the nineteenth century. Among the records preserved by members of the Smith family is the photograph of William Smith, (1816-1896), a notable civil servant in Sierra Leone during the nineteenth century.

William Smith was one of the most prominent and senior African civil servants in Sierra Leone during the nineteenth century.<sup>244</sup> Smith was born on 4 October, 1816 in Cape Coast Castle, Gold Coast to a Fante noblewoman<sup>245</sup> and William Smith Sr., (1795-1875), an English employee of the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, commonly known as the African Company.<sup>246</sup> The Company of Merchants Trading to Africa had been chartered in 1750 after the demise of the Royal African Company (1672-1750) and had a principal fort in Cape Coast, in the Fante region of modern Ghana.<sup>247</sup>

After the African Company was dissolved in 1821, William Smith Sr. decided to settle in Sierra Leone,<sup>248</sup> where he was appointed as the Registrar of the Courts of Mixed Commission in 1825 and would eventually serve as a Commissary Judge of the Courts until his retirement in 1835.<sup>249</sup> The Courts of Mixed Commission were international courts comprised of two commissioners from each of the European countries that had abolished the transatlantic slave trade and were signatories to the various treaties relating to the adjudication of slave ships.<sup>250</sup> Although there were limits to the power of the court, the court had the juridical

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<sup>244</sup>Cromwell, Adelaide, *An African Victorian Feminist: The Life and Times of Adelaide Smith Casely Hayford, 1868-1960*, (United States: Howard University, 1999), p. 31, Fyfe, Christopher, *A History of Sierra Leone*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 328

<sup>245</sup>Little information is available in published form on the mother of William Smith. William Smith's son, Justice Francis Smith of the Gold Coast Supreme Court, was said to have been related to William Coleman of Cape Coast. Although Coleman's relationship with Francis Smith may have been through marriage, the relationship also suggests that William Smith's mother may have been related to the Coleman family. William Smith's mother may have also been the familial link to the Coussey and Selby families of the Gold Coast. For the Coleman link, see 'News In Brief', *The Gold Coast Nation*, 5 December, 1912

<sup>246</sup>Information provided by Dr William Archibald Awunor-Renner (Communicated: 7 February, 2014). "England and Wales Census, 1881," index, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XQ4X-6C1> : accessed 01 Sep 2014), William Smith, St Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands; citing "1881 England, Scotland and Wales census," index and images, findmypast.co.uk ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) : Brightsolid, n.d.); PRO RG 11/, p. , The National Archives of the UK, Public Record Office, Kew, Surrey; FHL microfilm . Casely-Hayford, Gladys, Casely-Hayford, Adelaide, *Mother and Daughter: Memoirs and Poems*, (Sierra Leone: Sierra Leone University Press, 1983), edited by Lucilda Hunter, p. 1, Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist*, (United States: Howard University, 1999), p. 31, Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 195, 328. William Smith Sr. was born in Yorkshire and settled in West Africa in the early 1800s. Based upon the available evidence, he was not related to John Hope Smith (d. 1831), the Governor of the Committee of Merchants of the Gold Coast which oversaw British settlements in the region.

<sup>247</sup>Crooks, Major J.J., *Records Relating to the Gold Coast Settlements from 1750-1874*, (United Kingdom: Psychology Press, 1923), pp. 10-12. Priestley, Margaret, *West African Trade and Coast Society: A Family Study*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 4. For further records on the African Company see the T1 and T70 series at the National Archives in Kew. Probate records in the National Archives of the United Kingdom also contain a significant number of the wills of employees of the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa.

<sup>248</sup>The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, (TNA), CO 267/111, 1831 Census of population and Liberated Africans. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 195. 'Love and Mammon', *London Weekly Review in The Ariel: A Literary Gazette* Volume 2. No. 18, 27 December, 1828. For a possibly interesting account of William Smith's departure from Cape Coast see 'Love and Mammon', *London Weekly Review in The Ariel: A Literary Gazette* Volume 2. No. 18, 27 December, 1828. Smith would eventually marry a European woman and settled at No. 2 Wilberforce Street, Freetown. Frederick P.H. Smith, (1828/29-4 July 1855), was the youngest son of William Smith Sr. and his European wife, and he served as a junior clerk in the Mixed Commission Courts for the Suppression of the Slave Trade before he died at sea aged 26 in 1855.

<sup>249</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 195, Shaikh, Farida, 'Judicial Diplomacy: British Officials and Mixed Commission Courts', in Hamilton, Keith (Ed.), Salmon, Patrick (Ed.), *Slavery, Diplomacy and Empire: Britain and the Suppression of the Slave Trade, 1807-1975*, (England: Sussex Academic Press, 2009), p. 46

<sup>250</sup>Information provided by Dr William Archibald Awunor-Renner (Communicated: 7 February, 2014). , Shaikh, 'Judicial Diplomacy', in Hamilton (Ed.), Salmon (Ed.), *Slavery, Diplomacy and Empire*, (England: Sussex Academic Press, 2009), p. 42. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 137-8. Smith was first appointed as the Registrar of the Court, and was promoted to the position of Commissioner of Arbitration (arbitrator) before he served as Commissary Judge of the Courts. As the Commissary Judge of the Courts of Mixed Commission, William Smith received a salary of £3000 a year, the equivalent of approximately £125,000 in modern times. When Smith retired in 1835, he was pensioned with £850 per annum. He retired to Ryde in the Isle of Wight before he died in Kensington, London, in 1875.

oversight to adjudicate cases involving intercepted slave ships.<sup>251</sup>

William Smith Jr., initially wedded to horse 'racing and betting' became a clerk in the Registry of the Mixed Commission Courts in 1833 and was eventually elevated to the position of Registrar of the Court in 1850.<sup>252</sup> As the Registrar of the Mixed Commission Courts, it was Smith's duty to record the decisions of the Courts in relation to intercepted slave ships.<sup>253</sup> This was a prestigious position that increased the social status of Smith in the Colony.<sup>254</sup> Smith also served as a Justice of Peace in the Colony, and his obituary accorded him the title 'J.P.' that this position held.<sup>255</sup> Described as an 'ardent Methodist', Smith also served as a lay preacher alongside his friend, John Ezzidio, a merchant who served as the Mayor of Freetown and who was also the first African to be elected as an unofficial member of the Legislative Council.<sup>256</sup>

William Smith married three times.<sup>257</sup> His first wife was Charlotte Macaulay, the daughter of a Liberated African<sup>258</sup> and Acting Governor Kenneth Macaulay, a prominent merchant and relative of the English historian and politician, Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay.<sup>259</sup> After the death of Charlotte Smith at age 36, Smith married Anne Spilsbury, (1840- 2 June, 1876) on 27 July, 1858 at St George's Cathedral.<sup>260</sup> Anne Spilsbury was the daughter of Joseph Green Spilsbury, a prosperous Maroon trader and Hannah Spilsbury, née Carew, a Creole who had been born to equally wealthy Hausa and Bambara Liberated African parents.<sup>261</sup> It was Smith's marriage to Anne Spilsbury in 1858 that produced the notable Smith sisters.<sup>262</sup> Smith was also the father of

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<sup>251</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 137-8

<sup>252</sup>Casely-Hayford, Casely-Hayford, *Mother and Daughter*, (Sierra Leone: Sierra Leone University Press, 1983), ed. Hunter, pp. 1-2. Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, pp. 189, 261. Fyfe, Christopher, 'John Ezzidio', *Eminent Sierra Leoneans in the Nineteenth Century*, (Sierra Leone: Department of Information for the Sierra Leone Society, 1961), p. 28

<sup>253</sup>Shaikh, 'Judicial Diplomacy', in Hamilton (Ed.), Salmon (Ed.), *Slavery, Diplomacy and Empire*, p. 43.

<sup>254</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 328

<sup>255</sup>"General News: Death of William Smith of Jersey", *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 8 August, 1896,

<sup>256</sup>Fyfe, 'John Ezzidio', p. 28. "General News: Death of William Smith of Jersey", *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 8 August, 1896. Smith was described in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* as an "ardent Methodist" who "occupied the foremost rank among lay-preachers."

<sup>257</sup>Casely-Hayford, Casely-Hayford, *Mother and Daughter* ed. Hunter, pp. 1, 16. Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist*, p. 42. After the death of Anne Spilsbury in 1876, Smith would later marry Elizabeth Jewell, an Englishwoman from Yorkshire on 16 June, 1883.

<sup>258</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 189. Casely-Hayford, Casely-Hayford, *Mother and Daughter* ed. Hunter, p. 2. 'Memorial Sketch of Mrs. Robert Dillon', *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine: Being a Continuation of the Arminian Or Methodist Magazine First Published by John Wesley*, (Britain, Wesleyan-Methodist Book-Room, 1890), p. 634. Charlotte Macaulay's mother was a Liberated African who had been rescued from a slave ship that had set sail from the 'Nigerian Ports'. Charlotte Macaulay's mother had been educated by Kenneth Macaulay, who had a number of mixed-race children in Sierra Leone. Charlotte Macaulay had been educated in England, and her sister, Margaret Macaulay married Reverend Robert Dillon, (1831/32-8 March, 1907) a Methodist missionary and a friend of William Smith.

<sup>259</sup>Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 189. Kenneth Macaulay's will can be found at the National Archives, see PROB 11/1780/280, Will of Kenneth Maccaulay [sic] of Freetown, Sierra Leone.

<sup>260</sup>'Fifty Years Ago: From *The African*, August 13 1858', 15 August, 1908, *Sierra Leone Weekly News*

<sup>261</sup>Casely-Hayford, Casely-Hayford, *Mother and Daughter* ed. Hunter, p. 1, Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist*, pp. 29-30, 38. Hannah Carew Spilsbury was born in Freetown to a Bambara Recaptive butcher and trader and a Mandinka or Hausa Recaptive mother. Joseph Green Spilsbury was born to Dr George Green Spilsbury, (1786-1857), the inventor of the thermantidote and Elizabeth 'Betsy' Fowler, a Maroon. A portrait of Dr George Green Spilsbury can be found at the Asiatic Society in Kolkata (Calcutta), India. The PROB 11/2238/111 will of Joseph Green Spilsbury is found at the National Archives and is available online. In the CO 267/111, 1831 Census of population and Liberated Africans, Joseph Green Spilsbury is listed in the household of his mother and grandmother, Sarah 'Sally' Gray among other relatives. The 1831 census lists the household of Thomas Carew and Betsy Carew but does not list Hannah Carew, presumably because she was receiving her education in England at the time.

<sup>262</sup>'EAP443/1/3/2 Register of Births, Freetown District', 13 April, 1857 to 12 April, 1860, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189218;r=12382](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189218;r=12382). 'EAP443/1/3/9, Register of Births, Vol. 5, Freetown District', 9 October, 1863 to 4 December, 1864, page 45, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771). 'EAP443/1/3/15, Register of Births, Vol. 11, Freetown District', 5 July, 1870 to 4 August, 1871, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189231;r=17035](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189231;r=17035). At least some, if not all, of the birth registers of the Smith children from William Smith's

distinguished sons such as Dr Robert Smith (1839-4 July, 1885),<sup>263</sup> Justice Francis Smith of the Gold Coast Supreme Court, (1847-25 November, 1912),<sup>264</sup> and Dr Joseph Spilsbury Smith (13 May, 1859-4 February, 1894).<sup>265</sup> Smith's relatives and descendants were equally distinguished and include Dr Edward Awunor-Renner, the first African Director of the Sierra Leone Medical Service and Frances Wright, the first female to qualify as a lawyer in Sierra Leone.<sup>266</sup>

In 1872, after a lengthy career of public service, Smith retired to Norwood, England and then Kenmuir, St. Helier in the Isle

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second marriage can be found among the birth registers held at the Sierra Leone Public Archives. For example, the birth of Joseph Spilsbury Smith on 13 May 1859, Emma Smith on 15 April, 1864 and Annette Kathleen Smith on 31 August, 1870 at Upper Wellington Street, Freetown are listed within the birth registers for the Freetown District between 13 April, 1857 to 12 April, 1860, 9 October, 1863 to 4 December, 1864 and 5 July, 1870 to 4 August, 1871. These documents were digitised by scholars Paul Lovejoy and Suzanne Schwartz through a grant provided by the British Library Endangered Archives Programme. For more information on the Smith sisters see the work of historian Adenike Ogunkoya, a specialist historian on women's history in Britain.

<sup>263</sup>'Medical News-Medical Appointment', *The Lancet*, 4 November, 1871. Grace, John, *Domestic slavery in West Africa, with particular reference to the Sierra Leone protectorate, 1896-1927*, (United States: Barnes & Noble Books, 1975), pp. 31-3. England Marriages, 1538-1973, "index, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/N6VG-NV3> : accessed 24 Aug 2014), Robert Smith and Annie Mary Pine, 21 Jul 1865; citing Saint Nicholas, Brighton, Sussex, England, reference 2:JRPVF4; FHL microfilm 1067129. The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review, Volume 219, page 373. 'EAP443/1/12/14, Register of Deaths, Freetown District', 1 May, 1885 to 19 February, 1886, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/over-view\\_item.a4d?catId=189337;r=23655](http://eap.bl.uk/database/over-view_item.a4d?catId=189337;r=23655). 'Births', *Limerick Chronicle*, 7 March 1867. Dr Robert Smith was the first West African Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh. On 21 July, 1865 at Saint Nicholas Church in Brighton, Sussex, England, Smith married Annie Mary Pine, the daughter of Governor Richard Pine of the Gold Coast (b. 1813), who was the brother of Sir Benjamin Chilley Pine Campbell (1809-1891). The couple had at least four children including Mrs. Frederick George Roper (presumably b. late February or March, 1867), who was most likely the Charlotte 'Lottie' Roper referred to in the 1881 census and in Emma Smith's letter to Adelaide Casely-Hayford (Cromwell, *African Victorian Feminist*, p. 73), Florence Mary Smith (1868/69-21 January 1883), Robert Chilley Smith (b. 1870/71), and another daughter (presumably seven year old Edith Smith listed in the 1881 Census) born in Rochester, Kent, England on 2 September 1873. Dr Robert Smith died of malignant bilious intermittent fever on 4 July 1885 in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

<sup>264</sup>'Pursuant to an order of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice made in the matter of the Estate of Francis Smith deceased', *The Gold Coast Leader*, 26 April, 1913. Francis Smith died on 25 November, 1912 at his residence at No. 13 Oxford Gardens, Notting Hill in London, England. He was survived by his wife, Juanita Cortis Smith, and his children including Robert Smith II, Eva Frances Wright, née Smith, Charlotte Brown Pobee, née Smith and Mercedes Smith.

<sup>265</sup>Doortmont, Michel, *The Pen-pictures of Modern Africans and African Celebrities by Charles Francis Hutchison: A Collective Biography of Elite Society in the Gold Coast Colony*, (The Netherlands: Brill, 2005), p. 412. TNA, CO 1069/89, Photographs: Sierra Leone Album. There are photographs of Justice Francis Smith and Dr Robert Smith. The photograph of Justice Francis Smith appears in *The Pen-pictures of Modern Africans and African Celebrities*, p. 412 and there is also a coloured portrait of Francis Smith in the Wright family album. The photograph of Dr Robert Smith (taken in 1885) is contained in the CO 1069/89, 'Photographs: Sierra Leone' Album held at The National Archives Kew (TNA). Dr Smith would pass away on 4 July, 1885 from malignant bilious intermittent fever shortly after the photograph was taken.

<sup>266</sup>Easmon, M.C.F., 'Sierra Leone Doctors', *Sierra Leone Studies (New Series)*, No. 6, June 1956, p. 91. 'African Girls Follow Careers Of Their Fathers', *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 24 April, 1943. 'The Death of Dr. William Frederick Campbell', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 27 February, 1926. Sibthorpe, Aaron Belisarius Cosimo, *The History of Sierra Leone*, (United Kingdom: Psychology Press, 1970) p. 100. Smith was also a relative, perhaps the maternal uncle, of Dr William Frederick Campbell, (1858-1926), the son of Moses Frederick Campbell, a shoemaker and Sally Smith the daughter of William Smith (possibly William Smith Sr.). Campbell trained at the dispensary of Dr Robert Smith and later qualified as a medical doctor in Edinburgh and Glasgow, similar to his distinguished relative. In May 1885, Campbell married Esther Deborah Elliott, (1860/61-1918), the daughter of John Bucknor Elliott and Susan Elliott, née Cole, (1823-1875). Their granddaughter, Esther Campbell, (1919-2007), the daughter of William E.D. Campbell, a school teacher at the Government Model School, married Dr Raymond Sarif Easmon (1913-1997), a cousin of Dr M.C.F. Easmon, the grandson of William Smith.



of Jersey,<sup>267</sup> where he died on 6 August 1896.<sup>268</sup> Even during his retirement in England, Smith remained active in the Methodist Church and subscribed to the *War Cry*, the official news publication of the Salvation Army.<sup>269</sup> In eulogizing William Smith, the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* stated that Smith had been "highly respected by all" and had "'worked in the interest of the country and laboured hard to improve the social and religious conditions of things...in the community which he adopted as his home.'"<sup>270</sup> In contrast to some notable Sierra Leoneans with distinguished achievements who did not establish dynasties to enhance their legacy, Smith left notable descendants who continued the family tradition of civil service and excellence in the legal and medical professions well into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The photograph of William Smith is taken from a personal family album. The photograph was taken in the late nineteenth century possibly at the studio of a certain Greville in Maidenhead<sup>271</sup> or at the studio of Hughes & Mullins in Ryde, Isle of Wight.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>267</sup>Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist*, p. 38. "England and Wales Census, 1881," index, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XQ4X-6C1> : accessed 01 Sep 2014), William Smith, St Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands; citing "1881 England, Scotland and Wales census," index and images, findmypast.co.uk ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) : Brightsolid, n.d.); PRO RG 11/, p. , The National Archives of the UK, Public Record Office, Kew, Surrey; FHL microfilm. Easmon, M.C.F., 'Auntie Dad: An appreciation of the late Adelaide Casely-Hayford of Sierra Leone', *West African Review*, Volume 31, (1960), p. 53. Smith is listed, aged 64 years, in the 1881 Census of the Channel Islands alongside his immediate family and relatives. Charlotte Smith (b. 1867), (later Mrs. Frederick George Roper), Florence 'Florrie' Smith (b. 1868/1869-, Edith Smith (b. 1873) were the children of Dr Robert Smith recorded in the household of William Smith Jr. in the 1881 Census. The birthplace of Florence and Edith Smith was not recorded as 'Sierra Leone' or 'Africa', confirming that Edith Smith was the daughter of Robert Smith born in Kent in 1873 and suggesting that Florence Smith was also born in England. Dr Robert Smith's son, Robert Chilley Smith (b. 1870/1871) was recorded in the 1881 Census as a student at Oxenford House Academy at St. Laurence, Jersey. Charlotte Davies (b. 1867/1868) and Alice Davies (b. 1869/1870), were recorded as the granddaughters of William Smith and these sisters were the children of Dr William Broughton Davies (25 October, 1833-13 January, 1906) and Mary Davies, née Smith, (1843-1884). Both sisters lived in England for eight years, and after being educated in Jersey, Alice travelled around the continent for four years. Annie Selby, an eight year old born in Africa-most likely Cape Coast-was recorded as a visitor granddaughter of William Smith; she would later marry Reverend Thomas Milner. Annie Selby, the daughter of W.H. Selby Jr. and Christine Mary Selby, née Barnes of Cape Coast, had links to the Proctor and Coussey families (her mother appears to have been related to William Smith Jr. perhaps through his mother). The Proctor family in the Rio Nunez region of Guinea descends from Michael Proctor, an English coffee exporter and trader in produce in the Isles de Los and Northern Rivers, who was the grandfather of W.H. Selby Jr. Michael Proctor arrived in Africa in 1815 and similar to the Selby family, the Proctor family originate in Yorkshire, England. The Proctor and Selby families may have been related to Smith Jr. through his father, Judge William Smith. Thomas George Spilsbury Smith, Emma Smith and Adelaide Smith are also recorded in the 1891 census of the Channel Islands. M.C.F. Easmon, Smith's grandson would describe Smith's residence in Kenmuir, St Helier as the 'Mecca' for all the young men from Sierra Leone.

<sup>268</sup>"General News: Death of William Smith of Jersey", 8 August 1896, *Sierra Leone Weekly News*. Casely-Hayford, Casely-Hayford, *Mother and Daughter* ed. Hunter, p. 17. Adelaide Casely-Hayford stated that her father died at 10pm on 5 August, 1895. The *Sierra Leone Weekly News* reported that Smith died on Thursday, 6 August, 1896 in his 81<sup>st</sup> year. The will of William Smith Jr. is still available from the Jersey Archives, see the 'Will and Testament of William Smith, late of Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa, now of St Helier.' Dated 27 July, 1894. Bequeaths all real estate in Sierra Leone to William Broughton Davies and William Renner, D/Y/A/55/7916 September, 1896, *Jersey Heritage*, URL: <http://remote.jerseyheritage.org/Details/archive/110106730>

<sup>269</sup>Cromwell, *An African Victorian Feminist*, p. 45

<sup>270</sup>General News: Death of William Smith of Jersey", *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 8 August, 1896,

<sup>271</sup>*The London Gazette*, 2 December, 1927, pp. 7777-8, *The Gazette*, URL: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/33334/page/7778>. There was a Theodore Harold Greville, a British photographer in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century based at No. 7 High Street, Maidenhead. The studio of T.H. Greville was operated as a family business by T.H. Greville, and Herbert Reginald Greville, Cecil Hector Greville, and Norman Edward Greville and was dissolved in 1927 (however, the family tradition of photography continued into the twenty-first century). However, the Greville family business appeared in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the surname was previously 'Schwanke' up until 1919 and 1920. Therefore the studio of T.H. Greville is unlikely to be the Greville Studio possibly associated with the photograph of William Smith.

<sup>272</sup>Information provided by Dr William Archibald Awunor-Renner, (Communicated: 7 February, 2014 and 7 September, 2014). Lyden, Anne M., *A Royal Passion: Queen Victoria and Photography*, (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2014), p. 120. Turley, Raymond, 'Hughes Cornelius Jabez (1819-1884) British photographer, writer, and lecturer', Hannavy, John, *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, (United States: Routledge, 2013), pp. 719-720. According to Dr Awunor-Renner, the photograph was possibly taken in Freetown, Sierra Leone or in Jersey where Smith eventually retired. The photograph was possibly taken at the studio of Hughes and Mullins, a studio at No. 60 Union Street, Ryde, Isle of Wight. This studio was owned by Cornelius Jabez Hughes (1819-1884) in partnership with his former assistant, Gustav William Henry Mullins (1854-1921), a native of St. Helier, Jersey. The studio was patronised by Queen Victoria and the Royal family and received a Royal Warrant on 15 January, 1885 which allowed Mullins

Dressed in a frock coat and displaying a rather serious pose (somewhat reflective of Victorian portraits during the time period), the photograph depicts undoubtedly one of the most prominent citizens of Sierra Leone during the nineteenth century.



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to use the title, 'Photographers to Her Majesty at Ryde.' The photograph of both William Smith and his wife, Anne Spilsbury were inscribed with 'Copy by Greville, Maidenhead.' However, the photograph of William Smith also contains the signature of 'Hughes and Mullins' indicating that the photograph could have been taken at the studio of Hughes and Mullins.



**Fig. 1. William Smith, Registrar of the Mixed Commission Courts, Sierra Leone, circa 1870s-1890s<sup>273</sup>**

**Select Bibliography (sources cited and consulted)**

Special acknowledgement is given to Dr William Archibald Awunor-Renner, a great-grandson of William Smith Jr., who provided the photograph of William Smith Jr.

**The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew**

The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, CO 1069/89, Photographs: Sierra Leone Album

The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, CO 267/111, 1831 Census of population and Liberated Africans

The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, PROB 11/1780/280, Will of Kenneth Maccaulay of Freetown, Sierra Leone

The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, PROB 11/2238/111, Will of Joseph Green Spilsbury, Merchant of Freetown, Sierra Leone, 22 August 1856

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**Jersey Archives**

'Will and Testament of William Smith, late of Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa, now of St Helier'. Dated 27 July, 1894. Bequeaths all real estate in Sierra Leone to William Broughton Davies and William Renner, D/Y/A/55/79, 16 September, 1896, *Jersey Heritage*, URL: <http://remote.jerseyheritage.org/Details/archive/110106730>

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"England and Wales Census, 1881," index, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/XQ4X-6C1> : accessed 01 Sep 2014), William Smith, St Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands; citing "1881 England, Scotland and Wales census," index and images, findmypast.co.uk ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) : Brightsolid, n.d.); PRO RG 11/, p. , The National Archives of the UK, Public Record Office, Kew, Surrey; FHL microfilm .

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<sup>273</sup>Photograph provided courtesy of Dr William Archibald Renner, a great-grandson of William Smith Jr.

"England and Wales Census, 1891," index, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/4B3Y-T6Z> : accessed 01 Sep 2014), Emma Smith, Channel Islands; citing "1891 England, Scotland and Wales census," index and images, findmypast.co.uk ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) : Brightsolid, n.d.); PRO RG 12, county, registration district, subdistrict, The National Archives of the UK, Kew, Surrey.

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## **British Library Endangered Archives Programmes 284 and 443: A short note on the digitisation of records at the Sierra Leone**

### **Public Archives**

By Nigel Browne-Davies

The need to preserve colonial documents pertaining to Sierra Leone has long been recognised by scholars of Sierra Leone and members of the Sierra Leonean community.<sup>274</sup> Thus, the completion of the Endangered Archives Programmes 284 and 443 to digitise important archival records held at the Sierra Leone Public Archives is an exciting development for scholars and for those individuals interested in Sierra Leone. The work undertaken to catalogue and digitise important documents held in the Sierra Leone Public Archives was funded by a grant provided by the British Library Endangered Archives Programme and is the work of Professor Paul E. Lovejoy of the Harriet Tubman Institute at York University, Canada, Professor Suzanne Schwarz of the University of Worcester, and Albert Moore, the Director and Chief Government Archivist of the Sierra Leone Public Archives.

The Endangered Archives Programme 284 (EAP284), launched in 2009, was the initial pilot project for the digitisation of documents in the Sierra Leone Public Archives, and this project was completed in 2011.<sup>275</sup> The catalogues of the EAP284 project contain valuable archival documents such as a copy of the 1788 Treaty for the purchase of land that was used as the basis for the establishment of the Freetown colony and a digitised copy of Lieutenant John Clarkson's *Mission to Africa*.<sup>276</sup> Subsequently, the Endangered Archives Programme 443 (EAP443) was initiated in 2011. EAP443 was a two year project with larger funding to digitise

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<sup>274</sup>'Births & Deaths records in bad condition', *Awoko*, 6 July, 2009, URL: <http://awoko.org/2009/07/06/births-deaths-records-in-bad-condition/>. The article in the *Awoko* newspaper specifically refers to birth and death records dating from 1892 that are held in the Office of the Administrator and Registrar-General in Wilberforce Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone. However, the sentiment expressed in the article is similar to sentiments reflected in other articles; that the unique and rich heritage of Sierra Leone exemplified in archival documents must be preserved.

<sup>275</sup>'EAP284: Before the war, after the war: preserving history in Sierra Leone', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_project.a4d?projID=EAP284;r=41](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_project.a4d?projID=EAP284;r=41)

<sup>276</sup>The EAP284 contains the following catalogues of documents digitised from the Sierra Leone Public Archives collection: 'EAP284/1/1, Liberated African Department, Register 1814-1815, Numbers 4,684 - 7,507', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=160393;r=18467](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=160393;r=18467). 'EAP284/1/2, Liberated African Department, Letter book, 1820-1826, Vol. 1', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=160394;r=6334](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=160394;r=6334). 'EAP284/2/1, Births Vol. 5, Freetown District, 9 October, 1863-4 December, 1864', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=160396;r=26500](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=160396;r=26500), 'EAP284/3/1, Manuscript Journal of Lieut. John Clarkson, R.N. Governor of Sierra Leone – 1792', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=160398;r=19169](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=160398;r=19169), 'EAP284/4/1, Treaty from 1788', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=160400;r=15724](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=160400;r=15724), 'EAP284/5/1, Autographs (Manuscript Orders from the Directors of the Sierra Leone Company) 1791', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=160402;r=11478](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=160402;r=11478).

documents on a wider scope and the result of this project was published on the website of the British Library Endangered Archives Programme in the summer of 2014.<sup>277</sup>

The complete EAP443 catalogue of digitised records and material held at the Sierra Leone Public Archives, can be accessed online at the British Library Endangered Archives website and at the Harriet Tubman Digital Archives.<sup>278</sup> Among the digitised records are the Liberated African Department Letter Books, Liberated African Registers, miscellaneous return books of the Liberated African Department, court records of the various districts of the Colony, Registers of alien children in the Colony<sup>279</sup> and perhaps most importantly for both historical and genealogical purposes, the 1857-1894 Registers of Births and Deaths for the Colony of Sierra Leone.<sup>280</sup>

The Liberated African Registers are valuable sources of information on the thousands of Liberated Africans or 'Recaptives' who were resettled in the Colony of Sierra Leone during the nineteenth century.<sup>281</sup> The late Professor Akintola Wyse, an eminent historian of colonial Sierra Leone during the early twentieth-century, noted the importance of the twenty-set volume of Liberated African Registers in his work on the Sierra Leone Krio people.<sup>282</sup> Perhaps no other sources provide such comprehensive information on formerly enslaved Africans.<sup>283</sup> The Liberated African Registers contain information such as the name, age, physical description

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<sup>277</sup>'EAP443: Nineteenth century documents of the Sierra Leone Public Archives', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_project.a4d?projID=EAP443;r=41](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_project.a4d?projID=EAP443;r=41). Some of the documents contained in the EAP443/1 Liberated African Department, 1808-1894 catalogue are: 'EAP443/1/1/1, Copy of letters and return of stores and pay list of liberated African, 1831-1837', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189192;r=18467](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189192;r=18467), 'EAP443/1/1/2, Liberated African Department, Charlotte Book, 1885-1891', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme* URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189193;r=6334](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189193;r=6334), 'EAP443/1/1/5, Liberated African Department, Index-10 letters received 22 February, 1834 to 26 September, 1836', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189197;r=11478](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189197;r=11478), 'EAP443/1/1/11, Court of Commission for the Recovery of Small Debts, 15 September, 1838 to 18 January, 1840', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme* URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189204;r=16827](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189204;r=16827), 'EAP443/1/1/12, Mountain District Magistrate Court Records, 5 November, 1844 to 26 September, 1846', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189205;r=9961](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189205;r=9961), and the 'EAP443/1/1/14, Register of Escaped Slaves, 1875-1884', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189207;r=2995](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189207;r=2995).

<sup>278</sup>Digital copies of the documents contained in the EAP443/1 catalogue are held at the Sierra Leone Public Archives, the British Library, the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples at York University, the University of Worcester and the Wilberforce Institute for the study of Slavery and Emancipation at the University of Hull. To access the documents online see the 'Sierra Leone Collection' at the Harriet Tubman Digital Archives (<http://digital.tubmaninstitute.ca/collections/show/8>) and the EAP284 catalogue (<http://eap.bl.uk/database/results.a4d?projID=EAP284>) and the EAP443 catalogue (<http://eap.bl.uk/database/results.a4d?projID=EAP443>) contained within the British Library Endangered Archives collection. Images of the records contained with the EAP284 and EAP443 can be downloaded and saved; Adobe PDF files of the documents held in the Harriet Tubman Institute Digital Archive can also be downloaded and saved.

<sup>279</sup>The Registers of Alien children in the Colony of Sierra Leone are also useful for genealogical purposes. For example see 'EAP443/1/2/1 Pt 1, Register of alien children in the colony of Sierra Leone', [no date given], *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189209;r=11942](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189209;r=11942) and the 'EAP443/1/2/3 Pt 2, Register of alien children in the colony of Sierra Leone, 1 June, 1863 to 29 April, 1865', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189214;r=3902](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189214;r=3902)

<sup>280</sup>'EAP443/1/3/12, Register of Births, Vol. 8, Freetown District, 28 February, 1867 to 3 May, 1868', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189228;r=19912](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189228;r=19912). For example, the author was able to trace 'John' (according to oral history christened as Daniel Gershom Brown), the son of the author's third great grandfather, Charles Sylvanus Brown, a catechist employed by the Church Missionary Society catechist and his wife, Mary Bernice Brown formerly Allen (apparently known according to oral testimony as 'Granny Margaret'), using the 'EAP443/1/3/12, Register of Births, Vol. 8, Freetown District, 28 February, 1867 to 3 May, 1868', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189228;r=19912](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189228;r=19912).

<sup>281</sup>Wyse, Akintola, *The Krio of Sierra Leone: An Interpretive History*, (Washington D.C. :Howard University Press, 1989), p. 14, footnote. 7

<sup>282</sup>Wyse, *The Krio of Sierra Leone*, (Washington D.C. :Howard University Press, 1989), p. 14, footnote. 7

<sup>283</sup>Lovejoy, Henry B., 'The Registers of Liberated Africans of the Havana Slave Trade Commission: Transcription Methodology and Statistical Analysis' in *African Economic History*, Volume 38, 2010, p. 107. There are also comprehensive Liberated African Registers

such as height and tribal marks, and in some cases the area of origin of the rescued Africans.<sup>284</sup>

The Liberated African Letter Books also provide detailed information on the Liberated Africans.<sup>285</sup> The Liberated African Letter Books are an invaluable source of information on Liberated African life and eminent historians and biographers of notable Sierra Leoneans have consulted these records for their research.<sup>286</sup> The Liberated African Letter Books contain official correspondence of the Liberated African Department including the letters of Liberated African village managers relating to the management of the Recaptives. The correspondence contained within the Liberated African Letter Books sometimes provides information on the activities of the Liberated Africans.<sup>287</sup>

The 'benefit' of colonial documentation is also reflected in the organisation of the colonial birth and death registers in Sierra Leone.<sup>288</sup> Sierra Leoneans have long recognised the importance of the registration of births and deaths and appreciated the difficulty of tracing the date of birth of ancestors born prior to 1857.<sup>289</sup> Thus, a significant number of Sierra Leoneans welcomed the Ordinance of 1857 requiring the registration of births and deaths and one commentator noted that 'within a year or two after the introduction of the new law the most remote hamlet showed records of the births and deaths that occurred in it.'<sup>290</sup> Each register of

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for Havana, Cuba and the Bahamas. However, these Liberated African registers are not as sizeable as the collection of Liberated African Registers held in the Sierra Leone Public Archives.

<sup>284</sup>'EAP443/1/17/10 Pt 1, Liberated African Register, (19889 - 24205), Vol. 20., 1825-1827', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189371;r=24221](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189371;r=24221) and 'EAP443/1/17/17 Pt 2: Liberated African Register, (57,572-64,406), Vol. 13, 1837-1839', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189385;r=27624](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189385;r=27624)

<sup>285</sup>See for example 'EAP443/1/17/10 Pt 1, Liberated African Register', (19889 - 24205), Vol. 20., 1825-1827', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189371;r=24221](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189371;r=24221) and 'EAP443/1/17/17 Pt 2, "Liberated African Register, (57,572-64,406), Vol. 13, 1837-1839', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189385;r=27624](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189385;r=27624).

Similar to the Registers of Births and Deaths, the Liberated African Registers were sometimes incomplete and were haphazardly recorded. Thus, some registers may be more complete in detailing information such as the area of origin and physical description of the Liberated Africans listed in the registers, than others.

<sup>286</sup>Peterson, John, *Province of freedom: a history of Sierra Leone, 1787-1870*, (United States: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 388. Ayandele, E.A., *Holy Johnson: Pioneer of African Nationalism, 1836-1917*, (London: Frank Cass, 1970), pp. 15, 33 note. 1. For example, Professor E.A. Ayandele consulted these documents for the purpose of estimating the date of birth of Rev. James 'Holy' Johnson, (c. 1836-1917). Although Professor Ayandele did not find the documents useful for this purpose, he noted that the Liberated African Letter Books for the Waterloo District provided details of marriage licenses for Liberated African couples who were married before Holy Johnson's estimated birth in 1836.

<sup>287</sup>See 'EAP443/1/18/4 Pt 2, Liberated African Department, Letter book, 1830 - 1831, No 4, 1830-1831', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189397;r=11020](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189397;r=11020), 'EAP443/1/18/6 Pt 1, Liberated African Department, Letterbook', 22 August, 1837-15 February, 1843', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189400;r=27348](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189400;r=27348). The Liberated African Letter Books contain miscellaneous information relating to the management of the Liberated Africans and can be used to enrich the narrative of Liberated African life in the early nineteenth century.

<sup>288</sup>'The Present System of Registering Births and Deaths in The Colony', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 2 March, 1907. This important article in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* provides an overview of birth registration and the ordinances passed in 1857, 1883, and 1906 relating to the registration of births and deaths. According to the author of the article, the Ordinance No. 9 of 1906 intitled "An Ordinance to consolidate and amend the Law relating to the Registration of Births and Deaths in the Colony of Sierra Leone" effectively abolished the registration of births and deaths in the rural areas of the Colony by only requiring compulsory registration in the Freetown District.

<sup>289</sup>'The Present System of Registering Births and Deaths in The Colony', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 2 March, 1907. Furthermore beyond tracing ancestors, the early deaths of prominent Creoles and the pan-Africanist message of the decline of the Creoles spoken by scholars such as Edward Wilmot Blyden, caused the Creole community to have a morbid fascination with the mortality of their community. Typical of the late Victorian obsession with degeneration and survival of the fittest, so the Creole community introspectively pondered the survival of their community. Thus, the statistics revealed in the registration of Births and Deaths were vitally important to some sections of Creole society interested in the survival of their community.

<sup>290</sup>'The Present System of Registering Births and Deaths in The Colony', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 2 March, 1907. However, although faced with potential fines, the registration of births and deaths was sometimes an inconvenience which posed difficulties for rural Sierra Leoneans particularly due to the changes in the law regarding where registration should take place. For example, the



births and deaths was recorded in the various districts in the Colony such as the Freetown District, the First Eastern District, the Western District, and the Mountain District, before being deposited at the Registrar-General Office in Freetown.<sup>291</sup> The birth and death registers also reveal the haphazard method by which births and deaths were recorded in the Colony; some of the registers are incomplete, or the writing is near illegible.<sup>292</sup> The subsequent deterioration of the records is also evidenced in some of the earliest registers dating between 1858 and 1867.<sup>293</sup> However, although some of the documents have deteriorated, the value of these document cannot be overstated.

The Registers of Births and Deaths contain pertinent information for historians and genealogical researchers interested in colonial Sierra Leone. The Registers of Births contain categories such as 'When Born', 'Name, if any', 'Sex', 'Name and surname of Father', 'Name and Maiden Surname of Mother', 'Rank or Profession of Father', the 'Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant', and 'When Registered'.<sup>294</sup> The Registers of Deaths contain categories such as 'When and Where Died', 'Name and Surname', 'Sex', 'Age', 'Rank or Profession', 'Cause of Death', 'Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant', and 'When Registered'.<sup>295</sup>

A brief example demonstrating the usefulness of these documents for genealogical research shall be outlined by examining the genealogical background of the Rosenior family.<sup>296</sup> A Matthew J. Rosenior was listed among the Committee members

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residents of Wilberforce, Murray Town and Aberdeen were expected to travel over eight miles to Goderich in order to record the births and deaths of relatives.

<sup>291</sup>The birth and death registers cover the Freetown District, First Eastern District, Second Eastern District (Waterloo), Western District (Kent), Mountain District, Northern District (Isles de Los) and the Sherbro District. There was also a distinction between the 'Eastern District' and 'North Eastern District,' see 'The Birth and Death Rate Of The Colony', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 28 March, 1901.

<sup>292</sup>This is particularly true of the Registers of Births and Deaths recorded in the rural settlements outside the Freetown District. Furthermore, the supposed neglect of the Registrar-General in ensuring the registration of deaths occurred in the rural settlements was a particular point of contention among some Sierra Leoneans, see the articles, 'Registration of Deaths: To the Editor of the Weekly News', by 'Light', 'Greater Light', and 'Gas-Light' in the Weekly News of the 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> of July, and the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, 1890.

<sup>293</sup>'EAP443/1/3/1, Register of Births, Freetown District, 4 March, 1865 to 19 August, 1867', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189217;r=292](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189217;r=292). 'EAP443/1/12/1: Register of Deaths, Vol. 5, Freetown District, 26 August 1861 to 7 August 1862', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189324;r=19072](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189324;r=19072) particularly pages 64-80. For example the 'EAP443/1/3/1, Register of Births for 4 March, 1865 to 19 August, 1867', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189217;r=292](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189217;r=292)

<sup>294</sup>'EAP443/1/3/1, Register of Births, Freetown District, 4 March, 1865 to 19 August, 1867', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189217;r=292](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189217;r=292). For example the 'EAP443/1/3/1, Register of Births, Freetown District, 1865-1867'. The information contained in the birth registers is also important for the study of literacy in Sierra Leone during the colonial era. As Professor Christopher Fyfe noted in *A History of Sierra Leone*, p. 102, the land registers and marriage registers between 1825 and 1850 contain the marks of a significant number of Sierra Leonean women. Similarly, the birth registers contain the marks of a significant number of Sierra Leonean women.

<sup>295</sup>'EAP443/1/12/1: Register of Deaths, Vol. 5, Freetown District, 26 August 1861 to 7 August 1862', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189324;r=19072](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189324;r=19072). For example the Register of Deaths, 1861-1862.

<sup>296</sup>The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew, (TNA), CO 267/273, 'Address of Condolence to Queen Victoria on the death of Prince Albert from the Nova Scotian and Maroon Descendants' Association. 17 April 1862. The Rosenior family was certainly of Nova Scotian Settler or possibly Jamaican Maroon descent but likely descended from a European forbearer of German or French extraction. The Rosenior family could also be descended from one of the two Nova Scotian Settler boys taken as slaves or apprentices by French sailors in 1794, see Walker, James St. George, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783-1870*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 182, 188 note. 45. These Nova Scotian boys, who could have been mixed race, may have escaped and returned to Sierra Leone after the abolishment of the slave trade by France in 1815. Alternatively, Matthew Rosenior could have adopted the surname 'Rosenior.' The surname may have originally been spelt as 'Rosenoir', 'Roseniore' or 'Rosener'; Rosenoir means 'pink black' in French.

of the Nova Scotian and Maroon Descendants Association in April 1862.<sup>297</sup> This Matthew J. Rosenior was a signatory to an address sent by the Association in condolence to Queen Victoria, following the death of Prince Albert. This Matthew J. Rosenior might have also been the M.C. Rosenior noted as a confectioner and preserve factor based at No. 424 Percival Street in the *African Interpreter and Advocate* during the 1860s.<sup>298</sup>

In the Register of Births for the Freetown District recorded between 9 October, 1863 and 4 December, 1864, a Matthew Jenkins Rosenior is listed as the father of Wilfred Peare Rosenior, born at 2pm on 8 February, 1864.<sup>299</sup> This Matthew Jenkins Rosenior, whose occupation was recorded as a 'trader', is almost undoubtedly the Matthew J. Rosenior who was a signatory to the 1862 address to Queen Victoria drafted by the committee of the Nova Scotian and Maroon Descendants Association. The entry in the birth register is also important as the 'Jenkins' in Rosenior's surname may be indicative of kinship with Charles Jenkins, an African-born Nova Scotian Settler.<sup>300</sup> The Register of Births indicates that Matthew Jenkins Rosenior was married to Mary Anne Campbell, who herself had been previously married to a Mr. Brown.<sup>301</sup> The couple resided on George Street, just on the 'boundaries' of 'Maroon Town' and 'Settler Town', which had historically been the residential districts of the Jamaican Maroon immigrants and the Nova Scotian Settlers.<sup>302</sup>

The Register of Births for the Freetown District dating between 26 January, 1866 and 1 March, 1867 lists the father of Jane Alethea Rosenior, born at 8pm on 30 January, 1866, as a certain Matthew Chambers Rosenior, a trader who resided at Percival Street.<sup>303</sup> This Matthew Chambers Rosenior of Percival Street is undoubtedly the 'M.C. Rosenior' of No. 424 Percival Street noted as a confectioner and preserve factor in the advertisements that appear in the *African Interpreter and Advocate*.<sup>304</sup> The mother of Jane

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<sup>297</sup>TNA, CO 267/273, 'Address of Condolence to Queen Victoria on the death of Prince Albert from the Nova Scotian and Maroon Descendants' Association'. 17 April, 1862

<sup>298</sup>*The African Interpreter and Advocate*, 20 July, 1867, *The African Interpreter and Advocate*, 25 January, 1868, *The African Interpreter and Advocate*, 1 February, 1868, *The African Interpreter and Advocate*, 15, February 1868

<sup>299</sup>EAP443/1/3/9, Register of Births Vol. 5, Freetown District, 9 October, 1863 to 4 December, 1864', page 23, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771)

<sup>300</sup>TNA, CO 217/63, List of the blacks at Birchtown who gave their names for Sierra Leone in 1791. TNA, WO 1/352, 1802 List of Nova Scotians and Maroons in Sierra Leone. TNA, CO 267/91, Commissioners' Report Appendix A1-2 (Lists of Nova Scotians and Maroons in 1826). Wilson, Ellen Gibson, *The Loyal Blacks*, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1976), pp. 394, 396. Charles Jenkins was one of the original Nova Scotian Settlers who arrived in Sierra Leone in 1792. According to the 1826 'List of Nova Scotians', Jenkins was still alive in 1826 and had descendants in the Colony.

<sup>301</sup>EAP443/1/3/9, Register of Births Vol. 5, Freetown District, 9 October, 1863 to 4 December, 1864', p. 23, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771). 'Fashionable Marriage: From Correspondent', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 14 July, 1888. Mary Ann Rosenior was recorded as the 'late Brown' and 'formerly Campbell'. In the Registers of births, if the mother of the child had been previously married, she would be known as the 'late' and 'formerly' was used only in reference to the maiden name of the mother. Mary Ann Campbell was the paternal niece of Assistant Chaplain John Campbell, (1823-20 February, 1906), a Creole born to Igbo and Yoruba Liberated African parents. Her father may have been one of Rev. Campbell's two brothers who 'played an important part in the service of the Imperial and Colonial Governments in their day'. She was thus a cousin of Nicholas Emeric Browne, the well-known druggist based at Westmoreland Street, whose mother was the sister of Rev. Campbell.

<sup>302</sup>EAP443/1/3/9, Register of Births Vol. 5, Freetown District, 9 October, 1863 to 4 December, 1864', p. 23, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771) Porter, Arthur, *Creoledom: A Study of the Development of Freetown Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 95. George Street was technically the beginning of Maroon Town and the end of Settler Town. As Professor Arthur Porter noted, Settler Town and Maroon Town were the most prestigious areas of Freetown during the nineteenth century until the development of the Hill Station enclave.

<sup>303</sup>EAP443/1/3/11, Register of Births, Vol. 7, Freetown District, 26 January 1866 to 1 March 1867', p. 3, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869). 'Post Office Notice', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 14 March, 1903. As an adult, Janet Rosenior appears to have settled in Conakry, Guinea.

<sup>304</sup>TNA, WO 1/352, 1802 List of Nova Scotians and Maroons in Sierra Leone. TNA, CO 267/91, Commissioners' Report Appendix A1-2 (Lists of Nova Scotians and Maroons in 1826). *The Philanthropist: Or, Repository for Hints and Suggestions Calculated to Promote*

Alethea Rosenior was recorded as Mary Anne Rosenior 'formerly' Campbell, who had been previously married to a Mr. Brown.<sup>305</sup>

This Mary Anne Campbell, who had been previously married to a Mr. Brown, was also noted as the mother of Wilfred Peare

Rosenior, the son of Matthew Jenkins Rosenior in the Register of Births for the Freetown District dating between October 1863 and

December 1864. Thus, the Register of Births for 1866-1867 confirms that Matthew Jenkins Rosenior and Matthew Chambers

Rosenior are the same individual.<sup>306</sup> Matthew Rosenior may have changed his middle name from 'Jenkins' to 'Chambers' as his

signature appears to differ between the October 1863-December 1864 registers and the January 1866-March 1867 registers.<sup>307</sup>

The Register of Deaths for the District of Freetown dating between 7 September, 1882 and 17 June, 1883 record the death of a Matthew C. Rosenior from jaundice aged 44 years old.<sup>308</sup> Based upon the 1863-1864 and 1866-1867 birth registers, Matthew Jenkins Rosenior was almost certainly the Matthew C. Rosenior noted as passing away at his residence in Percival Street.<sup>309</sup> Thus, in conjunction with the Registers of Births for 1863-1864 and 1866-1867, the Register of Deaths for September 1882 to June 1883 is important for confirming the identity and death of Matthew J. Rosenior, the trader and Committee member of the Nova Scotian and Maroon Descendants Association who was the M.C. Rosenior noted as a confectioner in the *African Interpreter and Advocate* in the late 1860s. Finally, the death register also notes that the informant, a certain 'W. Charles Rosenior' was the son of Matthew C.

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*the Comfort and Happiness of Man*, Volume V (Google eBook) (Britain: Longman and Company, 1815), pp. The surname 'Chambers' is indicative of kinship with the Maroon family of Charles Chambers, recorded in the 1802 list of Maroons in Sierra Leone and also in the 1826 list of Maroons alongside a Betty Chambers. Charles Chambers is also listed among the Maroons noted in the CO 217/74, Account of Maroon Property and George Ross recorded in his diary that a Polly Chambers gave birth to a daughter on 9 December, 1800. The *Philanthropist* of 1815 also records that Charles Chambers and Thomas Chambers, both Maroons, owned property in Freetown. Thomas Chambers, presumably the son or brother of Charles Chambers, lived at No. 539 East Street and Charles Chambers owned properties at No. 386 and No. 482 Trelawny Street in addition to 11 ¼ acres of land. However, the 'Chambers' middle name does not necessarily mean that Matthew Rosenior was of Maroon descent. Among the Nova Scotian Settlers and Maroons, there was seemingly a common pattern of giving the surnames of friends and associates as middle names to children. Thus, John Bucknor Elliott and Richard Rigsby Elliott, both born to Nova Scotian Settler parents, were named for a Maroon colonist and an African American who settled in Sierra Leone in 1815 after being transported to Freetown aboard Paul Cuffee's brig, *The Traveller*.

<sup>305</sup>'EAP443/1/3/11, Register of Births, Vol. 7, Freetown District, 26 January 1866 to 1 March 1867', p. 3, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869)

<sup>306</sup>'EAP443/1/3/9, Register of Births Vol. 5, Freetown District', 9 October, 1863 to 4 December, 1864', p. 23, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771). 'EAP443/1/3/11, Register of Births, Vol. 7, Freetown District, 26 January 1866 to 1 March 1867', p. 3, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869). Based upon the birth registers for 1863-1864 and 1866-1867 it is highly unlikely that there were two Matthew Roseniors.

<sup>307</sup>'EAP443/1/3/9 Register of Births Vol. 5, Freetown District, 9 October, 1863 to 4 December 1864', p. 23, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771). 'EAP443/1/3/11, Register of Births, Vol. 7, Freetown District, 26 January 1866 to 1 March 1867', p. 3, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869). In the 1863-1864 register, Matthew Rosenior signed as Matthew J. Rosenior; however, in the 1866-1867 register, Matthew Rosenior signed as Matthew C. Rosenior. Sierra Leoneans in the Colony did change their names, as evidenced by notices in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* in later periods. For example Moses Athanasius Taylor, the cousin of Samuel Coleridge Taylor, the Black British composer, changed his name to 'Amado Taylor' in 1908. There is also a possibility that Matthew Rosenior may have been born with two middle names such as 'Chambers Jenkins' or 'Jenkins Chambers'.

<sup>308</sup>'EAP443/1/12/10, Register of Deaths, Vol. 30, Freetown District, 7 September, 1882 to 17 June, 1883', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189333;r=9161](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189333;r=9161). Matthew C. Rosenior died on 8 January, 1883. The information provided in the register of deaths is also important as it provides a time frame for Matthew Rosenior's birth and thus for researching the period when his father could have arrived in Sierra Leone.

<sup>309</sup>'EAP443/1/12/10, Register of Deaths, Vol. 30, 7 September, 1882 to 17 June, 1883', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189333;r=9161](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189333;r=9161). The birth and death registers and other sources confirm that Matthew Charles Rosenior and Matthew Jenkins Rosenior are the same individual as both individuals are listed alongside the same spouse and had the same occupation. So it is evident that there was only one Matthew Rosenior born c. 1838/39.

Rosenior. This 'W. Charles Rosenior' was most likely William Charles De Graft Rosenior, the goldsmith and trader who was active in Freetown society from the 1880s till the early twentieth century.<sup>310</sup> By examining other documents it is possible to trace the activities of William Charles De Graft Rosenior and his descendants.<sup>311</sup> William Charles De Graft Rosenior was perhaps the most notable member of the Rosenior family during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>312</sup>

This brief genealogical study on the Rosenior family is only a short example demonstrating the extent to which the digitisation of valuable records at the Sierra Leone Public Archives will greatly aid scholars and genealogists interested in Sierra Leone. By using other documents held in the National Archives of the United Kingdom such as the WO 1/352, 1802 'List of Nova Scotians and Maroons in Sierra Leone' and the CO 267/111, 1831, Census of population and Liberated Africans, and obituaries in newspaper sources held at the British Library such as the *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, it will be possible for scholars of Sierra Leone to reconstruct biographical information on historical figures and to conduct genealogical research.<sup>313</sup> It is hoped that further records

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<sup>310</sup>The Opening of the Wesleyan High School, Old Boy's Library', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 2 May 1903. 'Family Bereavements', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 12 August 1893. 'Deaths', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 5 August 1893. 'Death of Mrs. Rebecca Anderson', *Sierra Leone Times*, 28 March, 1896. CO 267/111 1831 Census of population and Liberated Africans. 'Married', *The Independent*, 13 July, 1876. William Charles De Graft Rosenior (c. 1860/63 to c. 1928) was the natural son of Matthew Jenkins Rosenior and Nancy Ann De Graft, (1834/35-2 August, 1893), the daughter of Joseph De Graft, a Fante immigrant from Cape Coast who settled in Sierra Leone in late 1829 or early 1830 and who was the Second Writer in the Liberated African Department. Joseph De Graft was listed as a 'Native Stranger' in the CO 267/111, 1831 Census of population and Liberated Africans and was also listed among the 'coloured' settlers in the CO 267/99 'Return of Coloured Settlers holding Government appointments'. Joseph De Graft was likely a member of the prominent De Graft family of Cape Coast and may have been related to William DeGraft, the Fante clergyman who was instrumental in the establishment of Methodism in Cape Coast. William DeGraft had been a pupil of Philip Kweku (Quaque), (1741-17 October, 1816), the first African to be ordained as a clergyman in the Church of England. Joseph De Graft had children with a Mrs. Rebecca Anderson (1812/13-27 March, 1896), a Nova Scotian Settler, who was most likely the Ms. R York said to be De Graft's housekeeper in the 1831 census. Rebecca York was a descendant of the York family descended from Ishmael York (1754/55-c. 1802), a Nova Scotian Settler born in South Carolina and his wife, Elizabeth York (1756/57-c. 1815). Rebecca York would have been either the daughter of Ishmael York or his granddaughter through Ishmael York's son, Benjamin York. Joseph De Graft's son, Joseph De Graft Jr. was also listed in the CO 267/273 petition from the Committee of the Nova Scotian and Maroon Descendants Association. Another likely descendant was Mary Ann De Graft, a dress maker. On 22 June, 1876, Nancy Ann De Graft, married Thomas Pilot, a merchant based in Freetown.

<sup>311</sup>'In Memoriam', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 3 September, 1921. 1899. Luke, Sir Emile Fashole Luke, K.B.E., 'M.B.H.S.-1901-1911', *Methodist Boy's High School Centenary Magazine 1874-1974*, (Sierra Leone: Methodist Boy's High School Old Boy's Association, 1974), p. 10. For example, Jacob 'Jack' Rosenior, a pupil of the Wesleyan Boy's High School and contemporary of Sir Emile Fashole Luke established a branch of the Rosenior family in Cameroon. Jacob Rosenior, also known as Willoughby Rosenior was the father of Clementine Rosenior of Cameroon among other children.

<sup>312</sup>*Annual report of the Free Public Museums*, (Liverpool: Liverpool Museum, 1899), p. 45. 'Chester Bros., Manchester: West African Merchants', *Sierra Leone Times*, 9 December 1899. 'Presentation to Mr. and Mrs. T.F. Victor Buxton At The Wilberforce Hall, March 4th 1913', *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 15 March, 1913 William Charles De Graft Rosenior attended the Wesleyan Boy's High School (now Methodist Boy's High School) and was a contemporary of Arthur Williamson O'Dwyer (b. 21 February, 1861), a Sierra Leonean general merchant and Postmaster of Duke Town, Old Calabar, Samuel Tillotson Shaw (1861/62-13 September, 1905), the cabinet maker, Dr Albert Whiggs Easmon (1865-28 May, 1921), and John William Moses Horton (1861/62-24 November 1916), the Freetown city treasurer. William C.D. Rosenior, a staunch Methodist and member of College Chapel, Rawdon Street Methodist Church, married Clementine Manley Rollings, (d. 4 September, 1918) and had four children; Matthew Rosenior, Jacob 'Jack' Collins Willoughby De Graft Rosenior (4 January, 1895-4 January, 1940), Rebecca Rosenior, and Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Rosenior. The name 'Matthew' was common among the descendants of Matthew Chambers Rosenior; the name 'William' derived perhaps from William DeGraft, the Fante clergyman, was common among the descendants of William Charles DeGraft Rosenior, who was probably named for the Fante clergyman. The name 'Charles' was likely derived from Charles Chambers or Charles Jenkins, the possible ancestors or relatives of Matthew Rosenior. W.C.D. Rosenior, a jeweller who kept a workshop at No. 6 Regent Road, was also the agent for Chester Brothers, a Manchester based firm. Rosenior, who resided at Charlotte Street, donated a sample of native cloth and yarn from home grown cotton from Segbwama [sic] (Segbwema) to the Liverpool Museum in 1899. These items can still be viewed at the Liverpool Museum. There was also a Mr. R.C. Rosenior referred to in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* of 20 October, 1888. This could be a reference to W.C.D. Rosenior or perhaps another Rosenior. Photographs of W.C.D. Rosenior remain extant in the Rosenior family album.

<sup>313</sup>Browne-Davies, Nigel, 'A précis of sources relating to genealogical research on the Sierra Leone Krio people', *Journal of Sierra Leone Studies* Vol. 3, Edition 1, pp. 94, 102, 106, 108, 117-118. Other records include the CO 267/91 Commissioners' Report Appendix A1-2 (Lists of Nova Scotians and Maroons in 1826) and the CO 267/127 1833 Census of Population and Liberated Africans. The

held in the Sierra Leone Public Archives, the Office of the Administrator and Registrar-General,<sup>314</sup> and in churches across the Western Area of Sierra Leone and beyond will be digitised for posterity, and that similar efforts will be undertaken in archives elsewhere in Africa and the Caribbean.<sup>315</sup>

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'Deaths for the Week' column in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* is also an important source listing the full name, age, and residence of the deceased. There are also marriage registers dating to 1823 for St. George's Cathedral and Wesleyan Marriage registers for 1843-1849. There are also colonial burial registers for Sierra Leone. For a full account on the methods and sources for tracing Sierra Leone Krio ancestry see Browne-Davies, Nigel, 'A précis of sources relating to genealogical research on the Sierra Leone Krio people', *Journal of Sierra Leone Studies* Vol. 3, Edition 1.

<sup>314</sup>The birth and death records held in the Sierra Leone Public Archives only cover the period between 1857 and 1894. The Office of the Administrator and Registrar-General, also known as the Registrar-General Office, contains birth and death records for the Free-town District dating from 1892 and the Office also holds registers for other districts of the colony dating from the 1890s onwards. Land records and probate records such as wills are also contained at the Office.

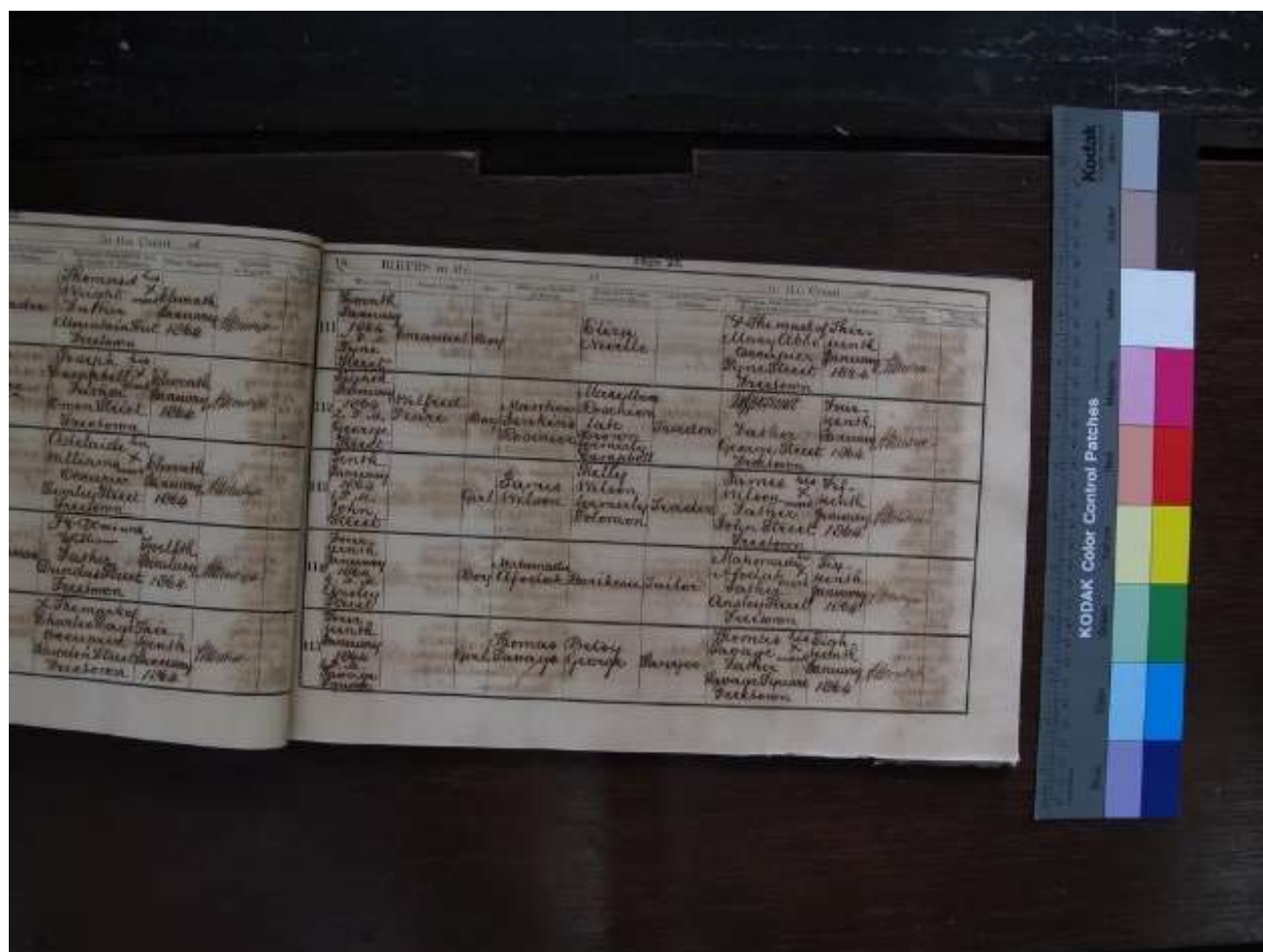
<sup>315</sup>For example in archives such as Accra, Ghana (Personal Knowledge). Other projects in the Endangered Archives Programme such as EAP474, EAP231, and EAP295 have focused on preserving archival material in Cape Coast, Ghana, the Gambia, and Grenada.





<sup>317</sup>*The African Interpreter and Advocate*, 20 July, 1867

## Appendix III

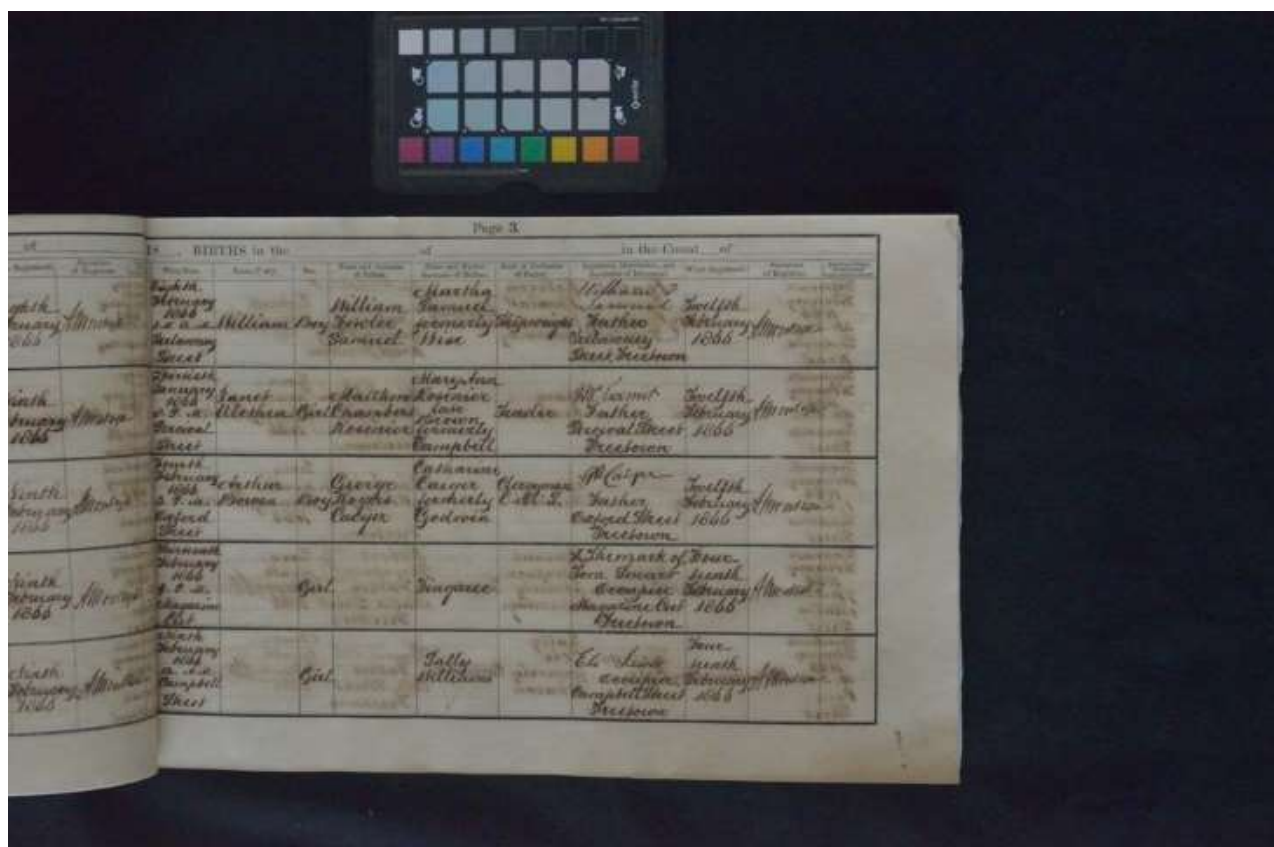


Birth register listing Matthew Jenkins Rosenior as the father of Wilfred Peare Rosenior, (second column on the right-hand page)

<sup>318</sup>EAP443/1/3/9 Register of Births, Freetown District, 9 October, 1863 to 4 December 1864', p. 23, *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189225;r=14771)



# Appendix IV

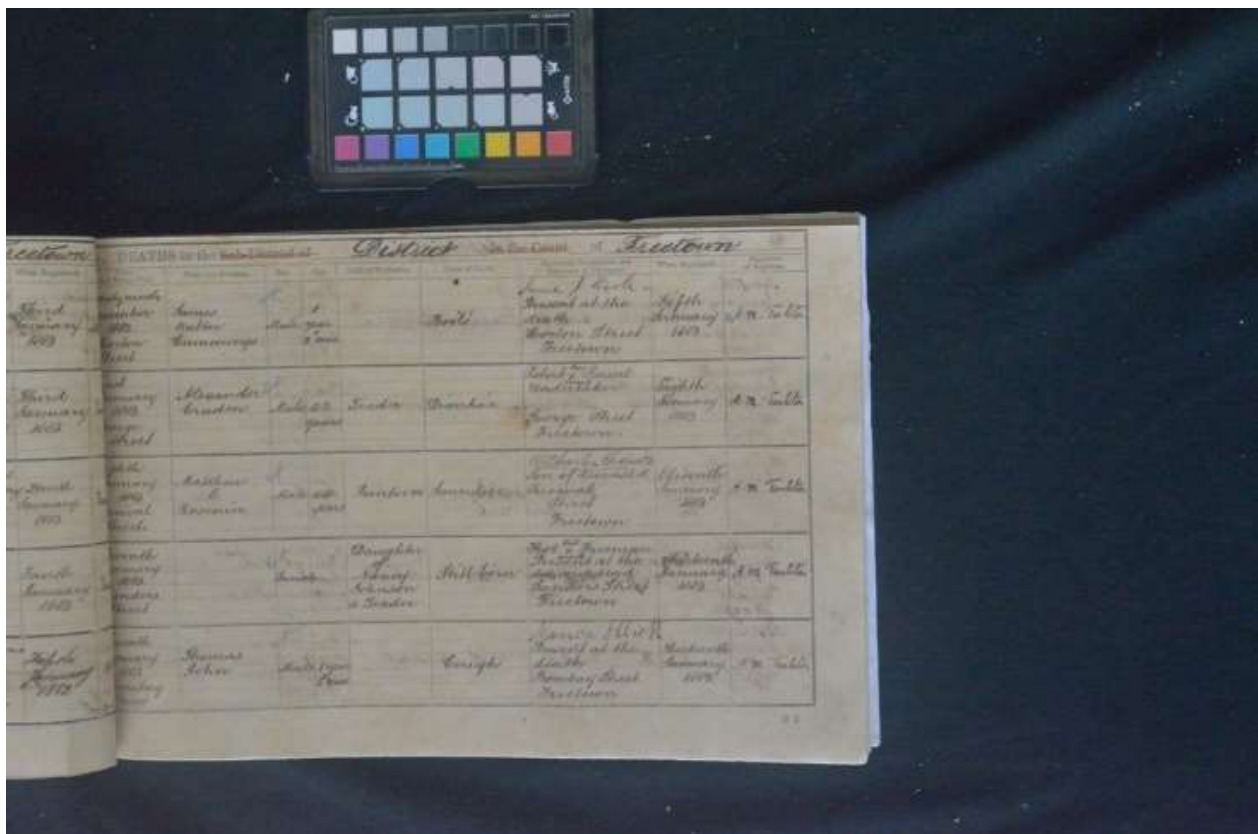


BIRTHS in the				in the District of			
Date	Sex	Name	Parents	Date	Sex	Name	Parents
26th January 1866	Male	William Day	William Day & Jane	27th January 1866	Male	William Day	William Day & Jane
28th January 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	29th January 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
30th January 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	31st January 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
1st February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	2nd February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
3rd February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	4th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
5th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	6th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
7th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	8th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
9th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	10th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
11th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	12th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
13th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	14th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
15th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	16th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
17th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	18th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
19th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	20th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
21st February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	22nd February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
23rd February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	24th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
25th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	26th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
27th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	28th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
29th February 1866	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	30th February 1866	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
1st March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	2nd March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
3rd March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	4th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
5th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	6th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
7th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	8th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
9th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	10th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
11th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	12th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
13th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	14th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
15th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	16th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
17th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	18th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
19th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	20th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
21st March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	22nd March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
23rd March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	24th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
25th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	26th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
27th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	28th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
29th March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet	30th March 1867	Male	Samuel	Samuel & Jane
31st March 1867	Female	Janet	Matthew Chambers & Janet				

Matthew Chambers Rosenior recorded as the father of Janet Alethea Rosenior in the Register of Births, Freetown District, 1866-1867 (second row and third column of right-hand page)<sup>319</sup>

# Appendix V

<sup>319</sup>EAP443/1/3/11, Register of Births, Vol. 7, Freetown District, 26 January, 1866 to 1 March, 1867', p. 3, British Library Endangered Archives Programme, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189227;r=1869)



Register of Deaths, Freetown District, 1882-1883 listing the death of Matthew C. Rosenior from jaundice in 1883 (third column on the right-hand page)<sup>320</sup>

**Author's Note:** The most recent grant from the British Library Endangered Archive Programme pertaining to Sierra Leone is the 'Tracking the past - the preservation of the railway archives of Sierra Leone.' This project aims to preserve archival material held at the archives of the Sierra Leone Railway Museum.

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<sup>320</sup>'EAP443/1/12/10, Register of Deaths, Vol. 30, Freetown District, 7 September, 1882 to 17 June, 1883', *British Library Endangered Archives Programme*, URL: [http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview\\_item.a4d?catId=189333;r=9161](http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_item.a4d?catId=189333;r=9161)

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## Reviews

**Olayinka, A Woman's View: The Life of an African Modern Artist** by Simon Ottenberg. New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2014. 327 pages, 40 colour plates, 15 monochrome plates, and 15 photos. ISBN 1-59221-832-6 (hardcover), 1-59221-833-4 (paperback)

**Among the Mende in Sierra Leone – The letters from Sjoerd Hofstra, (1934-36)** – Edited by Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra – African Studies Centre, Leiden. ISBN: 978-90-5488-138-6

**Justice and Security Reform – Development Agencies and Informal Institutions in Sierra Leone** – Lisa Denney – Routledge – ISBN 978-0-415-64250-7

**Youth-traditional authorities 'relations in post-war Sierra Leone** – Patrick Tom – Children's Geography, 2014 – <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2014.922679>

**Olayinka, A Woman's View: The Life of an African Modern Artist** by Simon Ottenberg. New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2014. 327 pages, 40 color plates, 15 monochrome plates, and 15 photos. ISBN 1-59221-832-6 (hardcover), 1-59221-833-4 (paperback)

Simon Ottenberg is the author of definitive books on traditional and contemporary Nigerian art and African aesthetics. In this book, he explores yet another phase of African art, that of mid-twentieth century modernism in Sierra Leone. This monograph details the life, times and work of Olayinka Miranda Burney-Nicole (1927-1996), who identified herself as an artist early on. Though it was then an unusual choice for a woman, she later commented "I should say I have been fond of drawing and painting ever since I was conscious of my being" (p. 28). Born into a Krio family whose antecedents were Yoruba, Mende and West Indian, she grew up in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Olayinka, derived from Yoruba, was the name she chose to sign her work.

This book draws us into her life, that of her country and the world beyond, as she moves between Sierra Leone, England and America. In the preface, the author describes his growing awareness of the importance of transitional artists in mid-twentieth century Africa, particularly in larger cities as traditional arts were waning and European influences promoted. He also understands the neglect faced by female modern African artists, which further motivated this investigation. "Olayinka was one of these early modern artists, among the first generation of Sierra Leonean artists to use European materials and tools, to be influenced by Western art, and to create innovatively, drawing from her African experience" (p. xvii).

The task that Ottenberg sets for himself is to illuminate her life and a body of artwork that seemed to exist between worlds. Her art was nurtured and created during a specific time in her country, in circumstances that allowed her to pursue her work. Well aware of issues raised by modernist influences, she trusted in the ability of art to transcend boundaries, declaring "my work is a fusion of cultures" (p. 216). Some of her public murals remain in Freetown. Paintings and prints survive in private hands and as images in exhibition catalogues. They demonstrate her efforts to incorporate symbolism and storytelling content with abstraction, to link her own heritage with a transitional time in her country.

Well organized and skilfully presented, this book conveys a wealth of information, both verbal and visual. Setting the stage in the introduction, the author presents a history of Krio culture in Freetown during the colonial period and after independence. Subsequent chapters introduce the artist's chronology, noting her influences and the various environments in which she chose to



develop. Later chapters identify and illustrate the range of her work: oil painting, assemblage, wood panels, landscapes, drawing, prints and textile design. The work itself, amply illustrated here, can also be 'read' quite clearly. Images reveal the extraordinary fusion of cultures that she was able to make visible. She renders local scenes, Sande Society masks, Gobo masqueraders, Igbo iconography, maternity themes, Mammy Watta and Christian images, using techniques and media absorbed from European landscape painters, and from Fauve, Cubist and Expressionist artists. Olayinka was not alone in her quest for fusion in the arts during those mid-century decades. Artists in cities throughout Africa were exploring similar territory. Ottenberg notes the presence of the Oshogbo School in Nigeria. In Ghana, Ablade Glover, and in South Africa, Sidney Beck, were influenced by European modernism and Renaissance realism, respectively. In Mali, Victor Sow, Alpha Diarra, and Ismaela Diabate created landscapes, social commentary paintings and portraits.<sup>321</sup>

While conducting research in Sierra Leone, Ottenberg became acquainted with Olayinka, so is able to draw upon personal anecdote as well as archival material for this profile. He delineates the social and political history of her time, providing context for each stage of her development as an artist. Excerpts from her writing, catalogue descriptions, and interviews with fellow artists, friends and family amplify the text. Each phase of her life and artistic output is amply illustrated with colour plates and vintage photos.

Written in clear and accessible language, this book is a significant contribution to the expanding awareness of mid-century modern art and artists in Africa. For scholars of this period, students and artists, this book will provide solid research material. A strong narrative line, amplified by visual documentation, will also interest the general reader. The extensive bibliography is an ample resource, not only for this book, but for further expansion on themes of cross-cultural currents in mid-century African art.

Donna Page

Donna Page is co-author and co-editor of *Surfaces: Colour, Substances and Sacrificial Material on African Sculpture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.

1. Davis, P.R., "A Short History of Painting in Bamako" in *Victor Forestier Sow: A Pioneer Malian Painter*. Pascal James Imperato and Austin Imperato, eds. New York, Kilima House Publishers, 2014

**Review of *Among the Mende in Sierra Leone – The letters from Sjoerd Hofstra (1934-36)* – African Studies Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands. ISBN: 978-90-5448-138-6**

This most interesting of books allows one a rare and fascinating glimpse of life amongst the Mende people in the years immediately before the Second World War.

As such it is both a most welcome addition to the relatively small volume of literature that addresses how such people lived in Colonial Africa and also allows one a brief exposure to an intimate set of letters exchanged between two people who meant much to each other. They are written to his adoptive Mother, living in The Netherlands. Sjoerd left The Netherlands to conduct his anthropological research in Panguma, Sierra Leone in 1934.

By the conclusion of this beautifully written, edited and translated book one can only be saddened by the fact that events in the life of Sjoerd meant he never completed his research or published what undoubtedly would have been a major work on the lives of the Mende people. He twice contracted Blackwater Fever and the terrible events that soon arose in Europe brought a premature end to his work on the Mende. He did, however, write four articles on the Mende and copies of these appear at the back of the text. Once again the attention to detail and fascinating insights of life amongst the Mende only increase the disappointment felt that he never developed his research and written work further.

Sjoerd immersed himself in his work and the ways of those he felt privileged to be amongst and they seemed to have warmed and appreciated both his methods of work and his personality. In what was only a short stay amongst the Mende he became someone whom those he lived amongst trusted and wanted to share with him many of their ways of life – he even entered the seldom experienced world of the secret societies and witnessed events that both then and now have only been seen by a small number of non-Mende people.

He arrived amongst the Mende having spent a period of time learning of their customs and their language. His letters are 'intimate' and allow one to enter into a world that he constantly stresses was not 'primitive' but 'different' from that which he as a northern European had been born to. His defence of traditional ways and the inherent values of such a rich and complex people show him to have been a man well ahead of his time.

Throughout the book the reader is shown how central parts of Mende life, such as sin, sickness and purification are linked in their culture and he stresses their awareness that the way we treat each other and the members of the animal kingdom affect the lives we as individuals and members of a wider society live.

Sjoerd is genuinely interested in every aspect of the how the lives of those he was living with unfold. His accounts of infant deaths, marriages and funerals show to the reader that much can be learned from how the Mende have accepted and built reactions to the common problems of our species. His undoubted sensitivity and reactions to some of what he saw shows someone who could relate to humanity and empathise with events and personalities that easily transcended race or religion.

'If only' constantly enters one's mind – so many who have visited Sierra Leone, learnt of it in lecture rooms, text books etc. would

have been better able to appreciate and learn more of the complexities of Mende life if they had been exposed to the knowledge and a deeper understanding that would have been theirs from having read these marvellous letters. They simply ooze fascination and respect and were a rare correspondence at a time thought by many to have been the height of Empire. In some of the letters he begins to look in depth at the structure of society and how a distinct hierarchy was central to the Mende people. The lives of sisters of Chiefs, the respect shown to elected leaders and the ways in which individuals respected and supported one another are fascinating insights and leave one wanting more – as noted earlier circumstances meant that this initial account of Mende life was never developed into the text it so richly deserved. It is also rewarding to note how he keeps to himself much of what he saw and knew to be a part of Mende life that few had ever been allowed to witness before or since. His respect for those who welcomed him into their cultures and daily lives is clearly visible and he often hints that he is the pupil and is learning both something of their ways of life and the fault lines within his own culture and traditions. The entire correspondence makes one aware that people living in ways very different from our own have much to teach us and that we develop in more sophisticated ways if we see ourselves as being part of a linked species and not distinctly different races, creeds etc. As these letters were written against the rise of Fascism and the eventual global slaughter of millions the awareness of common characteristics, the need to learn to appreciate the ways of others and the desire to accept the differences and the similarities that exist within us as a species are as relevant today as they were then. In his Foreword Paul Richards notes that 'it deserves to become a key reference in debates in anthropology about the nature and purpose of ethnographic writing and here is an anthropologist unadorned – frank, straightforward, subtle and humane.' One cannot better these words and all that is left to note is that anyone with the remotest interest in the human race should read, ponder and possibly adjust to its honesty – it will not disappoint.

#### PS

We must thank and congratulate Sjoerd's daughter, Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, for editing and collating her Father's correspondence. In doing so she has made an invaluable contribution to both our knowledge of the Mende people and anthropology in general – thank you.

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#### **Justice and Security Reform – Development Agencies and Informal Institutions in Sierra Leone – Lisa Denney. Routledge, ISBN 978-0-415-64250-7**

In what was an interesting coincidence this edition required the Editor to review three books.

Two of the books were written eighty years apart and yet they were connected. The older of the two titles examined life amongst the Mende in the 1930's, whilst the other looked in detail at how a lack of cultural awareness, history and societal structures affected the efforts of well-meaning organisations to build a safer post conflict society. The connections made and the knowledge contained within the older text showed once more how important a knowledge of cultural awareness is for those working in complex societies.

The conclusion of the civil war in 2002 left Sierra Leone with problems that few of the international agencies charged with re-building a war torn country had experience before. Each agency had its own structure, 'ways of doing things' and a political agenda. Into such a febrile environment came the relatively young Department for International Development (DFID) – a new part of the Government of the United Kingdom and a very important part of the Blair vision of 'development'. The old colonial power had returned and brought peace to its former colony but now it had to create ways of maintaining this.

As 2002 closed it became increasingly obvious that Sierra Leone was a fragile country. It contained former adversaries, large numbers of unemployed young people and a dislocated economy and infrastructure.

Lisa Denney begins her detailed analysis of post conflict Sierra Leone with a tale of how she was interviewing a man when a disagreement arose between a man and woman who came to speak to the individual she was interviewing – a local Chief. In the ensuing discussion it became obvious that the Chief had his own system for considering cases and passed a judgement and charged a fee for one of the accusations brought by the woman. All of this was applied without reference to the formal legal system and yet was accepted by both parties. The case had within it a charge that could not be dealt with by the Chief as it was a breach of electoral law – an alleged damage of election posters, but the offence of abusing the woman was considered to be customary law and as such allowed the Chief to hear the case and pass a judgement. In just a few minutes the division within the legal systems of Sierra Leone was clearly illustrated. Those charged with establishing a legal structure within Sierra Leone have mainly focused on state systems, though in reality the majority of Sierra Leoneans access security and justice through informal means.

It may be that as the world watched and learned of the atrocities that had taken place in Sierra Leone the pressure on organisations to find a path to stability and peace meant that they chose to take the easier and less costly route of the re-configuration of State led systems and largely ignored the more traditional ways of resolving differences.

The initiatives selected mainly focused on the military, police, intelligence and judicial systems. This coincided with a shift in development spending away from the 'softer' issues of education, health and human rights towards security and building a framework

within which a State could prosper and increase the material well-being of its citizens. A stronger State would be the safe guard against a country slipping into war and may be becoming a safe haven for those who wanted to practice terrorist acts against the West and would also reduce the risk of corrupt political elites controlling resource wealth to satisfy their own greed and that of their immediate supporters. The era of 'capacity building' emerged and terms such as accountability, civil society, democracy and transparency became the language of those working in what was broadly called justice and security reform and post conflict resolution.

The author successfully addresses the challenges that faced those charged with resolving the problems apparent in Sierra Leone and the resultant changes needed to be made to the Rule of Law. This complex and much needed analysis also shows the reader how such changes were adopted and their apparent successes but she shows in commendable detail where mistakes were made and the results of such errors of judgement. It is argued that a much 'thicker' understanding of why the conflict arose should have been applied. The failure of the State may have been a contributing factor but other causes do, in her opinions rest firmly in the territory of local grievances and these included a distrust of informal governance mechanisms, as much as formal governance mechanisms and it was this combination that gave rise to a feeling of betrayal and hopelessness.

It is forcibly stated that Chiefs for example, though widely accepted as traditional leaders, had become too closely involved with the political elite based in Freetown and that there was also a sense in which Paramount Chiefs were essentially 'loose canons' able to operate their own little fiefdoms as long as this didn't create problems for the political elite in Freetown.

It is disappointing, though not surprising, that this was probably overlooked by international donors, as any student of Sierra Leone history knows of the tensions that developed between Freetown and the 'Protectorate' in the years after the amalgamation and in the immediate post- independence era. It is suggested that a lack of knowledge or a failure to appreciate how the past is reflected in the present situation was a failure of policy development that reduced the impact of many of the policies applied by various agencies. Many Chiefs still possessed the authority to tax, apply laws dealing with private and public behaviour, influence cultural change and decide on disputes over land.

Once again the task of reviewing two texts showed an interesting correlation. The source author in the first text spends time learning both language and culture. (the reviewer once had to give a seminar to UN workers in 2001 as to the history of Freetown and especially the area in which their office was based – they possessed very little knowledge of the country in which they were directly concerned with helping former combatants surrender and develop a new way of life) - The UN was pleased with the outcome of this seminar and we travelled beyond Mile 91 – at that time against all the rules of the UN Commander!

Ms Denney looks in detail at the range of causal factors – diamonds, illicit mining, state failure – but she also introduces to this toxic mixture an awareness of the behaviour of the governments of the 1970's, 80's and 90's, when most who visited the country could see the seeds of rebellion visible in so many areas of normal life – for example almost no jobs for any school leaver. Discontent was rife and the arrival of the RUF was a galvanising factor for many of those who felt that life in their country offered little, if anything for them.

Ms Denney skilfully moves through such important issues as slavery, 'strangers', chieftaincy reform and other related aspects of society - an ignorance or failure of donors to consider such factors reduces the impact of any policy, however well-meaning its intention. She then enters the difficult area of family violence – not reserved for Sierra Leone but a contributor to parts of the distrust that existed between the State and the individual. In considerable detail she analyses cases of customary law and the outcomes of these – again an essential area of everyday life in Sierra Leone that anyone wanting to appreciate the complexities of law making and their application needs to be aware of and capable of appreciating how such systems influence beliefs, customs and traditions.

Turning her attention to local justice Ms Denney carefully analyses the evolution of the justice system in Sierra Leone and its significant changes post the end of conflict. The section on 'formalising the informal' serves as an excellent 'vignette' of how any future moulding of legal systems should be conducted. Policy makers should also be made aware of pages 115 to 118 where the pace of change is analysed and is followed by a sensible questioning of the failure to appreciate that customary based societies will not adjust at a pace which a western mind might expect and that consequences of this are considerable. The lack of appreciating the 'thick' model are again analysed in sufficient detail to allow the reader to appreciate that 'it remains dubious as to whether formalising rules and creating further legislation will have a substantial impact upon the actual functioning of the customary justice system.'

As the book moves towards its conclusion the reader is introduced to other issues of primary importance – namely why won't state-centred security and justice reforms lead to the decline of informal actors?; why has there been more engagement with informal actors in the justice reforms than in security reforms?; and why do donors seemingly find it so hard to engage with informal security and justice actors? The essentials of this most important of chapters can be summarised as:

- That too little contact with informal actors was made when the police systems were subject to reform – although there may have been important reasons for this at the time and in fairness to the author she does suggest that in the initial stages of the post conflict era it may have been impossible to engage with the informal sector. As such those responsible for policies in the early stages of policy development may have had a viable excuse for not having engaged with local authorities and traditional systems – not something those who came later to the process could use.
- That DFID found it difficult to engage with informal security actors due to political and bureaucratic stringencies
- The apparent State bias within the concept of security and justice reform itself

Ms Denney explores each of these and more as she develops her analysis. Her findings are well-argued and supported and some familiar culprits emerge – DFID is a political entity, bureaucratic systems discourage local connections, especially with the informal sectors, a lack of listening leads to inflexibility and a State-centred JSR. She also notes the impact of normative elements of any decision-making framework, especially when the distance between conception and delivery might be several thousands of miles tends to reduce the probability of good and flexible decision-making. She ends her penultimate chapter by posing the question: ‘DFID must decide whether there is space within its political, bureaucratic and statist nature to accommodate the kinds of actors that engaging with security and justice tasks puts the organisation in contact with, or whether its role in security and justice programmes needs to be limited to practices that fit more comfortably with the donors’ goals and ambitions?’

By the time the conclusion is reached the reader is aware that though donor-supported reforms of security and justice sectors in Sierra Leone have been successful in forging an improved state police service and formal judiciary - and that the safety of women is now a more open and comes within the responsibility of the ‘authorities’ - she again notes the failure to engage with the informal actors who shape and deliver much of the security and justice in Sierra Leone reduced the real impact of much of what was introduced. As such improvements in these sectors were ‘thin’ in structure and failed to address the wider or ‘thicker’ factors that continue to influence the sectors where reform was both needed and large sums of money and personnel focused on.

The result of the internalisation of DFID’s understanding of the causes of war focused primarily on state failure and excluded the other issues that undoubtedly were part of a range of issues that led to the collapse of the state and the consequences of this. She also questions the adequacy of traditional development organisations to consider and deliver security and justice reforms – which are by their very nature an area of societal interaction of which they have at best a limited level of experience. It is not a case of simply bolting on security logics to development logics and expecting the hybrid that will emerge to be satisfactory to both causes it is trying to further.

She ends by returning to her belief that the ‘international community’ needs to consider the ‘thicker’ version of the causes of why states fail. By developing a thicker understanding of local authority structures, allegiances and service providers, donors can build programmes that engage with practices that have deep roots in society and that will weather the political and social storms of the future better than the thinly planted reforms. Future conflicts and their ultimate resolution will require a different skills set than those which encourage an approach that believes that problems in developing countries are best dealt with through transferring skills attuned to the functioning of a western political system. It seems we are yet to move away from the belief that western systems are by their very nature those which developing countries should aim to emulate. This is at odds with academic literature that highlights the unclear trajectory of development and state reforms in developing countries, and rejects such a teleological approach. Ms Denney suggests that we need more anthropological/sociological approaches that get away from these technocratic and teleological approaches to change

One can only suggest that all of those with an interest in why states fail and what can be done to assist them to re-establish themselves give careful consideration to this well written, researched and easy to read book. It asks serious questions, many of which have received attention elsewhere but they are asked in some new and interesting ways. Also, the debate of just why the west thinks it has the answers is given an examination that has been long overdue. May be ‘market forces’ and the language of the modernisation theorists required more analysis and alternatives explored.

An excellent text, that adds much to the work done post conflict and will, alas, be required reading for those charged with resolving future confrontations

#### **Youth-traditional authorities’ relations in post- war Sierra Leone – Patrick Tom – Children’s Geographies, 2014 –**

<http://dx.doi.org/10.14733285.2014.922679>

‘In Sierra Leone, economic and social marginalisation and exploitation from chiefs and elders prompted young people to ‘revolt’ against them and the State.’

In what is a relatively new way of publishing articles the above is the start of an interesting and well researched analysis of a range of reasons why Sierra Leone slipped into civil war and whether the post conflict era is a top-down, technocratic and ethnocentric approach that suffers from a crisis of both legitimacy and confidence – and as such it fails to empower the grassroots in host societies.

The author notes that scholars have argued that individuals and social groups in post-conflict societies are not passive recipients of international peace-building projects, but have power and agency to shape them, and that this has led to the production of hybrid forms of peace and such situations.

In a well written, researched and presented article the author asks some difficult and yet relevant questions, some of which are ‘uncomfortable’ for decision-makers – yet they need to be addressed.

### **Relevant Web Sites**

<http://www.sierraleoneheritage.org> – an excellent site that contains a range of materials, including videos on the culture of the people of Sierra Leone.