Left: Cotton Tree in downtown Sierra Leone, on Siaka Stevens Street, that marks the location of the first mass held by resettled Africans in 1792.

Right: An illustration of liberated slaves arriving in Sierra Leone, from Samuel Griswold Goodrich’s *A System of School Geography Chiefly Derived from Malte-Brun* (1835)

These two images represent two major themes that are linked in the history of Sierra Leone. These are colonization and the transatlantic slave trade.
Basic Timeline

Overview of the TAST in Sierra Leone

- 1462: Portuguese Explorers begin identifying Serra Lyoa
- 1490s-1670s: Luso-African culture evolves on the coast
- 1545-1580: Mane people conquer area of Sierra Leone
- 1670: English set up first trading factory at Bunce Island
- 1787-1789: Britain’s first attempt at SL colonization fails
- 1792: Britain’s second attempt at colonization “succeeds”
- 1807: British Empire bans their Transatlantic Slave Trade
- 1808: Britain makes Sierra Leone their first Crown Colony
  and establishes the West African Squadron to free slaves
- 1839: 2,000 slaves illegally shipped from Gallinas per year
- 1885: Krio culture has largely developed in Sierra Leone

The English were mainly active at the Sierra Leone and Sherbro Rivers. Slave traders shipped people mainly to Georgia and South Carolina, what was called the Low Country.

Left: Sengbe Pieh or Joseph Cinquiz, leader of the Amistad Revolt of 1839. He is on the 5,000 Leones bill.
Sierra Leone indicated on the Cantino Planisphere, drawn by an unknown Portuguese mapmaker in 1502. Sierra Leone came to be known as part of the Windward Coast because it was to the windward of major settlements on the Lower Guinea Coast.

A couple of things were significant about the Windward Coast in Atlantic Africa:

1) Major stopping point in the Transatlantic Slave Trade for provisioning trade — rice, millet, water, yams, and seeking shelter

2) Decentralized states in the region — Bullom, Loko, Temne, Sherbro, Susu, Fule, et cetera

3) The location of first major colonial projects in West Africa — Sierra Leone (1787, 1792) and Liberia (1820-1843)
Sulima on the Gallinas River will be emphasized in the movie we are watching on Thursday. This is where Pedro Blanco ran Lomboko fortress.

Atlantic traders were active on the Scarcies, Sierra Leone, Sherbro, and Makona Rivers.

The Mende and the Temne are examples of heavily Mangudised people who were invaded by the Manes in the 16th century. The people who were invaded by the Manes were collectively known as the Sapes.
View of a Bullom town on the coast of the Sierra Leone river called Ya, Ma Cooba’s

Sierra Leone did not have large kingdoms like other regions of West Africa. There is no Futa Toro, Futa Jallon, Bondu, Asante, Dahomey, Oyo, Benin, or Kongo. The area is much more decentralized.

From Africa and Africans by John Thornton: “In all, only about 30 percent of Atlantic Africa’s area was occupied by states with surface areas larger than 50,000 square kilometers, and at least half of that area was occupied by states in the medium-sized (50,000 to 150,000 square kilometers) range. The rest of Atlantic Africa was occupied by small, even tiny, states...Thus, one can say with confidence that political fragmentation was the norm in Atlantic Africa. By this account, the ‘typical’ Atlantic African probably lived in a state that had absolute sovereignty but controlled a territory not exceeding 1,500 square kilometers (smaller than many American counties, perhaps the area occupied by a larger city.” (104-105).

Conclusion: We tend to focus on large states when we discuss the Transatlantic Slave Trade in West Africa (think about Gates’ emphasis on the Asante in his Wonders of the African World segment); however, the slave trade was just as often run by smaller states.
Image from the second edition of John Matthews’ *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (1791). This image shows a conference that Matthews is having with a native Bullom chief in the Sherbro River estuary.
Understanding Africa in Space

How do historians think about African geography?

*Environmentally*

Geography plays a big role in African history as well will see. Sometimes these environments span across regions, i.e. Senegambia or the Upper Guinea Coast

The woodland savannah had a lot more small states and a lot less density than grassland savannah. Sierra Leone receives 40 inches of rainfall in the wet season.
The Portuguese in Atlantic Africa (1440s-1630s)

**Geographic traditions**
- Set relations with the trading regions of Atlantic Africa
  - *e.g.* Connections between Brazil and West-Central Africa

**Architectural traditions**
- São Jorge da Mina built on the Central Gold Coast in 1482

**Artistic traditions**
- *Portuguese Soldier with a Musket* from 17 c. Benin, Nigeria

**Linguistic traditions**
- *Panyarring* from the Portuguese word *apanhar*
- *Cabocceir* from the Portuguese word *cabeca*
- Factory from the Portuguese word *feitoria*
- *Palaver* from the Portuguese word *palabra*

---

**The Portuguese are the first influence**

**In terms of the European powers,** Atlantic Africa was the domain of the Portuguese for roughly two centuries (1440s-1630s)
- Kongo and Elmina were controlled directly by the Crown
- The Atlantic islands were leased out to captaincies
- Independent traders settled on the mainland
Case Study – Early Connections between Cape Verde and the Rivers of Guinea
By the 1490s, Lancados, tangomaos, and Luso-African traders are coming to Sierra Leone from the Portuguese settlements at Cape Verde

Reading from Toby Green’s *The Rise of the Trans-Atlatic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589*
Chapter 3: “The Settlement of Cabo Verde and Early Signs of Creolisation in Western Africa,” 95-119
Chapter 5: “The New Christian/Kassanke Alliance and the Consolidation of Creolisation,” 149-174
Sierra Leone had some of the best deep-water harbors in all of West Africa at the Scarcies, Sierra Leone, and Sherbro estuaries. This allowed large ships to anchor closer to the water than they could in places like Benin or Nigeria. Here is an image of the entrance to the harbor on the Sierra Leone River.
The Mane invasions are the second influence. Manguidised warriors known as the Mane conquer Sierra Leone from the northeast.

Film we are watching in class on Thursday, *Ghosts of Amistad*. Makes the argument about the Poro male secret society and the 1839 revolt. **The Mende claim to be the originators of the Poro.** Initiation rites of men into adulthood. Circumcision rights, warrior training, puberty to manhood, regulate warfare, check the power of chiefs. The *Sande* is a female-only analog. **The gris-gris here is an example of creolization.**

**Right:** “Warrior with Poisoned Arrows” from Francis B. Spilsbury, *Account of a voyage to the Western coast of Africa; performed by His Majesty's sloop Favourite, in the year 1805* (London, 1807). This image is from Sierra Leone. Mende warrior. This warrior has some Mandinka influence, probably from the Manguidised Susu and Fula tribes to the north.
The British are the third influence

**Joseph Corry's watercolor of Bance Island from 1805, from *Observations on the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: W. Bulmer & Co., 1807).**

The English Royal African Company (RAC) traded for slaves and provisioned their slave ships at Bance Island in the Sierra Leone River since 1672. The fort was abandoned by the company in 1730, and it was owned throughout the remainder of the century by a private company called Grant, Oswald & Company of London. Then it was owned by John and Alexander Anderson of London. The fort reached the height of its involvement in the slave trade between the 1780s and 1807.

**Henry Laurens of Charleston, South Carolina, is an example of a wealthy planter who recognized the connection to rice farming on the Windward Coast.** He worked with the owner of Bunce Island, Richard Oswald, between the years 1750 and 1787 to acquire enslaved Africans with experience cultivating rice in tidal, wetland ecologies. He is one example of a planter who articulated preferences for Africans from Sierra Leone because of their knowledge of rice cultivation (*Black Rice* by Judith Carney, 90).
This is a map of Bunce or Bense Island in Sierra Leone from 1727.
Bunce Island historical summary describes the history of the island. Contrast this site with the forts memorializing the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Ghana and Benin. The Sierra Leone government has not embraced diaspora tourism to the same degree as these other countries. Sierra Leone suffered a long period of Civil War (1991-2002) during the exact years that these other nations embraced diaspora tourism under presidents Rawlings and Soglo. Poverty and disease has further hindered the country’s development.
Images of Bunce Island national monument today. The site was abandoned in the early nineteenth century (c. 1835) when local slave traders like Pedro Blanco had to move to more secretive areas such as Fort Lomboko. Blanco was a Spanish slave-trader allied with King Siaka of the Vai.
Images of Bunce Island national monument today. The site was abandoned in the early nineteenth century (c. 1835) when local slave traders like Pedro Blanco had to move to more secretive areas such as Fort Lomboko. Blanco was a Spanish slave-trader allied with King Siaka of the Vai.
“Each person will be allowed, by common consent, to possess as much land as it may be judged he or she can cultivate, to which they will always be at liberty to add as much more as their necessity, or convenience may require; and of which they may enjoy the possession and produce, in security and freedom”

- Henry Smeathman (1786)

The plan of Britain’s first colonial settlement in West Africa was designed to serve several purposes:

1) **Address racism back home in Britain** – many people wanted to relocate poor black people from London

2) **Address the concerns of black refugees** – runaways slaves from places like the North American colonies

3) **Find an economic alternative to slavery** – replace the slave trade with “legitimate” or “rationale” commerce
Contemporary image of the British colony, called the “Province of Freedom,” created at St. George’s Hill in Sierra Leone. This is looking north to the Bullom Shore. North side of the Sierra Leone Peninsula.

1787-1789 – Province of freedom; 400 blacks and 60 whites from England; poverty, crop failure, disease, violence; eventually destroyed by the Temne chief Naimbana

1792 – British try a new colony with Afro-American settlers from Nova Scotia, this time it succeeds, although many die in the process

1799 – Revolt of settlers against the colonial establishment as a result of poverty and lack of opportunity, put down by imported maroons from Jamaica

1808 – Britain incorporates SL as a Crown Colony, sets up West African Squadron and VA Courts, and starts resettling the “receptive” or “liberated Africans”

1787-1885 – Krio people/culture is formed out of the resettled Africans – creole language, British names, middling economic positions, college, Christianity
Table showing the “Recaptive” or “Liberated Africans” during the nineteenth century, taken by the British West African Squadron

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recaptives</th>
<th>Recaptives in Decade as Percent of Total Number of Recaptives</th>
<th>Number of Captives Who Embarked from Africa</th>
<th>Recaptives as Percent of Total Number of Captives Who Embarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1808–1817</td>
<td>23,239</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>603,000</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818–1827</td>
<td>20,949</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>795,000</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828–1837</td>
<td>62,169</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>721,000</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838–1847</td>
<td>47,744</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>643,000</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848–1857</td>
<td>28,296</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>390,000</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858–1863</td>
<td>17,053</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>198,710</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,205,000</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data derived from tbls-h-exp-2019.sav at the Voyagers Web site, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tbl/database/download.faces. For an immediate approximation of column 1, readers can use http://www.slavevoyages.org/tbl/database/search.faces?from=yfrhtc&to=1863&data=yfrhtc&ts=1808&v=1818&ts=1848&ts=1858&v=1863&prop=lastname&crit=0.001. and go to the tables tab to generate departures of slaves from Africa who were subsequently liberated from slave ships. This generates 30,000 departures—slightly more than is shown in column 1. Making decisions about who was liberated and who was not, especially for cases involving non-British vessels, requires more sophisticated programming than the Voyagers search interface allows. For the exact figures readers will have to use the downloadable SPSS version of the data.
The number here is 94,787 or 53% of all liberated Africans ended up in Sierra Leone. The colony also attracted other Africans from around the Atlantic World, including members of a group called the “Black Poor” in London, runaway African-Americans in Nova Scotia, and Afro-Jamaican maroons.

The Krio were black poor from London, Nova Scotians, Maroons, transatlantic migrants, and receptive or liberated Africans from all over West Africa.
Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1809-1891) was one of the so-called liberated Africans. He was born in Yorubaland, now a part of Togo, Benin, and Western Nigeria. He was enslaved as a young man, “rescued” by the British African Squadron, and freed by the Court of Mixed Commission at Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 1821. He converted to Christianity, and then received formal training in London and at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone (f. 1827). He was ordained in London in 1841. In 1864, he was appointed the first African Anglican bishop. He produced texts in both the Igbo and Nupe languages. These included a Yoruba dictionary, Yoruba translations of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, and the Bible. He married a woman named Asano, who he met on the slave ship on the slave ship that rescued him.