

Land of Liberty

THE INSPIRING STORY OF

REVEREND GEORGE WILLIAM EMMANUEL METZGER (1800–1855)

&

MARY DIANA HICKSON METZGER (1803–1847)

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"There is no Negro problem. The problem is whether the American people have loyalty enough, honor enough, patriotism enough, to live up to their own constitution."

—Frederick Douglass (1818–1895)

"Love is the greatest force in the universe. It is the heartbeat of the moral cosmos. He who loves is a participant in the being of God."

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968)

My Metzger family history is respectfully dedicated
to the memory of my second great-grandparents:

REVEREND GEORGE WILLIAM EMMANUEL METZGER
(1800–1855)

&

MARY DIANA HICKSON METZGER
(1803–1847)

And to all of our ancestors,
without whom none of us would be present.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Early in my research, on the website Find a Grave, I found information about Reverend George William Emmanuel Metzger posted by Aileen Dobson Speegle. When I contacted Aileen, she directed me to her cousin, Johnathan F. Krull. Johnathan grew up on the land where Rev. Metzger built his first cabin. Johnathan sent me a CD with 156 files from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) Archives at Birmingham University in England. I am grateful for his generosity. Johnathan's interest in Rev. Metzger and his wife, Mary, encouraged me to write this book.

After joining Ancestry.com, I began corresponding with Tina Curby, a distant relative and Rev. Metzger descendant. Tina suggested I contact the Basel Mission, where she obtained some of Rev. Metzger's original writings. Andrea Rhyn, archivist and historian at Mission 21 in Basel, Switzerland, sent me a copy of a portrait of the reverend, along with a trove of documents he wrote in German Kurrent script.

I contacted Pastor Jim Watson at the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Valley City, Ohio, in May 2019. Rev. Metzger was the first pastor of this church in 1834. Pastor Watson responded by saying he was aware of the story of Rev. Metzger's wife, Mary, having a difficult time being accepted in the community because she was African. He informed me that the Zion Church would acknowledge this history and take an official step of apology to make amends for her treatment. With Pastor Jim's support, a committee was formed to propose a memorial for my second great-grandparents. Heike Gombar, Zion's administrative assistant, continued my communication with the church. She provided a sketch of the 1838 first church and a photo of the current Zion church. Mary Ann Dalgleish is a lifelong member of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church. She is one of the team leaders for Zion Outreach and Ministries. Mary Ann responded to my many questions and kept me informed. I could always count on her and I am thankful for her support.

Rod Knight, a Liverpool Township historian, sent me their book, *A Rural Reflection, A History of Liverpool Township 1810–2010*, and shared photos of the headstones of Rev. and Mary Metzger. He

also sent me a document from *The Biographies of the Pastors of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Valley City, Ohio* regarding Rev. Metzger, written by Zion Historian Eugene C. "Skip" Reisner.

Adam Jaenke, with the Center for Local and Global History at Cleveland Public Library, located Mary's obituary. His search for an obituary for Rev. Metzger came up empty. Patricia Morgan, president of the Medina County Genealogical Society, found Rev. Metzger's last will and testament.

Two university professors have been crucial sources of information on my quest. They have both been to Sierra Leone, West Africa, and shared their research with me. Katrina Keefer, Adjunct Professor of History at Trent University, in Ontario, Canada, is a cultural historian specializing in colonial education in Sierra Leone, tribal body marking and slavery in West Africa. Dr. Keefer generously shared information, including her vast archive of colonial Sierra Leone documents.

Fiona Leach is the Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of Sussex in Brighton, England. Her research includes gender and education equality, with a focus on colonial Africa. Fiona shared her original research documents and provided me with access to CMS archives at the University of Birmingham. She sent me documents illuminating details of Mary Diana Hickson's origins and early education. Dr. Leach's kind and generous support, together with her detailed knowledge of early colonial Sierra Leone, was invaluable.

My eldest son, Timothy Coleman, offered his skills in digital editing to improve the images for this book. I am grateful to him for taking the time from his busy schedule to review my manuscript. I am grateful to Courtney Oppel and Catherine Williams for their professionalism and patience in polishing my manuscript and creating this book.

This book would not have been possible without my husband Peter's help and support. His history major skills turned my years of research into an amazing story. We felt it important to explain the historical context surrounding my second great-grandparents in the first half of the nineteenth century. Peter's persistence and love were a constant source of encouragement.

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FOREWORD

Dear Linda, 10 May 2020

I'm thrilled to learn that my research has been useful to someone in tracing a family connection. The little I know of Mary Metzger does indeed confirm that she was very badly treated in America. I hope you will have great success in tracing her life.

Unfortunately, as Mary's American experiences fell outside the dates of my three women, I did not go into much detail about her life there. Although I followed up sources about Mary Hickson and her sister Jane in Sierra Leone, not much was available and I have included most of what I found in my book, *Reclaiming the Women of Britain's First Mission to West Africa, Three Lives Lost and Found*.* Sadly, of course, women went largely unremarked and there are no surviving letters from her as far as I know.

What may be useful to you is that the CMS archive at the University of Birmingham here in England holds quite a number of letters and documents relating to Reverend Metzger (George William Emmanuel Metzger). There is another George Metzger, a local man employed as a teacher in the 1830s, so the records are sometimes a bit confusing.

By the way, there are a lot of CMS publications available, in particular the *Missionary Register*, a monthly periodical which I cite a lot in my book. You can search each annual volume online by name.

I recall a mention of Mary at a baptism ceremony in the Rio Pongas in 1815, when she led the children all dressed in white. It is probably in a letter from Melchior Renner. Do you have this? I could find it for you if you don't.

I'm afraid I don't have any more information about the Rev. Metzger or Mary. But it's wonderful to think that my book has contributed to your own family research and especially the link

between your great-great grandmother and Elizabeth Renner (who, as you will know, was a bit of a disciplinarian!).

If I can be of further help, do let me know.

Best wishes,

Fiona

Fiona Leach, Professor Emerita in International Education,
University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

* *Reclaiming the Women of Britain's First Mission to West Africa: Three Lives Lost and Found* (Leiden: Brill, 2018)



Figure 1: George William Emmanuel Metzger (1821)
Basel Seminary Mission Archives

INTRODUCTION

As a young girl growing up in Elyria, Ohio, in the 1950s, I frequently attended activities at the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Valley City, with my extended family of Metzgers and Drogells. My mother, Ruby Mae Drogell, and father, Timothy Charles Metzger, grew up in Medina County, Ohio. The Metzgers and Drogells are well represented in Valley City. Many of my relatives are buried in the Zion Lutheran Cemetery on Abbeyville Road.

Years ago when I began this project—to discover my ancestors—I had no idea where it would take me. I never imagined that I'd write a book. It wasn't until my manuscript was nearly finished that I realized their story was about the horrors of slavery, brutal discrimination and racial contempt. I had much to learn.

My second great-grandparents, Rev. G.W.E. Metzger and his African wife, Mary Diana Hickson, arrived in Liverpool Township, Ohio, with their two sons in September 1834. They settled in Valley City where Rev. Metzger became Zion's first pastor.

Following years of research on three continents, I began writing the remarkable story of the lives of Rev. and Mary Metzger. Rev. Metzger was a scribe, prolific writer and ordained Lutheran pastor. I transcribed and translated over 170 documents from the 1800s preserved in the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of London and Basel Mission of Switzerland's archives. Many were in poor condition. I reproduced these documents from archaic script, German Kurrent and calligraphy as accurately as possible. I searched the CMS annual *Missionary Register* every year from 1813 to 1855 for any mention of "Metzger" or "Hickson." This trove of documents preserved their story.

Mary Diana Hickson lived much of her life in the shadows. As is the case with many women, her life is but a footnote in history. Mary's African mother is a complete mystery. All we know is the color of her skin. Her English father, Charles Hickson, was my third great-grandfather. He was a slave trader.

From these archival writings, I followed Mary's progress as a young orphan and scholar in the CMS education system. Mary was an extraordinary student of that system. At an early age, she became a missionary teacher. I only have a glimpse of her life as seen through the eyes of her devoted husband, Rev. Metzger, and his writings. Mary traveled to London, Württemberg and New York. In Africa, she was judged by the strength of her character, yet from the day she set foot in America, she was judged by the color of her skin. She and her children encountered extreme racial prejudice in America. The animosity toward Rev. Metzger's colored family nearly destroyed him and the church he founded. He begged to move to Canada where there was less prejudice toward colored people.

Mary spent the last years of her life in Valley City, isolated on their family farm, and may even have been denied burial in the Zion cemetery. Sadly, the only words spoken by Mary that survived in the archives are the hymn she sang from her deathbed and "I am dying."

In Africa, Rev. and Mary Metzger witnessed the brutality of slavery. They committed their lives to abolishing this inhumane commerce. The end of slavery was not achieved in their lifetime. And yet, their lives were defined by a quest for equality and social justice and their love of God.

The Zion Church is planning a ceremony in August 2022 to honor Reverend and Mary Metzger with a granite memorial placed in the Zion Lutheran Church Cemetery. The inscription reads:

In Honor of Zion's
First Pastor and His Faithful Wife

Rev. G. W. Emmanuel Metzger
1800–1855

Mary Diana Metzger
1803–1847

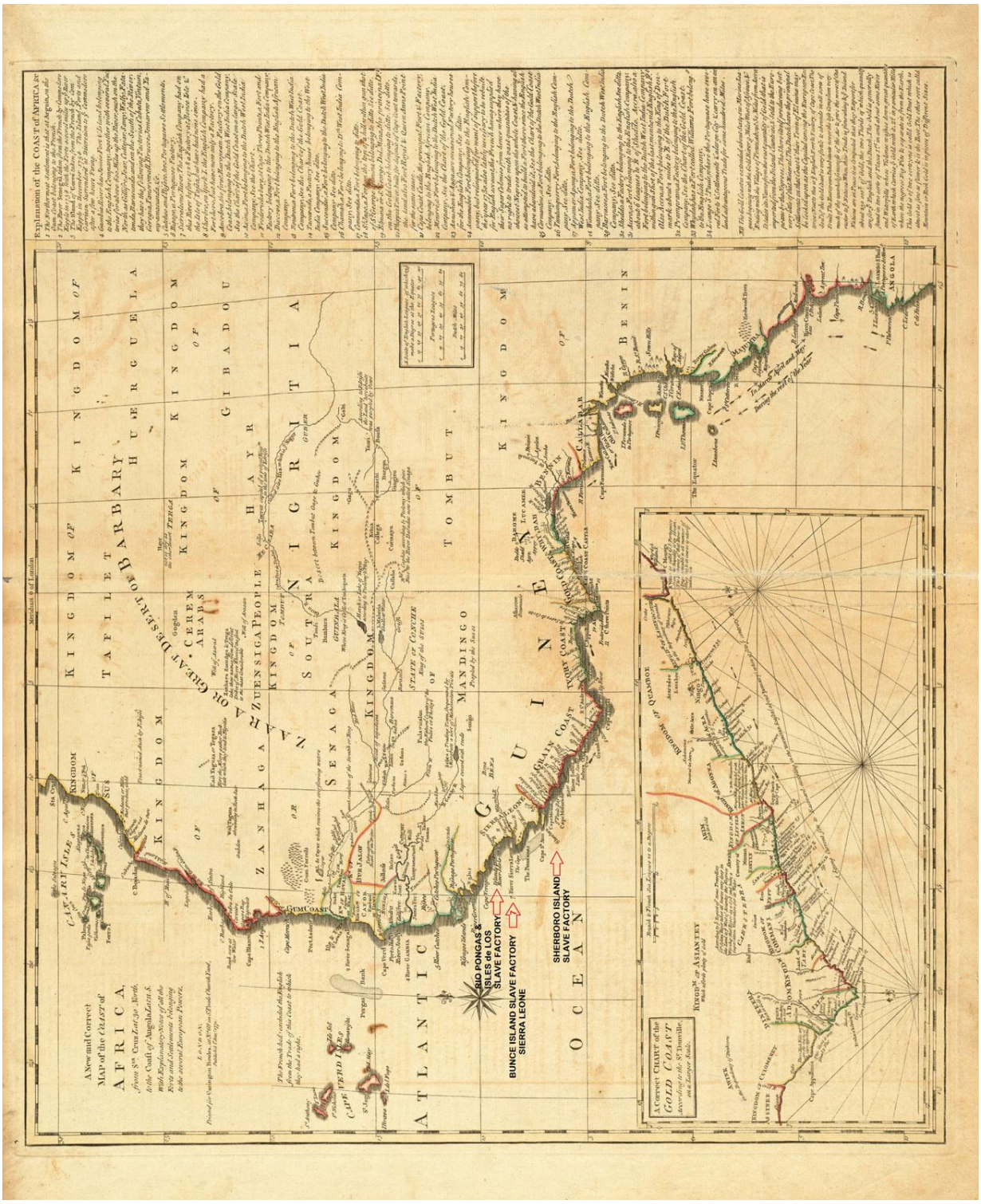
Good stewards of the manifold grace of God—1 Peter 4:10

I plan to attend the ceremony and present this book to the church. I am privileged to tell the story of my second great-grandparents.

Linda Metzger Enticknap
McMinnville, Oregon

PART I

AFRICA


A New and Correct MAP of the COAST of AFRICA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
GUINEA
BIGHT OF BENIN
BIGHT OF BIAFRA
SENEGA
ZANHAGA
ZAARA OR GREAT DESART OF BARBARY
TAFILLET
HUEDE
HAYR
ZUENSIGA PEOPLE
ARABS
NIGRITIA
SOUTH NIGRITIA
TOMBUT
MANDINGO
KINGDOM OF BARBARY
KINGDOM OF GIBADOU
KINGDOM OF BENIN
KINGDOM OF ANGOLA
GUM COAST
GRAIN COAST
IVORY COAST
CAPE VERD
CAPE LOPEZ
CAPE NEGRO
CAPE BLANCO
CAPE BOJADOR
CAPE MESURADO
CAPE PALMAS
CAPE TRIPOINTS
CAPE APOLLONIA
CAPE THREE POINTS
CAPE LAHOU
CAPE COAST CASTLE
CAPE CORSO CASTLE
CAPE ANNAMABOE
CAPE APPOLONIA
CAPE DELGADO
CAPE CORRIENTES
CAPE NEGRO
CAPE LOPEZ
CAPE ST CATHERINE
CAPE ST MARY
CAPE ST PAUL
CAPE ST ANNE
CAPE ST JAGO
CAPE ST JOHN

Chapter 1

A Brief History of the British Colony of Sierra Leone, West Africa (1787–1834)

Sierra Leone is on the west coast of Africa. In the mid-1400s, Portugal began sending ships to Sierra Leone and maintained a fort near Freetown, today's capital. Freetown is a natural deep-water harbor and one of the few such ports on Africa's west coast.[2]

> *[Freetown] soon became a favorite destination of European mariners, to shelter and replenish drinking water. Some of the Portuguese sailors stayed permanently, trading and intermarrying with the local people. When Europeans first arrived at Sierra Leone, slavery among the African peoples of the area was believed to be rare. If the Africans were not much interested in acquiring slaves, the Portuguese—as well as the Dutch, French and English who arrived later—certainly were.*
>
> *History of Sierra Leone*, 2019[3]

In the fifteenth century, Bunce Island, Sierra Leone, was a central departure point for thousands of Africans shipped to the Americas and sold into slavery. At the mouth of the Sierra Leone River, Bunce Island was a trading post for privateers and slavers. The Royal African Company (RAC) was a partnership between privateers and British monarchs founded in 1672, specifically to promote and profit from the slave trade. The RAC occupied Bunce Island where they branded slaves with the letters RAC (Royal African Company). In 1728, Portuguese traders attacked and took control of the Bunce Island fort. The island was recaptured by the British and continued as a major exporting center for slaves transported to the Caribbean and American colonies. By the mid-1700s, England dominated the Atlantic slave trade.[4]



Figure 3: Bunce Island Factory, The Place of No Return[5]

The first British colony of Granville, Sierra Leone, was named for British abolitionist Granville Sharp. With government support, in 1787 England began sending Liberated Africans and London's "Black Poor" to settle in Granville. Active slave trade "factories" surrounded Granville. From the late eighteenth century until 1808, an estimated 266,000 enslaved Africans were sold from three trading centers in Sierra Leone: Sherbro Island, the Banana Islands and Bunce Island in the Sierra Leone River. These slave factories were a source of sustained conflict for the colony of freed, repatriated and recaptured slaves.[6]

A coalition of British organizations assembled for humanitarian and commercial purposes established the British Colony of Sierra Leone for Liberated Africans.[7] Many refused to go. Four hundred eleven Black Poor resettled from England in 1787 to the "Province of Freedom," known as Granville Town, on the Sierra Leone Peninsula. They included about sixty white London prostitutes duped into marrying freed Negroes.[8] The UK National Archives avoids acknowledging this appalling incident by stating: "The ships left England on 9 April 1787 with 350 Black passengers (including 41 women) and 59 White women (the wives or widows of Black men)."[9] Within a year of their arrival, only 130 settlers remained.[10] The settlement was burned

to the ground in 1789 in a land dispute with the native Temne king Tom. Disease ravaged the population.[11] England's first attempt at relocating Liberated Africans, London's Black and white poor to Africa, ended in disaster. In 1792 a new colony named Freetown was populated with Colonial American former slaves known as Black Loyalists from Nova Scotia, Canada. They rebuilt on the ruins of Granville Town. Conditions continued to be deplorable, and many died for the utopian dream of a "Province of Freedom".

Alexander Falconbridge (*c.* 1760–1792) was a British surgeon. He joined four voyages on British slave ships between 1780 and 1787. In 1791, the English Anti-Slavery Society sent Falconbridge to Granville Town to help rescue the failing colony. He died a year later, after being summarily dismissed by the Sierra Leone Company hours before his death. The company refused to acknowledge the claim of his wife, Anna Maria Falconbridge, for monies owed to her late husband and, perhaps conveniently, the company records went missing.[12]

Employed as a surgeon aboard British slave ships, Alexander Falconbridge had first-hand knowledge of the slave trade, which he related in his popular narrative, *An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa*, published in 1788 and widely read in England. His book chronicled the trade from when the ship's captain bought captive Africans at the coast, through their treatment during the Middle Passage, to the time they were sold into hereditary bondage as chattel slaves in the British West Indies. Dr. Falconbridge's eyewitness account of the shocking brutality inflicted on kidnapped African men, women and children during the transatlantic crossing stirred the conscience of the nation. The following is an excerpt from his horrific sickening report.

> *The following sheets are intended to lay before the public the present state of a branch of the British commerce, which, ever since its existence, has been held in detestation by all good men, but at this time more particularly engages the attention of the nation, and is become the object of general reprobation. From the time of the arrival of the ships to their departure, which is usually near three months, scarce a day passes without some Negroes being purchased, and carried on board; sometimes in small, and sometimes in larger numbers.… All the information I could procure confirms me in the belief that to kidnapping, and to crimes (and many of these fabricated as a pretext) the slave trade owes its chief support.… When the Negroes, whom the black traders have to dispose of, are shown to the European purchasers, they first examine them relative to their age.… If any of the foregoing defects are discovered in them they are rejected … the traders have frequently been known to put them to death … and instantly beheaded them in sight of the captain.… The men Negroes, on being brought aboard the ship, are immediately fastened together, two and two, by handcuffs on their wrists and by irons rivetted* [sic] *on their legs. They are then sent down between the decks.… The women also are placed in a separate apartment*

between decks, but without being ironed. An adjoining room on the same deck is appointed for the boys. But at the same time, however, they are frequently stowed so close, as to admit of no other position than lying on their sides.

The hardships and inconveniences suffered by the Negroes during the passage are scarcely to be enumerated or conceived. It frequently terminates in death, especially among the women. But the exclusion of fresh air is among the most intolerable.… The confined air, rendered noxious by the effluvia exhaled from their bodies and being repeatedly breathed, soon produces fevers and fluxes which generally carries off great numbers of them.

The deck, that is the floor of their rooms, was so covered with the blood and mucus which had proceeded from them in consequence of the flux, that it resembled a slaughter-house. It is not in the power of the human imagination to picture a situation more dreadful or disgusting.

This devastation, great as it was, some years ago was greatly exceeded by a Leverpool [sic] *ship … though a much smaller ship than in which I have just mentioned, took on board … at least six hundred Negroes … nearly one half of them died before the ship arrived in the West Indies. … those who are emaciated frequently have their skin and even their flesh entirely rubbed off, by the motion of the ship, from the prominent parts of the shoulders, elbows and hips so as to render the bones quite bare.*

And some of them, by constantly lying in the blood and mucus that had flowed from those afflicted with the flux and which is generally so violent as to prevent their being kept clean, having their flesh much sooner rubbed off than those who have only to contend with the mere friction of the ship. The excruciating pain which the poor sufferers feel from being obliged to continue in such a dreadful situation, frequently for several weeks, in case they happen to live so long, is not to be conceived or described. Few, indeed, are able to withstand the fatal effects of it. The utmost skill of the surgeon is here ineffectual.… As very few of the Negroes can so far brook the loss of their liberty and the hardships they endure, they are ever on the watch to take advantage of the least negligence in their oppressors. Insurrections are frequently the consequence; which are seldom expressed without much bloodshed.

An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa, 1788[13]

Mrs. Anna Maria Falconbridge (1769–1835), wife of the Sierra Leone Company's surgeon, was shocked by what she encountered when inspecting Granville Town in 1791. English white prostitutes were deceived into marrying Black men and transported to Sierra Leone by the government. After her husband's death, she returned to England and her letters were published. In the

following excerpt from her letters, Anna Maria Falconbridge describes her encounter with a woman transported to Freetown against her will:

> *The outcasts were seven of our country women, decrepid* [sic] *with disease, and so disguised with filth and dirt, that I should never have supposed they were born white; add to this, almost naked from head to foot; in short, their appearance was such as I think would extort compassion from the most callous heart; but I declare they seemed insensible to shame, or the wretchedness of their situation themselves; I begged they would get washed, and gave them what cloaths* [sic] *I could conveniently spare. Falconbridge had a hut appropriated as a hospital, where they were kept separate from the other settlers, and by his attention and care, they recovered in a few weeks. I always supposed these people had been transported as convicts, but some conversation I lately had with one of the women, has partly undeceived me: She said, the women were mostly of that description of persons who walk the streets of London, and support themselves by the earnings of prostitution; that men were employed to collect and conduct them to Wapping* [East London], *where they were intoxicated with liquor, then inveigled on board of ship, and married to Black men, whom they had never seen before; that the morning after she was married, she really did not remember a syllable of what had happened over night, and when informed, was obliged to inquire who was her husband? … "Thus," in her own words, "to the disgrace of my mother country, upwards of one hundred unfortunate women, were seduced from England to practice their iniquities more brutishly in this horrid country." Good heaven! how* [sic] *the relation of this tale made me shudder; I questioned its veracity, and enquired of the other women, who exactly corroborated what I had heard; nevertheless, I cannot altogether reconcile myself to believe it; for it is scarcely possible that the British Government, at this advanced and enlightened age, envied and admired as it is by the universe, could be capable of exercising or countenancing such a Gothic infringement on human Liberty.*
>
> *Narrative of Two Voyages to Sierra Leone 1791–1793*, 1794[14]

Historians dispute Mrs. Falconbridge's firsthand account of the horrific treatment and condition of these women, glossing over her detailed eyewitness report. However, the Sierra Leone Company's Directors' Report of 1791 states that "sixty Whites, chiefly women of the lowest sort," were included in the 1787 government-sponsored colonial expedition.

> *ABOUT five years hence, the streets of London swarming with a number of Blacks in the most distressed situation, who had no prospect of subsisting in this country but by depredations on the publick* [sic], *or by common charity, the humanity of*

> *some respectable Gentlemen was excited towards those unhappy objects. They were accordingly collected to the number of above 400, and, together with 60 Whites, chiefly women of the lowest sort, in ill health, and of bad character, they were sent out at the charge of government to Sierra Leone. It was hoped that the necessity of their situation might be Substance of the Report.*
>
> Sierra Leone Company's Directors' Report of 1791[15]

At the expense of the British Crown, 119 European and Black Poor and about 1,200 former American slaves referred to as Black Loyalists arrived from Nova Scotia, Canada, at Freetown, Sierra Leone, on British ships in 1792.[16] The Sierra Leone Company organized the new colony, formed by London abolitionists and investors seeking commercial prospects in Africa.[17] The colonial territory was the sovereign nation of indigenous peoples. Black Loyalists were former slaves and veterans of the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783) who had been granted freedom after seeking refuge with British forces during the war.[18/19] After the war, Sir Guy Carleton (1724–1808), commander of British forces and governor of British North America, refused General George Washington's demand for the return of all former slaves who joined the British war effort. Sir Carleton chose instead to honor the Crown's promise of freedom.[20/21] The first American president, George Washington (1732–1799), owned hundreds of slaves.[22] The Sierra Leone Company promised the settlers land, independence, self-government and supplies to build a new self-sufficient future in return for their loyalty to the Crown during the Revolutionary War.[23] They would soon break those promises.

The Sierra Leone Company assured settlers thirty acres of land and soon reneged, instead providing some settlers with small lots. Land intended for the benefit of freed slaves to build an independent, self-sustaining democratic community in West Africa became the property of investors in London eager for a profit. This was but one of many grievances and broken agreements with the settlers. In 1793, thirty settlers elected two representatives and raised funds to send them to London to petition the Sierra Leone Company and Parliament to address these injustices.[24] Lieutenant John Clarkson (1764–1828) was a British naval officer assigned to evacuate the Black Loyalists from Canada. He was an abolitionist and the first governor of the Sierra Leone colony.[25]

> *That Mr. Clarkson had promised in Nova Scotia, among other things, they should be supplied with every necessary of life from the Company's stores, at a moderate advance of ten percent, on the prime cost and charges. That while Mr. Clarkson remained in the Colony; they paid no more; but since then, they have been charged upwards of 100 percent. That he (Mr. Clarkson) was authorized by the Directors of that Company, to say, each head of a family should have a grant of not less than twenty acres of land, for him or herself; ten acres for a wife, and five acres for each child. That those grants*

> *should be given directly on our arrival in Africa, free of any expence* [sic] *or charge whatever. That we should be provided with all tools wanted for cultivation, and likewise the comforts and necessaries of life, from the Company's stores, at a reasonable rate, such as about ten percent advance, upon the prime cost and charges, and should not be distressed for the payment of such goods, until enabled by the produce of our lands; but when we became comfortably settled, we should be subject to such charges and obligations as would tend to the general good of the Colony. That we should be protected by the laws of Great Britain, and justice should be indiscriminately shewn* [sic] *Whites and Blacks.*
>
> Black Loyalists Petition to Sierra Leone Company and Parliament, 1793[26]

In September 1794, Freetown was attacked by a fleet of seven captured English ships led by an American slave trader with a grudge against the colony. Jacobin French sailors looted the settlement, destroying everything of value, and burned Freetown to ashes. They left behind 120 English sailors captured with the British ships.[27] With few remaining supplies, ten of the forty European officials perished by the end of the year. The remaining Nova Scotia settlers rebuilt the settlement.[28] Conflict and raids continued as colonists expanded their territory. Mismanagement by the Sierra Leone Company included exploitation of the settlers, refusal to honor land grants, lack of protection under British law and broken promises of self-governance. In response, the settlers rebelled.[29/30]

In 1800, Britain sent 550 Jamaican Maroons, who revolted against their enslavement in the West Indies, to control the rebellious Nova Scotians.[31] The surviving Black Poor, Nova Scotians, Maroons and Europeans intermarried. Descendants of these unions created a mixed-race Creole population and culture that effectively dominated the region's commerce by the beginning of the nineteenth century.[32] Many mixed-race colonists became wealthy from the slave trade.[33]

In 1807, the British Parliament made the slave trade illegal by passing the Slave Trade Act. The Act was one of the first by a slave-trading nation in Europe to prohibit the slave trade, but it did not ban slavery.[34] In January 1808, the British Crown assumed control of the Freetown settlement from the Sierra Leone Company. The government established a Royal Navy base at Freetown to block the export of slaves from West Africa. They fined British captains £100 for every slave found on a British ship. Freetown became the center into which recaptured slaves (aka "recaptives") were released.[35/36] Each year, thousands of naked, starving and sick Liberated Africans arrived on the shores of the struggling settlement. As the Royal Navy disgorged its human cargo in the port of Freetown, the resources of the colony were insufficient to deal with the human suffering. Approximately one hundred thousand Liberated Africans landed in Freetown from British vessels by the mid-1800s.[37] And yet the slave trade continued.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe and the War of 1812 in America led to a revival in the slave trade in the Rio Pongas (the region incorporating Rio Pongo), about one hundred miles north of Freetown by sea.[38] Slavery remained legal in most of the British Empire until the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833. From 1808 to 1860, the British Royal Navy seized approximately 1,600 slave ships and liberated about 164,000 enslaved West Africans.[39]

For a brief period, Black settlers in Sierra Leone enjoyed unparalleled political freedom and the rights of full citizenship and democratic representation. They elected their own leaders and officials and demanded representative government. White soldiers served under Black officers, Blacks served on juries passing verdicts on whites, and Blacks served as constables. In one case that caused a great outcry among Europeans, the court ordered a Black man to flog a white sailor found guilty of stealing a duck. In one of the first instances of women's suffrage anywhere in the world, female Nova Scotian settlers in Freetown voted in 1792 elections. All heads of household could vote. One-third of ethnic African settlers were then women.[40] The British government revoked women's right to vote when they took control of the colony in 1808. Women did not win the right to vote again in Sierra Leone until 1930.[41] Black Loyalists, Black Poor, Maroons and Liberated Africans, all seeking freedom and equality under British law, were denied citizenship in the Province of Freedom.

African Transatlantic Slave Trade

The major Atlantic slave-trading nations, by trade volume from the mid-1400s to the mid-1800s, were Portugal, England, France, the Netherlands and Spain. Some countries established outposts on the African coast where they purchased slaves from local African chiefs and European slave traders. They held slaves in so-called factories under brutal conditions while awaiting shipment. About eight hundred thousand died from abuse, starvation and disease in these stockades. From 1519 until 1867, a ship departed Africa with its human cargo every three or four days.[42]

Historians estimate that 12.5 million Africans were transported across the Atlantic over four hundred years. The actual number captured and sold was considerably higher, as the so-called Middle Passage had a high mortality rate. By one estimate, about 2.5 million died during the Atlantic crossing. The dead and dying were thrown overboard, while some jumped ship to end their suffering.



BRANDING A NEGRESS AT THE RIO PONGO
From a wood engraving in Canot's *Twenty Years of an African Slaver*, New York, 1854

Figure 4: Branding A Negress at the Rio Pongo (1854)

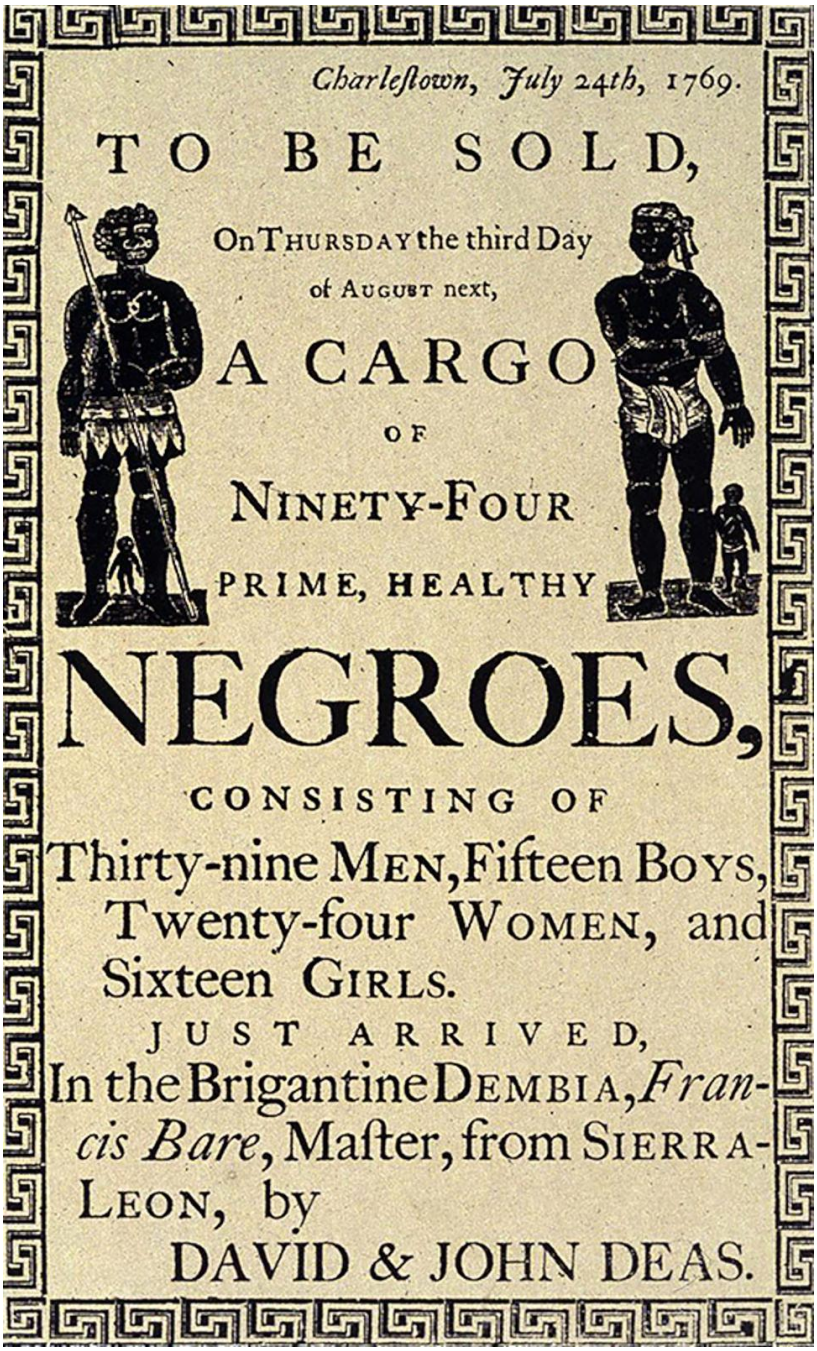


Figure 5: Charleston, July 24th 1769

TO BE SOLD
A CARGO
OF
Ninety-Four
Prime, Healthy
NEGROES
CONSISTING OF
Thirty-nine Men, Fifteen Boys
Twenty-four Women, and
Sixteen Girls.
Just Arrived from Sierra Leone

Many more Africans died during the raids on their villages and the march to coastal ports. The number of these victims is unknown. By one conservative estimate, four million died on the continent of Africa after capture.[43] Another six million were shipped to Asian slave markets, and eight million were sold in African markets. Including the 12.5 million slaves transported across the Atlantic, the total estimated number of Africans killed, captured, sold and transported is at least thirty million.[44]

Muslim traders dominated the inland corridors of caravans. The primary commodity traveling along those pathways was enslaved Africans.[45] In the late 1700s and early 1800s, British authorities and abolitionists comprising evangelical Anglicans led the efforts to end this barbaric trade. Powerful Muslim syndicates, African kings, headmen and slave traders on both sides of the Atlantic conspired to protect their financial interests in the extraordinarily lucrative commerce in human cargo by fighting British attempts to end the slave trade.[46]

	Britain	France	Netherlands	Spain	US & British Caribbean	Denmark*	Portugal	All Nations
1519-1600	2.0						264.1	266.1
1601-1650	23.0		41.0				439.5	503.5
1651-1675	115.2	5.9	64.8			.2	53.7	239.8
1676-1700	243.3	34.1	56.1			15.4	161.1	510.0
1701-1725	380.9	106.3	65.3		11.0	16.7	378.3	958.6
1726-1750	490.5	253.9	109.2		44.5	7.6	405.6	1,311.3
1751-1775	859.1	321.5	148.0	1.0	89.1	13.4	472.9	1,905.2
1776-1800	741.3	419.5	40.8	8.6	54.3	30.4	626.2	1,921.1
1801-1825	257.0	217.9	2.3	204.8	81.1	10.5	871.6	1,645.1
1826-1850		94.1		279.2			1,247.7	1,621.0
1851-1867		3.2		23.4			154.2	180.8
All years	3,112.3	1,456.4	527.7	517.0	280.0	94.2	5,074.9	11,062.0
% of trade	28.1%	13.2%	4.8%	4.7%	2.5%	0.9%	45.9%	100%

Figure 6: Volume of Transatlantic Slave Trade from Africa by Nation (Thousands)[47]

In 1823, King Boatswain, being in debt to a French slaver who required young slaves, selected a peaceable tribe near the Queahs, made an assault at night on them whilst they were asleep, murdered in one hour every adult male and female as well as the very young children, and reserved the boys and girls to pay the Frenchman. When the slaves had been seized and secured, they were marched down to the coast. Fastened by the leg and sometimes also by the neck, they were made to walk a distance of five hundred miles and more, the whip being freely used to urge them on. The disabled were left to perish, and, of course, large numbers died. Denham bivouacked on a spot where more than a hundred skeletons were lying, and after a journey of twenty-six

> *miles, computed that a hundred and seven more skeletons were strewed along the track. Thirty-six percent was the average loss of every caravan of slaves. On arriving at the coast, if no slaver* [ships] *were in sight, the slaves were shut up in crowded yards, heavily ironed and half starved. It was not uncommon for the cargo to be then weeded of the old, diseased, and infirm (to avoid the cost of their maintenance) by throwing them into the river.*
>
> Reverend Henry Seddall, *The Missionary History of Sierra Leone*, 1874[48]

> *For every one European who voluntarily migrated to the New World, 3.55 Africans arrived as slaves. The estimate is that some 2.4 million Europeans migrated to the Americas in the period before 1820, while at least 8.4 million Africans arrived as slaves.*
>
> David Sowell, "The Problem of Slavery Studies Today," 2004[49]

Slave Emancipation Act 1833

In August 1833, the English Parliament passed the Slave Emancipation Act. It freed all slaves in the British Empire over a period of years. The act immediately freed all children under age six. Plantation owners received compensation from the government for their loss of free labor. Enslaved people received nothing; they remained landless and were forced to work for low or no wages at all, having been compelled into another form of slavery called indentured servitude. Slaves in the British West Indies continued to work as unpaid apprentices for their former masters. Little changed for them. Enslaved people in the British Caribbean, at least in theory, gained their freedom in 1838.[50]



Figure 7: Map of Upper Guinea Coast, Freetown, Sierra Leone (1820)[51]



Figure 8: Map of Sierra Leone Slave Factories (1842) Lithograph (Edited)

By John Arrowsmith, Lithographer. British territory and slave trading localities are denoted by a red line and a green line beneath names, respectively. Slave factories are indicated, including those on the Scarcies, Sherboro, Shebar and Gallinas rivers, as well as the factory on the River Pongo owned by Mrs. Lightburn. Ordered by the House of Commons, 5 August 1842. The map was produced for Richard R. Madden's anti-slavery report to: Parliament, House of Commons, Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa.

Chapter 2

Church Missionary Society of London

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) of London, an offshoot of the Anglican Church, was formed in 1799. The founders of the CMS committed to three goals: abolishing the slave trade, promoting social reform in England and spreading the Christian gospel. The CMS was the first missionary society to become firmly established in West Africa in the early 1800s.[1]

William Wilberforce (1759–1833) was one of the CMS founders, a member of Parliament and a leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade. Josiah Pratt (1768–1844) was the society's first secretary (from 1802 to 1824) and one of its founding members.[2/3] Dandeson Coates (1778–1846) succeeded CMS secretary Pratt.[4]

Failing to recruit English missionaries for Africa, the CMS turned to the Mission Seminary of Berlin, in the capital of Prussia. There, they recruited German-speaking Lutherans to spread the gospel in the nascent colony in Sierra Leone, West Africa. The Berlin Seminary eventually sent twelve missionaries to Freetown.[5] The first German mission school, the Jänickesche Missionsinstitut in Berlin, emerged in 1800 dedicated to the "heathen mission" (Mission unter den Heiden). Its director, Johannes Jänicke (1748–1827), began a four-year training program comprising arithmetic, writing, German, Latin, English and a little Greek and Hebrew.[6]

Offers to serve as missionaries for the CMS increased in 1816, in part because of high unemployment and recession that plagued Europe in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. Beginning in 1817, the CMS resolved to take no more recruits from the Berlin Seminary, having determined candidates from Berlin unsuitable. However, they accepted four recruits in 1820 for service in Sierra Leone from a newly established seminary in Basel, Switzerland.[7] German Lutherans from Baden and Württemberg had formed the interdenominational Basel Mission Society (BMS) in 1815. In 1818, BMS collaborated with the CMS to train candidates for the heathen mission in West Africa and India.[8/9]

Rev. Christian Gottlieb Blumhardt (1779–1838) of Stuttgart, Germany, was the first director and co-founder of the BMS.[10] His colleagues in London knew him as Theophilus.[11] The BMS later changed its name to the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society. It is now known as the Basel Mission 21.[12] Rev. Blumhardt also established the Basel Seminary to train British and Dutch missionaries.[13] The Basel Seminary curriculum covered four core skills:

Theology: Bible studies, religious and world history

Linguistics: Philology (languages), Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, English and grammar

Skills Training: Arithmetic, calligraphy, orthography, rhetoric and correspondence, cartography, anatomy, basic medicine, surgery, botany, logic/philosophy, physics, chemistry and mathematics

Supplementary Instructions: Parish record-keeping, music, singing and civil engineering[14]

G.W.E. Metzger was one of the first graduates of Basel Seminary to be accepted by the CMS. After graduating from Basel Seminary, on 20 July 1821, he traveled to Stuttgart, where he was ordained before a large crowd including the king of Württemberg.[15] An agreement between the two Christian societies in London and Basel provided the CMS contribute £25 per person per year toward the education of German missionaries. The CMS insisted the Basel Seminary theological education include Latin, Greek and Hebrew, as many of the early Basel Seminary candidates had only completed primary school.[16]

Conflict was inevitable between the CMS and the Basel Mission. The Anglicans felt that German theological training was insufficient.[17] The Basel Seminary offered a pragmatic education that aimed to qualify candidates for ordination in the Lutheran or Anglican Church without covering the depth of theological training provided by English universities. This abbreviated route to ordination caused consternation among German and British theologians.[18] Cultural differences between English-speaking and German-speaking missionaries over theological orthodoxy raised questions in London about the teaching methods of the Basel Mission. That young German speakers had difficulty expressing themselves in English may explain these differences. About half of the German missionaries married English women. Basel-trained missionaries exhibited a more robust and energetic form of evangelical fervor. Other cultural differences included mistrust amongst the Basel brethren. Rev. Blumhardt encouraged students to report any infractions or inappropriate behavior undermining collegiality.[19] In addition, some of the strict Lutheran students refused to swear allegiance to a bishop requisite for ordination in the Anglican Church.

The British CMS expressed reservations about the English-language competence of the German candidates. Rev. Blumhardt became disillusioned with the demands made by London. He pointedly observed that the CMS college in London, which was equipped to receive fifty students, could only recruit twelve. And he objected to the education standards set in London, which he felt were unrealistic.[20] Despite these difficulties, a warm relationship existed between the Anglican CMS and Lutheran-dominated Basel Missionary Society as evidenced by their kind exchange of greetings in 1865 on the fiftieth anniversary of their successful association.[21] It was not until 1824 that the first ordained English Anglicans carried the British flag for the CMS. German Lutherans continued to be engaged out of necessity.[22]

Reverends Melchior Renner and Peter Hartwig (1804)

The first CMS missionaries to Africa, Melchior Renner (*c.* 1772–1821) and Peter Hartwig (*c.* 1777–1815), arrived in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1804.[23] They had been trained at the Mission Seminary of Berlin. They spent over a year in England improving their English and learning the CMS teaching methods under the Bell education system and the Susu (pronounced "soosoo") language spoken in West Africa. In 1803, Renner became an ordained Lutheran pastor, followed by the younger Hartwig in 1804. On arriving in Africa, their instructions were to stay in Freetown for one year to acclimatize themselves before going to convert the Susu in the Rio Pongas near the southern border of present-day Republic of Guinea.[24]

Renner, of the duchy of Württemberg, was thirty-one when he arrived on the West Coast of Africa. He served as government chaplain for the first two years. He then oversaw the first Rio Pongas settlements from 1808 to 1818, when he fled for his life.[25] He died at age forty-nine in 1821, in Kent, Sierra Leone. His African American wife, Elizabeth, survived him. He served the CMS for nearly eighteen years.[26]

Hartwig, a Prussian, joined the CMS at twenty-five. Considered the better educated of the two men, Hartwig knew Greek and Hebrew, while Renner spoke a smattering of Latin. Neither man was fluent in English.[27] Hartwig's CMS orders were to travel with Renner into Susu country. Hartwig and Renner fought endlessly. They were so mutually opposed that in letters from the colonial governor to London, the governor reported that Renner and Hartwig could not take part together in any expeditions or even share the same quarters. Both men also experienced various illnesses and ailments. Renner's early letters to the CMS in London repeated the hardships that Hartwig also described: Freetown was a place where food was scarce, and deadly sickness and violent conflict were common. Sierra Leone was known as "The White Man's Grave." Rev. Renner described the colony as a place ***"rampant with sickness and subject to starvation."***[28] The death toll among missionaries was high due to yellow fever, other tropical diseases including malaria, famine, starvation, hazards of travel, and conflicts between settlers, slave traders and the native

population. Between 1804, when the first CMS missionaries were sent to Sierra Leone, and 1820, twenty-two of the twenty-six missionaries died or were lost at sea.[29] Six missionaries died in the year they arrived, five died the following year and four died within three years of their arrival in the colony.[30] The CMS eventually trained Africans for the ministry and teaching in mission schools, as they appeared to have a lower mortality rate than Europeans.

The CMS directed both men to leave the colony in 1806 and dedicate themselves to mastering the Susu language and begin teaching African children.[31] While Renner's diligence was notable, in early 1806, Governor Thomas Ludlam (1775–1810) wrote that Hartwig was "indolent," and rarely officiated at church. Renner remained in Freetown while Hartwig explored the interior of the country. By early summer 1806, Renner's letters to CMS Secretary Pratt reflected his frustration at being confined to the colony while Hartwig explored inland. Renner, being the elder of the two, mentioned increasing disagreements and fights over which one was the superior. Tensions between Renner and Hartwig escalated. Hartwig's continued journeys beyond the colony were in obedience to directions by the CMS to learn Susu and Arabic and engage the heathen. However, his constant absence placed a heavy burden on Renner, who remained in a colony rampant with sickness and famine. In 1807, Hartwig was dismissed by the CMS for a presumed but unconfirmed affiliation with slave traders. Hartwig then left the colony without permission and headed for the Rio Pongas with CMS property. Meanwhile, Renner settled at Bashia, a former slave factory, on a tributary of the Rio Pongo, while Hartwig was allegedly working as an overseer in a slave factory. In 1814, Hartwig begged to return to his former CMS duties, and was then engaged by the CMS as a linguist. Hartwig died shortly thereafter of yellow fever and was followed to the grave by his English-born wife, Sarah, six weeks later. He had translated St. John's Gospel into Susu and served the CMS for four years.[32] The chronology of directives given by officials of the colony and the general committee of the CMS present a variety of contradictory orders and perspectives of these two courageous, conflicted, and combative pioneering missionaries.[33]

These two young founding missionaries had tarnished CMS's reputation.[34] However, Renner and Hartwig also had laid the foundation for the CMS method of education and promoted the abolitionist movement in England. In addition, they had established the precedence for mission-based parish villages for Liberated Africans, churches and mission schools to be formed throughout the Freetown Peninsula, the first university in sub-Saharan Africa (Fourah Bay College, established 1827), and the first European colony specifically for repatriated and recaptured slaves. The first principal of Fourah Bay College was Rev. Charles Lewis Frederick Haensel (1796–1876).[35] Freetown would become a multi-racial, multi-cultural capital of the nation of Sierra Leone.

The Rio Pongo is on Africa's western coast, about one hundred miles north of Freetown, Sierra Leone, by sea. In the 1700s, Rio Pongas settlements became a center for the slave trade. The

Îsles de Los, south of the Rio Pongo, were the departure point for slaver ships headed for the Americas. Traders frequently took an African "country wife" as a gift from a local headman or chief to facilitate trade.[36] One notorious and particularly brutal slave trader, John Ormond, had thirty-two native wives.[37] In the early 1800s, there were over forty-eight slave-trading families in the Rio Pongas region operating dozens of so-called factories. Some traders become extremely wealthy, owning property in Africa, Europe, the West Indies and America. They formed syndicates and raised armies to protect the lucrative slave trade, including war ships bristling with cannon capable of challenging the Royal Navy.[38]

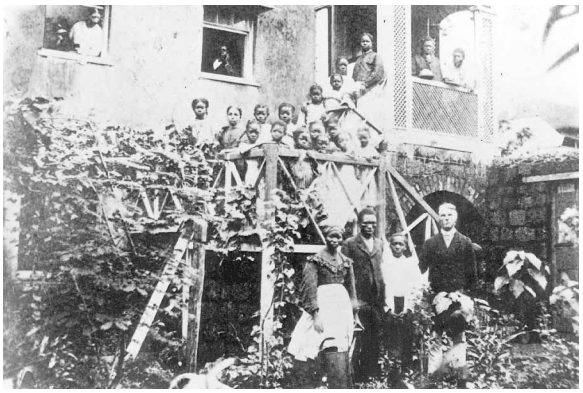


Figure 9: Church Missionary Society, Freetown, Sierra Leone, CMS Archives, UK

These powerful Creole families, although rooted in the Rio Pongo, extended their horizons far beyond West Africa. Many of these Creole traders became quite wealthy. They encouraged education for their children and allowed the London-based Church Missionary Society (CMS) to establish schools in the area while at first conveniently overlooking the economic activity and source of wealth of the parents of the mixed-race children they taught. These families, however, owed much of their wealth and status to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. By 1800, slave trading was an enormously profitable business on the Pongo River.

Bruce L. Mouser, ***American Colony on the Rio Pongo***, 2013[39]

The acceptance of the CMS schools for children by the headmen and chiefs signified a shift in attitude. Slaver dealers and chiefs considered the missionaries an asset.[40] They sent their mixed-race "mulatto" children to the missionary schools to learn English and a trade. The first CMS mission school on the African continent was established in 1808 by Rev. Renner.[41] The Bashia settlement was a former slave factory on the Fatala River, upstream from its confluence with the Rio Pongo. Renner brought with him his former housekeeper-turned-bride, African American Elizabeth Richards, one of the Nova Scotian settlers to Sierra Leone.[42/43] By 1809, the school at Bashia had thirty-one students, including boys and girls of varied racial heritage classified as "Native, Mulatto, Trader" (assumed to be European) and "Ransomed," which identifies a formerly enslaved child purchased by Rev. Renner.[44] Bashia was attractive and important to the local people and traders. They offered Renner the Bashia land and facilities in return for educating their children. Bashia was an English-speaking school for nine years until attacks and an intentionally set fire destroyed it in 1817.[45]

> *From twenty-one boys in 1809, Bashia had increased its student body to forty-four boys by 1811, and from nine girls in 1809, the female portion of the school had risen to thirty-seven, though the majority of girls were still listed as 'Mulatto'.*
>
> Katrina Keefer, "Missionary Education in Sierra Leone, 1793–1820," 2015[46]

Among the nine mulatto girls recorded in the Bashia registry in November 1809 is my second great-grandmother, Mary Diana Hickson, then age seven. Between 1808 and 1811, missionaries in the Rio Pongas initially brought few challenges to the slave dealers, even though several traders sought to expel them. The Rio Pongas was beyond the jurisdiction of British authorities in Freetown, so the slave trade continued with impunity.

Cooperation with the missionaries was not to last. In 1811, British officer Charles W. Maxwell (1775–1848) was appointed governor of Sierra Leone. Part of Governor Maxwell's mandate was to enforce the anti-slave-trading acts passed by British Parliament in 1807 and 1811.[47] Beginning in late 1813 and into 1814, Governor Maxwell ordered a series of raids by Royal Navy vessels into the heart of the Rio Pongas slave detention camps. They destroyed over a dozen American-and English-owned slave factories.[48] In January 1817, a British Royal Squadron followed a slave ship up the Rio Pongo and captured it, demanding the release of the slaves. Fula tribal warriors and headmen who profited from the slave trade joined the slavers and fought the Royal Navy. They blamed Rev. Renner for aiding the British attack. Repeated threats and attacks forced the missionaries to abandon the Rio Pongas and return to Freetown in 1818.[49]

Colonel Charles MacCarthy (1764–1824), Governor Sierra Leone (1814–1824)

Following a tradition of appointing military officers to lead British possessions, England assigned Colonel Charles MacCarthy as governor of Sierra Leone in 1814, replacing Governor Maxwell. The colonel served the Crown in military campaigns in Canada, Europe, the West Indies and Senegal, where he distinguished himself. He brought much-needed stability and administrative skills to the office of the governor. MacCarthy took a strong interest in the colony's welfare and Liberated Africans while actively promoting public building projects, including schools for the settlers.[50]

Governor MacCarthy also was a correspondent of William Wilberforce, the leading proponent for the abolition of slavery in Parliament.[51] MacCarthy established many settlements for Liberated Africans administered by missionaries of the London-based CMS. In addition, he supported the education of recaptured children in schools run by the CMS. As governor, he campaigned for the complete suppression of the slave trade.[52]

Governor MacCarthy ordered Liberated Africans placed in parish villages surrounding Freetown, where they could farm and support themselves. Without a surveyor until 1816, he could not allot them land.[53] He discovered his predecessor, Governor Maxwell, had mismanaged government funds and broken the law by driving several hundred settlers from the colony and appropriating their land.[54]

In a series of letters to CMS Secretary Pratt in 1816 and 1817, tensions between Governor MacCarthy and the CMS missionaries surfaced. The missionaries saw converting heathens as their paramount duty. As village superintendents, they oversaw building projects and administrative duties, managed schools and the distribution of rations, and enforced British law. MacCarthy inspected several CMS villages and complained the children were not being well cared for. In 1818, the CMS was allotting £5 annually for the children's support, although it was determined that £9 per year was insufficient. The CMS was raising funds in England by taking sponsors' donations in return for naming a Black child. MacCarthy complained the funds were not reaching the children.[55] He suspected treason by two German missionaries when Reverends Gustav R. Nyländer (1875–1825) and Wilhelm A. B. Johnson (*c.* ? –1823) walked out of a meeting whilst the British National Anthem was being sung. He angrily wrote to CMS Secretary Pratt in London, ***"Christianity without loyalty is a mere Name."***[56] Pratt responded by writing, ***"Now must a Society like ours be run down because it does not, as yet, see fit to adopt all the plans of the Governor?"***[57]

In 1819, MacCarthy wrote to Secretary Pratt, ***"I can say boldly that the most powerful, nay, the only inducement to my long stay in Africa has been my hope of laying the foundation of civilization for an oppressed race on the only stable basis—Christian religion and Loyalty."***[58] However, few Africans were practicing Christians; they were more likely to be pagan animists or Muhammadans.[59] I assume that "loyalty" as interpreted by MacCarthy implies submission to the Crown, its institutions, British law and his authority. Seventeen of the first twenty-four CMS missionaries sent to Freetown in the first fifteen years were German or Prussian.

MacCarthy's plans to expand the village parish system came to fruition in 1817. CMS personnel managed the villages by acting as superintendents and magistrates enforcing British law. CMS teachers employing the Bell education system ran the schools. In cooperation with the CMS, by 1820, more than a dozen villages were established under the governor's plan. They were divided into parishes with a magistrate, schools and the government providing food and clothing. Over sixteen thousand Liberated Africans entered the colony during MacCarthy's ten-year administration. Over the governor's objection, the CMS maintained its missionaries in the Rio Pongas, until the missionaries were forced to flee in 1818, while Freetown had over two thousand children in need of their attention.[60]

In the twenty-seven years following MacCarthy's untimely death in 1824, there were twenty-eight colonial administrators. MacCarthy's first three successors each died within a year of their appointment, and all of the governors were left to develop and implement their own interpretation of British policy for the colony of Liberated Africans.[61] The missionaries never embraced their secular responsibilities, and shortly after MacCarthy's death, the clergy's stipends were transferred entirely to the CMS instead of being shared jointly with the government for buildings and education. Government managers then replaced the CMS village superintendents.[62]

British War with the Ashanti Empire (1823–1900)

In 1821, the British Crown took control of the territories on the Gold Coast (now Ghana) from the African Company of Merchants (1752–1851), a British-controlled and subsidized trading company that was dealing in slaves.[63] The company had been in decline since the Royal Navy's blockade of the slave trade after passage by Parliament of the Abolition of Slave Trade Act in 1807.[64] Brigadier-General Sir Charles MacCarthy was appointed governor of the Gold Coast besides his duties as governor of Sierra Leone. He launched a campaign to resist the Ashanti tribe against the more peaceful Fanti who inhabited the coastal region. Mustering an army of Fanti tribesmen, local militia and regulars from the Royal African Colonial Corps, MacCarthy marched through the unfamiliar country to intercept the Ashanti army.[65]

Unfortunately for General MacCarthy, his column of five hundred men encountered the ten-thousand-strong Ashanti force on 21 January 1824. After sporadic skirmishes in alien terrain, MacCarthy's men ran out of ammunition. The re-supply was bungled, and his reinforcements failed to arrive. Instead of four barrels of powder, his besieged troops received one, the other three containing pasta. His reinforcements were lost whilst his porters and men deserted in the face of the overwhelming Ashanti force. MacCarthy ordered his men to play "God Save the King," loudly. This appeared to enrage the Ashanti as they beat their drums and advanced, crossing the Pra River. MacCarthy was cut off and surrounded. He was seriously wounded and, rather than being captured, took his own life. The Ashanti king took MacCarthy's head as a trophy and had it made into a gold-rimmed drinking cup.[66] MacCarthy's skull was recovered in 1829 and interred at Saint Saviour Church in Dartmouth, Devon, England.[67] MacCarthy was survived by his colored mistress, Hanna Hayes, who bore him a son, John, in August 1822. He excused himself to his family, claiming she was "almost white."[68] Not until 1900 did the British ultimately subdue the Ashanti after a series of wars that spanned the entire nineteenth century.[69]

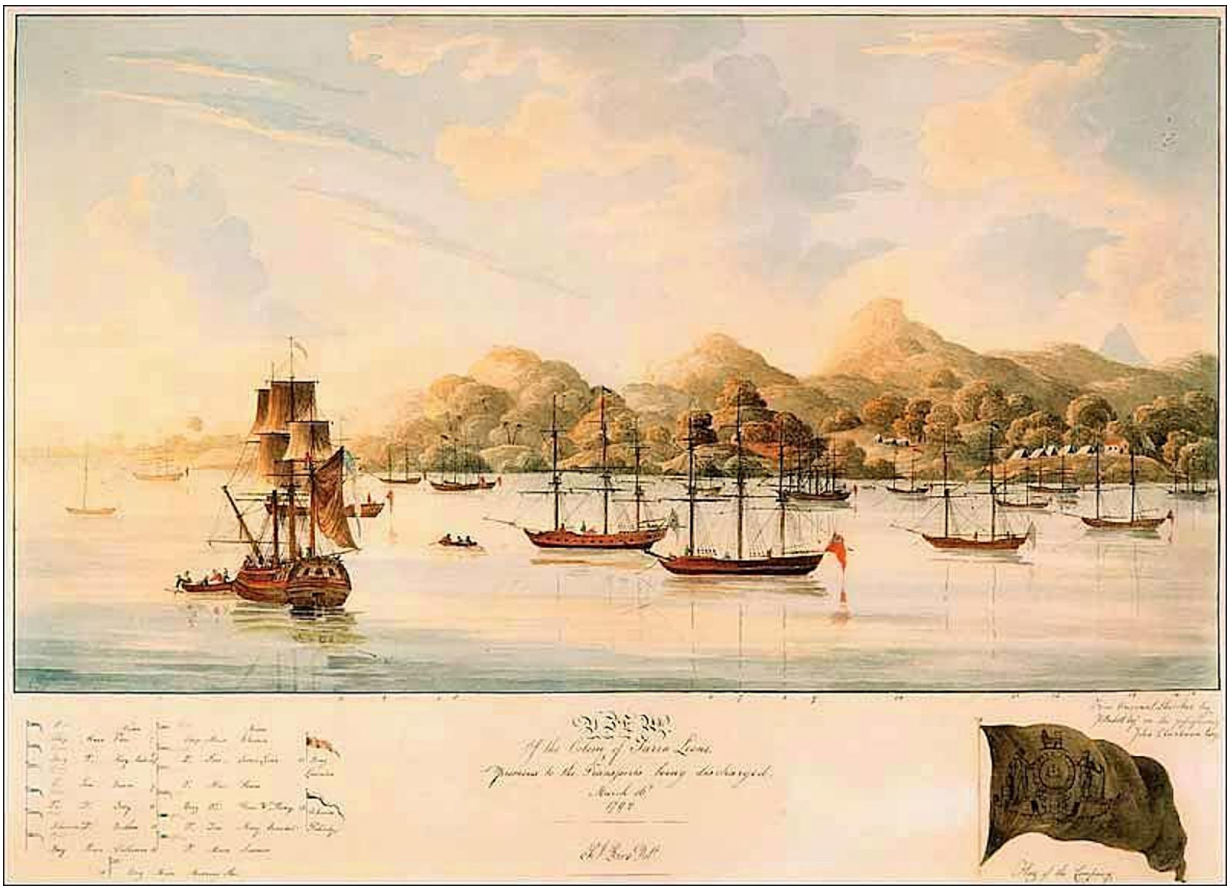


Figure 10: View of Sierra Leone Colony Previous to Transports Being Discharged of 1,196 "Black Loyalist" Settlers from Nova Scotia 16 March 1792, by John Beckett

Chapter 3

Elizabeth Richards Renner (*c.* 1767–1826)

Elizabeth (née Richards) Renner was an African American immigrant from Nova Scotia. She arrived in Sierra Leone in 1792. Sixty-five people died during the voyage.[1] As one of the Black Loyalists, she may have escaped slavery from a southern plantation in America. Her origins are unclear, and Elizabeth's date and place of birth are unknown, although it is known she was from America.

On 7 November 1775, John Murray (1730–1809), the 4th Earl of Dunmore and governor of colonial Virginia, declared martial law and promised to emancipate all slaves and indentured servants willing to fight for the Crown during the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783).[2] The colony of South Carolina was the center of slave trade in North America from about 1670; over forty percent of enslaved Africans passed through Charleston's harbor.[3] In 1780, British troops captured Charleston. Thousands of slaves, including men, women and children throughout the South, joined the British, seeking promised freedom for themselves and future generations.[4] At the end of the war, Elizabeth was likely transported by the British to Nova Scotia, Canada.[5] She was about twenty-five years old when she arrived in Freetown in 1792 with the fleet of fifteen British ships carrying 1,196 Black Loyalists. Elizabeth received a small plot of land in Freetown that she paid for with her own funds as part of the resettlement scheme. Elizabeth worked for Rev. Melchior Renner as his housekeeper. When she was about forty-one and he was thirty-seven, the two married on 27 October 1808 in Freetown.[6]

Elizabeth was admired by Melchior's colleagues. She ran the first CMS school in West Africa. Elizabeth taught over sixty girls at her mission school in Bashia in the Rio Pongas. She was her husband's advisor and interpreter with the Susu people. Melchior said of his good fortune in such a union, ***"The Lord has joined black & white together in love, peace & harmony."***[7] Rev. Renner built a house on his wife's lot in Freetown using CMS funds. Unfortunately, Elizabeth

never lived in her home. The CMS appropriated the house. She also never received compensation for her property.[8]

> ***In September [1808] M. Renner went to S. Leone, and the 27th of October married Elizabeth Richard[s], a young woman, born in America, and of a virtuous character; this was done with the consent of his Brethren, and it was Desirable that one should be married as the trouble with native women, and even society hired S. Leone women, was very grievous.***
>
> Reverend Melchior Renner to Secretary Josiah Pratt, CMS, London, 1812[9]

Fiona Leach, British author and historian, wrote to me regarding the Renners, guardians of my second great-grandmother, Mary Diana Hickson:

> *I examined the possible origins of Elizabeth Richard[s] in my book [Chapter 6]* Reclaiming the Women of Britain's First Mission to West Africa: Three Lives Lost and Found. *As she came to Sierra Leone as part of the mass emigration of black people from Nova Scotia in 1792, she must have been one of those who fled north on Britain's defeat in the American War of Independence but, as there is no mention of her in the surviving records [very thin] of those who left for Africa, I wasn't able to establish whether she had been a slave or was a free woman. I do, however, link her to two families named Richards who made the journey. I also speculated as to how she came to be so well educated, but couldn't shed much light on it.*
>
> *The extract [Renner to Pratt above] comes from Melchior Renner's 'Short Account of the Mission and Missionaries in Africa,' written in 1812. His comment about 'the trouble with native women' has to do with the fact that she was his housekeeper before they married and in the Freetown of the time this was an ambiguous position—often referred to in the literature as 'housekeeper-mistress'. The new Governor in 1808 was particularly zealous in tackling the town's notorious immorality, so Melchior was keen to get married!*
>
> Fiona Leach, August 2019[10]

> *Renner married his Nova Scotia housekeeper, Elizabeth Richards, who went with him to the Rio Pongas, taught in the school and was an ornament to the mission.*
>
> Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone*, 1962[11]

Elizabeth earned a reputation as a respected CMS schoolmistress, taking charge of hundreds of girls in her care. She was fluent in the local language, Susu, and was a strict disciplinarian and devout Christian. She taught and cared for Mary Diana Hickson from the age of seven. Mary was one of the first female scholars to enter the mission school at Bashia in 1809.[12] The Renners took custody of Mary and her sister, Jane, when their father, Charles Hickson, died in February 1818. He was sentenced to prison in Sierra Leone for three years' hard labor, having been convicted a second time of slave trading.[13]

Elizabeth was considered an unusual talent, self-confident and much admired for the way she ran the girls' school at Bashia. ***"She was a determined, independently minded black woman capable of both impressing and intimidating those around her."***[14] She ran the first and best-managed school for girls in the CMS system in West Africa. Elizabeth was well educated for her day, with an elegant and fluid pen of the European letter-writing style of her time. She initiated correspondence, presenting herself equal to her European colleagues and employers—one who would not be patronized or ignored. It is not known where she received her education.[15]

The CMS schools were unique in offering a European-style education to all children, regardless of their origins. Mary Diana Hickson and her sister Jane were exceptional products of the CMS mission education system under Elizabeth.

> *When the CMS's German-speaking missionaries began to teach at Bashia … they brought with them a radical new method of education. Called variously the Bell method or the Lancaster method after the two men who developed it almost simultaneously, this system required one schoolmaster, and rewarded pupils for their academic accomplishments by giving top students the responsibility of leading classes. Students were to be paired in order that a strong student could help a weaker, and both might benefit by this approach. Not only did this method permit many hundreds of pupils to hypothetically be overseen by a single schoolmaster, but it also rewarded students solely on what they were able to accomplish; their work ranked them as opposed to the standing or purses of their family.… By purchasing slaves and then redeeming them, and by welcoming the sons and daughters of Nova Scotian or Jamaican Maroon settlers from Freetown, the missionaries created classrooms populated by the children of the elite, the children of slave traders, the children of former slaves, and children who had themselves been enslaved, and then rewarded their students for their performance alone. In theory, a former slave could become First Class, and teach or remonstrate with the children of the elite or of slave traders.*
>
> Katrina Keefer, "Missionary Education in Sierra Leone, 1793–1820," 2015[16]

Elizabeth Renner wrote a remarkable series of letters to CMS Secretary Josiah Pratt and his wife, also named Elizabeth, in London. The following is the first of only five letters known to have survived. They show her elegant command of English, self-confidence, intellect and demand to be regarded equal in initiating correspondence with her husband's employer. Elizabeth had completely transformed herself from a likely former African American slave, independent Black Loyalist and housekeeper to an accomplished and valued member of the colony and frequent guest of the governor. The following letter was read to the entire CMS committee in London in 1812.[17]

> ***Reverend Sir,***
>
> ***Had I had the pen of a ready writer, I would long ago have taken the liberty to address myself to you, and I trust you will excuse this present scribbling, coming from a creature of God whom his Providence has in-trusted but with a small talent. I am not, Sir, personally known to you, but so much you know that I am in the service of the Mission and that God has cast my lot in a fair place. I am not only happy in having a good husband in Mr. Renner, but feel myself very happy to be in a way where I can serve God and the cause of Christ.***

Elizabeth continued to write of her aspirations for the African girls in her care:

> ***My situation can lead my Lord to work out my salvation with fear and trembling, and the same situation affords me the means to do good to others—to teach children the fear of God, to impress into the minds of those female children about me, to be chaste, decent & honest, and to shew them such necessary works as are needful for females brought up in this country, and such virtues which I practice myself are not hard for me to teach these children. I like children and the children in our house [I must praise them] like and regard me as their mother. It goes now in the fourth year that I am in the country and in the Society's service, in a busy and large family, but I am not yet tired of it, and if God upholds my feeble constitution, I like to stir about and sit down with my girls and do for them as much as I can. I conclude with begging to be remembered in your prayers, and I beg kind remembrance to your Lady from a distant friend.***
>
> ***I am Reverend Sir, your humble servant***
>
> ***Elizabeth Renner***
>
> Elizabeth Renner, 12 February 1812, Bashia[18]

In British society, corporal punishment was considered an indispensable part of child-rearing in the 1800s. Elizabeth was not squeamish about making ***"them pay with their back."*** In a letter to the wife of the CMS Secretary Josiah Pratt, Elizabeth Renner wrote about one fire at Bashia and her stern discipline of the African children in her care. Professor Leach reports that Mary Hickson led the girls in a ceremony to dedicate a church at Canoffee, where the girls were all dressed in white with silk ribbons, including Mary's sister, Jane.

> ***My dear friend, Mrs. Pratt***
>
> ***At the time I was confined a whole week to my bed on account of my lame knee but was a little stronger the day the fire happened, so that I was able to walk down stairs, the boy carrying my trunk before me and the other people brought me the beds; all what I had in two chest of drawers was either burnt and stolen by the natives…. Amongst many girls belonging to the place I had but one that went astray; the rest I kept in good order and out of vice, but all by a necessary severity. The schoolgirls I keep in a similar way, making them to sew, to wash and ironing; no idle person can live with me, and those that are idle and lazy must pay for it with their back…. You are blessed to be mother to many children, and I trust you can manage them with little trouble; and it must give you great pleasure to see them round your table like olive bra[n]ches; a blessing which hitherto has been denied me.***
>
> Elizabeth Renner, 21 June 1815, Bashia[19]

> *In fashioning a new identity for her girls, Elizabeth [Renner] oversaw every aspect of their visible lives, closely monitoring physical appearance, comportment, language and behavior. A neat school uniform has always been a powerful statement of social, moral and intellectual superiority. It was also used by the missionaries as a means of controlling female sexuality, with the girls' intentionally shapeless dresses serving to de-emphasize the sexual being … the girls always in virginal white to symbolize purity … on short notice all [forty-eight] girls wore white frocks and white caps with a silk ribbon.*
>
> Fiona Leach, *Reclaiming the Women of Britain's First Mission to West Africa: Three Lives Lost and Found*, 2018[20]

At Bashia, pressure by the Royal Navy West African Squadron in the Rio Pongas affected enrollment at the school. By 1815, these incursions resulted in a decrease in pupils fathered by local slave traders. Young John Hickson, son of the infamous Charles Hickson, was remarked upon:

> *About the age of 12 years [John Hickson], the son of a slave trader on the Îsles de Los. He was called home before his father was taken by the English to be tried in Sierra Leone.*
>
> Katrina Keefer, "Missionary Education in Sierra Leone, 1793–1820," 2015[21]

Beginning in 1816, Freetown was divided into parishes managed by a superintendent clergyman provided by CMS and paid for by the government. In addition, the CMS provided for and paid teachers while the government paid for churches and schools. These policies gave the government greater control over the missionaries and required that clergy become involved in government administration and justice, which they resented and opposed.[22]

Also in 1816, missionaries in the Rio Pongas reached a crisis point. Local headmen and slave traders began removing their sons and daughters from the school. Slave traders suspected the missionaries at Bashia and Canofee were in collusion with the British authorities in Freetown. In addition, several children at the Bashia school, run by Rev. Renner and his wife, Elizabeth, died in 1816 during a yellow fever outbreak, causing the locals to suspect some problem with the Renners.[23] These conflicts led to the removal of twenty-five children. Tensions erupted after a Royal Navy vessel intercepted an American slave ship, causing the local people to protest. Their economic wellbeing and wealth depended on the slave trade.

In the wake of these events, conflicts escalated into January 1817 with continued threats of violence toward Rev. Renner and his family.[24] On 13 February 1817, the Renners fled the Bashia Settlement for Canofee. Rev. Renner was kidnapped and sentenced to death by native chiefs, as they suspected he was a spy for British authorities.[25] Their compound at Bashia was mysteriously burned on multiple occasions.[26] A traumatized Melchior Renner wrote to the CMS Secretary Pratt a few weeks later:

> ***To this day, I have been in heaviness, and mine eyes are weeping on the account of the burning down of my old residence, Bashia.*** [Later he wrote again:] ***But what are we to do? No houses? No clothes? No money! No rice!***
>
> Reverend Melchior Renner, Bashia, 1817[27]

With repeated threats made against his life and the series of intentionally set fires that destroyed their property and much of the settlement of Bashia, in October 1817, the Renners abandoned the Rio Pongas altogether. The Renners transferred CMS property and approximately sixty children to the colony in Sierra Leone. Among them were Charles Hickson's two mulatto daughters, Mary Diana Hickson, age fifteen, and Jane Hickson, age twelve. They settled in the colonial village of Leopold in 1818, where Mary and Jane continued to live with the Renners.[28]

In 1818, the village of Leopold had a population of 469 Liberated Negros. Mrs. Elizabeth Renner was schoolmistress and Mary Hickson was her native assistant, receiving an allowance from the government. In July, the school had 144 scholars. The colonial governor spoke highly of Mrs. Renner's management of the school.[29]

In 1821, Elizabeth's beloved husband and CMS's first missionary, Rev. Melchior Renner, died in the village of Kent, on the coast of Sierra Leone. Katrina Keefer reports Melchior was forty-nine when he died on 9 September 1821. Fiona Leach reports he died at age fifty on 8 September 1821. He had served the CMS for nearly eighteen years in Africa. He probably died of yellow fever.[30] Elizabeth Renner wrote to CMS Secretary Josiah Pratt in London in 1822 regarding her last wishes and the funeral of her beloved husband. The date of his burial in 1822 is incorrect:

> ***My dear husband was buried on the 9th of Sept'r 1822*** [sic]***, at 2 O'Clock in the afternoon, and was followed by Mr. Joseph Reffell, Chief Superintendent of the Liberated Africans … likewise all the people in the Town, followed him to his grave.***
>
> ***Mary Hickson, the first girl in the [Bashia] School, and who is one of the Rio Pongas girls, and is at this time [September 1821] an Assistant … she with the Nurse, collected all the girls together, they were also dressed very neat, and arranged regularly in one line. The people were all dressed very clean. The children, poor things, all seemed to be very sorrowful, and very much cast down on that day; on account of their poor Master who had been such a kind father and friend to them; they certainly do lament his loss, and likewise all the people in the town; for he certainly was esteemed and beloved by most everyone. He was always ready and willing to give to his children and people all the good instruction he could, both for the good of their Souls and bodies.***
>
> ***He said, O my dear Love, I shall soon leave you. I said to him he should not talk so; he said he could not help it, for he spoke as he felt and assured me that he could not be very long with me, that he was going to a place where he would rest from all his troubles; that I should make up my mind to part with him, for he was going out of this sinful world. He also told me that he had given me unto the Lord, for he was well assured that He would help me.***[31]

Forced from their home in the colonial village of Kent after her husband's death, Elizabeth took some of her girls to the mountain village of Gloucester on the Freetown peninsula, about fifteen miles north/northeast of Kent. Mary Hickson, then age eighteen, was her native teaching assistant at the CMS school for girls in Gloucester. Being "first in class" implies Mary was top of her class and teaching under the Bell system, which explains how she quickly became a paid native teacher's assistant at age fifteen.[32] Mary is the only student mentioned by name in Elizabeth's letters. Jane

would become assistant teacher to her sister, Mary. Elizabeth continued in a plea with Secretary Pratt for the return of her land:

> ***Therefore, I should not want for anything that was good for my soul, nor yet for my body; likewise, he told me that the Honourable Society would support me as long as I would keep to them, that I should not want for anything; he also desired me to beg the honourable Society would be pleased to take into consideration the Lot and House, which is now called the Missionary House. His reason for so saying was, because the Lot was purchased by his Wife's money, (the House was built partly through the Society's money) but he said that it was his wish that his wife should have the Lot again; as for the house, if the Honourable Society could let her have the house and Lot, or to purchase them; and by so doing, he would take it as a great favour shewed*** [sic] ***to him. He said it is true he gave up the grant to Mr. Bickersteth, when he was in Rio Pongas; but begs of the Honourable Society if they would be so pleased to take it into consideration: this was the wish of my dear husband in his last hour. He desired to be kindly remembered to Mr. & Mrs. Pratt and Mr. & Mrs. Bickersteth, and all the members belonging to the Society; he hoped that they would all meet him in heaven around the throne of grace; he also said that his dear wife should meet him in heaven, and never part anymore.***

In her letter to Secretary Pratt, Elizabeth Renner described her mistreatment by Superintendent Beckley, who demanded all of Renner's books and belongings:

> ***I received a letter by Mr. Beckley [Superintendent] which was from Mr. Reffell, to encourage me to remain in Kent, as it was the wish of the meeting. When Mr. Beckley arrived in Kent, I was very unwell on account of the much grief and trouble that I had on my mind on account of the loss of my dear husband. When Mr. B came into the house, he found me lying on the Sofa. I was very glad to see him; after he asked me if I was well, he told me that the Brethren desired me to remain in the place where I was, and that I was to deliver up to him all the Books that my husband had belonging to the Society; and even this was not told me in a smooth way of speaking, but rather in a hard way of speaking. He spoke all these words to me before he even took a chair to sit down. I truly thought it very hard indeed, that after I had been in the Mission for nearly 14 years when my husband died, that I should be deprived so soon after his death of the books, and that every book should be taken away from me as soon as he was dead. I thought it hard indeed, for those few books were my only comfort, and they are also a great remembrance of my dear husband to me, and especially as his name is written in all of them; but all this I leave to the Honourable Society, if they***

> ***say I should give up all the books to the Missionary friends, and I am quite willing to do whatever they wish.***

Elisabeth then spent three weeks at Government House in Freetown on the invitation of the acting governor and his wife. They were both very kind to her, as was Mr. Reffell. Elizabeth continued:

> ***I beg the favour of the Honourable Society to send me out a Grave Stone*** [sic] ***to be placed at the head of my dear husband's grave, the inscription as follows: Sacred to the Memory of the Rev'd Melchior Renner, Missionary of the Church Missionary Society, who departed this life September 8th, 1821 in the 52nd year of his Age, (You will be pleased to deduct the value of the above mentioned Stone out of my Salary) leaving his poor Widow to lament his loss.***
>
> Elizabeth Renner, Gloucester, 20 November 1822[33]

Elizabeth's desperate pleas for the return of her land and for a gravestone to honor her husband's memory were ignored by the Christian society she had faithfully served for over a decade. As Leach reports, Elizabeth was heartbroken and deeply saddened as none of the missionaries bothered to visit, even when they knew her beloved husband was gravely ill. It was a bitter pill for Elizabeth. The African mission was being reshaped by newcomers who had little regard for the hardships faced by the pioneering missionaries and their families. Deprived of her status as a missionary wife, Elizabeth was soon to discover that her position was in jeopardy. Now she was just a Black woman employed as a lowly native school mistress. She soon came under attack.[34]

In a letter to Rev. Edward Bickersteth at the CMS in London, Elizabeth wrote in 1824:

> ***The present Superintendent of Kent, Mr. Beckley, often told me that he would take the School from me as soon as he was married; and so it was as he said, for I was told by a certain person that Mistress Beckley applied for my School two or three weeks before she was married to Mr. Beckley, she tried all she could to get me out of the place, so that she might get the School.***

Mistress Hannah Beckley had no prior teaching experience; however, as a white European, she would have received an annual salary of £50. Mr. Robert Beckley, superintendent of Kent, contrived to keep Elizabeth's students in deplorable conditions, then blame her so the students could be taken away.

The girls were then living in a grass hut that had a very poor roof. The sides were all open, so that the children were quite exposed to cold and also to anything that may disturb them. Elizabeth

begged Beckley to provide better quarters for her girls, which he refused to do. Elizabeth was in poor health and traveled to Freetown. In her absence, the girls' shelter was burned. Beckley took all the children and then called the constable to stop them from returning to Elizabeth's house. Mary and Jane Hickson witnessed this bitter, racially motivated conflict.

Elizabeth was not about to give up her girls without a fight. Three missionaries visited her at Beckley's request and tried to convince Elizabeth to relent. They complained Elizabeth assumed too much authority. She was then ordered to the mountain village of Gloucester and forced to relinquish all of her husband's books and CMS documents that had been demanded by Beckley soon after her husband's death. The standoff was finally resolved by Governor MacCarthy, who this time did not come to Elizabeth's rescue. In January 1824, MacCarthy died fighting the Ashanti on the Gold Coast. With his departure, racist attitudes demonstrated by Robert Beckley toward their Black colleagues increased. In an act of defiance, Elizabeth kept twenty orphaned girls who had accompanied her from the Rio Pongas, including her two adopted daughters, Mary and Jane Hickson.[35]

Elizabeth continued:

> ***I was sick at the time but the constable did not go but waited till I got up and that with a broken heart: got all the children together and sent them over to Mr. Beckley; that was not enough, he wanted all the Rio Pongas children, and told them that he would give them more things than they got from me. But that did not avail anything; they would not leave me; and thank God they are still with me at Gloucester, & are doing well, and so are all the other children. Mr. Beckley is the first person that sent a Constable into my house, I hope that he will be the last; he often told me that I wore my husband's trowsers*** [sic]***…. But all this I leave to God, He will do what seemeth him good. I merely thought to let you know a little how I was treated by my friends. Please to remember me kindly to Mrs. Pratt.***
>
> Elizabeth Renner, 19 August 1824[36]

Corporal Punishment of Children

On the first day the Renners had arrived in the village of Kent in the spring of 1821, they found children chained together in slave irons. Melchior immediately removed them, then had them cut into pieces and made into nails.[37] In a shocking incident, William Randle, the preceding superintendent and schoolmaster in Kent, flogged a boy to death with a knotted rope in 1821. At his trial, it was revealed that Randle had thrashed three other boys for theft, deprived them of food and water, and made them work as slave laborers, building roads. Randle and his wife were

dismissed from the CMS following his murder conviction. It was likely that Randle was the one who had children put in the irons that Renner had removed on his first day in Kent.

The subject of corporal punishment of children in the care of the missionaries was raised by Rev. John Gerber (Johannes Glade H. Gerber 1796–1870), a close friend and confidant of Rev. Metzger, in the following letter. In subsequent correspondence, written on the same day that Mr. Beckley, superintendent of Kent, received Gerber's letter of 7 November 1825, Beckley demanded that Gerber produce witnesses for a proceeding at the courthouse in Freetown.[38]

> *Dear Brother* [Beckley], *Bananas* [Island], *November 7th, 1825*
>
> *So here have come to my knowledge some things of your Proceedings at Kent which I consider highly improper to be performed by any Servant of our society as well as illegal to a Magistrate, I find myself called upon to censure the same.*
>
> *The Proceeding, more particularly referred to, are*
>
> 1. *The Practice of confining the children under the floor of your Boys School=Room, nowhere there is scarcely any air, neither Room enough for them to sit up.*
> 2. *The Practice of putting Iron=Rings around the necks of little Boys and Girls, of tying them together with chains, for the Crime of running from the Town.*
> 3. *The Practice of giving Boys and Girls who have deserved some little punishment, into the care of other Boys and Girls, to inflect shame upon their body's.*
>
> *It would have long before this been my duty had been discharged, had it not have been my desire to avoid uncomfortableness between us; but I trust, if you consider the case, you will take it as an exhortation from a Brother, who sees the evil consequences which may arise, and injure both yourself and our Society at Large.*
>
> *With kind regards to Mrs. B., I remain*
>
> *Sincerely yours,*
>
> *J. Gerber*[39]

Robert Beckley's relentless persecution of Elizabeth was but one of his racially charged failings. Beckley and his wife were forced to leave the colony in March 1826. He was described as lacking in education, judgment and experience, and was formally reprimanded for his cruel treatment of the children in his care.[40]

Two Liberated African girls filed written complaints describing their mistreatment by missionary wives in the early 1820s. They had the courage and sense of justice to write letters directly to the

CMS authorities in London, explaining that they had been falsely accused and persecuted.[41] CMS Secretary Pratt knew that missionaries regularly used the cane, but he rarely issued a rebuke. Pratt understood that corporal punishment was considered an essential tool for child-rearing in British society in the 1800s. Causing physical pain, injury and suffering on children and slaves was and continued to be unjustly inflicted on those least able to defend themselves or retaliate.



Figure 11: Iron Slave Shackles

Elizabeth's last correspondences to the CMS committee in London were written in 1826. She had eighty girls in her care attending school. African schoolgirls were expected to provide free labor by producing clothing for the hospital. These working girls were deprived of the full curriculum available to boys, suggesting both class and gender discrimination. Working schoolgirls in Elizabeth's care—who may have been kidnapped and traumatized as recaptives (slaves freed by the British Royal Navy) or ransomed orphans as young as six—were required to wash and iron clothes and clean the schools and dormitories, as well as assist in food and meal preparation.[42]

> ***Report of the Girls' School at Gloucester***
>
> ***Dear Brethren,***
>
> ***The Lord be praised for his great goodness and tender mercy which he Hath schewed*** [sic] ***towards me and the dear children that are intrusted*** [sic] ***to my care, that through his great mercy we have all been spared to see the end of another quarter. Thank God for his great goodness, that not one death has happened among the children in our school throughout the Quarter. The number of female children that are living in the School at Gloucester at the present time is 80; but the whole number, including those who live in the town, is 97. The school contains 6 Classes, of which***

> ***all are busy employed in making up clothing for the Hospital. There is no Marking carried on in my school at present, because I cannot get any canvas to mark on.*** [She is probably referring to the practice of tracing a pattern on canvas.] ***They are all going on very well with their reading, spelling and writing. Four Girls have been married out of our School in this Quarter.***
>
> Elizabeth Renner, Gloucester, 21 March 1826[43]

In 1825, Elizabeth had 125 girls under her care with her able "Assistant" and "First in Class," Mary Hickson, at the Gloucester settlement. Jane Hickson was Mary's assistant teacher. However, beginning in 1824, Elizabeth and her girls were the victims of racial discrimination that became extreme after the death of her husband in 1821.[44/45] The colonial government had control of the management of the schools. The salary for a school mistress was £50 per year in 1821. After Governor MacCarthy's death, in 1824, the government dramatically reduced that to £15 sterling per year for a "native schoolmistress" and then further reduced it and Elizabeth's title to "native assistant" at £5 per year. The male native assistant's salary was reduced to £12. African women were victimized twice, for their color and gender. Meanwhile, white European wives who had just arrived in the colony with no teaching experience received £50 annually.[46] In today's currency, £5 sterling in 1825 had a purchasing power of just $475.[47] Colonial district managers received £200 per annum with no pension. Senior colonial officials, by comparison, received £2,000 to £3,000 per annum, some with an annual pension of £1,000 or more upon returning to England. This would provide a generous retirement benefit for several years' service to the Crown, with an equivalent purchasing power today of over £94,000.[48/49]

Elizabeth died on 29 May 1826, just weeks after she witnessed the marriage of her star scholar, adopted daughter and teaching assistant, Mary Diana Hickson, to Rev. G.W.E. Metzger. Elizabeth served the CMS as a highly regarded schoolmistress for eighteen years. Mary was her paid assistant for nine years and had lived with the Renners from the age of six or seven.[50] The once proud and respected "ornament" of the first CMS missionary school for African girls and successful founding architect of the education system employed throughout the colony, was in her last years of service, reduced to native assistant at a fraction of her prior salary. She soon disappeared from the historical record.[51]

> *Elizabeth Renner, a native African, wife of the Rev. Melchior Renner, was the first missionary to the Rio Pongo. Rev. Renner died in 9 Dec 1821* [date is in error]. [For eighteen years] *Elizabeth Renner has worked for the West African mission both at the Rio Pongo and Sierra Leone. She died on 29 May 1826.*
>
> Samuel A. Walker, *The Church of England Mission in Sierra Leone*, 1847[52]

Mary and Jane Hickson would have experienced similar cruel discrimination. This flagrant racism and demotion of women of color was to mark a period of rapid change in the colony and reflected a growing European attitude of British racial superiority throughout the colonial period. Within months of Elizabeth's death, the girls that had been in her care were dispersed to other villages within the colony. Mary and Jane continued serving the CMS as native teaching assistants. Within a year of Elizabeth's death, the village of Gloucester had fallen into disrepair and was all but abandoned by the missionaries.[53]

> *The story of Elizabeth's final poignant years offers a rare historical lens through which to observe the rapidity with which racial discrimination embedded itself alongside the subordination of women in mission and colonial culture. Women of colour were, inevitably, doubly disadvantaged.*
>
> Fiona Leach, *Reclaiming the Women of Britain's First Mission to West Africa: Three Lives Lost and Found*, 2018[54]



Figure 12: Melchior Renner's Grave Site, Kissy, Sierra Leone[55]

A List of the Children in the Settlement at Bashia
Mulatto Children Belonging to Traders

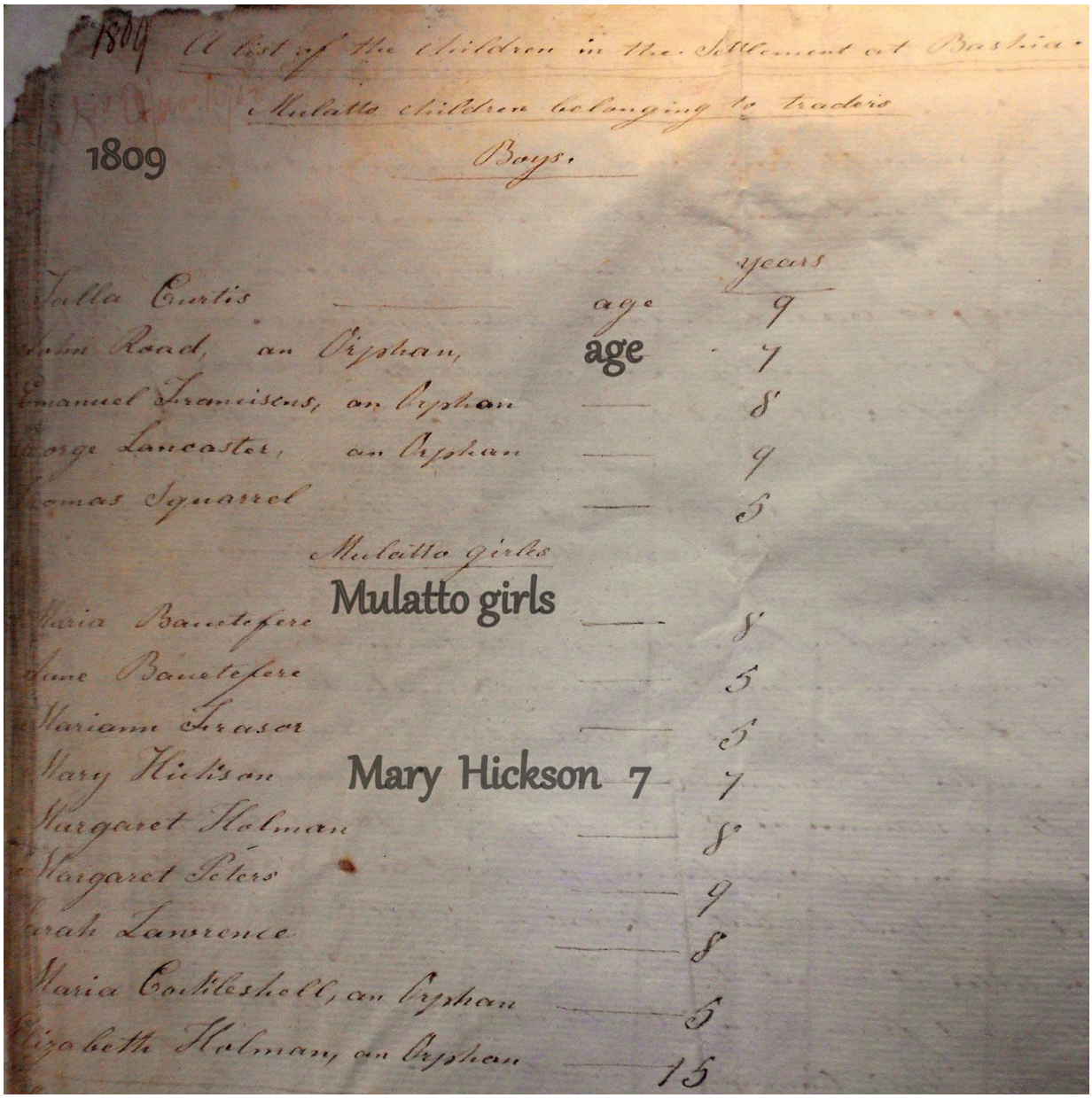


Figure 13: Copy of Original School Register, Bashia, Rio Pongas, November 1809 (Edited)[1]

Chapter 4

Mary Diana Hickson (1803–1847)

Charles Hickson was an English slave trader.[2] He operated a slave factory, which was a stockade or holding compound for slaves waiting to be shipped to the Americas. His factory was on Îsles de Los, approximately sixty miles north of Freetown, Sierra Leone.[3] He partnered with the influential and notorious Dutch slave trader Samuel Samo.[4] In 1809, Charles Hickson sent his oldest daughter, Mary, to the new Bashia missionary boarding school run by Rev. Melchior and Elizabeth Renner, situated at a former slave factory on the upper Rio Pongas.[5] In 1810, Hickson enrolled his son, John, and youngest daughter, Jane, at Bashia. Charles Hickson was my third great-grandfather. His oldest daughter, Mary Diana, was my second great-grandmother.

CMS missionaries "Rev. [Leopold] Butscher and [Johann] Prasse, with Mr. Renner, went to the Susoo [sic] country.… Soon after their arrival [July 1808], a trader named [Benjamin] Curtis transferred them to a factory at a place called Bashia, on condition of teaching his children."[6]

Like many slave traders, Hickson took an African "country wife."[7] I could not identify the mother of Hickson's three children. This anonymous African woman is my third great-grandmother. She was most likely Susu. Her oldest daughter, Mary, spoke the language.[8] The Susu were a peaceful ethnic group living in West Africa, primarily in present-day Guinea and northwestern Sierra Leone. They were amenable to the missionary's presence and teaching.[9]

The mission school registry at Bashia shows Charles Hickson's two daughters as "mulatto."[10] The registry does not mention John Hickson's race. It was convenient for slave traders to rid themselves of mixed-race offspring at missionary boarding schools where they were cared for, learned English and gained European customs and skills. These children were strangers in two worlds, not quite European nor sufficiently African to be accepted by either culture.[11] The Bashia school registry of 1809 to 1816 records Mary, John and Jane Hickson. The following compiled registry of students includes name, sex, age, race, date of birth, affiliation or parents, nation and/or birthplace. It was

common for the children of wealthy slave traders to be accompanied by a "servant," or personal slave. The missionaries purchased those children identified as "ransomed" from the slavers.

Registry of Bashia Students, Compiled (1809–1816)[12]

Mary Hickson	age seven	mulatto	DOB 1803 from Îsles de Los
John Hickson	age six	[no entry]	DOB 1804 from Îsles de Los
John Hickson	left settlement: 1815		Affiliation-Parent's Name: Slave Trader
Jane/Jenny Hickson	age four	mulatto	DOB 1806 from Îsles de Los
Hanna Hickson	–	[no entry]	DOB 1801 Servant

The school registries recorded Mary Hickson in attendance each year from 1809 to 1815 at the settlement of Bashia, and at Canoffee in 1816. School registries frequently listed mulatto children belonging to slave traders with an X, showing their parents agreed to pay for them to attend boarding school. Some entries had an X next to Mary Hickson's name. In 1811, Rev. Leopold Butscher records students Mary Hickson, eight, and Jenny/Jane Hickson, five, as "sisters-mulatto." Rev. Butscher notes Mary as competent in writing and ciphering.[13] The Hickson children were absent from Bashia in June 1815, when their father went to prison in Sierra Leone. However, the sisters were back in Bashia in December 1815, but not their brother, John. Mary and Jane appear twice in a registry of girls entered by Rev. Renner at Bashia in 1815.[14]

Charles Hickson was arrested and tried with his Dutch slave trading partner, Samuel Samo, in 1812. Hickson was acquitted. The Hickson children left Bashia for several months in 1815 after their father, Charles Hickson, was arrested a second time and convicted of slave trading.[15] In February 1818, Charles Hickson died in Freetown soon after being released from prison, where he spent three years in hard labor.[16]

The Renners left the Hickson sisters in the care of Rev. Jonathan Klein and his wife, Susanna, at the Kapparoo settlement on the mainland opposite the Îsles de Los, while they arranged the transfer of their property and sixty girls from Bashia to the colony in Freetown. William Fantimani, a local Susu headman and supporter of the missionaries, delivered the two sisters to the Renners at Îsles de Los, their birthplace, so the sisters could proceed with them to Sierra Leone in May 1818.[17/18] Now orphaned, the two Hickson girls lacked the protection of their influential father. They were in danger of being kidnapped and sold into slavery. Thus, the Renners requested and were granted custody of Mary and Jane Hickson.[19] From this, we can infer that Mary and Jane were living with the Renners from about the ages of seven and four, respectively, on an almost continuous basis until they both married European CMS missionaries. Mary married in 1826 at twenty-three, and Jane was twenty-two when she married in 1828.[20] Reverend Melchior and

Elizabeth Renner raised, educated and cared for my second great-grandmother, Mary, and my second great-aunt, Jane, from an early age.

The Trial of Samo and Hickson

In April 1812, Charles Hickson, a white British subject from Leigh, England, and his slave trading syndicate partner, Samuel Samo, a Dutch trader, were the first to be tried under the British Slave Trade Felony Act of 1811 in Sierra Leone.[21/22] "On the 9th of April, Charles Hickson … was acquitted by the jury."[23] "The white men on trial are British subjects and not Africans."[24] After spending three months in jail, Governor Maxwell pardoned Samo, after presiding Judge Robert Thorpe ruled that the Rio Pongas slavers were operating beyond British jurisdiction and Samo was not a British subject.[25]

The Trial of Samuel Samo Slave Trader

Indicted for the trading in Slaves and tried at the court of Oyer and Tirminer, held in Sierra Leone, on the Coast of Africa, before the honorable Chief Justice Thorpe, L.L.D. on the 7th 8th 9th and 10th of April 1812.

The cruelty and turpitude practised by the slave traders will also appear, and serve to add an increased horror towards that diabolical commerce, at the mere contemplation of which, every mind not hardened by the profits accruing from it, involuntarily shudders.

Gentlemen,

Indictments will be laid before you in the trial of Samuel Samo and Charles Hickson, for the trading in slaves, since the first of September 1811, in violation of the fifty-first of the King chap. 23. The British Parliament passed above 10 bills for meliorating good condition, and affording comfort, and preventing cruelties that had been practiced on the negroes in their transatlantic passage. The Grand Jury found true bills of indictment against Samuel Samo and Charles Hickson.… Another paper was produced from Samo's desk shewing [sic] *that a combination was entered into by the principal factors of the Rio Pongas, not to have any dealings with blacks and native traders under the forfeiture of 500 bars or dollars. The object of this agreement was to monopolize the slave trade to themselves; this agreement was signed by Cunningham Wilson, Samuel Samo, Charles Hickson, W. [William Henry] Leigh, and John Ormond, dated 25th of November 1809; the signatures were provided.… It appeared from the bill of lading that the slaves were all branded on the right thigh,*

> *the witness being asked how the brand was effected, replied, that it was done with a hot pipe, which burned the mark on the flesh. Samo's solicitor argued that as a Dutch citizen … these laws are made for British subjects only.*
>
> *The Trials of the Slave Traders*, 1821[26]

As a condition of their release, Charles Hickson and Samuel Samo signed formal pledges to abandon the slave trade. Hickson returned to his slave factory on Îsles de Los after being acquitted in 1812 and swiftly resumed slave trading. Samo lingered in jail in Freetown until July. The Kings of the Susu and Manding nations, together with other headmen of the Rio Pongas, petitioned Governor Maxwell on behalf of Samo. They all agreed to quit the slave trade in return for Samo's pardon. British authorities could then claim that Samo was sufficiently punished while averting a crisis over sentencing a non-British subject beyond Crown territory. Governor Maxwell pardoned Samo, who returned to his factory at Charleston in the Rio Pongas and renewed smuggling and slave trading.[27] The headmen pressured Rev. Renner to sign the petition supporting Samo, but he declined. The missionaries tried to remain neutral, disregarding the commerce in humans that surrounded them, but after 1812, that become increasingly impossible.[28]

In 1815, the government tried Charles Hickson again in Sierra Leone for slave trading. He was sentenced to three years of "… hard labour on the public works."[29] Charles Hickson died in February 1818 in Freetown after being pardoned by the governor.[30]

> *Events at the Îsles de Los in early 1818 brought the question of American interest in those islands to the attention of [Governor] MacCarthy and eventually resulted in the 'Treaty of Cession' [for the islands] signed on 6 July 1818. In 1818, the two principal non-African traders on the islands were Samuel Samo and Mr. [Charles] Hickson of Leigh [England], both assumed at Freetown to be agents of American commercial interests. In January, MacCarthy reported that Americans were regularly landing trade goods on the islands and from there they were being smuggled, without duties paid for goods carried on non-British vessels, into the colony tax free.*
>
> Peter McLachlan, "Travels into the Banga and Soosoo Countries in 1821"[31]

In October 1817, after continued conflicts following the suspicious burning of mission settlements at Bashia and Canoffee, and under pressure from Governor MacCarthy, CMS Secretary Pratt ordered all missionaries to abandon settlements in the Rio Pongas and return to the colony in Freetown with orphaned children in their care. In May 1818, the Renners completed the transfer of sixty children to the colony. Among them were Mary and Jane Hickson. They left their native country escorted by the Renners, never to return. Rev. and Elizabeth Renner moved to the

settlement of Leopold on the Freetown peninsula. As their guardians and adoptive parents, Rev. Melchior and Elizabeth Renner kept the two Hickson sisters.[32]

Did Charles Hickson see his three children before he died in 1818? Who was the African mother of the Hickson children? What became of John Hickson? Was John also a mulatto? Available records offer no answers. However, we know that Mary and her sister, Jane, were safely in the custody of the Renners and lived with them for over seventeen years until they each married.[33] Mary was teaching at fifteen and was "first in class." Mary and Jane Hickson both become paid Assistant School Mistresses under the watchful and stern care of Elizabeth Renner. Later, they were demoted to Native Assistant, reflecting the government's creeping racist policy of demoting African teachers.[34] Mary is the only student of Elizabeth Renner who is mentioned in both the annual CMS *Missionary Register* and in Elizabeth's letters to CMS Secretary Pratt in London.

Fiona Leach sent me a copy of the original 1816 register from the Kapparoo settlement school on the coast, east of the Îsles de Los. "By chance I noticed from my notes that a William Hickson, age 5, from the Îsles de Los is registered at the school at Kapparoo [by Rev. Jonathan Klein] on 23 November 1816. I have a very poor photocopy of it, which I will try to send to you. Of course, the slave traders often had many 'wives' so there may have been lots of other little Hicksons around that we don't know about!" William's race is omitted. He has an X next to his name in the register. A note in the register says, "The Friends of those who are marked thus X have promised to pay for them." Although Charles Hickson was in prison in Freetown in 1816, he could still support his children in the missionary schools. When Mary and Jane arrived at Kapparoo in early 1818 on their way to meet the Renners, would they have seen their little brother?[35]

Jane Hickson married English CMS missionary Edmond Boston in 1828.[36] He died in 1830. Jane then married English CMS missionary William Young in 1834. Jane [née Hickson] Young died in Sierra Leone on 17 March 1841, at thirty-five.[37] Did Jane have any surviving children?

Elizabeth Renner's demotion to Native Assistant from Schoolmistress, with a dramatic reduction in salary after her husband's death, must have been shocking and humiliating. She and her girls were sent to the mountain village of Gloucester. In March 1825, Elizabeth Renner had 140 girls in her care at Gloucester. She taught them reading, spelling and writing in six classes with the help of her Native Assistant, Mary Hickson. She kept the students busy making clothing for the local hospital. Elizabeth died 29 May 1826, likely from the rheumatic fever she'd suffered for years. The CMS *Missionary Register* mentions her passing, which was more than was afforded to her husband four years earlier.[38]

> *One of the Society's oldest servants in the Mission, our respected sister, Mrs. Renner, has been most unexpectedly removed from us. She had been afflicted for some time*

> *with pains in her knees. And had afterwards an attack in the stomach; but was not considered in danger.… On Sunday evening … she raised herself up in bed, knelt down, and prayed for a considerable time, and then, quietly taking leave of her attendants, she directed them to retire to rest. Early the next morning she was observed by one of those about her to be apparently fainting: they hastened to her relief and immediately administered some cordials; but it was too late: the conflict was over, and the spirit had taken its flight no more to return.*
>
> *Missionary Register*, 1826[39]

On 11 April 1826, Mary Diana Hickson married Rev. Metzger at the mountain settlement of Gloucester. Their union was witnessed by Mary's guardian, Elizabeth, just weeks before Elizabeth died.[40/41] Rev. Metzger's best friend, Rev. John Gerber, officiated their wedding.

Many European men entered relationships with Black women. These women were euphemistically referred to as "country wives."[42] The lack of European white women in the colony, combined with a long-established practice of white men in positions of power treating young Black women as property and sexual objects, led Governors Zachary Macaulay (1768–1838)[43] and William Dawes (1762–1836)[44] to oppose these loose and "shockingly irregular" relationships.[45] From a practical perspective, women in the colony simply outnumbered men. In 1811, nearly 60 percent of the colonial population was female, comprising African-American Nova Scotian and Jamaican Maroon settlers of African and mixed-race descent. Many Nova Scotian settlers were Christian, spoke English as their first language, survived the climate and disease and had acquired property, making them a desirable choice for marriage.[46]

CMS authorities did not initially oppose interracial marriage in Sierra Leone, unlike the London Missionary Society in the South African Cape colony in 1817.[47] Between 1808 and 1812, there were four such unions in the West African colony between missionaries and women of African descent.[48] The Renners were the first interracial CMS couple. In letters to CMS Secretary Pratt in London, Rev. Renner wrote:

> ***But should I be asked; she [Elizabeth] is a Christian in the true sense of the word? To this I would be obliged to answer.… She has Christian actions, Christian virtues, and this suffices me.… My good wife … desired to be remembered to you and to all who have not much aversion to coloured people.***
>
> Reverend Melchior Renner, 1810–1811[49]

Six further unions between missionaries and women of mixed-race African descent took place over the following decades. There may have been more; however, CMS records may have intentionally ignored this practice.[50] As with Mary and Jane Hickson, there is no mention of their ethnicity in the *Missionary Register* in announcing their marriage to white CMS missionaries.[51]

In Rev. Metzger's case, he initially proposed marrying a native woman after the death of his first wife, Christine, during childbirth. His brethren rejected his newly betrothed as unacceptable. Metzger subsequently proposed to Mary, a well-known and "First Class" schoolmistress since the age of fifteen, raised by the pious and strict disciplinarian, Elizabeth Renner, herself an African-American. Metzger's brethren, therefore, deemed Mary a satisfactory missionary wife. However, by the 1820s, "interracial marriage was frowned upon and miscegenation regarded as distasteful and 'unnatural.'"[52]



Figure 14: Gloucester Church, Sierra Leone, *c.* 1820
Where Mary Diana Hickson & Reverend G.W.E. Metzger
Married on 11 April 1826—Photo by Fiona Leach[53]



Figure 15: Stiftskirche Cathedral, Stuttgart Evangelical Lutheran Church, Württemberg, Germany (est. *c.* 1240)

Chapter 5

Reverend George William Emmanuel Metzger (1800–1855)

George William Emmanuel (G.W.E.) Metzger was born on 30 December 1800, in Gross Sachsenheim, Ludwigsburg, in the Duchy of Württemberg (as Georg Wilhelm Immanuel). Baden-Württemberg is the current name for the state in southwest Germany, east of the Rhine. It is the place of origin for my Metzger (aka Mezger) family. We derived the surname Metzger from the German "Metzger," meaning butcher. G.W.E. Metzger's father was Immanuel Gottlob Mezger (21 Dec. 1773–24 March 1833), an apothecary. His mother was Johanna Willhelmina Roth (15 Jan. 1770–06 May 1814). Both were from the Duchy of Württemberg. Metzger had seven siblings.[1/2]

Württemberg suffered great hardships and enormous loss of life during the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815). King Frederick I of Württemberg initially fought on the side of Napoleon but then allied with Austria in 1813 and fought against Napoleon. His son, Frederick Wilhelm, then took command of the Army of Württemberg. Following the death of Frederick I, in 1816, Frederick Wilhelm I became king of the Duchy of Württemberg. Crop failures and famine in the "Year Without a Summer" in 1816 compounded the suffering of his subjects. After taking office, Wilhelm I initiated sweeping reforms, resulting in the approval of a constitution in 1819.[3]

Andrea Rhyn, archivist and historian at the Basel Mission Archives in Basel, Switzerland, sent me a copy of the original portrait drawn of G.W.E. Metzger in 1821, after he graduated from the Basel Seminary. He was twenty when the drawing was made. Rhyn confirmed biographic data regarding Rev. Metzger from the Brethren Registry at the Basel Mission Archives.

> *He was born in the town of Gross Sachsenheim, in the district of Ludwigsburg, today a suburb of Baden-Württemberg (Southern Germany) on December 30, 1800. He was called Georg Wilhelm Immanuel Metzger and was known to his peers at Wilhelm. He*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Linda Metzger Enticknap was raised in Elyria, Ohio. She attended Kent State University after graduating from Elyria High School in 1964. After moving to San Diego, she continued her education at Mesa College and the University of California, San Diego. Linda started an interior design business that was twice recognized by *Sunset* magazine for her practical designs and creative home improvements. She had a successful career as the co–owner of a real estate company. She managed her own accounting and tax consulting business as sole proprietor.

Linda lived in Ohio, California, Alaska and Baja California Sur, Mexico. She is fortunate to have traveled extensively, visiting six continents. In her travels she studied one of her passions, the cuisines of Mexico, Thailand and Italy. Her halibut chowder recipe won first place in an Alaska state–wide competition. She volunteered at the Sumatran Orangutan Reproduction Centre in Sumatra, Indonesia. Linda studied Nile crocodile reproduction in KwaZulu–Natal, South Africa.



Figure 24 Metzger Memorial

Timothy C. Coleman, Zachery C. Coleman, Linda Metzger Enticknap, Lisa A. Metzger Lalonde
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Cemetery, Valley City, Ohio 2022

An avid birder, Linda worked on a tropical bird research project in the Usambara Mountains of Tanzania. Linda volunteered for many non–government organizations working in conservation biology as treasurer. She enjoys camping, hiking, birding, gardening and reading historical novels.

Linda raised three sons, Timothy, Gregory and Benjamin. She has three grandchildren. Linda is retired, living in Oregon with her husband, Peter, and their beloved Flat–Coated Retriever, Raven.

