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FROM THE SOIL UP:
SIERRA LEONE AND THE RURAL UNIVERSITY IN THE WAKE OF EMPIRE

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

After the formal end of empire, African academics, students and campus laborers worked to upend enduring British authority over urban and rural higher education in Africa. In Sierra Leone, British professors and their families remained on the campuses after independence in 1961 and maintained a high level of residential and administrative privileges. To translate persistent inequalities into new forms of African autonomy, Sierra Leoneans sustained an everyday campaign to protest the racialized division of resources, and at the same time recruited American personnel in order to dislodge British academics and delink African universities from British universities. Amidst these conditions, challenges to the uneven distribution of scarce campus resources—from housing to piped water—aided wider campaigns to level the material conditions of international development. And the local agendas of campus workers, from their dislike of British food to their preference for ginger farming, impeded some of the agendas of a postcolonial state and its Anglo-American partners. The widespread effort to reclaim local control of African universities ultimately changed institutions in Britain and the United States, and yielded new forms of African influence on American expansion in the wake of British decline.

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INTRODUCTION

Education, Development, and African Influence on Anglo-American Relations

In British West Africa the colonial college was a critical site in the struggle for and against imperial control. The Colonial University Colleges—a label signifying affiliation with a university in the United Kingdom—were subject to European institutional standards and to a foreign curriculum that was overseen primarily by expatriates.¹ From the 1930s onwards these urban colleges pulled African students and teachers into the hierarchies of colonial governance, while at the same time exposed the mechanisms of colonial rule to new forms of critique and contest.² While West African postwar social movements pushed for reforms in labor relations and civil service polices, students-turned-faculty tried to undo colonial conditions at Achimota College in Ghana, Ibadan College in Nigeria, and Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone.³ These academics, along with staff and students, aspired to transform a system that let them work as teachers but not as advocates for Africanization. And while high-level talks were underway to decolonize the state, they led movements to decolonize the colleges and organized educational agendas that remain alive today.⁴

¹ Amina Mama, Teresa Barnes, “Editorial: Rethinking Universities I” in *Feminist Africa* Issue 8 (2007); p. 2. As of September 2014, accessible at <http://agi.ac.za/journal/feminist-africa-issue-8-2007-rethinking-universities>. J.F. Ade Ajayi, Lameck K.H. Goma, G. Ampah Johnson, *The African Experience with Higher Education* (Association of African Universities/James Currey, 1996) pp. 67-70; and J.D. Hargreaves, “The Idea of a Colonial University,” *African Affairs* 72 : 286 (1973).

² Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain: 1900 – 1960, Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (Lawrence & Wishart, 1998).

³ Ajayi, Goma, Johnson (1996) pp. 69-70.

⁴ Tade Akin Aina, “Beyond Reforms: The Politics of Higher Education Transformation in Africa,” *African Studies Review* 53 : 1 (April 2010) p. 28; See also, Francis B. Nyamnjoh, Nantang B. Jua, “African Universities in Crises and the Promotion of a Democratic Culture: The Political Economy of Violence in African Educational Systems,” *African Studies Review* 45 : 2 (September 2002) pp. 1-26.

Yet the movement to Africanize established colleges was not confined to the city. As this dissertation argues, the tradition of reforming institutions inherited from the colonial-era while advancing postcolonial educational agendas also has a rural history. The history of postcolonial education in West Africa, I argue, is one deeply intertwined with the local and international politics of rural development in the wake of empire. For example, initiatives for new rural education institutions reflected how West African academics, students, workers and farmers navigated competing developmental agendas and used new international relations to disrupt old ones. The pursuit of African autonomy and the Africanization of higher education in rural West Africa, however, ran up against obstructions in the form of British and American determination to reproduce colonial relations through projects of international education. In the process, universities in rural West Africa emerged despite local and global constraints, and generated, in turn, new rural avenues for the pursuit of postcolonial education. Though this is a story about American and British ambition in the region, it is first and foremost a story of attempts by Africans to control the terms upon which education and rural development emerged as twin sites of national and regional advancement.

In Sierra Leone, in particular, the desire to develop new schools distinct from the Colonial University Colleges led some working on Fourah Bay College to seek out the promise of higher education in the rural parts of their country. The possibility of transforming colonial education to meet the needs of rural postcolonial West Africa preoccupied Sahr Thomas Matturi, a Sierra Leonean professor of botany. Matturi knew the colonial education system from the inside out, having traversed the local and international network linking West Africa to the U.K. and beyond.⁵ Like other children of influential families in rural Sierra Leone, Matturi attended

⁵ Adi, (1998) pp. 120-50.

the Bo School for Boys. A preparatory academy on the outskirts of the largest city in the rural interior, Bo School fed students into the Colonial College system in West Africa and the U.K. After a successful undergraduate program at Ibadan, Matturi moved to east-central England, where he studied and taught at the University of Hull, eventually earning a doctorate in mycology in 1961.⁶ Matturi's journey from Bo to Ibadan to Hull led him to Fourah Bay College, where he found that the local features of the Colonial College system—privileged conditions for British academics and the repression of Africanizing initiatives—remained intact as part of a larger legacy of the formal end of British rule. Shortly after, he decided to leave Fourah Bay to work as first principal of a rural university he believed might disrupt a British imperial culture which continued to restrain Sierra Leonean educational aspirations.

Writing a letter in his hillside Fourah Bay College office atop Mount Aureol in Freetown, Matturi contemplated plans for higher education in Sierra Leone that “might be considered sacrilegious up on these heights of ‘Olympus.’”⁷ The heretical thoughts Matturi had in mind was a partnership with Americans whom he believed could help transform an existing rural campus into a school radically different from the one on ‘Olympus.’ Writing to his American interlocutors, Matturi explained that their plan to expand the Njala Training College into Njala University College was driven by “excellent economic reasons.” A new school at Njala built with American resources might improve agricultural research capacities and aid rural development initiatives. But possibly of greater urgency—“what is even of tremendous, immediate importance,” Matturi explained—“[is] to re-orientate our ideas and entire thinking from Victorian or even Medieval England to local problems and pressing needs in Modern Sierra

⁶ C. Magbaily Fyle, “Sahr Thomas Matturi,” *Historical Dictionary of Sierra Leone* (Scarecrow Press, 2006) p. 126. See also Hull City Council website, hullcc.gov.uk, section on “twinning” of Freetown and Hull in the “About Hull” section (accessed September 2014).

⁷ S. T. Matturi, Letter to Karl Gardner, May 30, 1963; University of Illinois Archives, Chancellor's Office, Office of International Program and Studies, Njala University College Subject File, 24/7/2, Box 4, K.E. Gardner File.

Leone.”⁸ As Matturi and his Sierra Leonean colleagues would repeat throughout the 1960s, Americans needed to put developmental resources in Sierra Leonean hands in order to aid an anti-British, locally orientated form of higher education.

The recruitment of American resources generated new possibilities as well as new constraints within the campaign for an alternative base of educational power in rural Sierra Leone. Spanning ten years (1963 – 1973) this Sierra Leonean-American engagement focused on the transformation a British colonial-era research station and rural training facilities at Njala. During this time Matturi served as principal of the new Njala University College. Along with his colleagues, Matturi put a great deal of effort into the fusion of Sierra Leonean, American and British histories and agendas in order to develop Njala. This transnational venture, however, proved challenging as Americans promoted an unsustainable form of rapid campus development and, in Sierra Leonean eyes, often appeared too similar to the British. Additionally, Sierra Leonean administrators found their efforts to manage relations with both the Americans and the British frequently encountered competing local initiatives emerging from nearby villages and other campuses in the country. Matturi’s agenda for reorienting Sierra Leonean higher education was therefore one of many local and international agendas, a fact made significantly clear when he was forced to resign in 1973 as a condition of further American funding for Njala.⁹

This dissertation brings to light the local, national and international agendas that shaped the postcolonial history of Njala in order to argue for its significance as a site of contest and struggle over what the combination of education and development should look like in post-

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ “Biographic Information – Sierra Leone’s Ambassador, Dr. Sahr Thomas Matturi,” Cable, October 1976, American Embassy, Sierra Leone, Office of Ambassador Michael Anthony Samuels, to American Embassy, Italy, Office of Ambassador John Anthony Volpe; Public Library of United States Diplomacy, search.wikileaks.org/plusd, accessed September 2014.

independence Sierra Leone. Here, the rural location of Njala is critical. Though focused primarily on urban locales, recent work has demonstrated how university development fit into national and intellectual agendas in West African countries. In his study of Nigerian universities, Ogechi Anyanwu argues that the search for educational policy was at the core of questions of national identity. In building new universities in each region of the new state, politicians and administrators had to balance the promotion of a nationalist curriculum with local ethno-religious demands.¹⁰ Alongside this history of campus expansion, argues Appolos Nwauwa, is the interrelated history a West African intelligentsia who formed alliances with political leaders to ensure that nationalization meant the Africanization of university curriculum. Within the contexts of decolonization, therefore, academic and national leaders believed that building universities was synonymous with building nations.¹¹

Yet despite the significance of nation-building projects in urban educational settings, this is not the whole story of development transfer in postcolonial West Africa. In this dissertation, I move the history of postwar higher education beyond its urban and institutional emphases in order to demonstrate how off-campus community agendas and localized contests over resources shaped specific sites of higher education in rural contexts. At these sites the politics associated with the material, infrastructural, and labor conditions of higher education are laid bare, and the exigencies of local community impact are made visible. Like other sites in West Africa, the international and national developmentalist agendas deployed at Njala were adapted, tempered and sometimes rebuked through local idioms and local control over the division of campus

¹⁰ Ogechi Emmanuel Anyanwu, *The Politics of Access: University Education and Nation-Building in Nigeria, 1948-2000* (University of Calgary Press, 2011).

¹¹ Appolos O. Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education For Africans, 1860-1960* (Frank Cass , 1996); See also Katya Leney, *Decolonisation, Independence , and the Politics of Higher Education in West Africa* (Edwin Mellon Press, 2003).

labor.¹² Such evidence echoes the arguments made by Joseph Hodge and Andrew Zimmermann for the colonial-era in West Africa. Together they demonstrate that the transnational economy of rural research stations evolved around intensive labor demands on experimental plantations and the contested use of local natural resources.¹³ In the postcolonial-era, rural outposts of agricultural education continued to depend upon and be shaped by local working and farming communities. In the pages that follow I account for the role these workers, farmers and families played in the transformation of colonial research stations into postcolonial rural universities.

Placing higher education and rural development in the same analytical frame allows us to appreciate the triangular nature of Sierra Leonean relations with American and British empire. As evidenced in Matturi's desire to use American resources to enable a reorientation away from the British, postcolonial education required Africans to negotiate with multiple partners and to hold their own not just among multiple players but *between* powerful western hegemony. These power dynamics were characteristic of the 1960s, which was a time when Sierra Leonean relations with Americans consistently referenced the British and Sierra Leonean relations with the British consistently referenced the Americans. To develop a new university, Sierra Leoneans like Matturi recruited and utilized American resources as they wrestled with American interests in order to transform a campus that had been established under British rule. To free Fourah Bay College from British oversight and contain American determination to reproduce colonial-era academic relations, Sierra Leonean students, workers and administrators had to constantly

¹² Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Wisconsin University Press, 1993); Melissa Leach, *Rainforest Relations: Gender and Resource Use Among the Mende of Gola, Sierra Leone* (Smithsonian Institute Press, 1994); Monica M. van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development: African Farmers at the Office du Niger, 1920-1960* (Heinemann, 2002); Paul Richards, *Coping with Hunger: Hazard and experiment in an African rice-farming system* (Allen & Unwin, 1986).

¹³ Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Ohio University Press, 2007); Andrew Zimmermann, *Alabama in Africa: Booker T. Washington, the German Empire and the Globalization of the New South* (Princeton University Press, 2010).

manage relations between Americans and Britons working in Sierra Leone at many scales at once. To do so, I argue, meant innovating methods to anticipate and counter the threat of Anglo-American imperial solidarity in West Africa.¹⁴

Comparisons of American and British empire in the postwar era often depict Anglo-American colonialism as sequential and produced through a series of inter-imperial exchanges or hand-offs.¹⁵ The story I tell from Njala and Fourah Bay College archives and the wide variety of official records and testimony related to the period challenges this narrative, in large part by re-materializing the labor and struggle of Sierra Leoneans, many of whom were canny readers of the imperial hand-off story and worked mightily to interrupt it. Meanwhile, the idea that one empire might simply take the place of another remains a central, largely unexamined assumption in theories of the “imperialism of decolonization.” In explaining how Anglo-American coalitions aided the postwar transition from formal to informal empire, W.M. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson conclude that, “President Kennedy’s ‘New Frontier’ began where Europe’s imperial frontiers had ended.”¹⁶ This formulation is accurate only insofar as it depicts aspirations for interchangeable frontiers amongst imperial peers. For West Africa, Ebere Nwaubani makes clear that the American desire to pick up where the British or the French left off was consistently inscribed into policy governing relations between the United States and Europe.¹⁷ What it is equally apparent, and especially clear in Sierra Leone, is that rather than a simple policy of replacement or grand design to have empires work in shifts, the production of imperial coalitions relied upon the situated coexistence of American and British interests.

¹⁴ Ebere Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2001) pp. 239-242.

¹⁵ Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2011) pp. 236-8.

¹⁶ Wm. Roger Louis, Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Decolonization,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 22 : 3 (1994) pp. 462-511.

¹⁷ Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa* (2001).

In the 1960s, Sierra Leoneans intervened at the ground level of imperial coalitions and upset the translation of inter-imperial policy into practice. Within the contexts of higher education and rural development, high and low ranking Sierra Leonean academics and officials challenged the Americans and the British through the cultivation of overlapping, three-way relations. Their assertions of control over the Anglo-American axis in Sierra Leone contradict the notion that empires operate as unimpeded and distinct entities freely transferring frontiers between each other. On the ground and in the school we find people standing in the way of those transactions, regulating the Anglo-American element of postcolonial politics, and defining the terms of triangulation.

In addition to producing new histories of rural higher education, attention to localized challenges to Anglo-American power make for new narratives of 1960s Sierra Leone as well. Historians of Sierra Leone often characterize the transition out from colonial rule in Sierra Leone as a superficial and exclusive process. Through comparisons with the more radical politics in Ghana and Guinea, they argue that Africanization in 1960s Sierra Leone was slow, and the political sphere more conservative and more attached than other new nations to a departing colonial regime. A.B. Zack-Williams and John Hargreaves, for example, argue that a small portion of society had an authoritative proximity to the political mechanics determining the transition to national rule in 1961. The majority of Sierra Leoneans, they argue, had a different set of slow-moving, frail relations to the promises of independence.¹⁸ Others argue that on the world stage Sierra Leonean independence was an unnoticed event. According to Samir Amin,

¹⁸ A.B. Zack-Williams, "Sierra Leone: Crisis and Despair," *Review of African Political Economy*, 49 (1990) pp. 22-33. John Hargreaves, *The End of Colonial Rule in West Africa: Essays in Contemporary History* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979) pp. 65.

after independence, Sierra Leonean politics drifted into a deep “doze.”¹⁹ The 1960s, for these authors, was a time when a brand of post-colonial conservatism propagated within an elitist political sphere and foreclosed alternatives. According to Ibrahim Abdullah, “the glaring absence of a radical post-colonial alternative” defined an anti-democratic transition from colony to nation, and set the nation of Sierra Leone in the wrong direction from the beginning.²⁰

It is no doubt essential to recognize that a relatively conservative governing class inherited and then tried to reproduce repressive political conditions in the 1960s Sierra Leone. However, there are risks associated with imposing an unnecessarily narrow or top-down framing of the imperfect origins of Sierra Leonean political independence. For example, in his recent book Matthew Lange categorized the governance of four former British colonies (Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Guyana and Botswana) as either despotic or developmental.²¹ Sierra Leone, he argues, exemplified despotism insofar as its citizens were unable to interrupt the progression of repressive institutions founded in the colonial-era. Suggesting that Sierra Leoneans were optionless in the face of misrule he concludes that, “[post]independence reforms simply built on and thereby strengthened the preexisting systems of indirect rule.”²² Rather than interrogate the local constraints and daily politics of postcolonial reforms of colonial-era institutions, here Lange misleads us toward the idea that Sierra Leoneans could only add to old systems. By this logic, any intervention into the reproduction of colonial-era institutions merely made things worse. As I argue throughout the dissertation, thinking about education and development from the soil up

¹⁹ Samir Amin, *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa* (Penguin: 1973) p. xvii. Also see, James P. Hubbard, *The United States and the End of British Colonial Rule in Africa, 1941-1968* (McFarland Inc.: Jefferson, 2011) p. 302.

²⁰ Ibrahim Abdullah, “Bush Path to Destruction: The Origins and Character of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF/SL),” in *Between Democracy and Terror: The Sierra Leone Civil War*, Ibrahim Abdullah, ed (CODESRIA: Dakar, 2004) p. 42. See also, Elipas G. Mukonoweshoru, *Colonialism, Class Formation and Underdevelopment in Sierra Leone*, (University Press of America: Lanham, 1993).

²¹ Matthew Lange, *Lineages of Despotism and Development: British Colonialism and State Power* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

²² *Ibid*, 113.

reshapes our understanding of where political struggle took place in postcolonial Sierra Leone and of how Sierra Leonean academics managed both western pressures and challenges from below as they tried to design and manage the conditions under which the new nation would engage the global marketplace of education and rural development projects.

In addition to locking Sierra Leone into what Lange calls its “poor developmental trajectory,” analyses that fail to take these struggles into account risks uncritically reproducing official narratives of development that serve broader assumptions about the need for continued Anglo-American hegemony in the postimperial world.²³ For example, in 1968 officials in the American embassy in Freetown claimed that postcolonial nationhood had failed in Sierra Leone, and the nation was trapped in a state of perpetual dependence. They argued that, “Sierra Leone is too small and too poor to have any meaningful long-term existence as an independent state”²⁴ The country, they added, would inevitably have to be supported by a regional, multinational organization like the United Nations or the British Commonwealth. Officials in Freetown informed their counterparts in Washington that American mining and shipping operations in Sierra Leone would not be put at risk in the future, as they did not anticipate “any radical shift” in Sierra Leone, and had confidence “the UK will remain Sierra Leone’s principal trading partner.”²⁵

The American ambassador, Robert Graham Miner, echoed the idea that Sierra Leone was a static country unable to change its historical trajectory. Writing in 1968 he claimed that, “Sierra Leone’s past contains some element of assurance that the situation may not degenerate into

²³ *Ibid*, 92.

²⁴ “Guidelines for United States Policy and Operations, Sierra Leone, June 1968,” American Embassy Memorandum, Freetown; National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, RG 286, AID, Sierra Leone Office.

²⁵ *Ibid*.

chaos, violence, nor bloodshed. Sierra Leone's revolutions are not as savage as those in the Congo, its tribal rivalries milder than those in Nigeria, its political fireworks are noisy, but relatively harmless, and its people are used to hard times." The American government and the American citizens working in Sierra Leone, he concluded, could rely on the durability of the post-independence status quo. "Somehow," he explained "Sierra Leone will probably muddle through and be much the same next year as it was last."²⁶

Yet different narratives of the supposedly conservative and static 1960s in Sierra Leone are possible. Most recently in *Paradoxes of History and Memory in Post-Colonial Sierra Leone* the authors push back against rigid categorizations within West African postcolonial history. They insist that choosing between conservatism and radicalism, development or anti-development, is inappropriate when telling the origin stories of postcolonial nations. Instead, what they argue for is analysis that avoids preconceived frameworks, and draws attention to the vast variety of political acts and competing agendas that do not fall neatly into pre-existing categories or cannot be reduced to a binary of conservatism or radicalism.²⁷ As I argue in what follows, when we analyze imperial interests from the soil up and track the innovations and aspirations of Sierra Leonean faculty, students, workers, and village residents we see how effectively they galvanized efforts to Africanize higher education and advanced agendas of local control over international development. Similarly, tracking the initiatives they took to manage three-way relations they faced with Americans and the British generated new forms of postcolonial contestation of Anglo-American power. When viewed from Njala, these multi-tiered

²⁶ Robert Graham Miner, "Annual Political and Economic Assessment of Sierra Leone," sent from American Embassy Freetown to American Embassy London, May 29, 1968; NARA, RG 59, West Africa Division Files.

²⁷ Sylvia Ojukutu-Macauley, Ismail Rashid, eds., *Paradoxes of History and Memory in Post-Colonial Sierra Leone* (Lexington Books, 2013).

contests at the intersection of rural development and higher education represent interventions into transitions made in the wake of empire.

Njala, 1920-1973: From Colonial Settlement to Rural University

Njala is a word and a space with multiple meanings. It is a location where land, knowledge and institutions are tied together just as much through dialogue as by the physical transformation of a landscape. Translated from Mende to English, it is a locative term meaning “by the waterside.” The name of the campus originates from the proximity to the Taia River, and the tributaries that encompass and flow through parts of the campus. Colonial records show that starting in the 1920s this particular area “by the waterside” acquired the status of a proper noun, sometimes written as “Njala village” or “the Njala settlement.”²⁸ The new capitalized referents were byproducts of the expansion of British colonial power in Sierra Leone. When the Colonial Ministry of Agriculture ordered more land claimed for agricultural experiments along the interior trading corridor, they opted for an area with plentiful water between the existing rural communities of Kania and Mano. As a result, the colonial government claimed the paths, farmland and forest tended by residents of Kania as part of a new government sponsored settlement. Shortly after claiming this land, British officials renamed Kania “old Njala” and began to organize the building of “new Njala” nearby.²⁹

The British colonial government envisioned building a research station and campus in the area they now called Njala. Though their vision was never entirely realized, colonial administrators imagined the schools and farms of Njala might become the “the heart of the

²⁸ F.C. Marriot, “Njala Agricultural Training College, Memorandum,” August 31, 1925, pp. 16-18 from “Correspondence relating to the proposed Sierra Leone College of Agriculture and Protectorate Teachers’ Training College at Njala,” Durham University Library (UK).

²⁹ Minutes for 1924, “Group Native Appeal Court, Moyamba District”; Public Records Office (PRO), Fourah Bay College (FBC), Box 561, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Development Files.

Protectorate” in rural Sierra Leone.³⁰ As was the case elsewhere in the British Empire, the colonial government of Sierra Leone was divided into two administrative units: an urban Colony on the coast; and a rural Protectorate of inland provinces. British administrators, as Barbara Bush notes, took the Colony to be the base of their imperial power, and the realm of Creoles, coastal diasporas, “detrribalized” urban workers. By contrast, the Protectorate was seen as a zone of indirect rule where society was further beyond the reach of the colonial state and more native than society in the Colony.³¹

Though the boundary between Colony and Protectorate was consistently breached by those it was meant to keep at bay, colonial officials in Freetown nevertheless saw it as their duty to maintain the authority of the Colony over the Protectorate. Erecting a college at Njala thus represented such an opportunity for an efficient and relatively cheap extension of power outward from the Colony. According to A.R. Slater, the Governor of the Colony of Sierra Leone, as well as his predecessors, teaching “every child of the Protectorate” at Njala was a tactical “flank attack [in the Protectorate] where a frontal attack would prove too costly.”³²

It was, in other words, a warlike stance in the Protectorate that provided the original inspiration for the Njala Training College. Despite initial fervor, the development of a campus to support crop experimentation and the training of rural school teachers limped through the 1920s and 1930s. George C. Taylor, a Sierra Leonean, lived and worked at Njala from the late 1930s to the early 1960s, when he was forced to retire as Principal of the Training College. According to Taylor, in the late 1930s the Njala campus consisted of only “twelve buildings... erected with

³⁰ R. J. Wilckison, Memorandum, 1922 from “Correspondence relating to the proposed Sierra Leone College of Agricultural and Protectorate Teacher Training at Njala.”

³¹ Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919-1945* (Routledge, 1999) p. 59.

³² A.R. Slater to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, September 29, 1925, pg. 3 “Correspondence relating to the proposed Sierra Leone College of Agricultural and Protectorate Teacher Training at Njala.” Here Slater references one of his predecessors, Governor R. J. Wilkinson.

mud and wattle.”³³ To make room for soldiers and army personnel stationed in Freetown during the Second World War, the colonial Ministry of Agriculture and its staff were relocated from the capital city to the rural settlement of Njala. This influx of new resources and residents caused the pace of development to accelerate. Workers dug trenches for water pipes, hung a grid of wires to carry electricity from a new generator, built new food storage sheds and erected a cluster of experimental primary and secondary schools.³⁴

The labor demands and urban-like qualities at Njala attracted families from around southern Sierra Leone. As a result, the population of nearby communities expanded substantially, and a new village called Makonde was founded in the 1940s. Those who helped build the campus remained in the Njala area. Many applied for enrollment in the agricultural and educational training programs, and others sent their children to the new experimental primary and secondary schools.³⁵

Construction and expansion at Njala represented the overall increase in rural development funds expended during the final decades of the British and French West Africa colonial regimes. From the 1940s onward those regimes initiated what has been described by historians D.A. Low and John Lonsdale as the “second colonial occupation.”³⁶ By this they refer to the desire of British and the French officials to simultaneously regain any imperial control lost during the Second World War and expand control in the more loosely governed rural sectors of

³³ G.C. Taylor, “Brief Notes on Njala Training College (Prepared by Principal Taylor),” from “Diary of Sierra Leone Survey Team” p. 20. James E. Crawford, Karl E. Gardner, Russell T. Odell, M. Ray Karnes, “Diary of Sierra Leone Survey Team Visits and Conferences, February – March 1963”; University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 1.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 22.

³⁵ Emmanuel Fannah, Interview, Makonde, February 2013.

³⁶ D. A. Low and J.M. Lonsdale, “Introduction: Towards the New Order, 1945-1963,” in *History of East Africa*, vol. 3, ed. D.A. Low and Alison Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); 13. For further discussion of the term see Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007) pp. 207-253.

the colonies. In Sierra Leone this meant an effort by British authorities to merge the administrative units of Colony and Protectorate in a more unified colonial state.³⁷ The construction of Njala itself, was part of this creeping extension of imperial agricultural policy into new territory. As James Scott and Paul Richards argue, the dual purpose of these rural research stations was the concentration of resources for crop research and farmer training, as well as the erection of a network of rural bases used to launch agricultural and educational interventions into farming communities.³⁸

In addition to aiding rural interventions in Sierra Leone, the campaign to make Njala “the heart of the Protectorate” revolved around the creation of a regional botanical garden on the campus. British administrators oversaw the concentration of specimens of oil palm, cocoa, rubber, coffee, and ginger. Local workers built field labs to house collections of crop pests and harmful fungi gathered from around the region. Along with students these same workers cleared land and tended experimental farms for fruits, vegetables, tubers and upland and swampland rice. Gradually Njala was made into an organic archive for the region, with the raw material of agricultural research deposited around the campus. The Njala landscape represented a patchwork of fragments that simulated the West African agro-ecology. As Roy Lewis, a British tourist, explained in 1954, the “wisdom of Njala” was the ability to use the Njala campus as a window into the wider world of Sierra Leone and West Africa. “To understand agriculture in the tropical rain forest belt,” he wrote after passing through Njala, “it is essential for the visitor to take

³⁷ John Cartwright, *Politics in Sierra Leone: 1947-67* (University of Toronto Press, 1970) pp. 24-5.

³⁸ James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (Yale University Press, 1998) pp. 289-90. Here Scott cites Paul Richards’ earlier work in *Indigenous Agricultural Revolution: Ecology and food production in West Africa* (Hutchinson Press, 1985).

peripatetic instruction among the green lawns, the screened bungalows, and hygienic pigsties, the experimental plots and nurseries, the laboratories and botanical collections.”³⁹

Even with its laboratories and specimens, however, efforts to define the material values of the campus, as well as the more abstract values noted by Lewis, had never been scientific. To those who resided on the campus or lived around it the campus represented something larger than itself, and it was indeed more than the sum of its lawns, bungalows, and pigsties. Toward the end of British rule over Sierra Leone, nearly one-hundred students and forty staff lived at Njala, making it one of the least populated but most influential locales in the rural interior of the country.⁴⁰ For them, the growth of the campus coincided with the layering of social relations at Njala. For British researchers and teachers, the campuses served as their headquarters within the rural basis of empire. For West African researchers and teachers—who most often held one or two degrees from British universities—the campus was a site of employment in an expanding civil service, as well as a place to engage the regional politics of decolonization. Students, for their part, animated the campuses, and maintained the experimental farms alongside laborers from adjacent communities.⁴¹

Upon national independence in 1961 the British staff vacated their residences at Njala. As they left, Sierra Leonean faculty, staff and residents of nearby villages began their work from the soil up, at first by initiating a series of reforms and improvements to the Training College campus. Training College faculty took control of administrative posts previously held by British officers, and translated new forms of autonomy into material improvements of the campus. The first Sierra Leonean principal of Njala, George “Pa” Taylor along with his wife Rita Taylor,

³⁹ Roy Lewis, *Sierra Leone: a Modern Portrait* (HMS, 1954) p. 40.

⁴⁰ Annual Report 1960, Njala Teacher Training College, p. 3; Public Records Office (PRO), Fourah Bay College (FBC), Box 513, Ministry of Education Files.

⁴¹ Annual Report 1961, Njala Teacher Training College, p. 3-4; PRO, FBC, Box 513, Ministry of Education Files.

oversaw incremental adjustments in the control over resources and everyday conditions of living and learning on campus. While Sierra Leoneans took control over the administration of Njala, students asserted new forms of control over the curriculum, reshaping the agricultural economy and relations with nearby villages in the process.⁴²

As the post-independence Africanization of Njala progressed so did the expansion of American interests in postcolonial West Africa. From their offices in Monrovia, Liberia, American officials anticipated the economic and political opportunities that would result from the end of formal British rule in Sierra Leone. According to one U.S. State Department official, it was essential the Americans in Liberia calculate “possible need to fill urgent gaps created by the departure of civil servants...from [the] present metropolitan power.”⁴³

In order to test predictions made in Liberia, Ernest Neal, an African-American coordinator of U.S. State Department policy in West Africa, moved from Monrovia to Freetown in 1961. He offered to help expand American-Liberian agricultural and educational projects into Sierra Leone, and to fund new infrastructure and institution building projects tailored to local interests. Acting on American interests to fill “gaps” created by British departure, Neal assembled an inventory of the amount of British expatriates working in Sierra Leone and inquired about their plans to either remain in or leave Sierra Leone.⁴⁴ Aided by American officials in Liberia, Neal succeeded in opening up an office for the Agency for International Development (AID) in Freetown in 1961. Very quickly the office was responsible for arranging a wide-array of projects and surveys of developmental potential. By 1962, Neal’s negotiations

⁴² Annual Report 1962, Njala Teacher Training College; PRO, FBC, Box 513, Ministry of Education Files.

⁴³ Joint State Department/International Cooperation Agency Message from Office of Acting Secretary of State, April 28, 1960; NARA, RG 59, West African Division.

⁴⁴ Ernest Neal, *Hope for the Wretched: A Narrative Report of Technical Assistance Experiences* (Washington, DC: Agency for International Development, 1972) pp. 74-77.

and State Department interests translated into American funded studies on everything from fisheries to taxes, scholarships for nurses and mechanics, complex trade agreements, and inquiries into the development of a Sierra Leonean Navy and large-scale agricultural plantations.⁴⁵

While still working for Fourah Bay College, Sahr Matturi met with Neal in 1962. Together they organized a trip to the United States to secure a future partner for the development of Njala.⁴⁶ In the U.S. they visited three campuses, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Berea College in Kentucky, and the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.⁴⁷ The time he spent at Berea College and the Tuskegee Institute convinced Matturi that neither possessed the resources and status needed for the Njala project. Matturi found these two schools to be “philosophically” aligned with Sierra Leoneans interests and was impressed by their local and vocational orientation. Despite this admiration, Matturi concluded that Berea and Tuskegee could not compare to the size and international reputation of the University of Illinois.⁴⁸ Additionally, Matturi determined that Illinois professors were more prepared for work in Sierra Leone. Since the late 1950s, the University of Illinois and AID had assisted in the administration of Uttar Pradesh Agricultural Institute in northeast India. Like Njala, Uttar Pradesh formed around a colonial-era research station. Matturi determined that experiences acquired by Illinois

⁴⁵ Sierra Leone Desk, Box 38; NARA, RG 286, Agency for International Development Contracts.

⁴⁶ James E. Crawford, Karl E. Gardner, Russell T. Odell, M. Ray Karnes “Education and Agricultural Development in Sierra Leone: Report of the University of Illinois Survey Team to United States A.I.D. Mission to Sierra Leone” (Freetown: Sierra Leone Government Printing Department, 1963) p. 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

professors with “similar problems in the setting up of like institutions in India would be valuable to the development of Njala.”⁴⁹

Within a year of Matturi’s visit to the U.S., Sierra Leonean and American officials decided to close the Njala Training College in order to begin building a new university upon the existing campus. This takeover of the Training College, I argue in Chapter 1, foreclosed competing visions for the development of Njala. The initiatives of Training College staff and students in the years after independence and before the new university opened in 1964 indicate a burgeoning campaign to Africanize Njala and adapt the campus according to new local agendas. By examining these preconditions, this chapter restores the contingent origins of a rural university and demonstrates how Training College residents were removed to make room for a more aggressive form of international development.

Chapter 2 situates the arrival and settlement of American professors at Njala within the context of global initiatives to export professors and American educational models. These initiatives, I argue, rested upon a ground level capacity of professors to reproduce colonial relations through the pursuit of inter-imperial connections. According to one American professor living at Njala, during the first two years of Njala University College (1964-1966) his Illinois colleagues maintained a “very heavy hand” in the development of the campus.⁵⁰ Accordingly, American professors enjoyed significant residential privileges while leveraging a form of administrative authority that consistently referenced the history of British imperial power in Sierra Leone. When analyzed from the ground up and through an inter-imperial lens, the social world of the mobile professor appears as key site in the production of American global

⁴⁹ Kathleen M. Propp, Harold D. Guither, Earl H. Regnier, William N. Thompson, *AID-University Rural Development Contracts* (Urbana: CIC-AID, 1968) p. 55.

⁵⁰ W. N. Thompson, letter to Joseph Kastelic, July 1964; University of Illinois Archives, Series Number 8/7/26, “Joseph Kastelic Papers, 1945-1970,” Box 1.

educational power. Additionally, this ground level and inter-imperial approach also reveals the urgency behind initiatives to develop local counterweights to contain Anglo-American excess in Sierra Leone.

Chapter 3 widens the scope of analysis to include Fourah Bay College, the urban campus in the capitol of Freetown. British professors at Fourah Bay maintained a high level of authority over the affairs the campus until 1967, when a campaign to nationalize Fourah Bay finally succeeded. Focusing on Anglo-American-African tensions, this chapter outlines the simultaneous development of initiatives to curb British authority over the urban campus of Fourah Bay, and American authority over the rural campus at Njala. Efforts to correct, manage, and sometimes reprimand white academics, I argue, shaped a wider movement in town and country to counter the racialized division of labor and campus resources. By mixing popular and administrative authority to regulate the behavior and privileges of white academics living and working on Sierra Leonean campuses, students, professors and campus staff upset the mechanics through which agents of foreign universities strived to intervene into African universities. In doing so students, professors, and campus staff generated a broad politicization of daily and material conditions that aided the Africanization of higher education in Sierra Leone and dissolved tensions at the end of empire into new forms of African autonomy.

Chapter 4 moves just outside the university to examine struggles for local control in the seven villages in the Njala area. Village residents, I argue, frequently contested the local developmental agendas advanced by the university and frequently questioned any claims of university authority over the villages. In providing the essential labor and testing grounds for the university, village residents enabled the expansion of the university. But in critiquing its agendas and repurposing its resources, village residents also set limits upon, as well as bargained the

conditions of that expansion. This chapter examines two strategies used by village residents to contest their incorporation into the university. First, I examine village level commitments to ginger farming in opposition to university pressure that ginger growing be abandoned. The international market value of Sierra Leonean ginger rapidly declined in the 1960s, but farmers in the Njala area found growing small amounts of ginger for profit provided a means to safeguard their autonomy on the edge of an expanding university. The second strategy examined in this chapter is the methods by which village residents utilized and repurposed university led efforts to build a model village in the Njala area. In the village of Makonde, specifically, residents first gained from model village programs and later used their privileged status in the Njala area to acquire new forms of leverage over the development of the university. Together these examples demonstrate that amidst the rapid influx of international personnel, rising availability of wage work, and an increase in the number of off-campus projects, village residents advanced alternative agendas and used new resources to engage and refashion the contradictions of postcolonial rural economies and postcolonial rural universities.

A Note on Sources

Each chapter utilizes oral and archival materials gathered in Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom and the United States. Interviews conducted in all three countries were done under University of Illinois IRB Protocols (Project #11525). Over the past three years I have had the privilege of talking with African, British and American professors, graduates and current students of Fourah Bay College and Njala University College, campus workers at Njala, and village residents of the Njala area. These interviews helped fill archival gaps, and provide for a range of memories and personal accounts used throughout the dissertation.

This dissertation is significantly shaped by the history of particular archives. The Njala University College archives were mostly destroyed or displaced during the regional war in the 1990s. The campus became a battle zone on numerous occasions, and contemporary records were saved at the expense of those from the 1960s and 1970s, the period covered in this dissertation. An informal process led by Njala faculty is currently underway to re-concentrate the surviving institutional files back on the main rural campus. Alongside these efforts, the Njala Library has reassembled an excellent reference collection of faculty and students publications from which I draw extensively. I also draw heavily from records housed in the branch of the Public Records Office on the campus of Fourah Bay College. Primarily I use correspondence and reports generated within the Ministry of Development, Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Natural Resources, but I also draw from the very scarce records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In fact, I was unable to learn the whereabouts of the majority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs records for the 1960s. Post-independence records from the Moyamba District—the home of Njala—also proved decisively difficult to locate. Much better luck was had with the unindexed institutional records of the University of Sierra Leone which contain personnel files of expatriate faculty members and minutes of academic senate meetings from the 1960s.

I was extremely grateful to have access to the personnel files of expatriate faculty because these records are closed in the United Kingdom. The staff at the Durham University Library made every effort to provide some measure of access to the records of Durham professors who lived and worked in Sierra Leone. However, much like the British Library in London, the best materials at Durham provided only for context and background to the Africanization of British education in Sierra Leone. In the future, I will make additional applications which might allow greater access to restricted files. In the United States, faculty

records and project correspondence housed at Hampton University (VA) and Kalamazoo College (MI) proved tremendously valuable, as did the files for the American Agency of International Development housed in College Park. The Sierra Leone Files at Hampton are unindexed, and only recently became available. Nevertheless, the opportunity to scratch the surface of a ten year engagement between Hampton and Sierra Leone has had enormous payoffs, which are particularly evident in Chapter 1.

Lastly, it is important to note the original source of inspiration for this dissertation. The chapters below can be traced back to when I encountered a jar of Sierra Leonean soil in the University of Illinois Archives. While holding this fragment of a global story I felt that a potential project suddenly and quite literally became more tangible. Days before I had made the decision that my dissertation would attempt to write a local history of empire that addressed the accumulation of global forms of power at land-grant universities in the United States. In particular, I wanted to focus on the hierarchies and international networks that developed when land-grant universities embarked on a global campaign of institution building in postcolonial nations. During this time land-grant universities gained power as bridge builders for American empire, and in the process generated the preconditions for neo-liberal public universities that continues to aid American expansion today. This alignment of land-grant universities with American empire partly explains why the Sierra Leonean soil was in the Illinois archives. Joseph Kastelic, an Illinois professor of Animal Science and the subject of Chapter 2, brought the soil back with him after working in Sierra Leone for two years. And as a result of his overseas work, and his sudden death in 1972, the jar rested in a box that, among other things, contained empty bullet shells from Vietnam and other types of fragments from his international career.

But there is another equally important reason behind why Sierra Leonean soil is in an Illinois archives. At the same time that land-grant universities tried to channel and reproduce American imperial power, academics and politicians in new nations advanced the project of building institutions for postcolonial education by recruiting new international resources from land-grant universities. Kastelic's jar, as I would find out, was a piece of much larger story of how an educational apparatus of American settler colonial expansion was reconfigured to alter the educational landscape of British indirect rule in West Africa. Accordingly, Kastelic's interest in possessing Sierra Leonean soil also stemmed from postcolonial African initiatives to cope with and transform uneven global conditions in the wake of empire. This dual expansion of land-grant universities and postcolonial universities therefore had pulled people like Kastelic into the world of rural development. The following chapters account for the global tensions encapsulated in that jar of soil, with each chapter explaining the origins and consequences of the encounter between the land-grant university and the postcolonial rural university.

CHAPTER 1

Competing Possibilities in the Last Years of the Njala Training College, 1961-1964

In the first years after independence in 1961, Sierra Leonean officials made every effort to position themselves as the drivers of new global partnerships. To occupy a controlling position over partners from West Germany, China or the United States, for example, meant managing the mechanisms by which British colonial-era projects were opened up for new forms of international investment. Milton Margai, the Prime Minister of Sierra Leone, and his brother Albert Margai, the Minister of Natural Resources, along with dozens of officials charged with overseeing national development projects, initiated an open-ended pursuit of new international resources in tandem with an inventory of colonial-era resources now property of the new state. This pursuit was flexible and constituted through a wide scope of unpredictable exchanges. Top and mid-level Sierra Leonean officials recruited participants from around the world and tried to induce an interest in projects begun in the 1950s or before. West German engineers were asked to assist the completion of a colonial-era hydroelectric dam, and Chinese rice-specialists were asked to overhaul colonial-era model rice farms, to name but a few of hundreds of examples of the dynamics of international development in postcolonial Sierra Leone.¹

To their interlocutors in the new American Agency for International Development (AID), officials in the Ministry of Natural Resources proposed that AID make large and long-term investments in the rural and agricultural economy of Sierra Leone. Those working for Albert

¹ “Co-ordination of Foreign Assistance,” Cabinet Memorandum from the Minister of Finance, January 4, 1962; Public Records Office (PRO), Fourah Bay College (FBC), Box 663, Ministry of Development Files, “Coordination of Financial and Technical Assistance.” See also, “Co-ordination of Development Projects, Cabinet Notes, 1961-64,” PRO, FBC, Box 652 Ministry of Development Files.

Margai, who would go on to succeed his brother as Prime Minister in 1964, asked that AID either directly fund efforts to help multiply the number of colonial-era cash crop plantations or offer subsidies to advance the long-held objective of mechanizing rice production.²

When American officials in Freetown hesitated to make direct capital investments in the local agricultural economy, as AID had done elsewhere in the world, Sierra Leonean officials settled for a less direct form of AID investment. With no cash or tractors coming their way from the United States, Margai and Ministry officials were invited into the massive market of sub-contracts facilitated by a growing AID bureaucracy.³ Eventually Margai agreed to allow American professors from a public, land-grant university to survey the landscape of agricultural education in Sierra Leone, with the hope that more resources would follow. Similar designs had developed in other postcolonial nations. As it had in India and Nigeria, initial surveys by American academics came attached with promises of further assistance from AID and the American university designated as a sub-contractor of AID.⁴ On the surface the American survey appeared a less definitive approach to acquiring new international resources. But as Sierra Leonean officials learned when they brought other nations in to survey British colonial-era sites, deep interest often lay in wait. The survey, conducted in early 1963, succeeded in surfacing American interests in further developing locales previously occupied by the British.

The survey team, comprised of four academics from the University of Illinois, took particular interest in developing the Njala Training College. This rural school was comprised of

² Albert Sidney Johnson Carnahan (U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone) “Sierra Leone Investments limited to explore possibilities of Plantation Agriculture,” July 13, 1962; “Record of Conversation,” Carnahan with Albert Margai, January 18, 1962; College Park, National Archives and Records Administration, Records Group 59, “AID, Sierra Leone.”

³ Ernest E. Neal, *Hope for the Wretched: A Narrative Report of Technical Assistance Experience* (Washington D.C.: Agency for International Development) pp. 71-80.

⁴ Royden Dangerfield, “Conversations with AID officials on May 13, 1963”; University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5.

the former headquarters of the British colonial Ministry of Agriculture, an Agricultural Experiment Station, and a Teacher Training College. To the surprise of the students and teachers working at the Njala Training College, the four members of the survey team were unimpressed by the educational and agricultural conditions they encountered at Njala. To the survey team the teaching seemed inefficient and “more comparable to high school level.” The quality of livestock, crops, and “management staff” also appeared to be deficient.⁵ Ultimately, the survey team concluded, Njala Training College was an institution losing purpose, in decline and in need of dramatic, internationally sponsored restructuring. They recommended the college be closed, and the staff, students and campus workers be replaced.

Residents of the Njala campus did not share the survey team’s conclusions, and found the proposed takeover and sudden displacement of the campus population disturbing. Not only did the closure of the college put the employment and education of staff and students in jeopardy, but it also threatened to interrupt reforms and improvements initiated in the first years after independence in 1961. The social world of the campus, the dynamics of improvement and successful efforts to Africanize the campus in the wake of British departure—abundantly apparent to those living at Njala—was largely overlooked by the survey team.

If the social worlds of the local African community did not register completely in the survey team’s vision for Njala, it was largely because they looked beyond the existing population in order to focus on the infrastructure of the campus. Ultimately, in the survey team’s judgment in 1963, the campus consisted of sufficient buildings but insufficient people. The former had a

⁵ James E. Crawford, Karl E. Gardner, Russell T. Odell, M. Ray Karnes, “Diary of Sierra Leone Survey Team Visits and Conferences, February – March 1963” p. 17-20; University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 1. See also, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group (RG) 59, U.S. State Department, West Africa Division, AID Freetown meeting minutes March, 1962.

future; the latter needed to be relocated in order to clear the way for a new university. Looking beyond the existing population, the survey team focused on the facilities, residences, and farmland that constituted what they believed was the bare infrastructure, or “nucleus” for a future institution. According to the survey report, “the existing facilities at Njala are reasonably well located and quite functional. Although they are limited, they can be used as a nucleus to develop the kind of integrated agricultural and educational institution which Sierra Leone sorely needs.”⁶ Though imperfect, the existing campus structures appeared to possess enough potential to attract long-term American commitment in transforming Njala Training College into a new rural university patterned after the land-grant universities in the United States. Shortly after the survey submitted their recommendations, the vision of depopulating Njala in order to reveal a “nucleus” for international development was written into the initial contracts between the United States and Sierra Leone. Months later the Sierra Leonean Parliament ratified the creation of Njala University College, and transferred all facilities, residences and farms from the old school to the new one.⁷

Rather than view the Illinois survey of in 1963, and subsequent closure of the Training College in 1964, as the only possible way forward at Njala, I argue it is important to see it as one of many possibilities. The idea of that Njala contained a sufficient “nucleus” of facilities inspired many to see Njala as a new base for the rapid expansion of rural higher education, and as a new arena where Americans might help birth a new university. However, such visions of an

⁶ James E. Crawford, Karl E. Gardner, Russell T. Odell, M. Ray Karnes “Education and Agricultural Development in Sierra Leone: Report of the University of Illinois Survey Team to United States A.I.D. Mission to Sierra Leone” (Freetown: Sierra Leone Government Printing Department, 1963) p. 20.

⁷ “Proposal for a Contract between the Agency for International Development and the University of Illinois for Assistance to be rendered by the University of Illinois in the establishment of a Land-Grant Type of University at Njala, Sierra Leone (July 1, 1963 – June 30, 1965)” (Urbana: AID-Illinois); see also “An Act to Make Provision for the Establishment and Incorporation of the Njala University College and for Purposes Connected Therewith,” (Freetown: Government Notice, 1964); University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 1.

“embryonic institution,” as one American professor referred to Njala when it was in its “infancy,” were persistently troubled by and indebted to competing visions for the development of Njala.⁸ As Premesh Lalu argues for the contradictions embodied in the original legal foundations binding universities to the state in South Africa, the actual spaces of campuses and material foundations of universities are equally sites of contradiction, marginalization, and unfulfilled aspirations.⁹ Beneath the legal and material origins of Njala University College is a history of competing visions and postcolonial social relations that predate the legal acts creating the university in 1964. There, in the time before this founding, we can see who was removed and what was foreclosed in order to make room for the new school to be built atop the old school.

In order to explore “the paths not taken, the choices made, the constraints that appeared amidst the openings” of postcolonial rural education, this chapter aims to rematerialize the unpredictable and experimental qualities that factored heavily in early attempts to decide what to do at Njala after the British left.¹⁰ Multiple answers to this question emerged in the first years after independence. The range of possibilities perplexed all those with interests in Njala, a place widely regarded by those at the top and the bottom of the Sierra Leone government as the center of agricultural education in the country.¹¹ Immediately after independence in 1961, civil servants and state extension workers alike speculated as to what would become of the campus, community and curriculum at Njala. An assistant in the Ministry of Education, after facilitating a

⁸ W. N. Thompson, “The University of Illinois and Njala University College—The First Two Years. Terminal Report of a Two-Year Assignment as Chief of Party and Adviser to the Principal, Njala University College, March 1, 1964” (Urbana, University of Illinois AID Projects, Contract AID/Afr-132, 1966); pg. 2. University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 3.

⁹ Premesh Lalu, “Apartheid’s University: Notes on the Renewal of the Enlightenment,” *Journal of Higher Education in Africa/Revue de l’enseignement superieur en Afrique*, vol. 5, no. 7 (2007) p. 57.

¹⁰ Frederick Cooper, “Decolonization and citizenship: African between empires and a world of nations,” from *Beyond Empire and Nation: Decolonizing Societies in Africa and Asia, 1930s-1970s*, Els Bogaerts, Remco Raben, eds. (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012); 39.

¹¹ Correspondence between Ministry of Education and Ministry of Development, January – May, 1962, “Proposed Development of an Agricultural Technical College at N’jala”; PRO, FBC, Box 663, Ministry of Development Files.

country-wide inventory of the colonial-era education system, admitted that future of Njala was comparatively “difficult to envisage.”¹² The difficulties of generating and clarifying visions for Njala are examined across the three sections of this chapter.

The first section, “Experiments in Africanization,” tracks reforms and improvements initiated by faculty and students at Njala in the years immediately following independence. In these years Sierra Leonean faculty took control of administrative posts previously held by British officers, and translated new forms of autonomy into material improvements of the campus. The case of the first Sierra Leonean principal of Njala, George “Pa” Taylor, is examined to show how Taylor, along with his wife Rita Taylor, oversaw incremental adjustments in control over resources and everyday conditions of living and learning on campus. As Sierra Leoneans took control over the administration of Njala, students also asserted new forms of control over the curriculum, reshaping the agricultural economy and public relations of the campus in the process. When seen alongside the initiatives of their teachers, student initiatives to expand pineapple production or build more classrooms on campus, for example, counter the Illinois survey team’s representation of the campus as static and in decline. On the contrary, it was a place of dynamic experimentation with the possibilities of early postcolonial conditions.

The first long-term international guests at Njala in the postcolonial era encountered this atmosphere of incremental improvement. The second section of the chapter examines the period from January to September 1962, when a team of four professors, comprised of two married couples from the Hampton Institute of Virginia, lived and worked on the campus of Njala Training College. During these nine months the Hampton team investigated the prospects of

¹² Assistant to Minister of Education, Correspondence, January 16, 1962; PRO, FBC, Box 510, Ministry of Education Files, “Miscellaneous.”

forging a long-term partnership between Hampton and the Training College. If this partnership had developed it would have been largely by accident. Prior to their arrival in Sierra Leone, the Hampton team expected to live three-hours east of Njala, outside the eastern city of Kenema. Nonetheless, during their unintended nine-month residence the team conducted what would become the original American survey of Njala. The budding partnership between Hampton and the Training College, as well as the knowledge of the Njala environment gathered by Hampton professors, ultimately inspired a grander, more aggressive vision of American involvement at Njala. The Hampton team was moved to Kenema, cutting short an emerging relation with the Training College. Shortly after, a second survey of Njala was performed by professors from Illinois whose vision hinged less upon cooperation with the Training College, favoring instead its closure.

After examining local and international initiatives managed at Njala between 1961 and 1963, the final section turns to the Illinois survey team's vision of depopulating Njala in order to make room for a new university. This vision of taking over the Njala campus by emptying it and then scaling up of existing facilities featured a dramatic rearrangement of the political, educational, and agricultural aspirations of the people they encountered at the Njala Training College. The chapter concludes by considering how campus residents contested the closure of the Training College through attempts to outmaneuver the international and national forces pushing them from the campus. For example, workers went on strike to secure future employment at Njala, while "Pa" Taylor refused to heed the commands of his successor and simultaneously negotiated the transfer of aggrieved students. This friction upon the closure of Training College, as well as the creativity and aspirations of the two preceding years, provide the

content for this chapter, and allow for an analysis of the multitude of possibilities that emerged and collided in a relatively short, but nonetheless consequential period of time.

Experiments in Africanization

In order to help celebrate Independence Day in April 1961 students and teachers got a break from school. They marched in parades, sang in choirs, attended rallies, and for a week had a chance to participate in some of the spectacles involved in the transition from colony to nation.¹³ To the dismay of some students and teachers, ending British rule and replacing the colonial government with a new national coalition did not warrant an early end to the school year. After a week's worth of ceremonies wound down in the cities and larger towns of Sierra Leone, teachers and students returned to school to finish the final two months of instruction and examination. At Njala students carried on after the jubilation and continued their joint study of farming on the Agricultural Experiment Station and education at the Teacher Training College. Some students no doubt hoped to graduate by the end of the school year and find employment through the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education, Njala's primary sponsors. Other students looked forward to returning the following year to continue their studies. As farmer-teachers in the making, Njala students used the final months of the 1961 school year to wrap up agricultural experiments on the practice farm, or finish their apprenticeship at primary and secondary level practice schools housed on the campus.

Despite a return to pre-independence schedules, many teachers and students at Njala strove to determine how the transition from colony to nation might change their school. In the months following the exuberance of national independence teachers and students set in motion a

¹³ *Sierra Leone: An Illustrated Souvenir of the Birth of a New Nation* (Freetown: Government Information Services, 1961).

range of experimental measures to test what a postcolonial Njala might look like. With the departure of the majority of British personnel, and a dramatic reduction in the authority of those few Britons who remained, Sierra Leoneans, like many other West Africans, embraced new opportunities to Africanize higher education by altering the composition of the staff and curriculum.¹⁴ Together with students at Njala, faculty translated new forms of autonomy into material improvements on the campus; asserted new forms of control over campus-based agricultural production; and redefined relations and boundaries between the campus and adjacent communities.

“Pa” and Rita Taylor

As the British departed Njala, Sierra Leonean educators asserted new claims over the daily operations and the future of the institution. The most prominent example was the succession of George C. Taylor to top administrative post at Njala. Taylor, along with his wife Rita, began working at the Njala Teacher College in the early 1940s. In the two decades that followed, George and Rita Taylor lived and worked at Njala, participating in the expansion of the campus from “twelve buildings...[of] mud and wattle” to one six times as large with residential infrastructure like “modern flush system” latrines.¹⁵

While there is no record of George and Rita performing the manual labor of expanding the campus (this was likely left to students and residents from nearby villages) the Taylors built a prominent reputation through their maintenance of the social world of Njala Training College. George was known as “Pa Taylor” to students, campus workers and some of his junior

¹⁴ Appolos O. Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, 1860-1960* (London: Frank Cass, 1996) pp. 214-5.

¹⁵ G.C. Taylor, “Brief Notes on Njala Training College (Prepared by Principal Taylor),” from “Diary of Sierra Leone Survey Team: Visits and Conferences, February – March 1963”; pp. 20-1.

colleagues. The status of respected elder was earned through twenty years of teaching courses on “the principles of education” and mathematics, and improving the organization of essential services on campus like class schedules and student evaluations. “Pa Taylor” also organized religious services, assisted students with agricultural experiments, and together with Rita, frequently advocated for the improvement of student welfare, from better food to better access to the medicine kept in the small government dispensary on campus.¹⁶

Rita was known on campus as the person who answered sick calls from students at night, hosted unexpected international guests, and organized large meals for conferences and special occasions. She was the official Matron of the campus in the early 1940s. However, after her position was eliminated in the mid-1950 she spent the remainder of her time at Njala performing the work of a matron without pay. One of her more famous acts as an unpaid campus matron occurred in 1959 when thirty-seven teachers from Finland visited the Njala campus. Their immediate reception at Njala was apparently unwelcoming. When the Finnish guests arrived at Njala, “all the 20 European officers residing at Njala refused to take the responsibility of providing hospitality.” A representative of the British colonial government in Freetown requested that Rita intervene in the matter, and arrange food and lodging. She obliged, and helped avoid any possible irreparable damage in British-Finish relations.¹⁷

During the four-day visit by the Finnish guests, and during other similar international visits, Rita kept track of the amount of free labor she provided to the British colonial government. After most of the British left Njala, Rita tallied up what she thought the value of that labor was and asked that her new government recognize the debt. For Rita, the

¹⁶ Minute Paper, Sierra Leone Government, August 11, 1963; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files.

¹⁷ G.C. Taylor, “Recommendations in Respect of Certain Members of Staff of Njala Training College,” February 6, 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, “Closing of Njala Training College Files,” Ministry of Education Files.

Africanization of Njala in the wake of British departure, gave her a chance to settle an account. Independence meant an opportunity to seek redress for the conditions of her unpaid labor under the British regime. When “Pa” George became the Principal of Njala Training College in 1962, he petitioned the new government of Sierra Leone to compensate Rita for the years she had worked without pay.¹⁸ Despite there being no available record of any retroactive compensation, the Taylors presumably felt it was reasonable to expect a postcolonial government to recognize Rita’s work and reputation at Njala, even if it was well overdue.

When “Pa” Taylor became the first Sierra Leonean principal at Njala the Africanization of administrative posts in Sierra Leone’s tertiary education system was still inconsistent, and differed from school to school. At the time of Taylor’s promotion the head position at the Kenema Technical Institute, for example, was still held by Mr. C. Redgrave, a British man appointed in the 1950s. During the 1950s Redgrave, and the Kenema Institute, had the responsibility of preparing men to work for the mining companies operating in the eastern districts of Sierra Leone. One of Redgrave’s primary tasks was to oversee the London City Guild certificate exams in masonry, carpentry, plumbing, painting and machinery. Mining companies, many of which were British owned and operated, still demanded skilled, certified labor after independence, and Redgrave kept his job as a result.¹⁹

The office of the principal at Fourah Bay College, the elite urban college in Freetown, had long been reserved for white, British academics. Several Sierra Leoneans had served as interim acting principals since Fourah Bay became a Colonial Affiliate College of Durham University in 1876, but it took the political pressures of national independence for an African

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ James E. Crawford, Karl E. Gardner, Russell T. Odell, M. Ray Karnes, “Diary of Sierra Leone Survey Team Visits and Conferences, February – March 1963” p. 30; University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 1.

academic to be considered for a full-time appointment. On the eve of independence Dr. David Abioseh Nicol became the first Sierra Leonean principal of Fourah Bay College. Like Taylor at Njala, Nicol was well acquainted with the colonial policies that reserved top administrative posts for the British. Shortly after taking office Nicol oversaw reforms to these policies at Fourah Bay that allowed him to partially Africanize the seven deanships at the College. Nicol was able to appoint three Sierra Leoneans, while the rest remained held by British academics.²⁰

Taylor, like Nicol, was a highly trained educator. Nicol had degrees from Cambridge University, the University of London, and in addition to being the first African don at Cambridge, had authored breakthrough scientific research on human insulin.²¹ Nicol was in many respects a more famous academic than many of his British colleagues at Fourah Bay. While Taylor was not as well-known internationally as Nicol, Taylor did stand out in comparison to many of his British colleagues at Njala. Taylor had obtained more tertiary education training and had more administrative experience than his British predecessor at Njala. In addition to working at Njala far longer than James Albert Magee, the last British principal at Njala, Taylor had a bachelor-level degree in agriculture from the Hampton Institute, and a B.A. in Sciences and M.A. in Education from the University of Bristol (UK).²² Magee, originally from Belfast, had an external degree from Dublin University and a Teacher's Certificate from Stramillis Training College in Belfast. Prior to his appointment as principal at Njala in 1957, Magee worked as a primary school teacher in Northern Ireland for ten years, and then was the senior instructor of Geography

²⁰ Daniel Paracka, Jr., *The Athens of West Africa: A History of the International Education at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone* (New York, Routedge, 2003) pp. 169-70. Here Paracka is citing an unpublished biography of Nicol by British historian of Sierra Leone, Christopher Fyfe.

²¹ For the original study on insulin see D.S. Nicol, L.F. Smith, "Amino-acid sequence of human insulin" *Nature* (No. 187, August 1960); 483-5. For examples of Nicol's notoriety one could visit the hospital bearing his name in Freetown, or read the September 28, 1994, *New York Times* obituary.

²² Annual Report 1957, Njala Teacher Training College, p. 3; PRO, FBC, Box 513, Ministry of Education Files.

at the Royal College of Mauritius from 1951 to 1957.²³ Magee held the position of Principal at Njala until he announced his retirement in August 1961, four months after independence celebrations.²⁴ Shortly afterwards Magee returned to Belfast, leaving Taylor to fully assume the responsibilities of being the first Sierra Leonean principal at Njala.

Taylor's authority over the campus expanded significantly at the outset of his two-year tenure as principal (1962-1964). Taylor assumed official control over the administrative bureaucracy of the campus, and oversaw matters of campus discipline, campus finances and the management of confidential records. This allowed him to take a more official type of control of the "general supervision of staff and students."²⁵ In previous years "Pa Taylor" had played an essential role in the management and supervision of campus social relations; mediating conflicts, promoting cohesion, and helping Sierra Leonean students secure employment after graduating. Taylor's rise to principal relied on, and then expanded his status as a respected senior member of the campus community.

When he was installed as Principal, Taylor acquired a form of executive authority over the entire hierarchy of campus labor. The roster of employees at the Teacher Training College and the Agricultural Experiment Station amounted to thirteen teachers, six agricultural officers, and nineteen wage-earning drivers, mechanics and clerks. Additionally, there was a large pool of

²³ Davidson Nicol to H.M. Knox, Queens University, Ireland, June 8, 1962; PRO, FBC, Bundle 26, University of Sierra Leone Files, Fourah Bay College Senior Staff Association. Nicol wrote to Knox to inquire whether or not Queen's University would allow one of its Geography professors, K.G. Dalton, to remain on loan to Fourah Bay College for another academic year. Nicol was informed by Dalton that Magee had recently resigned from Njala. To keep Dalton at Fourah Bay, Nicol suggested Queen's University hire Magee since he was now available. Knox refused, and claimed Magee's experience at Njala was insufficient. Knox wrote, "As a nongraduate teacher with an external pass degree from Trinity College, Dublin, and no university experience, we would not regard [Magee] as having any qualifications whatever for the work here."

²⁴ Annual Report 1961-1962, Njala Teacher Training College, p. 1; PRO, FBC, Box 513, Ministry of Education Files.

²⁵ Minute Paper, Sierra Leone Government, August 11, 1963; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files.

domestic workers and cooks, some with formal contracts, others with informal agreements with specific teachers and officers residing on campus.²⁶

The upper-end of this hierarchy was thrown out of order as a result of the exodus of about a dozen British teachers, researchers and officers in the early 1960s. Taylor took personal control over Magee's post, but had to fill the other vacancies. To manage this transition Taylor adopted a range of methods designed to maintain and improve the operations. In general, Taylor encouraged Sierra Leonean teachers and agricultural research assistants to take over any responsibilities vacated by the British. In the meantime he pursued a course of promoting his colleagues and recruiting new Sierra Leonean staff. In some cases Taylor replaced British officers by promoting those who had been assistant instructors to the level of senior instructors.²⁷ This was the case with the Craft and Woodwork instructor left for the United Kingdom, and his Sierra Leonean colleague received a promotion. In other cases, Taylor recruited recent graduates of the agricultural education program to stay and work at Njala. Though Taylor lamented that these young teachers lacked experience, his larger interests of improving Njala justified any risks.²⁸

Some of Taylor's decisions also indicated a willingness to break with administrative tradition and experiment with the management of the institution. The position of Principal Agricultural Officer had long been one of the most prestigious appointments at Njala, and required that the Officer hold an advanced degree in crop sciences and be a scholar recognized

²⁶ "Njala Training College, Inventory," PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, "The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967." Staff also detailed in Minute Paper, Sierra Leone Government, August 11, 1963 in "Miscellaneous" PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files.

²⁷ The Education Officer, C.B. Flower, along with R.M. Cowan (Physical Education Instructor), left Njala to find work elsewhere. Flower transferred to a temporary job in Freetown before finding permanent work outside the country. Cowan worked for two months in the nearby junction town of Magburaka, but died while awaiting a transfer out of the country. Annual Report 1961-1962, Njala Teacher Training College, pp. 2-3; PRO, FBC, Box 513, Ministry of Education Files.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 8-9.

internationally. For ten years D.O. Wilson held this position at Njala, and was empowered to set the agricultural research agenda for the entire campus. Upon Wilson's return to the U.K. in 1962, Taylor helped hire W. A. Aboko-Cole as a replacement Agricultural Officer. Unlike Wilson, Aboko-Cole did not hold an advanced degree, nor had he been certified at any time during the colonial-era as an official agricultural instructor. Instead, Aboko-Cole began his career in the 1950s as a laborer in a series of British agricultural experiments. He was later hired as an assistant to an Agricultural Extension officer, who he helped build model farms and then perform a demonstration of agricultural techniques the state wanted farmers to adopt.²⁹

The differences between the Sierra Leonean farmer turned extension worker, and Wilson, the scientist turned colonial official, gave Taylor cause to lend his support for Aboko-Cole. Though Aboko-Cole did not have the academic and scientific pedigree of his British predecessor, he did have years of experience working on agricultural experiments around the country. It is likely that Taylor knew that Aboko-Cole had acquired a strong reputation during his years as a field agent. That he was well-known was apparent to the American Survey Team who interviewed Aboko-Cole in early 1963. They found that Aboko-Cole "came up through the ranks" of the colonial-era agricultural extension programs, and that in his first year as Acting Agricultural Officer had developed positive relations with local farmers in nearby villages and with the laborers he supervised on the College's experimental farms.³⁰ The question of whom could access to the slaughterhouse on the campus provides one example. Before Aboko-Cole came to campus only Njala teachers and students could use the slaughterhouse, and only college-owned livestock could be slaughtered in the facility. Butchers and families from the surrounding villages had over the years petitioned the college to use the slaughterhouse, as it had equipment

²⁹ Crawford, et. al., "Diary of Sierra Leone Survey Team," 23

³⁰ *Ibid*, 23-4.

and drainage that aided faster and cleaner slaughter. When Aboko-Cole he took over he gave village residents permission to use the slaughterhouse, and let his colleague know that they could now expect to see more people, animals and meat moving between the campus and the villages. Around Njala popularity stemmed from small, but nonetheless meaningful initiatives to reform colonial-era policy.

If it was not his popularity in the villages, there are many other possible reasons why Aboko-Cole was favored by people like Taylor. It is possible that Aboko-Cole was viewed as just a transitional figure that could mimic the work performed by his British predecessor. At the very least Aboko-Cole possessed a familiarity with the methods of agricultural experimentation, as well as a familiarity with the intentions and limitations of British colonial development. But it is unlikely that Aboko-Cole saw himself, or was seen by others as just someone to fill a gap, as a person to keep a system in order without changing it. It is more likely that Aboko-Cole, like the Taylors, was interested in testing what was now possible as Njala came under new management. To them, as the British departed, the future was not necessarily defined in terms of a large-scale overhaul of Njala. Instead, the possibilities of what Njala might look like came into view through incremental adjustments in control over resources and everyday conditions.

Students, pineapples, Queen Elizabeth, and piped water

As Sierra Leoneans took control over the administration of Njala, students claimed greater autonomy, and developed improvements in agricultural production and the production of agricultural knowledge. Between 1961 and 1962, nearly one-hundred students resided, worked and studied on the Njala campus. Their labor and initiatives in the years immediately after independence introduced pedagogical and material changes on the campus. They claimed new

land for the college farm, maintained new crop experiments, and found new jobs through educational and agricultural initiatives of the new national government.

While the students cooked, cleaned and lived together, they took different courses. On average, seventy students were in the teacher training program, and around thirty trained as crop researchers and agricultural advisers.³¹ The second year teachers-in-training worked at least one day per week in the campus' primary and secondary schools. These schools served 350 children living in what was often called the "campus neighborhood."³² By teaching in these schools, and organizing everything from Parents Day to community concerts, the teachers-in-training met institutional and communal expectations established during the colonial era. However, they also lobbied the College's administration for more space and resources to modify and expand those expectations. According to College administrators, teachers in training pushed for the primary and secondary school buildings to be expanded in order for more children from the Njala area to enroll.³³

College students' interests in modifying the campus coexisted with other off-campus interests. In the interest of extending the institutional reach of the College, and also to help meet a rising demand for rural teachers throughout the country, Njala students traveled to schools far away from campus. In the spring of 1961, twenty Njala students spent six weeks practicing their teaching in primary and secondary schools throughout the country. The transportation and expenses associated with these arrangements, however, proved to be too high. After this six

³¹ Njala Teacher Training College Report, 1960-61; 3.

³² Njala Teacher Training College Report, 1960-61; 3-4.

³³ *Ibid.*

week trial, the idea of sending teachers far outside of the campus “neighborhood” was reconsidered.³⁴

Students in the agricultural program also tried to change the space and boundaries of the campus. These changes were both large and small in scale. They ranged from the expansion of the perimeter of the campus, to the construction of new flower beds. Regardless of their size, this work allowed agricultural students to be like their fellow students in teacher-training program. Both groups of students both maintained older relations between Njala and the country, while at the same time they developed new relations. For example, in 1961 five acres of farmland along the edge of the campus was cleared by students who worked alongside farmers enrolled in a short certification program. That students and farmers from around the country labored together on the farms of Njala was nothing new. For decades families sent male members to Njala to be trained in farming techniques. The ministries of the colonial government had also recruited male farmers to come and receive training on the Njala campus.³⁵ What was new, however, was that in 1961 the agricultural training programs at Njala responded to the development agendas of the postcolonial government. Upon independence, the first Prime Minister, Milton Margai, supported a nationwide plan for scaling up the production cash crops and fruit—cocoa, oil palm, rubber, coffee, pineapple, bananas and coconut—into a program of “economic freedom through industrial plantations.”³⁶ For institutions of agricultural education this meant expansions of farmer training programs and changes in curriculum. In the certification program in 1961, the five acres cleared to expand the oil palm farm was done to train students and farmers in the “planting of economic trees” selected for industrialization. The aspiration for a massive scaling-

³⁴ Njala Teacher Training College Report, 1961-62; 5; PRO, FBC, Uncatalogued, Ministry of Education Files.

³⁵ Njala Station Handing Over Notes, 1958; PRO, FBC, Box 17, Ministry of Agriculture Files.

³⁶ “Plantation Programs,” PRO, FBC, Box 648, Ministry of Development Files.

up of oil-palm production translated into 81 farmers going to Njala to earn certificates as “demonstration farmers.” After training at Njala, it was expected that these men would return home and recruit other farmers into national initiatives for the industrialization of agriculture.³⁷

Farmer certification programs also allowed students to participate in new curricular initiatives. Those in charge of organizing these initiatives promised to connect students with employment opportunities on new agricultural plantations. In 1961, a Commercial Enterprise Agricultural Certification program was inaugurated at Njala. A new one-classroom building was erected with funding from groups overseeing the scaling-up of agricultural production throughout the country. The Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board, and the international corporations partnered with the Sierra Leone Agricultural Corporation, donated the funds for the new classroom. Additional funding paid for a dozen students to attend classes Njala. These classes required students work alongside farmers, and trained the students to become managers of plantations. The students toured the country, visited large-scale cash crop farms near the cities of Kenema, Makeni and Freetown. By September 1961, ten students of “Agricultural Commerce” had been “posted to various plantations...to assist the plantation overseers.”³⁸ Changes on the agricultural landscape of the country were thus mirrored at Njala. The emerging politics of postcolonial industrialization policies had been scaled-down, and translated through student and farmer labor into material changes on the campus.

Students were not passive in their participation, however, and they found ways to change the meaning of life and labor at Njala. For example, agricultural students forged new relations between what they grew and how it was distributed. Experimental work done by students with

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Njala Teacher Training College Report, 1961-62; 3.

tubers, groundnuts and pineapples provide examples of how students asserted new forms of control over the means of agricultural experimentation at Njala. Historically, the students in the agricultural program supplied the majority of the agricultural labor required to run and expand the campus and its farms. They also supplied the majority of the labor needed to build and maintain roads and facilities. This pattern continued in the years immediately after independence.³⁹

But while students continued to do most of the “maintenance work of the grounds,” they also configured ways to change the value and the actual products of their on-campus labor.⁴⁰ For example, students used experiments with fertilizer for ground nuts and a newly introduced variety of Chinese yams to alter student diets. More nuts, and using fertilizer to support the growth of a yam that could be eaten raw, meant a larger and more diverse amount of food. It also meant more opportunities for surplus to be sold to off-campus consumers. Crops harvested from the college farm that were not needed in the student kitchen could be sold to the off-campus community. Students had some success in harvesting a groundnut surplus, but were less successful in their attempt to get the raw Chinese yam integrated into student cuisine.⁴¹

Though the outcome may have been disappointing to students and their potential customers, students succeeded in taking control of a project abandoned by the British immediately before independence.⁴² In March 1961, the British colonial Agricultural Officer called for the fertilizer and yam experiment to be halted. This order was not followed by students. In the months after independence students’ continued with efforts to expand yam production. These experiments did not succeed. However, they did have better luck expanding

³⁹ J. A. Magee, Correspondence, March 1961; PRO, FBC, Box 513, Ministry of Education Files.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Njala Teacher Training College Report, 1961-62; 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*; 5.

the production of pineapples. The Sierra Leonean assistant to the former British horticulturalist convinced his fellow students to convert college farmland to pineapples. By 1962 students had a lot of pineapples, and organized shipments of the surplus pineapples.⁴³

Student initiatives to change agricultural production on campus coincided with efforts to change how their work was represented off campus. Ahead of the bountiful pineapple harvest of 1962, students lobbied college administrators to assist them in shipping the surplus to P.Z., one of Freetown's most well-known supermarkets.⁴⁴ Securing an outlet for college farm produce in Freetown, according to one Njala administrator, would help legitimate the decision made by students to claim more land for pineapple farming. "If you get a market for pineapples in Freetown," the head Agricultural Instructor wrote in May 1962, "try to ensure that supplies are regular and also that the fruit leaves the [agricultural] station in good condition and reaches the buyers with a minimum of delay."⁴⁵

In addition to opening up new markets for college produce, students publicized their role in making Njala a productive institution. At a regional agricultural fair, for instance, a "good yet simple" cross-section of student grown crops was put on display in order to attract future students.⁴⁶ Prior to the fair these same crops had won six out of eight contests an agricultural competition in Kenema, the capital of the eastern province. The Queen of England awarded the Njala students their prizes. The Queen was brought to eastern Sierra Leone for the "Kenema Royal Show." The prize money that students won was used to support their recreation interests on the Njala campus. To celebrate they bought a trophy and a record player for the dancehall.⁴⁷

⁴³ Njala Station Handing Over Notes, 1962, p. 3; PRO, FBC, Box 17, Ministry of Agriculture Files.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; 4.

⁴⁷ Njala Training College Annual Report, 1961-1962; 7.

Their victories represent more than just the will to dance and work. Students used supermarkets, annual fairs, and Royal Shows as venues to demonstrate agricultural improvements, display imports, and represent their role in shaping the future of agriculture in Sierra Leone. One thing these representations had in common was that they began with students initiating modifications to campus farmland, and asserting new forms of leverage over agricultural production at Njala.

Interest in Njala's crops was not limited to those of students, administrators and judges at Royal Shows. Residents of the villages in the Njala area often purchased agricultural products from the campus. When families experienced shortages of palm oil (an essential vitamin-rich ingredient in local cuisine) they purchased raw palm kernels from the college's oil palm experimental farm.⁴⁸ In other instances village residents gleaned large amounts of crops from the campus without paying for them. This was the case when an experimental variety of corn was harvested at night. The corn was a special Israeli hybrid that students planted in a large experimental plot. The student experiment with the imported variety was apparently a significant success, but two-thirds of the harvest was stolen. After the crop raid students cooked and enjoyed the remaining third.⁴⁹

Taking advantage of a student initiative on campus fit into a wider pattern of village-level interests in negotiating access to campus resources. Sometimes these negotiations were surreptitious. By gleaning the corn village residents acquired a crop they likely did not have before and temporarily improved and diversified their diets in the process. Corn was not new to Njala area, and families had long experimented with the improvement of local varieties.⁵⁰ Though the crop was not entirely foreign, studying, tasting and incorporating an unknown

⁴⁸ Crawford, et. al. "Diary of Sierra Leone Survey Team Visits and Conferences," 65.

⁴⁹ Njala Training College Annual Report, 1961-1962; 4.

⁵⁰ Paul Richards, *Coping With Hunger: Hazard and experiments in an African rice-farming system* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986) pp. 112-4.

variety possibly motivated village residents to risk getting caught taking the corn. Improvements in the area were thus subject to multiple agendas, and students often lost full control of their own agricultural experiments. Missing corn was one way students learned of the persistent interest in the villages to share control over local resources.

More formal negotiations over campus resources took place around the possibility of piping water into the villages in the Njala area. Village residents had petitioned Njala administrators for piped water since the early 1950s when the colonial Ministry of Agriculture installed a pump station in the center of the campus. The gas-powered “Pulsometer” pulled water from the nearby Taia River at a rate of 40 gallons per minute. The river water was then stored in a massive metal tank that had somehow been lifted to the top a thirty-foot tall platform. The tank supplied irrigation water to the majority of the campus farms, and fed filtered water into numerous residences and campus facilities.⁵¹

Village residents petitioned campus administrations to have this plumbing network extended into the villages. Representatives from the village of Makonde asked the campus to build a pipeline and a series of hydrants that reached into the center of the village. Taps would save residents from drawing water from the river by hand, and provide more water overall to use in homes and on their farms.⁵² Despite their lobbying the colonial administration initially rejected the proposal. The acting Permanent Secretary, A. G. Simpson, in October 1959 explained that, “Njala inhabitants will have to continue to boil and filter their water (which does not seem to be a very onerous requirement if I may say so!).”⁵³ Makonde residents were

⁵¹ G. R. Handley, Divisional Engineer, Public Works Department, June 29, 1960; PRO, FBC, Box 43, Ministry of Agriculture Files, “Njala Water Supply.”

⁵² Crawford, et. al. “Diary of Sierra Leone Survey Team Visits and Conferences,” 23.

⁵³ A. G. Simpson to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Works and Housing, October 19, 1959; PRO, FBC, Box 43, Ministry of Agriculture Files, “Njala Water Supply.”

apparently not dissuaded and continued to ask for piped water. Months later, in June 1960, village residents succeeded in convincing A. O. Wilson, the Principal Agricultural Officer, to agree to an extension of piped water into one or more of the villages in the Njala area. Shortly after overcoming Wilson's initial hesitation, however, the project was placed on hold again as Wilson prepared to return to the U.K. once power was transferred to his Sierra Leoneans colleagues.⁵⁴

The colonial government expressed little interest in expanding the distribution of piped water in the Njala area. Instead they preferred to leave things as they were. When Taylor and his colleagues took control from the British, changes in the structure of authority on the campus enabled the prioritization of local demands that the distribution of resources be reformed. These demands mirrored other changes in the campus area, such as the Africanization of staff and student experiments with agriculture. The logistics of improvement now responded to new commands. In 1962 the Sierra Leonean administrators at Njala instructed campus workers to install pipes and hydrants in Makonde. With this small measure daily routines and daily expectations changed in Makonde. Desired connections became realized, and new expectations for life after British rule came into view as piped water flowed to new places.

The Hampton Institute at Njala: First Draft for International Development

As they asserted greater control over Njala, Taylor and his colleagues balanced local initiatives with international initiatives. In addition to hiring more teachers, replacing most of the windows and doors on the campus, the administrators at Njala cultivated new international relations in order to draw new resources to the campus. Most of these initiatives did not pay off

⁵⁴ Njala Station Handing Over Notes, April 14, 1961; PRO, FBC, Box 16, Ministry of Agriculture Files.

immediately. However, as a form of international trial and error, the initiatives tested the capacity of the community and campus at Njala to attract and then utilize new international resources.

The hospitality of “Pa” and Rita Taylor continued to be essential to facilitating all forms of campus relations, both local and international. The Taylors hosted a variety of international delegates, from the Israeli Ambassador to four representatives from the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE).⁵⁵ At the time of his visit, Y. Avnon, the Israeli Ambassador, was touring the country and recruiting Sierra Leoneans into diverse Israeli initiatives, from scholarships to study rural development in Israel to bilateral ventures in textile production. Despite these efforts the Israeli Ambassador did not offer a scholarship to any students at the Njala Training College.⁵⁶ “Pa” Taylor also used his educational connections with British and American institutions to successfully negotiate donations of food and educational materials. He did not have the same success petitioning the Hampton Institute (Virginia, U.S.), one of his alma maters, to offer scholarships to his Training College students.⁵⁷

Though Taylor’s efforts to recruit scholarships for Njala students to travel to the Hampton Institute failed, he was nonetheless afforded an unexpected opportunity to engage professors from the Hampton Institute who had traveled to Sierra Leone. The most significant test in the Taylor years of Njala’s international potential came with an accidental arrival of a team of four couples from the Hampton Institute. The team was bound for Kenema, the largest city in the eastern part of Sierra Leone, but encountered a significant delay. The Hampton team

⁵⁵ Njala Training College Annual Report, 1961-62; 9.

⁵⁶ There was a broad range of Israeli project proposals and recruitment campaigns initiated in early 1960s Sierra Leone. For examples see PRO, FBC, Box 660, Ministry of Development Files, “Joint Israeli Construction Firm”; or PRO, FBC, Box 24, Ministry of Agriculture Files, “List of Israeli Scholarships.”

⁵⁷ Njala Training College Annual Report, 1960-61; PRO, FBC, Box 513, Ministry of Education Files.

was hired to be the initial teaching staff for a new trade and vocational school. This Rural Training Institute, as it was called, was meant to train students in carpentry, agricultural mechanics and home economics. Due to an impasse in Sierra Leonean-American diplomatic relations (and possibly a suggestion from alum “Pa” Taylor) the team was rerouted to Njala for what was originally thought was to be a short stay. The alleged cause of the impasse was that Sir Albert Margai, the Minister of Natural Resources and brother of the Prime Minister, objected to the American request that the Sierra Leone government pay for the construction of new residences for Hampton Institute families at the initial site of Kenema.⁵⁸

Between January and September 1962 the Hampton Institute team members were the first long-term guests from the United States to live at Njala in the postcolonial era. Though the Hampton Institute team had only expected to stay at Njala for a short period, American-Sierra Leonean relations remained at an impasse far longer than originally anticipated. As a result the Hampton team lived at Njala for nine months. During this time they investigated the possibility of transferring to Njala the resources originally intended for a Rural Training Institute in Kenema.⁵⁹

While living on the campus of the Njala Training College, the Hampton Institute team found the campus to be an improving, dynamic institution and locale. Their findings were instrumental in bringing Njala to the attention of officials inside the American Agency for International Development (AID). While living there, officials in AID asked that the Hampton Team test the possibilities of establishing a long-term American project at Njala. American and

⁵⁸ Ernest Neal, Letter to U.S. Ambassador Carnahan, February 6, 1962; Uncataloged, Sierra Leone Collection-Rural Training Institute Files, Hampton University Archives. As of July 2012 the Sierra Leone Collection at Hampton is in the process of being indexed.

⁵⁹ Ernest Neal to U.S. Ambassador Carnahan, October 5, 1962; Uncataloged, Sierra Leone Collection-Rural Training Institute Files, Hampton University Archives.

Sierra Leonean officials wanted to know whether or not the project intended for Kenema could be installed “within the existing facilities” at Njala.⁶⁰

In planning for this adaptation, the Hampton Institute constructed the first draft of the plan to make Njala a site for American-sponsored international development. Though their survey of Njala was essential to attracting further attention from AID, connections that developed between members of the Hampton team and the Njala campus were abruptly severed. After nine months spent investigating the possibilities of partnering with the Njala Training College, the Hampton team was moved to an abandoned airfield just outside of Kenema, and began all over again with another survey of a rural site. Despite their removal from Njala, the next AID project at Njala, a prospective partnership between Njala and the University of Illinois, was largely inspired by the work and insights of the Hampton team. From our perspective today, we can see that the Illinois partnership was derivative of a budding one between the Hampton Institute and the Njala Training College.

Before Illinois professors arrived in Sierra Leone, taking the place of Hampton professors at Njala, Hampton professors lived at Njala with the impression that they might reside there for several years. Eleanor and Robert Rice, Melvin Johnson and Mrs. Johnson, moved into housing at Njala in January 1962 after spending the two previous months living in Freetown in hotels and with AID officials. The Rices and Johnsons, as the first Hampton couples in Sierra Leone, had been tasked with making preparations for others Hampton couples expected to arrive later in 1962. When the Rices and Johnsons arrived in Freetown they were informed of the impasse in American-Sierra Leonean relations, and as a result the Kenema project was now on hold. This

⁶⁰ Robert Rice, Letter to William Martin, March 21, 1962; Sierra Leone Collection, Robert Rice Correspondence; Hampton University Archives, Hampton VA.

news followed another prior delay. Before they arrived in Sierra Leone, the Hampton couples were delayed in London for two weeks. The cause of the delay was a shortage of accommodation in Freetown due to the Queen of England visiting Sierra Leone in the last months of 1961.⁶¹

By 1961 Eleanor and Robert Rice had grown accustomed to unpredictable adjustments in international itineraries. Together they had worked as instructors in home-economics and carpentry for an American international development project in India and Thailand.⁶² Their familiarity with the procedures of international development made them ideal candidates for the Hampton project in Sierra Leone. After living for nine months at Njala, they subsequently lived near Kenema for eight years. When AID administrators significantly downsized all projects in 1969 the Rices returned to Hampton.

The Rices made many of their first impressions of life in Sierra Leone while living in staff quarters at Njala. Along with their Hampton colleagues, they found the quarters to be sufficient and comfortable places to reside while carrying out the work of their AID contract. The Hampton team lived in residences previously occupied by British colonial officers. These quarters, Robert Rice explained to those back in Hampton, were “the only place the Ministry of Natural Resources could provide housing accommodations for us.”⁶³ At first they lived out of their suitcase. But as their temporary stay at Njala became more permanent, they gradually moved in all the “household effects” that had been shipped across the Atlantic to Freetown. Silverware and bed linens were packed along with the sewing machines parts and woodworking

⁶¹ Robert Rice, letter from Holt Hatch, England, November 23, 1961; Uncataloged, Sierra Leone Collection-Rural Training Institute Files, Hampton University Archives.

⁶² AID Profile of Robert Rice; Uncataloged, Sierra Leone Collection-Rural Training Institute Files, Hampton University Archives.

⁶³ Robert Rice, letter to William Martin, March 21, 1962; Sierra Leone Collection, Robert Rice Correspondence; Hampton University Archives, Hampton VA.

tools needed by these instructors of home economics and building trades.⁶⁴ After settling in to Njala, the Hampton team concluded that the campus was a comfortable environment where they could successfully live and work. “Each team member has prepared a program fold for each area of responsibility,” wrote Robert Rice. Together the couples visited the campus’ primary schools, observed agricultural experiments, and explained their intentions to small audiences in the villages surrounding the Njala campus.⁶⁵ Though they had originally thought they would do this work in Kenema, the Hampton team found they could adapt it to Njala.

While the Hampton team unpacked, students and staff at Njala continued to maintain and improve the campus. For example, in early 1962, Taylor and the Training College administration petitioned the government for more construction funds and equipment to accommodate the “increase in the number of expatriate staff” living at Njala. Taylor expected more professors from Hampton, and other international guests to arrive in what he described as a “stream of visitors from overseas.”⁶⁶ While the Njala administration waited, electricians, blacksmiths, plumbers and students began a range of improvement projects. The water and electricity supply in particular had, according to Taylor, been neglected by the British and was in need of significant repair. This required old water pipes to be fixed and new ones installed. Taylor eventually received government funds for the repair of the water towers and electric generators. One campus construction project begot another. Proposals were submitted by the Njala administration for the construction of a “1,500 person assembly hall” to be used for community

⁶⁴ Robert Rice, letter to William Martin, May 28, 1962.

⁶⁵ Robert Rice, “Survey of Team Activities,” March 1963; Uncataloged, Sierra Leone Collection-Rural Training Institute Files, Hampton University Archives.

⁶⁶ Njala Training College Annual Report, 1961-1962; 4.

events, and another for the demolition of all “mud block staff quarters” and their replacement with “modern concrete bungalows.”⁶⁷

This flurry of construction (ongoing and planned) was the campus atmosphere that the Hampton staff encountered on a daily basis. In letters and reports sent to AID officials in Freetown and at the Hampton Institute, the Hampton team represented Njala as a hospitable place that was in the process of being successfully improved. Water, gasoline, and electricity (to their surprise) were readily available on the campus. They wrote to AID officials to explain that the residential infrastructure was limited but sufficient. They made plans to modify these homes. Speaking for the Hampton team, Robert Rice observed that the residences were sufficient, but that the Hampton couples were eager to install new refrigerators. These were subsequently ordered. Eventually the Hampton team was considered such permanent residents of Njala that they began paying the electric bills for their homes.⁶⁸ The Rices and the Johnsons also began to survey the campus in search of where new staff quarters might be built. They determined that the campus had the space and infrastructure necessary for accommodating additional Hampton couples, but AID had not provided for such construction in the initial budget.⁶⁹

While they settled in to the busy campus, and waited for negotiations between AID and the government of Sierra Leone to fully resume, the Rices and Johnsons did not hesitate to explore the Njala area. In order to investigate whether or not they could transfer the Kenema project to Njala they surveyed the farms, schools and villages in the campus area. “We have visited schools and the Agriculture station,” Robert Rice told those negotiating AID projects in Freetown. “We also assisted wherever possible. Visitations to schools and villages have given us

⁶⁷ Njala Training College Annual Report, 1961-1962; 3.

⁶⁸ Robert Rice, Letter to William Martin, April 21, 1962.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

good insights into Sierra Leon culture and heritage.”⁷⁰ The initial observations of schools, farms and village life led to detailed planning by the Hampton team. They proposed training workshops to various Sierra Leone ministries, studied local languages, and frequently visited the communities adjacent to the campus. Robert Rice explained that, “The team has been studying the Mende language, but I think we should have been enrolled in Krio classes instead. We find places where Mende is not understood, but Krio is spoken in every village we have visited.”⁷¹ Through these exchanges, the Hampton team grew more confident that a Hampton-Njala Training College partnership was possible.

The study of Mende, desire to know Krio, and ventures into nearby villages were thus not idle interests in culture. Rather they active methods to plot future relations between the Hampton team and those on and around the campus. William Martin, the coordinator of the Hampton Institute’s international projects, explained to AID officers in Washington, D.C., that the Hampton team at Njala was successfully adapting the Kenema project to Njala. He explained that they had been able to do “work at Njala in areas of child care, nutrition, clothing and vegetable crop production.”⁷² Though Martin did not describe the details of this work, presumably he meant that Eleanor Rice and Mrs. Johnson, as specialists in Home Economics, facilitated some variety of workshops to convey their knowledge of family health and textile production. Melvin Johnson, a specialist in agricultural engineering and farm management, presumably was engaged with those already growing vegetables on campus.⁷³ The head of the Hampton team at Njala, Robert Rice, had taught construction and carpentry in the past, but was

⁷⁰ Robert Rice, letter to William Martin, March 21, 1962. Spelling of “Leon” is from original.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² William Martin, letter to AID Office in Washington D.C., June 22, 1962; Uncataloged, Sierra Leone Collection-Rural Training Institute Files, Hampton University Archives.

⁷³ Biographical information about Eleanor Rice, Melvin and Mrs. Johnson is drawn from a 1966 AID Contract List; Uncataloged, Sierra Leone Collection-Rural Training Institute Files, Hampton University Archives.

likely unable to teach at Njala since he was too busy handling administrative affairs and coordinating requests for more resources. Nonetheless, in their first six months at Njala, the Hampton team and AID administrators believed that Americans had successfully cultivated valuable local connections.

After these initial encounters the Hampton team tried to solidify and expand their connections both on and off the Njala campus. Writing to Martin in Virginia, Robert Rice explained that the Hampton team had “established rapport in villages that would not have been possible if we had waited for complete developments in the Ministry of Natural Resources. We have been able in many instances to work with the village leaders, explain our program, get to know the people, learn of some of their problems and desires.”⁷⁴ In such village-level exchanges one thing was becoming increasingly clear to the Hampton team, as well to any village or campus residents interested to know how long the Hampton team would remain at Njala. Whether in a village or on a campus farm members of the Hampton team promoted their intention to remain at Njala far longer than initially expected. In many ways they embraced the idea of becoming more permanent residents of the Njala Training College campus. They were apparently willing to pursue this independently, without the approval of the Ministry of Natural resources or other Sierra Leonean government agencies.

In addition to convincing local residents of their growing interest in remaining at Njala, Robert Rice and the Hampton team tried to convince AID and Hampton officials to let them remain at Njala indefinitely. Robert Rice, as the spokesperson for the team, argued with confidence that Njala was a vibrant place, receptive to the prospect of partnership with the

⁷⁴ Robert Rice, Letter to William Martin, June 19, 1962.

Hampton Institute. The team, Rice argued, had become attached to Njala and increasingly aware of the possibilities of working with those in charge of the Training College.

Rice articulated this growing attachment after he learned that the Hampton team might be relocated from Njala in order to make room for a different AID-sponsored team of American professors. Prior to any decision Rice opposed the idea of forcing the Hampton team move from Njala. “If some [AID] plans materialize,” he wrote, “Hampton will have the edge on other Contracts in Sierra Leone. We are here [at Njala] and it will be easier to expand our Contract in all areas in which Hampton has curricular offerings, than to get additional contracts. Hampton, I hope, will be able to supply most of [the] proposed needs.”⁷⁵ Within weeks of writing this plea Rice learned his hopes would not be realized. By late 1962 the Hampton team was relocated to an abandoned airfield just outside Kenema. Shortly after the Rices and Johnsons left Njala, AID and the Sierra Leone government secured a sub-contract to the University of Illinois to conduct a second survey of Njala.

The Hampton team provided what would become the first extensive American survey of Njala. It was an unintended survey at first, as the team had been bound not for Njala, but for Kenema. Nonetheless, to their correspondents at Hampton and within the AID administration, they transmitted the idea that the campus of Njala Training College was not just a temporary refuge. Rather, the Rices and Johnsons encountered an institution and a locale they deemed well-suited to the long-term interests of the Hampton Institute and AID. They did not have the opportunity to pursue their findings. After announcing Njala’s potential—effectively replacing an abstract American interest with knowledge of the material and social conditions at Njala—the

⁷⁵ Robert Rice, Letter to William Martin, June 19, 1962; Uncataloged, Sierra Leone Collection-Rural Training Institute Files, Hampton University Archives.

Hampton team was moved out to make room for a far more aggressive vision for international relations based at Njala.

Expectations among members of the Hampton team for expanding initial relations into a more formal partnership with Njala Training College ultimately did not develop as they had hoped. Nevertheless, over the course of nine months in 1962 the Hampton Institute team had begun to appreciate the history of Njala and take seriously the aspirations of many living in the area. As Martin explained to an AID officer in June 1962, the time at Njala was a critical “period of orientation” when the Hampton team could “deepen its insights regarding critical educational needs.” Not all insights were positive, and in the process of becoming oriented at Njala the Hampton team identified managerial flaws and criticized the infrastructural limits of the rural campus.⁷⁶ However, the team developed any criticisms largely without overlooking the fact that faculty and students in 1962 were engaged in multiple, imperfect processes aimed at taking control of the Training College, and gradually improving the quality of agriculture and education on the campus. As demonstrated in the final section of this chapter, their approach stands in stark contrast to the second American survey of Njala.

Depopulating Njala

While the Hampton Team lived at Njala they came to know students, faculty and village residents as agents shaping an institution with a future. Along with American and Sierra Leonean officials, the Hampton Team presumed that it was possible for the Sierra Leonean community at Njala Training College to continue the work begun after the departure of the British. By contrast, when the University of Illinois Survey Team visited Njala in early 1963, they claimed to have

⁷⁶ William Martin, June 22, 1962, letter to Project Coordinator at AID; Uncataloged, Sierra Leone Collection-Rural Training Institute Files, Hampton University Archives.

encountered a static institution, one in decline and with a questionable future. The source of this decline, according to the conclusions of the Survey Team, was the present constitution of authority over education and agriculture at Njala, and more generally, that the faculty and students at Njala prevented, rather than enabled, agricultural and educational improvement on the campus and in the country.

The Survey Team dismissed ongoing efforts to improve the campus in the wake of British departure, arguing that “the departure of expatriates” had contributed to a “deficiency in leadership” at Njala.⁷⁷ In addition to criticizing the Africanization of posts formerly held by British staff, the Survey Team found teachers and students to be underqualified and lacking the necessary skills to participate in projects of international development. “Even if all existing specialist positions were filled with capable research workers, they would probably not have the skills necessary to attack some of the pressing agricultural problems in Sierra Leone. Therefore, a wider range of positions and skills should be assembled at Njala to provide the ‘critical mass’ of scientific skills necessary to do the most effective research in agriculture.”⁷⁸ To make room for this necessary assembly the Survey Team recommended disassembling the existing community at Njala. The facilities, they argued, could be more appropriately utilized if their present occupants and users were replaced.

AID sponsored teams in Nigeria and India made similar recommendations regarding displacement and expansion, but the scale of the recommendations from Illinois professors was unprecedented. Professors from Michigan State University, for example, backed the recommendation from the Premier of the Eastern Region, Nnamde Azikiwe, that one thousand

⁷⁷ James E. Crawford, Karl E. Gardner, Russell T. Odell, M. Ray Karnes “Education and Agricultural Development in Sierra Leone: Report of the University of Illinois Survey Team to United States A.I.D. Mission to Sierra Leone” (Freetown: Sierra Leone Government Printing Department, 1963) p. 12.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 20.

acres of vacant forest land on the edge of Azikiwe's home village of Nsukka be acquired in order to create a base for a new state university. In India, in order to have more space and revenue for the new Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University, another set of professors from Michigan State assisted in the acquisition of the Terai State Farm. Though such annexations surely interrupted preexisting patterns of resource use in the forest around Nsukka, and altered preexisting divisions of labor at Tarai, compared to Njala these disruptions did not overtly hinge on the displacement of existing communities and the closure of existing institutions.⁷⁹

The recommendations of the Survey Team represented a vision for a future Njala emptied of its present residents. The vision found support amongst the leaders of the national government of Sierra Leone. The Cabinet of Sierra Leone read the recommendations in April 1963, and endorsed the proposal to close the Training College and open a new American sponsored university. Shortly afterwards the faculty, students and campus workers at Njala learned of the pending closure. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Natural Resources announced that all students and staff would have to relocate at the end of the school year.⁸⁰ Faculty could reapply to the new university when it opened, but government official anticipated most would have to leave Njala to find work elsewhere. The same officials envisioned that campus laborers, on the other hand, would find that the administrators of the new college needed their knowledge of the

⁷⁹ For background on the "site development" of University of Nigeria at Nsukka see Ukariwe Kalu Ukariwe, "The Establishment and Development of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 1960-1970," dissertation, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (1984) pgs. 62-75; John Hannah, *A Memoir* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1980) pg. 133; P. Olisanwuche Esedebe, J. Okoro Ijoma, "Early History of the University: 1960-1966" pg. 13, in *The University of Nigeria, 1960-1985: An Experiment in Higher Education*, Emmanuel Obiechina, Chukwuemeka Ike, John Anenechukwu Umeh (eds.) (Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 1986); Arthur Goldsmith, *Building Agricultural Institutions: Transferring the Land-Grant Model to India and Nigeria* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990); pg. 172. For background on Uttar Pradesh and the Tarai State Farm see Goldsmith (p. 89) and K. A. P. Stevenson, Y. R. Mehta, *A New University: The U.P. Agricultural University* (Rudrapur, 1960) pp. 4-10.

⁸⁰ Memorandum, Ministry of Natural Resources, "Development of Agricultural Education at Njala," April 25, 1963; PRO, FBC, Box 663, Ministry of Development Files, "Cabinet Notes, 1963."

campus and its facilities.⁸¹ After consenting to the recommendation of the closure of the Njala Training College, and the handing over of the campus facilities to the authorities of the American sponsored project, the Cabinet focused their attention on the composition of the body that would govern the new college. Other than minor concerns about the comprehensiveness of list of people interviewed by the Survey Team (some Cabinet members wanted more time dedicated to interviewing members of the government), there was no high-level objection to the closure of Njala Training College.⁸²

American officials envisioned that replacing the Hampton Institute team at Njala would introduce an AID project of a wholly different scale in Sierra Leone. The future team from the University of Illinois was expected to use far more resources and occupy far more space than the Hampton Institute team. The AID administration in Freetown estimated that the Illinois project at Njala would cost nearly four-times the Hampton project. By late 1963, six months after the Illinois Survey Team had submitted their recommendations, the first team of Illinois professors began to settle at Njala. Their initial budget was \$700,000. The budget for the Hampton team, by that time living in the Kenema area, was \$200,000.⁸³ The Illinois team also anticipated to help oversee the rapid growth of the population and footprint of the campus. In 1963 the Njala Training College controlled 780 acres and had approximately 100 students. Initial calculations

⁸¹ Untitled correspondence between G.T. Taylor from Ministry of Education, November 1963; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, "The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College."

⁸² W.W. Wallace, Development Secretary, "Development of Agricultural Education at Njala," Correspondence with Ministry of Natural Resources, May 13, 1963; PRO, FBC, Box 663, Ministry of Development Files, "Cabinet Notes, 1963."

⁸³ American Embassy, "Sierra Leone: Background Information," (Freetown: January 1, 1964); University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 3.

by Illinois professors estimated that by 1968 the new rural university would control around 2,170 acres and house about 1,000 students.⁸⁴

The desired expansion of the Njala campus, an idea promoted by the Survey Team and subsequent follow-up surveys, was predicated on the relocation of those who taught and studied at Njala in 1963. The idea that occupants should vacate the residences, farms and classrooms in order to make room for others to take their place began as an imagined emptying and repopulation. Prior to the actual displacement upon the closure of the Training College in 1964, the Survey Team imagined and theorized the depopulation of current faculty and students, and subsequent repopulation with new faculty and students. Their main conclusion was that the buildings and infrastructure encountered at Njala could function as the base for a large-scale international reform. The population of the campus, on the other hand, could not.

This conclusion disturbed teachers, students, and workers at Njala. When project organizers began the procedures of closing the old college and opening the new college (numerous inventories, review of campus workers, requests for student transfers, for example) they found these procedures generated friction, insecurity and remorse. Tension caused by distinctions between old and new emerged around the Njala area: existing administrators squabbled with their replacements; farm workers withheld their labor in a bid to secure future employment; and students despaired about their educational futures during the final year of the Njala Training College.

⁸⁴ Joseph M. Barrow, *Report on Campus Planning, Njala University College, Sierra Leone, West Africa*, Adviser on Campus Planning and Architect, March 23, 1964 – July 22, 1964, University of Illinois A.I.D. Projects, Contract USAID/AFE-132 (Urbana, November 1964) pp. 12-15.

Sufficient buildings, insufficient people

The four members of Illinois Survey Team arrived at Sierra Leone in February 1963. Ray Karnes, Russell Odell, Karl Gardner and James Crawford represented a cross-section of the University of Illinois' academic, vocational and administrative sectors. Karnes chaired the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, and specialized in the training of teachers in rural locales in the United States. Odell was a professor of agronomy that had overseen the Illinois Soil Survey, a massive inventory of the state's soil properties and the associated opportunities for economic usages of the soil. Both Karnes and Odell would go on to work as administrators at the new Njala University College when it opened in 1964.⁸⁵

Gardner, the Dean of the University of Illinois' College of Agriculture, specialized in nutrition and dairy, and served as the head of the Survey Team. Crawford was designated as Gardner's assistant and was charged with organizing meetings and preparing the final report. At the time of the survey Crawford was the Director of Counseling Programs in the male dormitories at University of Illinois. He had degrees in history and political science from the University of Illinois, and had received his J.D. from the College of Law in 1960. After the survey team returned to Illinois, Crawford pursued a teaching career in law, and in 1971 became the first African-American professor to receive tenure at the University of California College of Law.⁸⁶ Crawford, along with the other three members of the survey team, maintained ties with Sierra Leonean agriculturalists and educators throughout their careers. Despite public statements that the University of Illinois was proud that it had "added [Sierra Leone] to the growing list of 'emerging nations' that have turned to the University of Illinois for assistance in agricultural,

⁸⁵ Profile of Survey Team Members; PRO, FBC, Box 663, Ministry of Development Files, "Proposed Development of Agricultural Technical College at N'jala."

⁸⁶ "In Memoriam: James E. Crawford," <http://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/inmemoriam/jamesecrawford.html> (Accessed August 2014).

social and economic development,” the formation of long-term ties may have surprised the members of the survey team.⁸⁷ Contrary to the public statements of their employer, the survey team’s initial impressions of the country in 1963 (cataloged in a diary and correspondence maintained by Crawford) indicate significant doubts about the future of agriculture, education and society in postcolonial Sierra Leone.

After three days in Sierra Leone the Illinois survey team sat in their hotel room, thought about their surroundings, and wrote a joint letter home. To their friends and family in Illinois they conveyed that they had yet to venture outside the city of Freetown. While they waited to begin their survey they took in the luxuries of the Paramount Hotel and a fancy dinner as an opportunity to have a “little civilization before the rough country.” The “excellent” rooms and local beer, the working shower and toilet, the constant supply of hot water, the absolute absence of bugs amazed all. Ernest Neal, the AID director in Sierra Leone, treated them to dinner, wine, ice cream, cigars, brandy and espresso.

In the letter the survey team also rehearsed their urge to divide new from old, and good from bad. From their “2 years old” hotel they reflected on the past and present swirling together outside their rooms. “Freetown has new construction all over the place, Post Office, government office buildings, Parliament Building, office buildings. There are several 8-story (or so) buildings. Traffic is considerable, and there are new double-decker London-type busses. There are also shacks, slums and plenty of unoccupied males lounging about.”⁸⁸ This marked one of the first in many comparisons between buildings and people made by the survey team. Initially in Freetown, and then later at Njala, admirable structures and infrastructures stood out in contrast to

⁸⁷ “U of I Aids Sierra Leone College,” Student News and Information Bureau, University of Illinois College of Agriculture, October 25, 1963; University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 1.

⁸⁸ Letter, February 9, 1963. University Archives, Njala Subject File, Box 1.

people perceived as idle, unproductive and detached from the processes of development. Though the team noted the shacks, their attention remained on buildings deemed to have future value.

Through their encounter with this urban landscape, the survey team began to anticipate what Njala and rural Sierra Leone would be like by comparison. They expressed their anticipation in the last line of their letter. “P.S. Desks and air-conditioned office provided focus at AID (Njala is different!).” Newness and comfort had been encountered in the city. Njala was expected to be different, and as a result was cast in their letter as an old place, out in “the rough country.”⁸⁹ Possibly to their surprise they found instead a campus with substantial, urban-like residential infrastructure, a scattering of recently constructed buildings amidst others undergoing repairs. The team noted a well-maintained post-office; adequate supplies of water and electricity; and most of all, a sufficient supply of “well-built homes” for senior and junior staff with only two that “needed improvements.” Though the campus had no air-conditioned offices, the survey team found there to be other comforts. They noted a special lounge and bar reserved for the faculty, as well as a tennis court and a golf course for faculty and students.⁹⁰ The golf course encompassed the oil-palm plantation on the Agricultural Research Station. No desire to play the course was noted in any of the survey team diaries or correspondence. However, the existence of such satisfactory “recreational facilities” was factored in to survey team’s final conclusion that the campus contained the right amount of adequate facilities and services.⁹¹ Compared to the comforts of the hotel in Freetown, life at Njala might not be as rough as they had once imagined.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ James E. Crawford, Karl E. Gardner, Russell T. Odell, M. Ray Karnes “Education and Agricultural Development in Sierra Leone: Report of the University of Illinois Survey Team to United States A.I.D. Mission to Sierra Leone” (Freetown: Sierra Leone Government Printing Department, 1963); 19.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

While the survey team interviewed Njala staff, reviewed records, and inspected facilities, they also noted some of the ongoing agricultural experiments. For example, the details of the student-led pineapple experiment drew their attention. They observed that students experimented with fertilizers and the spacing between the rows of pineapples. At that time students enjoyed a successful position in the nation's pineapple market. In addition to bringing the pineapples out to the highway to be sold to those in transit, they had, as noted above, secured an outlet for their pineapples in Freetown. Someone familiar with the pineapple experiments must have told the survey team that students' wanted to expand the scale of pineapple production at Njala to a level where they could begin exporting them out of the country. To this end the survey team noted experimentation with the "control of fruiting time" to allow greener pineapples to avoid rotting "if exported."⁹²

The team also noted the existence of other economic schemes. In early 1963 students and workers from the Agricultural Experiment Station organized a massive harvest of all the citrus growing in the Njala area. They brought the oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes and tangerines to Freetown and sold it all below market value. The students and workers brought such a high volume of citrus, and undercut competing vendors in such a manner they were, according to Survey Team diary, "accused of depressing Freetown citrus prices."⁹³ Evidently, the students and workers returned to Njala with a nice profit. Their success stemmed a two-year old campaign to plant citrus seedlings, and revive neglected citrus trees that the British had planted around their quarters. The Survey Team was impressed with the scheme, and also with the product. The seedless variety of grapefruit, according to Gardner, was "sweet, and the best I ever ate."⁹⁴

⁹² Diary, 26.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Though the Survey Team admired the pleasant landscape, and enjoyed its fruit, they maintained a high level of doubt about its future. After surveying Njala the Illinois team visited other rural schools along the way back to Freetown. Once back in Freetown they began to relay their impressions of Njala. Primarily, to AID and American diplomatic officials they expressed their disapproval of the existing management of the Njala campus. The level of teaching was claimed to be substandard, and inadequate knowledge of agricultural economics was reflected in “one of the weakest setups” of farm management.⁹⁵

At a meeting with AID and American diplomatic officials they explained their interpretation of the recent history and future potential of Njala and its relation to agricultural education in the country. The team found that Sierra Leone contained only a few locations that had the facilities supposedly needed for internationally coordinated agricultural and educational development. Despite this potential, they concluded all locations, including Njala, suffered from mismanagement, and poor pedagogical and financial organization.

We have been in the country now 4 weeks and conclusions must be severely limited...We have visited the three most hopeful areas of Sierra Leone, agriculturally speaking; there are areas which can be brought into cultivation. The other areas of the country (about 90%) is a very dismal picture due to the soil and rocky surface. The short, heavy rain season is another detriment. We are not overly impressed with the agricultural education that exists. Teaching methods in Njala are more comparable to high school level rather than a teachers training college.⁹⁶

By locating Njala in a bleak or “dismal” environment, the existing education at Njala was represented as too weak to support the economic transformation of an unfriendly agricultural

⁹⁵ “General Staff Meeting,” March 8, 1963; NARA, RG 286, AID, Sierra Leone Office, Box for 1961, “AID Meeting Minutes.” Ellipses original.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

terrain. If Sierra Leone desired to improve its agricultural economy, then the country needed students to be trained at a level above high school. The faculty and administrators interviewed at Njala, according to the survey team, could not provide the necessary training. Unless they were replaced, the potential developmental usages of the facilities at Njala would remain misguided and under-exploited.

To this end the Survey Team recommended the existing Njala Training College be vacated so that a new college may be built in its place. In their final report, submitted to AID administrators and the Sierra Leone Cabinet, members of the Survey Team explained that they “envisage a new institution without precedent, uninhibited by the educational traditions of the past, which will spearhead the agricultural and educational revolution required to serve best the needs, interests and aspirations of the people of Sierra Leone.” If placed under new management, the campus could be saved from decline and made into a revolutionary epicenter. Agricultural and educational progress could again be made at Njala, indeed, according to the Final Report, “it [had] so served in the past, and with proper direction, resume this important function.”⁹⁷

According to the Illinois Survey Team, the infrastructure and facilities at Njala could foster large-scale, international development. The present inhabitants of the campus, on the other hand, were seen as obstacles to development. A follow-up survey of the Njala area was commissioned to bolster this core idea articulated by the Survey Team—that the Njala Training College was a place with sufficient buildings but insufficient people.

In late 1963 AID administrators at the University of Illinois hired an architect to examine every building on the Njala campus and then prepare a blueprint for a future campus. At the time

⁹⁷ James E. Crawford, Karl E. Gardner, Russell T. Odell, M. Ray Karnes “Education and Agricultural Development in Sierra Leone: Report of the University of Illinois Survey Team to United States A.I.D. Mission to Sierra Leone” (Freetown: Sierra Leone Government Printing Department, 1963); 18.

Joseph Barrow was employed by an architectural firm in Urbana, Illinois, that had handled schoolhouse and campus planning in the Midwest. At Njala Barrow found that the majority of residential, educational and agricultural facilities had been well-built and well-kept. Along with his Illinois colleagues, Barrow mostly admired the campus facilities. In his final report he explained that, “the existing campus and buildings will be sufficient for the initial needs [of the new university].” Barrow rated as “good” or “fair” thirteen out of the fifteen buildings on the Agricultural Experiment Station, ranging from laboratories to a wood shop. Half of the forty buildings that comprised the Teacher Training College were also rated as “fair.” The offices, classrooms, and library were deemed suitable, and Barrow incorporated them as the core of an ambitious property development plan.

Barrow’s detailed interest in the architectural value of existing buildings was paired with a more abstract interest in the people that made and maintained the social world of the campus at the time of his visit. The work of an architect motivated him to look beyond the present population toward an imagined campus populated by new students and staff with new spatial needs. By the time Barrow arrived at Njala it was well-known that the students and staff were in their final year, and that the majority of them would relocate when the Training College closed.⁹⁸ Barrow’s knowledge of their departure fueled a romance with an imagined future population. And, ultimately, his detailed inventory of campus facilities provided the baseline measurements used to estimate an elaborate expansion in the amount of space and resources available to this future population.

⁹⁸ “Njala Training College, List of the Students Due to Start their 3rd and Final Year in September 1964...College each student wishes to Transfer,” Compiled January 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College.”

The base unit of Barrow's measurements was the amount of square feet needed by each future student. In Barrow's projection every student would need a certain amount of residential, agricultural, and educational space. The total spatial needs of each student equaled the total square feet required per student. According to Barrow, the students he observed in 1964 did not have enough square footage at their disposal. The growth of the future campus, Barrow argued, would be driven by providing students with the square footage they required. In his calculations every student required 170 square feet of total campus space. Barrow estimated that by 1965 the new college would have 125 students, 25 more than in 1964 and thus 4,375 more square feet of combined residential, agricultural, educational space. Barrow projected that by 1967 the student population would reach 500, and then one year later double to reach 1,000 students. At some undesignated future date, Barrow concluded, the new college could contain a population of 5,000 students. This massive expansion would be costly. "For each succeeding incremental enrollment increase of 500," Barrow wrote, "assume a required additional investment of \$2,525,000." Compared to this future campus, the last 100 students of Njala Training College lived on a minimal yet functional campus, one sustained by a scarce yet somehow manageable budget. Once they left, the work of building this grand vision could begin without them.

Though Barrow's proposal rendered abstract and looked beyond the existing population, it also proposed the capturing and acceleration of existing initiatives of improvement and reform. The students and staff of the Training College would leave, but in a way their initiatives would remain. Once the present population vacated Njala the next step in building the new campus, Barrow wrote, was to address what he called the "constant need for adaptation and remodeling of existing facilities until such a time as new facilities shall become available."⁹⁹ In previous years

⁹⁹ Barrow, 36.

the residents of the Njala campus had overseen efforts to modify and improve the facilities on the campus. A small amount of new buildings had been built by students and workers, these ranged from a small insect laboratory to a new classroom. Many other buildings had been placed under a form of incremental renovation, as was the case with a somewhat dilapidated student kitchen on campus. In this case a blacksmith from the Public Works Department was brought to campus to fix a “leaking oil stove and broken chimney.”¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, the administrators of the Training College foresaw possibilities of large-scale construction projects of their own. The campus’ Assembly Hall could only accommodate 250 people. In late 1962, George Taylor proposed to the Sierra Leone government that they sponsor the erection of a massive, new Assembly Hall. When the College organized a concert of film screening for the students and local off-campus residents the events drew from 1,000 to 1,500 people. Taylor envisioned a new building to accommodate that many.¹⁰¹ This vision, however, was preempted and intervened upon by the grander, more robustly resourced AID-sponsored vision of Barrow and the Illinois Survey Team.

Overall, Barrow and the Survey Team’s vision of taking over, and then scaling up existing architectural initiatives, relied on the downsizing of the political aspirations held by the people they encountered at the Njala Training College in 1963 and early 1964. In terms of the division of labor and the production of knowledge at Njala, the faculty and students of the Training College experimented with the possibilities of a locally administered Africanization of campus work and curriculum. Despite these efforts it somehow remained possible for Barrow and the Survey Team to suggest that existing initiatives get coopted into a new institution, and to

¹⁰⁰ Taylor, Annual Report, 1961-2; pp. 4-6.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

promote the idea that the successful development of the campus was dependent on removing its current occupants.

From the perspective of Barrow and the Survey Team, the real development of Njala lay in the future. Present initiatives were deemed insufficient. This dismissal is evident in Barrow's introduction to his architectural vision for a post-1964 Njala. "If Njala University College can develop a curriculum adequately meeting the needs of the people it will serve, and if the design of the physical facilities can suitably house that educational program and also engender a sense of pride in things African, then there may be less desire on the part of the educated to 'escape from the bush.'"¹⁰² Setting aside his concern over the gravitational pull of urbanization (the force he hopes to quell with an attractive rural campus) we find that Barrow and his Illinois colleagues consistently rendered the social relations encountered during their surveys into a set of abstract, suppositional "ifs." To offer these abstract suggestions Barrow and the Survey Team had to, in one way or another, overlook how the existing campus residents of Njala had already, largely and remained committed to processes of developing curriculum and adapt the "physical facilities" to meet local needs. The faculty, students and residents of the Njala area in 1963, and the in preceding two years, were also clearly more than capable of testing the possibilities of Africanization on their own terms. Acts of protest and dissent during the final year of the Training College suggest that the faculty, students and workers resented how their initiatives and claims to Njala had been overlooked by Barrow and the Survey Team.

¹⁰² Barrow, 1.

Friction at the close

When the professors selected to administer the closure of Njala Training College and the opening of Njala University College moved into campus housing in late 1963, they quickly learned that the communal dynamics of this transition would be difficult to manage. The Illinois professors, led by Survey Team veteran Karl Gardner, along with Sahr Thomas Matturi, the Sierra Leonean professor of botany at Fourah Bay College and future principal of Njala University College, found that the faculty, students and workers at the Training College were willing to disrupt measures perceived as marginalizing and disempowering.

Though the Training College community was well aware that this was likely their final year at Njala, they remained committed to the possibility of influencing the conditions of the pending closure and the terms of their displacement. As a result, pressure for a rapid transition was contested and unrest emerged in all quarters of the campus. College farm and kitchen workers refused to work, and bargained for their retention as employees in the new university.¹⁰³ “Pa” Taylor objected to managerial commands of the transitional authorities, and aided students as they begrudgingly dealt with the uncertainties of transferring schools. Everything from urgent requests to vacate staff residences to demands that classified documents be handed over was met with suspicion.¹⁰⁴

Tensions increased as the downward pressure of transition, represented by Gardner and Matturi, was met with an upward pressure of attachment to possibilities forged in the wake of British departure from Njala. Such attachment, however, was not simply a backward looking

¹⁰³ J.S. Kanga, “Posting to Another School,” letter to George Taylor and Minister of Education, July 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

¹⁰⁴ George Taylor, letters to Ministry of Education, July 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

nostalgia in the face of the foreclosure of the Training College. Rather, campus residents acted out of a forward facing collective interest in Njala, and will to preserve claims to the campus now jeopardized by the pending closure.

Amidst these conditions, “Pa” Taylor often conveyed the discomfort of the transition to officials in the national government. On one occasion Taylor informed them that a general attitude of despair had taken hold at the Training College in its final year. Taylor in fact feared there was no way to appropriately commemorate the closure of the Training College. After communicating with Taylor the Minister of Education explained that, “the closing of the Njala Training College is for us not a happy moment and I agree with [Taylor] that it would not be expedient to make a ceremony of it.”¹⁰⁵ In previous years the end of the school year had been marked with some form of graduation and matriculation celebration. In the final year of the college it appeared to Taylor, as well as many students, as more ceremonious to abstain from enjoyment and quietly pass out certificates to students in their final year of a program.¹⁰⁶

Another manifestation of unhappiness was a strike by campus workers. In early September 1963 approximately eighty-one men who maintained the college’s experimental farms and tended the agricultural experiments refused to work. The strike disrupted the fall harvest schedule, forcing the Training College administration to recruit new workers in order to not lose the crops.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Notes from Permanent Secretary, April 20, 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

¹⁰⁶ Minutes from Ministry of Education, March 17, 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

¹⁰⁷ W.A. Aboko-Cole to Agricultural Officer S.A. Kawa, and Agricultural Superintendent, J.O. Palmer-Davies, October 1963; PRO, FBC, Box 17, Ministry of Agriculture Files, “Njala Station Handing Over Notes.”

Though no college official or striking worker put down on paper the exact reason for the strike, it was a timely expression of the essential role that these farm workers played in the maintenance and improvement of the campus. At the start of the 1963 school year it was announced that all wage-earning, or “daily rated” personnel would be placed under a form of review by those who would take over the campus at the end of the school year in 1964. If they wanted to work at Njala in the future, the farm worker, along with the mechanics the kitchen cooks and office clerks, for example, all had reapply to the new Njala University College.¹⁰⁸ Compared to the mechanic, cook and clerk, whose reapplication was negotiated through paperwork and letters of reference, the employment history of the farm worker was more informal and largely paperless. In this context, the strike was represented a type of symbolic negotiation directed at securing future employment at Njala after the closure of the Training College.

Within the context of an inventory of all wage laborers, the results of the farm labor strike were mixed. While administrators offered no long-term commitment to maintain the employment of the farm workers, they did recognize the ability of the farm workers to disrupt campus operations in the future. Gardner and Matturi, the administrators in charge of hiring staff for the new university, extended offers of secured future employment to the mechanics, cooks and clerks—basically those with formal contracts.¹⁰⁹ The “knowledge of the compound and the [Njala] area” possessed by these skilled wage workers was estimated to be quite value to a

¹⁰⁸ George Taylor to S.T. Matturi, February 11, 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

¹⁰⁹ Karl Gardner, Chief of Party, University of Illinois-USAID to W. G. Jones, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, February 24, 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

functional transition to the new university.¹¹⁰ Despite collectively possessing their own knowledge of the college farms and agricultural experiments, no such offer was made to the farm workers whose only formal recognition was their name on a roster, or “labour roll.” Rather the incoming administrators wished to avoid strikes in the future and effectively agreed to maintain the existing roster of farm workers. According to Gardner the farm worker strike, and other overlapping uncertainties related to future employment at Njala, had succeeded in generating a general “atmosphere...and feeling of insecurity.” To avoid future disruptions Gardner proposed to resolve this insecurity by including all the farm workers in a “new dedication” to cooperation once the old Training College closed and the new university opened.¹¹¹ The farm workers apparently settled for this promise, and awaited the change in management at Njala.

In his own way during the final year of the Training College “Pa” Taylor exhibited a willingness to oppose the wishes of those poised to take over Njala. In addition to lobbying Gardner and Matturi to insure that campus wage workers had secured future employment, Taylor demonstrated a certain territoriality, and occasionally refused directives issued by the transitional authorities who had just recently moved to Njala.

This was the case when Matturi tried to remove confidential files from Taylor’s office. In December 1963 Taylor alleged that the “Principal-Designate” phoned him to seek access to employment records of faculty and administrators currently working at Njala. Matturi wanted to transport these records to his private residence on campus in order to examine them. Taylor refused and instead, “told [Matturi] he will be allowed to sit in one of the offices of the College to look at the files but the Confidential files will not be taken away to his house.” Furthermore,

¹¹⁰ Notes of Deputy Minister of Education, November 8, 1963; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

¹¹¹ Karl Gardner, “Progress of Wok Plan,” March 1964, pg. 9; University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 2.

Taylor insisted that, “as custodian of these files [Taylor] could not give them to anyone to be taken away to [a] house without the knowledge and approval of the Head of the Ministry [of Education].”¹¹² In insisting that the appropriate approval was absolutely necessary, Taylor delayed Matturi’s access to the records by rerouting the initial request to a higher authority within the national government. Until Matturi, the “Principal-Designate,” became the actual Principal of Njala, Taylor reserved his right to assert his authority over the procedures guiding the closure of the Training College. Not only was he willing to remind Matturi that there was a bureaucratic oath to uphold, but also that he could, in a small measure, control Matturi’s movements on campus. If Matturi wanted to examine the historical records of the Training College in order to determine who was fit to work in the future university, then Taylor could tell him where and when such examinations could be done. It’s no wonder that Matturi occasionally spoke of Taylor as an obstructing force. “Pa Taylor is due to retire at end of current school year,” Matturi explained to an AID administrator overseeing the Illinois contract, “I hope I should then be free to initiate the radical changes in my plans to remodel the Education section of the College without such resistance.”¹¹³

In addition to maintaining the institutional boundaries of the campus, Taylor’s protection of the confidential files represents a claim of guardianship over the history of Njala. The files contained the employment histories of Taylor, as well as his past and present colleagues. He feared the records might be misused, and that the difficult work and dilemmas of taking control of Njala in the wake of British departure might be misinterpreted. Specifically, Taylor suspected that in allowing Matturi to have full access to the records the transitional administrators might

¹¹² George Taylor, “Government Confidential Files,” letter to Minister of Education, December 14, 1963; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

¹¹³ S.T. Matturi, Airgram to AID-Illinois Administrator, May 30, 1963; University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 6.

gather evidence to bar certain employees from working at Njala in the future. His fears were legitimated when six teachers in the practicing school were fired at the end of the 1963-64 school year.¹¹⁴

Taylor was also suspicious of recent arrivals from the University of Illinois, and guarded against their overreach in his final year as principal. Specifically he feared that Matturi might pass along confidential files to the Illinois professors. This proved to be a legitimate concern, as Frank Klassen, an Illinois specialist in teacher training, was involved in the firing of the six teachers at the Njala practicing school.¹¹⁵ Taylor insisted on protecting the confidential files because he claimed it was, “[a] very dangerous practice...to indulge in giving out confidential documents and files to private individuals who seek to interfere with our work and give out confidential information to irresponsible people in the vicinity without counting the cost.”¹¹⁶ If we presume that by “private individual” Taylor simply meant those who might read the files without his explicit permission, then Taylor’s original objection to Matturi’s request to relocate the files to his house is further clarified. Taylor was unwilling to allow the archival locus of the campus to shift to Matturi’s house because it would then allow Matturi control over the flow of records on the campus. Once the files resided with Matturi, then any guest or person unknown to Taylor would be allowed to pour through employment histories and administrative records behind the walls of a campus residence. Though the closure of the Training College was imminent, and the replacement of administrators, students and teachers hung over the campus, Taylor tried to maintain his capacity to oversee campus operations until the end.

¹¹⁴ Office of the Permanent Secretary to George Taylor and the Minister of Education, June 17, 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

¹¹⁵ S.T. Matturi to Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education, June 16, 1964; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

¹¹⁶ George Taylor, “Government Confidential Files,” letter to Minister of Education, December 14, 1963; PRO, FBC, Box 514, Ministry of Education Files, “The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967.”

Conclusion

Taylor's rebuke of Matturi also addressed those whom he regarded as the "irresponsible people in the vicinity." At the time of the dispute over confidential files Taylor was able to think ahead and anticipate his final months as principal of Njala. It is important to consider how he might have imagined the difference between responsibility and irresponsibility at such a time. During the final year of the Training College Taylor witnessed numerous disruptive acts forged in opposition to the pending displacement of campus residents. It is unlikely that Taylor viewed those involved in such acts as irresponsible. After all, Taylor himself generated his share of opposition in his last year as principal, enough to be labeled a resistor by the person selected to replace him.

Taylor likely saw those in a hurry to close the Training College and initiate its dramatic makeover as the irresponsible party. Such a reaction by Taylor and his colleagues not only signals doubts about transitional procedures, but also larger concerns over the displacement of responsible, possibly more durable visions for Njala in order to make room for irresponsible visions of rapid development. When viewed from Taylor's perspective and the perspective of those residing with him at Njala in the first years after independence, the origins of a new rural university were troubling. The takeover of the Training College meant foreclosing local and international initiatives made at Njala after independence and before 1964. Within this context of dispossession a more aggressive form of international development had emerged.

CHAPTER 2

The Making of an Agrinaut: Professor Joseph Kastelic and the Land-Grant University

It seems most ludicrous that four or five Illinois people have the temerity to assume so many of the tasks associated with the creation and development of a university college!

~ Joseph Kastelic
Njala, November 1964

“Universities,” Sir Eric Ashby wrote in 1962, are “like motor cars.” Speaking in Ibadan, Nigeria, the British academic and policy adviser argued that postcolonial nations could select what model of university they wanted to import. There were limits however. Selecting a university model from a short list of options, he admitted, was limited by historical connections between those who allegedly made universities and those who imported them. “Just as Fiat and Renault cars are common in Dakar and Morris and Austin cars are common in Nigeria, so Dakar has a French pattern of university and Nigeria a British pattern,” Ashby explained.¹

Yet sometimes, in the market of university models, former European colonies took their business elsewhere. In Ashby’s analogy this was the case with the American land-grant university. Similar to when a car for “long distances and the rough roads” was needed, a postcolonial nation might opt to buy an American university model designed for rural environments. In Ashby’s mind, as well as those of many American professors and their counterparts in postcolonial nations, the land-grant university was the educational equivalent of the rugged American automobile fashioned to traverse the uneven terrain of rural development. As one dean of a Midwest college of agriculture argued, “the hope of assisting the developing

¹ Eric Ashby, “The functions of West African Universities,” in *The West African Intellectual Community* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1962) p. 48.

countries to become self-sufficient can only be accomplished if we export our concept of the land-grant college.”²

The marketing of the land-grant university as an apparatus of rural development in the 1960s led to a rapid escalation in the number of transactions between American and postcolonial universities in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These transactions took place between competing inter-imperial and postcolonial agendas, many which succeeded in altering the expanding global reach of land-grant universities. Additionally, American academics mobilized through inter-university projects found that they had been delegated ground level control over the global extensions of American universities as well as the growth in the value of American products, from automobiles to university models. Amidst the changing relations between former colony and metropole, the American professors emerged as a central figure in the imperfect internationalization of the American land-grant university.

By the late 1960s, U.S. university officials and professors had organized a global market of rural development contracts between thirty American land-grant universities and thirty-nine different countries.³ In the negotiations behind each transaction, American deans in Montana, Hawaii and Connecticut, for instance, often made two claims about the land-grant university model and the land-grant university professor. They promoted the land-grant university model as a formation with a unique geographic and social history in which campus research farms had been tailored to local ecologies and linked to off-campus state development programs. These programs, they argued, cultivated the land-grant professor’s capacity for engaging in local

² Orville G. Bentley, “New Commitments for the Land-Grant University in a Hungry World,” from *The Land Grant University and World Food Needs* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968) p.159.

³ K. Propp, *AID-University Rural Development Contracts* (Urbana/Washington D.C.: CIC-AID, 1968) p. 1.

politics and local economic development.⁴ American officials presented to African, Asian and Latin Americans officials the land-grant model as an institutional design that fostered deep transformation within rural economies. To this American officials added that the land-grant professor, who initiated veterinary clinics or fertilizer schemes in the rural quarters of the United States, for example, had in the process practiced the diplomatic skills and humanitarian ethos needed for international rural development.⁵

This chapter argues that the mobile professor of agriculture was the carrier of American philosophies of education, and a driver of American foreign policy. As small state actors (since “nonstate actors” does not seem appropriate for representatives of state schools), these professors made policy decisions on the ground, and orchestrated three-way relations between campuses in the U.S., other imperial metropolises, and postcolonial nations.⁶ In this manner, the mobile professor of agriculture was a key connective agent in what Paul Kramer has called, “the junctures between U.S. colleges and universities and American imperial power.”⁷

While current scholarship has demonstrated how midcentury American foreign policy wound through the higher education system, the role of the mobile American professor in

⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *The Development of Higher Education in Africa: report of the Conference on the Development of Higher Education in African, Tananarive, 3-12 September, 1962* (Paris: 1963) p. 17, p. 336.

⁵ *Ibid.*; 156.

⁶ Helen Milner, Andrew Moravcsik, eds., *Power, Interdependence and Nonstate Actors in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). For further discussion of actors deemed external to, or at the margins of official statecraft (often labeled non-governmental or non-state actors) see *Empire, Development and Colonialism: The Past in the Present*, Mark Duffield, Vernon Hewitt, eds. (James Currey, 2013).

⁷ Paul Kramer, “Is the World Our Campus? International Students and U.S. Global Power in the Long Twentieth Century,” pg. 12 in *Teaching American to the World & The World to America: Education and Foreign Relations since 1870*, Richard Garlitz, Lisa Jarvinen, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). Kramer’s essay originally appeared in *Diplomatic History* 33: 5 (2009).

shaping these policies remains largely unexamined.⁸ Additionally, little is known about the daily life and work of these professors. Examining the domestic lives and international relations of professors and their families, I argue, helps tell the story of how professors fashioned reforms to American higher education and opened up universities to new forms of international development. Furthermore, historians of higher education and empire have yet to examine how agriculture fit into the production of “foreign development” as a shared governmental and academic goal.⁹ The position of agricultural disciplines has been largely unexamined in studies of “cold war academic agendas,” with these works focusing primarily on social science fields.¹⁰ By following professors of agriculture as they moved between countries, and examining the daily basis of their educational work, we can more fully appreciate the breadth of international academic agendas in the Cold War era and the role of transnational rural politics in shaping those agendas.

⁸ Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Michael Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Latham, *Modernization as ideology: American social science and “nation building” in the Kennedy era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

⁹ See John Ernst, *Forging a Fateful Alliance: Michigan State University and the Vietnam War* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998), or more recently James Carter’s *Inventing Vietnam: The United States and State Building, 1954-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); 46-81. Useful case studies can be found in the following; Jacob Neusner, Noam Neusner, *The Price of Excellence: Universities in Conflict During the Cold War Era* (New York: Continuum, 1995); and Rebecca Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

¹⁰ Christopher Simpson, ed., *Introduction to Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War* (New York: The New Press, 1998); xxix. F. Cooper, R. Packard, eds. *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

The term “agrinaut” was coined in 1962 by the editors of Louisiana Agricultural Extension Service newsletter.¹¹ I use this term throughout the chapter to describe professors of agriculture who navigated multiple rural development projects over the course of their careers. Casting professors as agrinauts launched into orbit from American agricultural research universities toward work in rural or agricultural universities in West Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, for instance, is intended to capture a certain ironic, but also quite loaded valence. As a term, it channels institutional and technological contexts, while at the same time it reflects an actual rhetorical device used by professors of agriculture to define their work. “In the last half of the twentieth century,” William Thompson, a professor of Farm Management from the University of Illinois explained in 1969, “the astronaut and the multibillion-dollar space program represents the most advanced pioneering efforts combining scientific achievement and human skills.” By Thompson’s account, the figure of the agrinaut emerged in the shadow of the astronaut. It did so, however, “with much less fanfare, but often with great difficulty and great risks.”¹² Ultimately, the goal of this is to chapter locate Illinois agrinauts in the history of American’s “educational empire,” and tell the story of the work they did assembling the land-grant university model on the ground, between imperial and anti-imperial forces.¹³ In Sierra Leone, as examined below, we find the agrinaut evaluating colonial-era archives, living in houses formerly occupied by British officers, all the while engaged in a daily bargaining over what postcolonial institutions ought to look like.

¹¹ *The LSU Agrinaut*, May 1962, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Lafayette, LA); 1-2. *The LSU Agrinaut* was a federally funded newsletter of the Louisiana Agricultural Extension Service. This service, similar to the other USDA and land-grant university sponsored extension networks in each state and territory, tried to deliver services to farmers and farm owners. The editors used “agrinaut” to describe their newsletter as “a communication rocket” carrying agricultural news and state sponsored instructions to farmers and farm suppliers.

¹² Harold D. Guither, W.N. Thomson. *Mission Overseas: A handbook for U.S. families in developing countries* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969) p. 1.

¹³ Jonathan Zimmerman. *Innocents Abroad: American Teachers in the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008) p. 182.

When analyzed from the ground up and through an inter-imperial lens, the privileged lives of agrinauts indicate that American global educational power is firmly rooted in the social processes of higher education. The ascent of particular models like the land-grant university, and the rise of the agrinaut as a developmental and ideological figure, relied on the making of domestic and academic life at specific sites of inter-university transactions.¹⁴ At those sites, which were customarily (but not always) campuses, the source of the agrinauts' influence came from their capacity to establish a favorable domestic and epistemological order. As colonies transitioned to nations, and new rural universities were erected in the countryside, agrinauts expected residential privilege to develop hand-in-hand with a privileged position in the evaluation of the archives of colonial-era agricultural knowledge. In Sierra Leone this meant the expansion of American power depended on how agrinauts lived in new or recently vacated homes, and how they assessed the paperwork of colonial agricultural experiments, often determining whether or not to continue or discontinue preexisting projects.

For Illinois agrinauts, life at Njala was shaped by this simultaneous privileging of particular people and particular archives.¹⁵ In other words, they could expect to occupy nice homes, whilst occupying an authoritative interpretive position over the records of the colonial past. For example, an Illinois professor could make the decision to burn records, as was the case with some of the Njala botanical files, while another Illinois professor could become enamored

¹⁴ For example, Ogechi Emmanuel Anyanwu's *Politics of Access: University Education and Nation-Building in Nigeria, 1948-2000* (Calgary, 2011) provides an excellent overview of the commissions, political figures, and national policy driving what he terms the "massification" of university education in post-colonial Nigeria. But such an overview often overlooks the questions and conditions that appear when the political history of higher education is examined in tandem with its social history. For examples of this, see *Feminist Africa*, issues number 8 and 9 (2007) on "Rethinking Universities," edited by Teresa Barnes and Amina Mama.

¹⁵ Here it is important to note, as Antoinette Burton reminds us, "archive derives from the Greek *arkheion*, that is, the house, residence, domicile of the archon (superior magistrate), and that this dwelling-place marks the liminal space between public and private," p. 6, *Dwelling in the Archives: Women Writing House, Home and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

with experimental data from previous decades and then use that data to further the study of cattle in West Africa by comparing them to cattle in Illinois.¹⁶

My interest in grounding the politics of inter-institutional transactions in the lives of agrinauts is reflected in the sequence of this chapter. First, I look at the land-grant university model in the contexts of international development. This section introduces the scope of land-grant university partnerships with postcolonial governments, and locates the Illinois partnership with Sierra Leone within that international context. The chapter then turns to examine how the figure of the agrinaut emerged in the marketplace of international development projects. Here I trace the emergence of the agrinaut by highlighting tensions between supply and demand in the marketplace of international development projects, and also highlight the variety of national, academic and abstract values inscribed into the work of the agrinaut. The final section examines the relations between residential life, archives of colonial-era agriculture, and the role played by American professors in designing the curriculum and agricultural research agendas of Njala University College. Here I show how the project of building a campus was balanced upon domestic work, and how the simultaneous privileging of certain people and certain records in that project shaped the division of resources and production of knowledge at Njala.

The particular agrinaut featured in this chapter is Joseph Kastelic (1913-1972), a man who grew up around farms and logging camps in western Canada, and died in Illinois after working overseas. Born in the Butte, Montana, Kastelic moved with his parents to Alberta at

¹⁶ Paul Richards was told that an Illinois professor set aside records to burn by Charles Pyne. In the early 1960s, Pyne was a lab-assistant, having received his training in the 1950s at Njala. Pyne went on to be acting director of Agricultural Sciences in the 1980s (e-mail correspondence, August 2012). For the Illinois interest in West African cattle see, Joseph Kastelic, "Report prepared following a survey of various Sierra Leone agricultural activities at substations," pg. 7; University of Illinois Archives, Series Number 8/7/26, "Joseph Kastelic Papers, 1945-1970." See also, R. W. Touchberry, "A Study of the N'Dama Cattle at the Musais Animal Husbandry Station in Sierra Leone," published jointly by the University of Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station and Njala University College (April 1967).

young age and became a Canadian citizen. Kastelic returned to the United States in late 1940s, and earned a doctoral degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and then taught at Iowa State. In 1956, Kastelic took a job as a professor of Animal Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and became a United States citizen one year later.¹⁷

Kastelic and his wife, Gladys Kastelic, also a naturalized citizen originally from Canada, shared a common background. The University of Illinois AID Project Office asked those recommending Joseph for international work to anticipate how Gladys would “adapt” to living in Sierra Leone. She earned high marks, with one reviewer noting that, “she grew up under rather primitive conditions and should, I believe, be able to adjust.”¹⁸

Joseph and Gladys lived in Sierra Leone from 1964 to 1966. At Njala University College, Joseph worked as the first Coordinator of Animal and Agricultural Research. This job required that Kastelic dig through colonial-era archives of old experiments, literally dig through the soil around the campus, and ultimately weigh British, Sierra Leonean and American interests in Njala. His evaluations of existing archives informed his decisions to dramatically alter the makeup of the livestock population on campus. For example, he had all the chickens killed shortly after his arrival; initiated a scheme to gradually slaughter and replace the pigs; and brokered an agreement with the Sierra Leone government to relocate a small herd of cattle to the Njala campus. In his years at Njala, Kastelic also sorted through all the records related to the Njala Agricultural Experiment Station and oil palm plantation on the campus. He wandered the campus buildings and government offices in Freetown seeking other agriculturally related paperwork. Based on his evaluation of these records he articulated guidelines for

¹⁷ Candidate evaluation form, October 1964, J. Kastelic, Research Co-ordinator, Njala University College; University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

experimentation on the oil palm plantation and farm plots controlled by Njala University.¹⁹ For all this he earned an annual salary of \$18,370, and the family was provided additional travel, education, and shipping allowances.²⁰

During her time at Njala, Gladys co-founded and chaired the Njala Ladies Club, a group of American and Sierra Leonean women dedicated to the study of sewing, nutrition, cooking and West African languages. For this she was not paid.²¹ Shortly after returning from Sierra Leone, Joseph and Gladys lived and worked in rural, southern Vietnam for one year. There Joseph helped design and build pig slaughter facilities, as he had tried to do at Njala. Bladder and pancreatic cancer prevented Joseph from taking a third AID contract, and he died in 1972. Gladys lived forty more years in Illinois, and died in Florida in 2011.²² Though cut short by Joseph's death, their time together in Sierra Leone and Vietnam, as well as the majority of their married life in the Midwest, reflected interactions with competing local and global claims to the history and future of the land-grant university.

Land-Grant University Projects in West Africa and Beyond

In a letter written from Sierra Leone to his colleagues in Illinois, Joseph Kastelic described the "land-grant philosophy" as definitively flexible.²³ The 1960s, he claimed, was a time when this philosophy could be used anywhere in the world in order to translate any combination of teaching, research and off-campus extension projects into effective rural and industrial modernization. From Kastelic's perspective, the land-grant philosophy had emerged to

¹⁹ Joseph Kastelic, "Terminal Report of a Two-Year Assignment as Adviser in Animal Sciences and Adviser to the Agricultural Experiment Station," September 1966; University of Illinois Archives, Series Number 8/7/26, "Joseph Kastelic Papers, 1945-1970," Box 1.

²⁰ Appointment Notice, Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, September 22, 1964; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

²¹ "Njala University College Newsletter," 1:1 (December 1965) pg. 23; "Joseph Kastelic Papers, 1945-1970," Box 1.

²² Interview, April 2013.

²³ J. Kastelic, Letter, March 2, 1965; "Joseph Kastelic Papers," Box 1.

meet the educational demands that Ivory Tower institutions could not. Despite this belief, however, he admitted that the history of the land-grant university was in fact quite messy and often misunderstood. He noted that even one-hundred years after its invention, the philosophy of the American land-grant university was “still undergoing remodeling, repair and change.”²⁴ Though he acknowledged that the land-grant philosophy was imperfect and developing, he also believed it might fulfill the rural, industrial and educational needs of postcolonial nations. “Sierra Leone,” he wrote in 1966, “lacks long-established educational perspectives oriented to the country’s needs. The educational influence is primarily British, and the educational traditions are European and not American in origin. Most well-educated Africans are products of classical universities dominated by an intellectual elite.”²⁵ For Kastelic, the contemporary value of the land-grant philosophy was that it offered the antidote to old-world elitism and its colonial traditions. In addition to offering a gateway to the postcolonial, it was thought to offer a more pragmatic blueprint for erecting a less-exploitative and more nationalist form of education.

Kastelic’s views were echoed in higher education organizations in the United States. Like Kastelic, many land-grant university advocacy groups pushed the land-grant model into what they perceived as gaps on the global educational landscape. The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, for example, along with regional committees from state agricultural experiment stations, negotiated hundreds of international contracts in the 1960s between postcolonial and American universities. Professors mobilized through these contracts translated daily the philosophy of the land-grant university—an ideology in 1960s still “undergoing remodeling.”

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ J. Kastelic, “Terminal Report of Joseph Kastelic: Terminal Report of a Two-Year Assignment as Adviser in Animal Science and Advisor to the Agricultural Experiment Station,” 1966; “Joseph Kastelic Papers,” Box 1.

A career in international rural development, according to professors and university administrators, offered a diversity of projects and locations. Contracts between AID and universities mobilized professors of agriculture for natural resource use surveys, or household finance data collection. Other contracts assigned American professors to departmental posts in young academic departments, and charged them with the development of everything from curriculum to faculty housing.²⁶ The malleability of the study of agriculture facilitated the growth of the idea that agrinauts could adapt to any rural, educational task. A professor of Crop Science from Kansas State could become a professor of Veterinary Science in Nigeria.²⁷ Or, a professor like Kastelic, who admitted to knowing nothing of rice and palm oil (two of the most important crops in Sierra Leone) could oversee the development of an Experimental Farming Station in Sierra Leone.²⁸ Any mismatch in areas of expertise could presumably be compensated by an agrinauts ability to fall back on their broad knowledge of basic sciences, and familiarity with research methods common in land-grant extension programs. In this manner the international career paths of agrinauts combined a significant degree of randomness with a robust faith in the land-grant university model.

AID and university officials argued that by introducing the land-grant professors, and superimposing the land-grant model over former colonial locations, postcolonial nations could make significant educational and agricultural gains. In early 1960s, AID and West African governments hired Michigan State University, Kansas State University, the University of

²⁶ For surveys of range of rural development contracts see Kathleen M. Propp, Harold D. Guither, Earl H. Regnier, William N. Thompson. *AID-University Rural Development Contracts* (Urbana/Washington D.C.: CIC-AID, 1968); William Wayt, "AID, Agriculture, and Africa: A Perspective on University Contract Projects," USAID Rural Development Research Project (Urbana: Committee on Institutional Cooperation—American for International Development, 1968).

²⁷ University Contracts, Technical Assistance Survey Group; University of Illinois Archives, Series Number 8/4/40, CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project File, 1950-1968, Box 29.

²⁸ Joseph Kastelic, Report to Robert Jugenheimer, Director of Overseas Projects for the University of Illinois, October 10, 1964; "Joseph Kastelic Papers," Box 1.

Wisconsin, and the University of Illinois to help with the modification of colonial agricultural institutions. Each state university was put under contract to help transform British colonial agricultural sites according to the model of the American land-grant university. Nigeria, by 1964, worked with three land-grant universities to reform agricultural education institutions in its northern, eastern and western regions. In the northern region, professors from Kansas State modified the inherited curriculum of the British imperial veterinary service, and helped open a Veterinary Medicine affiliated with Amadu Bello University.²⁹ In the western region in 1964, a “team from Wisconsin” conducted an “educational and economic feasibility study” of the three years old University of Ife. The study analyzed how “a land-grant type” system might be developed at Ife. This study led to a five year relationship between Ife and Wisconsin.³⁰ In rural northern Nigerian, agrinouts and administrators from Michigan State University assisted in “planning the organizational structure, administration, facilities, curricula, research, equipment requirements and staff training requirements necessary for the University [of Nigeria] to reach a projected enrollment of 6,000 students [by] 1972.”³¹ Through these contracts and transactions, the land-grant university was positioned as an education model that was synonymous with rural development. Furthermore, the land-grant university was depicted as a model that could guide any large-scale educational and institutional reform.

As conveyed in the preceding chapter, the Sierra Leone government, AID and the University of Illinois began an experiment with the land-grant model by signing of a two-year contract in 1963. The contract aimed to “convert and combine [the campus at Njala] into an effective rural institution patterned after the typical US Land Grant Universities.” Professors

²⁹ G.H. Beck, E.E. Leasure, “AID Consultants Report, University of the North, Zaria, Nigeria” (Washington, D.C.: AID, 1962) p. 2.

³⁰ Kathleen M. Propp, Harold D. Guither, Earl H. Regnier, William N. Thompson. *AID-University Rural Development Contracts* (Urbana/Washington D.C.: CIC-AID, 1968) p. 86.

³¹ *Ibid.*; 44.

from the University of Illinois, the contract explained, would help “integrate” and “modify” the former colonial campus at Njala into an “effective tool for supporting the agricultural economy of Sierra Leone.” The contract’s \$300,000 budget covered the cost of relocating and supporting Illinois professors in their endeavor to begin the “conversion” of Njala into a land-grant university.³²

Professors from Illinois had high and broad hopes about what an effective conversion could mean for Sierra Leonean society and the international prestige of the American land-grant university system. Developing a land-grant styled university at Njala, according to an Illinois College of Agriculture newsletter, would have a massive societal impact in Sierra Leone. Under the headline “U. of I. Aids Sierra Leone College,” the article explained that “Sierra Leone was recently added to the growing list of ‘emerging nations’ that have turned to the University of Illinois for assistance in agricultural, social and economic development.”³³ According to Karl Gardner, associate dean of the College of Agriculture, the benefits that the land-grant university had brought to Illinois could be reproduced in these new nations, and help these nations cope with, “the pains of trying to make adjustments rapidly on all fronts at the same time.” Localizing the land-grant university in Sierra Leone would offer to Sierra Leoneans “a new approach to education in the country—one aimed at attacking current technical, agricultural, and social problems.” In order to accomplish this broad task, however, the University of Illinois would have to make a large initial input of agricultural and academic expertise. To establish at Njala “a land-grant-oriented system for spreading agricultural and other technical information” around Sierra Leone, Gardner calculated that the University of Illinois needed “supply 41 man-years over a

³² “Contract Proposal,” U.S.A.I.D. Office in Champaign-Urbana, 1963. University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 7.

³³ “U of I Aids Sierra Leone College,” Student News and Information Bureau, University of Illinois College of Agriculture, October 25, 1963; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 1.

ten-year period.”³⁴ Between 1963 and 1973, in other words, the University of Illinois intended to coordinate a steady flow of academics who would abstract their knowledge of the land-grant university model and attempt to institutionalize that knowledge in Sierra Leone.

In order to supply the required amount of professors from the University of Illinois, administrators in the College of Agriculture and representatives from AID conveyed a message of urgency and confidence to potential agrinauts. In one report distributed to recruits the government of Sierra Leone was depicted as in desperate need of professors of agriculture. Illinois professors could meet this demand, and fill the gaps created by “the critical shortage of educated people, teachers, agriculturalists, etc., working in the back country [in Sierra Leone].”³⁵ In addition to the high demand for agrinauts, recruitment efforts reassured candidates that their familiarity with the land-grant university system in Illinois increased the odds that they possessed the valued skills required to establish a land-grant university in another country. Efforts to inspire a belief that an Illinois professor could help build a rural, agriculturally oriented university in Sierra Leone assumed a variety of formats. For example, a map depicting a superimposed Sierra Leone over Illinois was used as a selling point in the effort to recruit Illinois professors to consider living and working in Sierra Leone.³⁶ A reassuring sense of size, according to the map, invited confidence that any uncertainties encountered could be overcome

³⁴ *Ibid.* “Man-years,” and related terms like man-months or man-days, was a common technocratic and managerial expression used to refer to the aggregate amount of time required to prepare for and then accomplish a given task. Since the term is presumed to encompass both cognitive and manual labor, it was used by academics like Gardner to quantify the total amount of time that would be transferred to another institution in order to complete a complex project.

³⁵ Joseph M. Barrow, *Report on Campus Planning, Njala University College, Sierra Leone, West Africa*, Adviser on Campus Planning and Architect, March 23, 1964 – July 22, 1964, University of Illinois A.I.D. Projects, Contract USAID/AFE-132 (Urbana, November 1964); p. 1.

³⁶ “Presentation to colleagues,” Urbana IL, 1963; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 2, “Correspondence Files.”

through an original proportionality between Illinois and Sierra Leone. On paper, at least, Illinois and Sierra Leone could appear to be symmetrical.

The mapping of Sierra Leone over Illinois was designed to transform the foreign locale into a familiar one with recognizable features. In particular, the map represents an effort to encourage academics to forge real and imagined relations between their home campus and the one they were expected to develop. This translated into an elaborate analogous relationship between the Urbana campus in Illinois and the Njala campus in Sierra Leone. As it is literally done in the map, professors were encouraged to see the two campuses in the same analytical frame. University administrators and AID project managers asked American professors to think of the foreign campus as they would their home campus. Specifically, Illinois professors of agriculture were encouraged to think of Njala as a window through which they could view wider agricultural and social patterns of Sierra Leone. Professors, as suggested by the map, might learn to see Sierra Leone through Njala, the way they had learned to see the Midwest through Urbana.

As a result of this abstract pairing of Sierra Leone and Illinois, professors transported analytical tools and procedures they were familiar with in Illinois. Kastelic, for instance, brought with him to Sierra Leone manuals, blank laboratory forms, blank budget spreadsheets, and specimen observation rubrics—all from the University of Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station. He used the forms as templates to take inventory of the British colonial archives deposited at Njala, to organize reforms to livestock research, and to frame vision for the future Agricultural Experiment Station at Njala.³⁷ His inventory and sketch was one way for Illinois agrinauts from to test how the land-grant institutional model could be assembled at Njala.

³⁷ Joseph Kastelic, Letter to Bill Thompson, Chief of Party-Njala, September 22, 1964; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

Supply, Demand and the Making of Agrinauts

Agrinauts, and government officials coordinating their contracts, often assumed that decolonization in Africa and Asia opened a vacuum of administrative and technical work. The acting Secretary of State explained this assumption in an April 1960 cable to American diplomatic posts throughout Africa. “In connection [to] advance planning for assistance to African countries scheduled for early independence, we are considering possible need [to] fill gaps created by departure [of] civil servants of present metropolitan power.”³⁸ He continued by requesting an inventory of all European technicians, administrators and teachers who were currently in each country, followed by an assessment of what proportion could be “expected [to] depart soon after attainment [of] independence.” He also wanted to know if these “urgent gaps” would be filled by “Bloc technicians” [i.e. Soviet Bloc technicians] or “personnel from another former metropole.” Concluding with a parenthetical statement, he noted that, “we must assume a sufficient number of US technicians to not likely be available.”³⁹ The State Department official’s concern of how to appropriately manage an emerging market for American educational services—a market imagined to be full of new gaps and shortages—was a concern shared by many university administrators.⁴⁰

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, university administrators involved in mapping the future of American international development schemes claimed that there was an insufficient supply of development agents within the American university system. To improve the situation

³⁸ “Joint State/ICA Message.” From acting Secretary of State, April 28, 1960. USAID Bureau of Africa, Office of Central and West Africa., Sierra Leone Desk, 1961-1963; NARA, RG 286, Box 38. Christian Herter was the Secretary of State at the end of the Eisenhower administration. The copy of the letter available at College Park does not include any signature or indicate any specific author.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ William W. Marvel, “The University in World Affairs: An Introduction,” pp. *xiv-xx* in *The University Looks Abroad: Approaches to World Affairs at Six American Universities – A report from Education and World Affairs* (New York: Walker and Co., 1965); John M. Richardson Jr., *Partners in Development: An Analysis of AID-University Relations 1950-1966* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969); p. 11.

university administrators, along with representatives of corporations, tried to organize a framework and an agenda they believed would help identify candidates, and increase the availability of exportable professors. According to Rowland Eggers, the chair of the Department of Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia, American professors lacked a commitment to international development work. What was needed, he argued, was that professors begin to identify themselves as members of what he called, “an overseas labor force [that] thinks and acts like a permanent professional organization.”⁴¹

A variety of initiatives to change the ratio between supply and demand pushed the connection between the American academy and American “educational empire” in new directions.⁴² The president of the Carnegie Corporation, for instance, suggested that professors could be recruited and mobilized through a “Foreign Development Reserve.” In this proposed system, one modeled after the National Guard and the Foreign Service, John Gardner advised that American government regard professors as potential “reservists...that could move with competence and rapidity into particular overseas assignments.”⁴³ This “reservoir,” as Gardner referred to it, would be filled with professors ready for deployment and redeployment to sites of international development. A “heterogeneous reserve force,” Gardner wrote, would fill “all categories of high talent manpower [that] are in short supply.” This scheme, as Gardner

⁴¹ Rowland Egger, “University Training for International Careers,” from *The Art of Overseasmanhip: Americans at Work Abroad* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1957); 150. Prior to his work in UVA’s Department of Foreign Affairs Egger was executive officers of the Joint Commission on Planning Belgium, an administrative and financial adviser to the President of Bolivia, Director of the Corporacion Boliviana, associate director of the Public Administration Clearing House in D.C., and in 1956 was the chief representative of the Ford Foundation deployed on a “tour of duty” to Beirut (*Ibid.*, xvii).

⁴² Jonathan Zimmerman. *Innocents Abroad: American Teachers in the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); p. 182.

⁴³ John W. Gardner, *A.I.D. and the Universities: Report to the Administrator of the Agency for International Development* (Washington, D.C.: AID, 1964); pp. 34-36

envisioned it, would reorient universities and professors toward a permanent commitment to international partnerships and, over time, help universities and AID turn a trickle into a flow.⁴⁴

Some U.S. legislators put their weight behind the effort to bring a Foreign Development Reserve to campuses. In 1965, senators reconfigured the “proven concept” of the Hatch Act of 1887 in order to expand the allocation of federal funds for international operations run by land-grant universities.⁴⁵ From the late 1880s onwards the Hatch Act financed the development of university run agricultural experiment stations as a means to take inventory and facilitate the exploitation of the natural resources of states. The construction of these experiment stations allowed professors and administrators at land-grant universities to expand their reach in two ways. On one hand the amount of land and lab space granted for experimentation increased, and on the other the political influence they had over local agricultural policy also increased. Seventy-eight years later, Senator George McGovern of South Dakota introduced “an adaptation of the Hatch Act.” This bill proposed to expand the spatial and political reach of land-grant universities overseas by authorizing appropriations to help expand the staff and facilities dedicated to international rural development. In addition to funding “the establishment and maintenance of foreign development centers,” the bill sought to authorize universities to organize “cooperative development of projects in foreign countries.” This form of “cooperative development” was premised on the development of new state educational resources in the United States, and in partner nations.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *Ibid*; 32. See also John M. Richardson, *Partners in Development: An analysis of AID-University Relations 1950-1966* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969). Richardson divides 1957 to 1966 into three periods: “the period of inertia”; “the interregnum”; and “the period of harmony.”

⁴⁵ “A New Basis for Technical Assistance Through Colleges and Universities,” *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 89th Congress, First Session*, February, 19, 1965 (vol. 111, no. 33).

⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

In campaigns for the revised Hatch Act, elected officials lauded administrators of colleges and universities as shrewd brokers of American capital. Invoking a vision of the developing world as “a vast, virtually untapped market for U.S. farm products,” Senator McGovern explained how university-led international development programs opened up foreign markets for American exports. Enabling universities to operate overseas, McGovern argued, was “one the best economic, political and moral investments we can make.” Universities, he added, were “institutions with proved ability to get us high returns on our investment.”⁴⁷ This confidence translated into massive federal allocations. In 1964 the Agency for International Development had \$71.2 million for international programs. The budget supported six thousand people to come to the United States to participate in training programs; four hundred Americans to work as education advisers in foreign education ministries; and an additional four hundred American professors to work in small liaison teams between universities and government agencies. Of that total \$71.2 million AID budget in 1964, \$27 million was designated for programs in Africa. Roughly \$6 million of the \$27 million was channeled into a broad category of education programs. These programs included twenty-three AID sponsored inter-university contracts between African universities and American universities.⁴⁸

The growing demand for professors to work overseas gradually changed American campuses and their curriculum. The University of Illinois, like other universities involved in the management of multiple international rural development contracts, had a bustling AID office on campus that facilitated simultaneous contracts with the governments of India, Jordan, Colombia,

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ “Aid to Education: An Anglo-American Appraisal – Report of a Ditchley Foundation Conference Held at Ditchley Park, 26-29 March, 1965,” (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1965); pp. 12-15.

Sierra Leone and southern Vietnam.⁴⁹ Additionally, universities supported agrinats through an Overseas Project Office a Department of Foreign Affairs. Beyond recruitment and travel support, these offices encouraged professors working on AID projects to contribute to the emerging fields of World Agriculture, Development Studies, and Area Studies.⁵⁰ Joseph Kastelic, for example, helped write the Animal Science curriculum in Sierra Leone, and designed globally oriented, introductory syllabi for courses on “world animal agriculture.”⁵¹ When Kastelic returned to Illinois he introduced similar courses to undergraduates, and served on numerous Area Studies committees. Kastelic was on the committee in charge of designing a graduate level minor in African Studies. This “modest program of African studies” promised to introduce courses in every discipline to support the interests of the growing amount of students and faculty connected, in one way or another, to Africa.⁵²

A shared identity emerged amongst this travelling class of professors as more and more returned home as veterans of international projects. Despite increasing global demand for agrinats, they often found cause to commiserate about local institutional cultures perceived to be unworldly, and unappreciative of overseas academic work. According to Bill Thompson, a veteran of the Njala project who also served on the African Studies Committee with Kastelic, there was, “a lot of informal discussion” amongst professors and families who had worked overseas for the University of Illinois. The range of topics included packing and travel tips,

⁴⁹ Royden Dangerfield, “Conversations with AID officials on May 13, 1963”; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5.

⁵⁰ Laura Nader and Ray Siever examine how similar incentives altered the disciplines of anthropology and earth science. See *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years*, Andre Schiffrin, ed (New York: The New Press, 1997). See also Phil Woodhouse and Admos Chimhowu, “Development studies, nature and natural resources: changing narratives and discursive practices,” in *A Radical History of Development Studies: individuals, institutions, and ideologies*, Uma Kothari, ed. (London: Zed Books, 2005). See also Jim Hightower’s *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times: A Report of the Agribusiness Accountability Project on the Failure of America’s Land Grant College Complex* (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1973).

⁵¹ J. Kastelic, Animal Science 011; “Joseph Kastelic Papers.” Box 2.

⁵² J. Kastelic, Letter to Dr. V. E. King, Njala University College, January 13, 1967; “Joseph Kastelic Papers,” Box 2.

discussion of similarities and differences between project sites. But there was also a shared sense that overseas work was undervalued by their home departments.

When I came back after being [in Sierra Leone] for two years I thought that I was anxious to get back to teaching and research in my field. But, I found there were people who had returned from two or more years in India, many of them were a bit uncomfortable that they were not able—they hadn't figured how to use the experience that they received in the foreign assignment—and were somewhat disappointed that they were back in the old, doing what they had done before. And I got that same feeling after about a few weeks.⁵³

One effect of working on an AID sub-contract, according to Thompson, was that “foreign assignments” erected an invisible barrier between those who served the university overseas and those who remained at home. Thompson and his agrinaut colleagues believed they had encountered the future of the more global American academy in Sierra Leone, India, Jordan and elsewhere. They found disappointment, however, when they returned from a satellite campus to the flagship campus in Illinois, a workplace now perceived as “back in the old.”

Despite fears that the value of overseas work might be underestimated, Thompson and his colleagues made time to transmit their international experiences to students in Illinois. “My perspective on teaching, an introductory course in farm management to U.S. students,” Thompson explained, “was [that] it didn't provide very much opportunity to use the many kinds of experiences that I'd had the previous two years in Sierra Leone.” In the year after he returned from Sierra Leone, Thompson designed a set of undergraduate courses on “World Hunger” and “World Agriculture.”⁵⁴ Other Illinois professors who had worked at Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University in northern India, where Illinois professors had been living and working since 1958,

⁵³ Interview, Bill Thompson, June 2011, Urbana.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

returned to Illinois and wrote handbooks and textbooks to teach the value expanding land-grant operations overseas not only to students, but also to deans, chancellors and donors.⁵⁵

To new audiences at home, as well as to each other, professors of agriculture found new ways to convey the value of their daily work overseas. Invoking the idiom of a military campaign, some professors of referred to international rural development work as “tours of duty.”⁵⁶ Other professors saw their mobile work as a navigation of a rapidly changing landscape. Reflecting on the “mutual benefits to our foreign efforts and to the academic community,” one professor of agriculture remarked on how his life had changed since he had become a driver in the “mounting traffic between some universities and the world outside.” These trips, according to Sherwood Berg, a professor of agriculture from the University of Minnesota, inevitably evolved into a shopping expedition, with newly independent nations imagined as not just place to work and visit, but also possessions to control. To other land-grant university professors he asked, “how many underdeveloped countries do you carry around in your pocket?”⁵⁷ The mobile professor of agriculture, according to Berg, was steering the academic community in a new direction one pocketful of pocketsize countries at a time. Yet, as demonstrated in this chapter’s final section, within each “tour-of-duty” and abstract expression of international development, is a story of professors asserting privilege and authority in the homes and on the ground of a new university.

⁵⁵ See, H. W. Hannah, *Resource Book for Rural Universities in the Developing Countries* (Urbana: 1966), and *The Legal Basis for Universities in Developing Countries* (Urbana: 1967). Other significant examples can be found in the dissertations advised by agrinants. “Functional Vocational and Technical Education in Agriculture in Sierra Leone,” by Renner Eric Mondeh (University of Illinois, 1970) is one of hundreds of examples from land-grant universities graduate programs.

⁵⁶ J. Kastelic, Letter, March 1965; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

⁵⁷ Sherwood O. Berg, “International Opportunities for Land-Grant Universities,” *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 43, No. 5, Proceedings Number (Dec., 1961), pp. 1056- 1063.

The Kastelics, Domestication, and Inter-imperial Development

Between 1964 and 1966, couples and families from the University of Illinois exerted a disproportional amount of leverage over the initial stages of constructing a new rural university at Njala. In many ways their job was to help fulfill the residential vision for Njala conceived by the Illinois Survey Team, who surveyed the facilities and existing campus of Njala Training College in 1963. According to the Survey Team, the Training College should be vacated so that a new university might be built.

The first step of this building process involved the settling of Illinois professors at Njala. Accommodating these professors was thought by Illinois-Njala project organizers to be the costly, but albeit necessary first step toward a new university. Karl Gardner, a lead project organizer for Illinois, recognized the economic and political risks of placing his Illinois colleagues at the center any developmental plan. “The use of any considerable number of expatriates on the staff has certain drawbacks. They ‘cost’ several times as much as Sierra Leoneans when travel, family allowance, and shipping costs are considered. They usually hold principal loyalty elsewhere, and they rarely make plans to throw in their lot with the Africans permanently.” According to Gardner, the drawbacks of expatriate professors was that they absorbed too many scarce resources while temporarily residing atop the local campus hierarchy, and all the while likely maintained “loyalties” to their home university that preempted more permanent, possibly transformational commitments to the African university. Nevertheless,

Gardner and his Illinois colleagues assumed granting themselves privileges and ground-level control to be the appropriate down payment toward future success at Njala.⁵⁸

Illinois couples understood the nature of their privileges at Njala by asserting them in their new homes and workplace. These couples also understood that making households to aid the development of a new university entailed living in place, and living in a moment, conditioned by both African agency and British imperial rule. For instance, as professors and their partners aspired toward living conditions seen as prerequisites for a new university, they understood their living situation by contrasting it to that of their Sierra Leonean neighbors. On the other hand, these professors came to appreciate their authority at Njala by recognizing American connections to their British predecessors at Njala, namely the American inheritance of British residential and academic privileges at Njala.

Americans lived and operated with a high degree of impunity in the first two years of Njala University College (1964-1966). As Bill Thompson explained to Joseph Kastelic, “I suspect that those of us on the Illinois contract will have a very heavy hand in administration in the next couple years. While you are ‘Adviser to the Director of the Experiment Station’ it is entirely possible that this man will not be appointed within two years.”⁵⁹ In this final section we examine the period of the American “heavy hand” at Njala. The subsequent chapter, “Disciplining White Academics,” explores the Sierra Leonean response, as well as strategies to deter and counter Anglo-American excess in Sierra Leone.

⁵⁸ I barrow the idea of a “down payment” from J. D. Y. Peel’s analysis of Christian missionaries assertions of “discursive control” over “the enactment of a divinely mandated success story” in southwestern Nigeria during the nineteenth century. See *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Indiana University Press, 2000) p. 17.

⁵⁹ W. N. Thompson, letter to Joseph Kastelic, July 1964; “Joseph Kastelic Papers,” Box 1.

Homemaking between the African and the British

After arriving at Njala in the fall of 1964 Joseph and Gladys Kastelic reflected on their position within the local domestic order of the campus. Writing to friends in Illinois, they described the routines of day to day life, and explained how these routines set the couple apart. “I have been hot, soaked by rain, and, on more than one occasion, cold!” Kastelic wrote. He continued, “still, boiling water, swallowing anti-malarial pills and sleeping under nets are trifling matters when compared to what many of these wonderful people are enduring.” Similar comparisons would be repeated by the Kastelics as they settled into a home at Njala. On a daily basis their work and household was shaped by how their experiences of shelter and exposure differed from those of the vague, but “enduring” Sierra Leoneans.

In addition to recognizing the inequalities in living conditions around Njala, the Kastelics noted a form a debt Americans owed to the British who had previously resided at Njala. For example, the Kastelics were avid gardeners, and arrived with an enthusiasm for establishing a new garden around their Njala home. The Kastelics began this process with an inventory of all the possible plants they might grow with the assistance of campus workers, or one of their household servants. Writing to his colleagues in Illinois, Kastelic detailed the worldly specimens that the agricultural networks of the British Empire had placed at his fingertips.

Many of you also wanted to know something about the food and ornamental plants which are often erroneously regarded to be indigenous to Sierra Leone. Bananas, pineapple, avocado pears, paddy and floating rice, cassava, bread fruit, passion fruit, peanuts, peppers, guavas, mangoes, citrus, paw-paws and many other food plants are not indigenous to Sierra Leone, but represent introductions into this country from Ceylon, India, Australia, South Sea Islands, South and Central America among many other countries by early western and far-eastern

intruders into this land. The many and very beautiful shrubs and trees are likewise exotic for they come from other semi-tropical or tropical areas. Many now growing at Njala were brought by the English and we are indebted to them for their foresight and enterprise. There are some native bush fruits and greens with which I am not familiar and hence one may wonder what the natives ate in a bygone age. Perhaps this is one reason why cannibalism was practiced so widely in central tropical Africa. Of course, there were other and more plausible reasons for this once flourishing occupation.⁶⁰

In this letter home, Kastelic positions himself in the agricultural history of Njala as a connective figure between two worlds. One is the imperial world of dislocated specimens that have been reterritorialized at Njala by “intruders.” For the gardener and professor of agriculture this is the pleasurable world, one where an organic, globally sourced archive provide both sustenance and attractive plants to place around a new home. The native world, by contrast, is an almost foodless world seemingly beyond Kastelic’s capacity to describe in agricultural terms. Both worlds, however, are products and fictions born of empire. While he enunciates his debt to imperial agriculture, his speculation about cannibalism is form of unspoken debt and fidelity to imperial myth. Thus, in preparing to landscape the area around a new home and generate curriculum for a new university, the dual material and intellectual inheritance of British imperialism was never far from Kastelic’s mind as he worked at Njala.

Insofar as it supported projects of residential development and home improvement, Kastelic’s mixture of gardening, ethnography and fantasy fit into his job description. Along with the five other Illinois couples, the Kastelics were expected by AID and the University of Illinois to pursue any homemaking project that might help make the residential vision for Njala

⁶⁰ Joseph Kastelic, “Letter No. 3,” March 2, 1965; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

University College a reality. According to plans authored by AID-Illinois personnel, the erection, furnishing, and landscaping of homes for American professors and future members of the senior staff was prioritized as the first “major task” of campus development at Njala.⁶¹ In order to make spaces for new residences, one of the initial steps in executing this plan required relocating existing farming operations to outer parts of the campus. To this end, in the months leading up to the new university opening in October 1964, in a murky (and still controversial) transaction, AID officials and the Sierra Leone government jointly subsidized a nearly five square mile expansion in the overall size of the campus. The boundary of the campus was extended in every direction after negotiations with authorities in chiefdoms adjacent to the campus. The acquisition of new land on the perimeter of the campus allowed any farming in the middle areas of the campus to be pushed outward to the edges of the newly expanded campus. As result, agricultural land was rezoned as a residential area.⁶² It was then the job of the first batch of American couples to oversee the development and maintenance of new homes erected on the Njala campus.

While four Illinois couples inhabited older residences once occupied by British and Sierra Leonean administrators of Njala Training College, the Kastelics and five other Illinois couples moved in to recently erected, pre-fabricated homes. The homes had been made at Forest Industries Plant in Kenema, and had been constructed in haste immediately before the arrival of their occupants.⁶³ The origins of Forest Industries date back to World War II, when the British Army demanded a massive escalation in the amount of tree-products extracted from their West African colonies. During this time a large sawmill was built at Kenema in order to turn trees in

⁶¹ W. N. Thompson, “The University of Illinois and Njala University College—The First Two Years: Terminal Report of a Two-Year Assignment as Chief of Party and Adviser to the Principal, Njala University College, beginning March 1, 1964,” 28-30; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University Subject File, Box 6, “Terminal Reports.”

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Associated Consultants in Education, *Njala University College – Facilities Study, 1967* (Tallahassee, FL) p. 92.

lumber for barracks and cargo containers. After the war, British investors took over the sawmill, and converted it into a housing and furniture manufacturing plant. Business was slow in the initial years, as clients were mainly limited to the overseers of mining operations in the eastern region of the country. However by the time the Kastelics arrived at Njala, Forest Industries had expanded to such a level that they had 700 employees who built approximately 100 pre-fabricated homes per year.⁶⁴

The design of the pre-fabricated homes provided ample space for a family and any domestic workers they employed. The homes included a detached room for a domestic worker next to the car garage; a large kitchen at the back of the house; three bedrooms; a large living room (approximately 24x20 feet) that opened to an even larger veranda in the front of the house. Significantly the kitchen had two doors but no windows: one backdoor faced the “steward’s room,” storage unit and garage; the other opened to the dining area. This design provided for minimal contact between domestic workers and household residents. In her analysis of the floor plans of white South African urban homes of the early 1960s, Rebecca Ginsburg notes that isolated kitchens and workers quarters “suggests the centrality of the domestic worker to the life of the house and at the same time her intended exclusion from its social life.”⁶⁵ Moving in to a new Forest Industries house at Njala therefore meant social relations had also been pre-fabricated, and that boundaries between worker and resident had, in a manner of speaking, already been written on the walls. It was then up to Illinois couples at Njala to build successful working relations within the household in order to ensure the subsequent development of the new educational institution presumed to reside outside the household.

⁶⁴ James E. Crawford, Karl E. Gardner, Russell T. Odell, M. Ray Karnes, “Diary of Sierra Leone Survey Team Visits and Conferences, February – March 1963” p. 58; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 1, “Survey Team File.”

⁶⁵ Rebecca Ginsburg, *At Home With Apartheid: The Hidden Landscapes of Domestic Service in Johannesburg* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011) pp. 63-4.

The Kastelics embraced the tasks required to establish order within their new homes, and accepted the responsibilities of having that interior space reflect the wider institutional mission of building a new university. In addition to gardening and getting to know their new environment, they were eager to unpack and fill the empty homes and assume control over the management of its interior. According to Joseph, he and Gladys were excited to be “part of an enterprise” of building a land-grant university in Sierra Leone, but their immediate concern was claiming a part within the domestic basis of this enterprise. For one they did not want to live in sparse, rural conditions. “I am no missionary!” Joseph explained to his colleagues. The Kastelics had shipped a car and two crates full of household and workplace necessities. So while the missionary in Joseph’s imagination might live ascetically, he envisioned living in greater comfort and having a place to reproduce familiar domestic habits. “We are now living with the Thompsons (our home will not be ready for another 2 or 3 weeks), and our things are at sea somewhere. We have much to look forward to, i.e., to getting our things before we run out of clothing, etc.”⁶⁶

The Kastelics and other couples had questions and concerns related to any limitation on the reconstitution of their domestic habits in Sierra Leone. For example, the amount of energy consumed by appliances brought by Americans put significant strain on an already weak electrical grid. The first Illinois couples who moved to Njala spent part of their first months there testing out the appliances they had shipped from home. One couple found that the Maytag clothes dryer that had worked in Illinois did not work well on the low wattage electrical grid at Njala. The entire campus relied on one older generator, and up until late in the summer newly arrived staff feared that home appliances they had brought with them would be useless. “I have

⁶⁶ Kastelic, Letter from Njala to “My Dear Friends,” October 4, 1964; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

written to Maytag asking for specific instructions on how I can get our dryer to operate on this electricity,” Bill Thompson explained to Joseph Kastelic. Kastelic was interested to know if they should bring an electric dryer. The thought of going through a rainy season in West Africa without an electric dryer caused consternation to both.⁶⁷ Some of their concerns over electricity were alleviated when the campus acquired another generator, and appointed a British man to manage the campus’ infrastructure. The Sierra Leone Electricity Corporation, with the help of local campus labor and the new Director of the Physical Plant, installed a generator and high-voltage distribution system in the last days of the summer of 1964. According to Thompson, the appointment of Lt. Col. R. P. H. L. Durham, was “the answer to many of the problems involved in physical plant improvement.”⁶⁸

Beyond dryers, Kastelic had concerns about how other possessions might not successfully transfer into the material world of Sierra Leone. For instance, the U.S. government would pay for professor’s cars to be shipped across the Atlantic, but professors had many detailed questions about what might happen after the car arrived. How far in advance should a couple ship their car so that it arrived ahead in Njala ahead of them? Could one obtain spare Ford parts in Sierra Leone? Did insurance companies in Freetown offer liability and collision coverage? The answer, Thompson told Kastelic, was that “full coverage” was not advisable. “If you have a major accident with a U.S. car, the only answer is to park it and leave it there until you get ready to return to the U.S.A.”⁶⁹ Professors from Illinois, in other words, should expect different mechanical regimes in Sierra Leone.

⁶⁷ Bill Thompson, Letter to Joseph and Gladys Kastelic, July 12, 1964; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

⁶⁸ W. N. Thompson, “The University of Illinois and Njala University College—The First Two Years,” 29-30.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Professors and their families were often preoccupied with decisions about what to take to Sierra Leone, and what to leave behind. The rules in AID and Illinois contracts required that all families take inventory of the possessions they intended to leave behind in the United States. Afterwards, what they wanted to ship overseas had to be itemized and weighed. This was an elaborate process for most households. The Kastelics numerated and estimated the value of the ninety-four items that would remain in their Illinois home. Then they moved a four-hundred dollar sofa, a rug, cabinet and two winter coats to storage, and loaned their stereo, portable TV, table saw, and aquarium to friends. A Hammond organ, “two large speakers,” and eight-hundred dollars of “recordings”—the objects they claimed held the highest monetary value of all their possessions—were left for two years with a household, attic, basement, and garage full of goods insured by local company with a sub-contact from the university. The Kastelics then selected twenty-two items to be shipped overseas to Sierra Leone and overland to Njala. This included their 1964 four-door Rambler; Mix-Master kitchen appliance; vacuum cleaner; and hand-pump garden sprayer; sewing machine; an Argus home projector; dishes and bourbon. The bourbon was stored in the trunk of the Rambler, but was not declared to those organizing the shipping and customs paper work. The alcohol was eventually confiscated though, and held in Freetown until the appropriate fees were paid.⁷⁰

The relocation of possessions, whether legal or not, was not all that concerned American families coming to Njala. The Kastelics, along with their colleagues, also wanted to know about daily campus life and the division of labor on campus. To meet this need, American families living at Njala received a guide about daily expatriate life in rural Sierra Leone covering everything from food to domestic servants. The guide explained that locally grown food was

⁷⁰ “Inventory of Possessions” and “Insurance Paperwork,” Njala University College; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

abundant. The agriculture on the campus provided fruits and vegetables, and chicken and beef were regularly available. Local wildlife and nightlife, according to the guide, would also fulfill expectations.⁷¹

Information about the management of domestic workers was also distributed in order to inform families about their living options. According to these guides, life at Njala would require that campus housing occupants decide what sort of domestic labor they wanted to use. They could depend on young males to do minimal domestic work when necessary. Or, they could be like the majority of American families who, the guide explained, “hire a steward to do housecleaning, washing and ironing, dishwashing, errand-running, and other miscellaneous chores.”⁷² In addition, Illinois administrators informed professors bound for Njala about the local wages for domestic workers. They should expect to pay \$14 per months for a steward, and around \$28 for a cook.⁷³

Domestic workers influenced how university families settled into the Njala area. The Kastelics, for example, employed three community members to build and tend a garden and assist with general housework. “With the help and approbation of some experienced Sierra Leonean gardeners,” Joseph Kastelic explained to his colleagues, “I prepared several raised beds for our garden.” After some initial trial and error with the garden, the Kastelics hired a steward to manage the daily water and “bi-weekly fertilization.”⁷⁴ The labor of laundering clothing and

⁷¹ Bill Thompson, Letter, July 7, 1964; University of Illinois Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

⁷² “Information for U. of I. Staff Considering Assignment to Njala University College, Sierra Leone, June 1967,” Supplement to US Department of State Post Report for SL and Suggestions for Staff Members and Families Going to Overseas Assignments; University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 7.

⁷³ Letter from Karl Gardner, April 10, 1963; University Archives, University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 3.

⁷⁴ Joseph and Gladys Kastelic, Letter, December 9, 1964; University of Illinois, Njala University Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

other household fabrics also tied multiple families and households together. “Laundry,” the guide to Njala explained, “is a very simple problem. It could be done efficiently in a matter of hours by trained houseboys.”⁷⁵ Through their movement and work “houseboys,” gardeners, and stewards tied together diverse domestic spaces on and off campus. Many domestic workers and their families lived in close proximity to their employees. Others, like those employed by the Kastelics, lived in the communities bordering the Njala campus. According to the guide, nearly all houses had two or three bedrooms, and a small garage. However, not all of them had “servants’ quarters attached.”⁷⁶ Whether or not servants’ quarters were attached, settling into Njala meant that American families entered into the domestic labor market of rural Sierra Leone.

Illinois families were encouraged to use multiple oversight measures to manage their household employees. According to a section titled “servants” in the guide, candidates for work as stewards “should be investigated carefully.” The guide suggested that this investigation should include reading letters of reference, and an initial negotiation of wages and working conditions. If the candidate was deemed desirable, they would be “sent to the Health Centre for examination before being hired.”⁷⁷ While some criteria for determining suitability for domestic work in university households had been standardized through reference letters and medical procedures, others remained flexible. The same guide that recommended stewards be “examined carefully” and sent for a health review also admits that arrangements with stewards “vary from household to household.”⁷⁸ Some stewards had to modify their schedule when members of academic families opted to perform a portion of household work. The guide points out that, “Most

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ “Information for U. of I. Staff Considering Assignment to Njala University College, Sierra Leone, June 1967,” 1967-68

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

American wives have preferred to do their own cooking.”⁷⁹ In addition to negotiating wages, stewards who had already worked on the Njala campus and already had medical records, tried to remain at certain houses after one university family left and another moved in.⁸⁰ These negotiations influenced the overall development of Njala University College, and gradually determined how campus building was balanced on domestic work.

Dirty archives, bloody husbandry and the “English” machete

The ordering of domestic life at the new Njala University College was intertwined with the reordering of British colonial archives deposited around the campus. Illinois professors poured through records housed in the library and offices of the old Njala Training College, and also gathered records and specimens from the small field laboratories scattered across the research sites of the campus. For example, one professor examined the mycology collection found in a greenhouse, while another gathered bits of data about the past husbandry practices at the poultry and swine stations.⁸¹ Such research meant the process of settling in to a new home in rural Sierra Leone coincided with the task of determining which agricultural records inherited from British projects should be incorporated into the curriculum and agricultural research programs of the new university. This task often required that records be evaluated according to a certain definition of scientific merit and potential value for future experiments. Thus, Illinois professors filtered records and specimens through their standards for scientific methodologies and, as a result, records and specimens believed to be legible and comprehensive were used as baseline for further research at Njala University College. The records and specimens thought to

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Njala Teacher Training College Annual Report, 1960-1961; PRO, FBC, Box 513, Ministry of Education Files.

⁸¹ Joseph Kastelic, “Some perspectives concerning the development of a programmed for research at Njala University College,” pg. 17; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

contain little or no scientific or statistical value were destroyed, set aside or removed from campus.⁸²

Though he had help from his Illinois colleagues, the bulk of this archival work was performed by Joseph Kastelic. As Njala University College's first Research Coordinator and Agriculture Experiment Station Director, Kastelic devoted a large part of each workday to interpreting reports of previous experimental studies at Njala, as well as studies conducted throughout Sierra Leone. In a letter to his colleagues back in the United States, Kastelic conveyed the scope of his inventory at Njala. "I now have gained some fragmentary insights into what has been going on at Njala since about 1930; there is need to become better acquainted with what has been done in tropical agriculture in the countries about us and at other locations in Sierra Leone. I plan to spend most of next week examining the records here and, hopefully, those in Freetown."⁸³ In addition to a lot of reading, Kastelic's archival digging also literally required that he dig through soils to remove seeds and break apart animal feed in order to examine its content. Getting his hands dirty was necessary in order to "unearth information needed to solve food production and distribution problems."⁸⁴ Kastelic's used his extensive reading and digging to develop a sense of the agricultural past at Njala. But in more immediate terms, his authority over the interpretation of that agricultural history provided him the means to make consequential decisions related to the agriculture and animal husbandry practiced on the Njala campus.

Kastelic's major preference as he sorted through records was for an abundance of statistics and data that allowed for a reader to derive long-term patterns. For example, the records

⁸² Joseph Kastelic, "Terminal Report of a Two-Year Assignment as Adviser in Animal Sciences and Adviser to the Agricultural Experiment Station," p. 10-14; "Joseph Kastelic Papers, 1945-1970," Box 1.

⁸³ Kastelic, "Letter to Friends," October 4, 1964; University of Illinois Archives, "Joseph Kastelic Papers," Box 1.

⁸⁴ "Some perspectives concerning the development of a programmed for research at Njala University College," J. Kastelic, Research Co-ordinator, Njala University College; University of Illinois Archives, Njala University College Subject File, Box 5, File for Joseph Kastelic.

of oil palm experiments at Njala impressed Kastelic. At the field station in the middle of the oil palm plantation in the southwestern sector of the campus Kastelic found that, “reports and records of achievements [kept here]... represent first rate research endeavors.”⁸⁵ Kastelic likely encountered an abundance of paperwork archived at the oil palm station. It had served as a substation for the West African Institute for Oil palm Research (WAIFOR) since the late 1940s. WAIFOR was a regional organization based in Nigeria that facilitated economic and scientific analysis of one of West Africa’s main export crops. At each substation researchers and farmers experimented with the growth of kernel-bearing palm trees, and the extraction of pulp and oil from the kernels.⁸⁶ Researchers in the WAIFOR network gathered results and specimen from substations like the one at Njala, and then circulated them throughout the colonies of British West Africa. The WAIFOR regional network was mostly broken apart as new West African states asserted greater national control over cash crop agricultural research, and initiated new forms of regional cooperation related to staple foods instead.⁸⁷ Teachers and lab assistants continued with the research and development of palm seedlings at Njala after independence in 1961 until the closure of Njala Training College in 1963.

By 1964, when Kastelic was at what he called “the Njala Palm plantation,” those former employees of the Training College had moved away from Njala. He had the station records largely to himself, and grew excited about the potential incorporation of the records into future research. As a professor of Animal Sciences with no prior oil palm experiences, and little background in crop sciences, Kastelic was unwilling to undertake any research of his own.

⁸⁵ Joseph Kastelic, Letter to Robert Jugenheimer, Director of Overseas Projects for the University of Illinois, October 10, 1964; “Joseph Kastelic Papers.”

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ One example of the decline of regional level research favoring export crops, and the subsequent rise in postcolonial and regional level research favoring food crops is the West African Rice Development Association, which formed in the late 1960s. For more, see Paul Richards, *Indigenous Agricultural Revolution: Ecology and Food Production in West Africa* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1985) pp. 118-28.

Rather he filtered and curated the records out of a desire to see them used at a later date. “These reports,” he wrote, “document a continuing series of comprehensive basic and practical experimentation which was culminated in major advances.” In particular Kastelic noted valuable data related to bacterial and fungal pathogens thought to weaken palm trees; “excellent botanical + physiological” data derived from the study of individual kernels; and well-written reports on the mineral and chemical “properties of plantation soils.” He concluded his analysis by noting that, “in every instance such studies were based on sophisticated experimental designs and rigorous statistical assessments.”⁸⁸

Despite his unfamiliarity with the particulars of oil palm studies, Kastelic found the apparent thoroughness and legibility of the total body of research warranted his approval as good science worthy of saving. As the first Research Coordinator for the new university he made sure to pass along the reports to other professors of agriculture who arrived after Kastelic. For example, in 1966, Kastelic’s second and last year at Njala, he brought the palm plantation data to R.T. Odell, an Illinois colleague and veteran of the original Illinois Survey Team. Odell, a specialist in commercial soil surveys, used the data Kastelic found at Njala as the basis for one of the first Njala University College textbooks.⁸⁹ Following this Odell and his colleagues conducted two further, and extensively detailed analyses of the soil at the oil palm station. Later they widened their analytical scope to include more part of the Njala campus, and other sites of

⁸⁸ Joseph Kastelic, Letter to Robert Jugenheimer, Director of Overseas Projects for the University of Illinois, October 10, 1964.

⁸⁹ R. T. Odell, J.C. Dijkerman, *Properties, Classification and Use of Tropical Soils, With Special Reference to Those in Sierra Leone* (Njala University College, 1967).

potential commercial value in the southern, eastern and northern parts of Sierra Leone.⁹⁰ These works by Odell and others indicate the fulfillment of Kastelic's initial enthusiasm for the data encountered at the largely vacant oil palm station. The data sets presumed to be complete by Kastelic enjoyed long lives and continued to provide material for researchers, teachers, and students.

By comparison, Kastelic determined the more fragmentary records and incomplete data to be almost useless. Compared to the records he found at the oil palm plantation, Kastelic was uninspired by records from non-export, food crop experiments. He concluded that whatever written records remained from experiments with fruits and vegetables trials left, in his words, "a great deal to be desired." He explained that, "these efforts lack continuity of effort, they were poorly designed and I can't think of any valid statistical procedure which could be used to validate the conclusions the data appear to support." The absence of any apparent methodology, and presence of apparent statistical disorder, led Kastelic to recommend that the food crop experiments and the experimental farm plots themselves be abandoned. Favoring the archival and agricultural legibility of the oil palm plantation, he concluded that poor records meant poor crops. The fields used for experiments with food, he wrote, "have been abused, fertilized indiscriminately and allowed to become seriously infested with weeds and very likely soil-borne pests and diseases."⁹¹

⁹⁰ First came J.C. Dijkerman, H. Breteler, *Soil Survey of the Oil Palm Station and the Northwest Extension of the Njala University College Farm* (Njala University College, 1969); followed by R. T. Odell, J.C. Dijkerman, W. van Vuure, S. W. Melsted, A.H. Beavers, P.M. Sutton, L.T. Kurtz, and R. Miedema, "Characteristics, Classification & Adaptation of Soils in Selected Areas in Sierra Leone and West Africa," Bulletin 748, Agricultural Experiment Station, College of Agriculture, UIUC, 1974 / Bulletin 4, Njala University College, University of Sierra Leone. Both made use of soil laboratory facilities at the University of Illinois. Though it unclear who trafficked the soil samples.

⁹¹ Joseph Kastelic, Report to Robert Jugenheimer, Director of Overseas Projects for the University of Illinois, October 10, 1964.

Compared to the oil palm plantation, these supposedly diseased fields contained the signs of poorly disciplined experimental agriculture. Kastelic's apparent power to diagnose the health of past experiments elevated one set of records over another; oil palm records were granted a future while the records of vegetable and fruit experiments did not warrant future attention. Upon Kastelic's recommendation the allegedly sick fields were abandoned, and new land was cleared to make way for more disciplined methods.⁹²

When it came to the physical health of the livestock on campus, as well any available data about those animals, Kastelic was guided by his expertise in the field of Animal Sciences. Walking the campus, and sifting through the "voluminous record of field notes" on feed and disease, Kastelic made dramatic adjustments to animal husbandry on the campus.⁹³ For example, shortly after his arrival at Njala, he had the entire Njala chicken population (roughly 200) slaughtered, and afterwards distributed some as food and had the rest incinerated. "After I learned yesterday that all the chickens here are diseased, not laying and skinny, we had them all killed even though some might now worry where they will get a chicken for their pot. Now its clean up and a fresh start."⁹⁴ Kastelic believed the pigs living in the campus swine facilities also should also be slaughtered in masse. "Most of the animals have unknown backgrounds," he wrote.⁹⁵ All of the pigs appeared "inbred" and he believed they should eventually be slaughtered and replaced by new pigs. The pigs would live a little longer than the chickens, however, as

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ J. Kastelic, Letter to Gardner, September 29, 1964; "Joseph Kastelic Papers."

⁹⁵ J. Kastelic, Letter to Jugenheimer, October 10, 1964; "Joseph Kastelic Papers."

Kastelic determined they might provide useful “laboratory study opportunities” within the new university.⁹⁶

With respect to the chickens and the empty pots, the culling marked a rather violent step in Kastelic’s scientific method. He had begun by consulting available sources archived at Njala and then examined existing specimens living in and around the existing chicken coop. As he eventually would with the pigs on campus, Kastelic quickly became frustrated with an inability to derive the history of the chickens’ lineage, and patterns of breeding, feeding and propagation from the existing records. For Kastelic, available statistics and experimental data were indecipherable and unscientific.⁹⁷ To compensate for the absence of historical records regarded as valuable, he initiated a sequence of events that reset the chicken situation back to zero. After ordering all chickens slaughtered, Kastelic directed campus workers to clean the floors, walls and ceilings of the chicken coop. Once the coop was emptied, Kastelic travelled to Freetown to investigate the prospects of acquiring new chickens from international dealers. Kastelic met with a local businessman who imported chicken feed, as well as live and processed chickens from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. After purchasing a small number of hens and roosters Kastelic returned to Njala.⁹⁸ There he quickly organized a new breeding regime, controlled feeding program, and began to acquire the necessary construction materials for an expansion of the existing chicken coop. Once the new operation stabilized Kastelic rapidly scaled it upward.

⁹⁶ Joseph Kastelic, “Terminal Report of a Two-Year Assignment as Adviser in Animal Sciences and Adviser to the Agricultural Experiment Station,” September 1966, p. 9.

⁹⁷ Joseph Kastelic, Letter to Gardner, November 11, 1964.

⁹⁸ Joseph Kastelic, “Report of Animal Science Specialist, Njala Oil Palm Station Director, and teacher in basic sciences,” July 1966, pg. 15; “Joseph Kastelic Papers.”

He ordered a “1,000 hybrid chicks from England,” and later imported an additional “1000 layers and 800 boilers.”⁹⁹

Within a year exercising his authority to reset the Njala chicken population, Kastelic orchestrated the large-scale expansion in of the chicken population and an expansion in the overall amount of data collected with regard to their patterns of breeding and feeding. As the chicken population grew, so did the possibility of generating a new body of data according to Kastelic’s expectations, producing what he had hoped to find at Njala upon his initial arrival.

Once armed with the possibility of generating new data, Kastelic initiated experiments aimed at altering existing husbandry practices. For example, the pigs and chickens of the campus were used in an experiment to study the relationship between feeding and slaughtering techniques. Kastelic wanted to reduce costs associated with feeding the animals, and at the same time introduce new methods to maximize the efficiency of the slaughtering and butchering of the animal. In essence, he wanted more chicken and pork meat at a lower price. With some of the first students in the new Animal Science program, Kastelic succeeded in developing a less expensive livestock feed. According to Kastelic the old feed relied on costly and imported concentrates of grains and proteins. The campus lacked the facilities needed to produce a form of concentrated protein from fish or groundnuts. However, Kastelic and the students were able to cook large quantities of rice on campus and make a type of bran or rice flake. The new rice bran was substituted for imported grain concentrates, and the overall cost of livestock feed on the campus was reduced.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Joseph Kastelic, “Terminal Report of a Two-Year Assignment as Adviser in Animal Sciences and Adviser to the Agricultural Experiment Station,” September 1966, pg. 10; “Joseph Kastelic Papers.”

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*; 13.

Kastelic's successful initiative to alter local livestock feeding practices was not duplicated in his efforts to change local slaughtering practices. In particular, Kastelic wanted to discourage killing pigs with what he called the "English" machete. This machete was a "heavy and thick knife-like weapon about 3 feet long" that was used to first remove the head, then after scalding and skinning the pig on the ground, used to divide the carcass into three-pound segments. The knife and butchering method appeared to Kastelic as unsanitary and yielded unclean and inefficient cuts of meat. Further, the machete appeared to Kastelic as a relic of the British colonial period, and he desired to see it replaced by more modern equipment and sanitary methods.

Any attempt to convince the campus workers who did the slaughtering to abandon the machete, however, was met with skepticism. The "English" machete, Kastelic noted, "is used with a minimum of wasted energy" and "is much better than the heavy and fancy made-in-the-U.S. variety."¹⁰¹ In order to replace the "English" machete and change existing slaughtering practice, Kastelic proposed that a new slaughterhouse be built on the Njala campus. At that time the campus only had a covered pig pen, with the slaughtering done adjacent to it. Kastelic proposed building a new slaughterhouse with drains, hooks, and an array of different knives to be used in each step of the slaughtering sequence. By design, the new slaughterhouse would facilitate the replacement of the "English" machete with new tools and new cuts of meat.

Though he recognized that the attachment of local butchers to existing slaughtering methods was quite strong, Kastelic nonetheless proceeded in ordering construction materials for the new slaughterhouse. The materials arrived in late 1966, just before Joseph and Gladys returned to Illinois. According to his final assessment, the proposed slaughterhouse was in fact

¹⁰¹ J. Kastelic, Letter, December 1964; "Joseph Kastelic Papers."

too expensive and too complex. The construction materials were likely incorporated into a different and, from the perspective of local butchers, possibly more popular project. In the end, Kastelic had helped change the composition of the diet of the local pigs, but when he left Njala the preference for the “English” machete ensured that the pigs died the same way.

Conclusion

Whether dealing with pigs, chickens or crops, the intersections of Sierra Leonean, British and American history confronted Kastelic on a daily basis. Kastelic’s residency at Njala, engagement with colonial archives, and any subsequent interventions into local practice indicate this three-way relationship. As demonstrated above, local attachment to a multipurpose machete (believed to be of British origin) acted as a barrier to one of Kastelic’s interventions. Additionally, his aggressive replacement of allegedly sick chickens rested on the presumption that the population could be replenished through British supply chains. And, according to Kastelic, oil palm plantations built during the British colonial-era yielded better science than the experiments with food for local markets. Any bilateral relation at Njala seemingly always referenced another international axis. In this manner, to aid the development of a new land-grant university, Kastelic saw it as his responsibility to manage the convergence of Sierra Leonean, British and American influences at Njala. Whether he succeeded or not, his endeavors relied on his sense of the different, but nonetheless simultaneous, historical forces living at Njala alongside him.

That the Kastelics spent the mid-1960s living and working at Njala is indicative of rapid expansions in the developmentalist capacities of American higher education institutions and the central role of the professor in shaping American foreign and educational policy from the ground

up. Only a few years earlier, administrators in American land-grant universities had worried that they could not fulfill the demand for professors in the expanding rural oriented programs run by the U.S. Agency for International Development. In order to engage AID and increase the amount of AID sub-contracts held by each American campus, land-grant administrators called on their professors of agriculture to bring their home university, AID, and partner nations into a productive alignment.

Once enough professors were recruited, deans and AID campus coordinators saw the number of sub-contracts increase proportionally. With a stable supply of agrinauts the University of Illinois saw its only AID sub-contract with India expand into further sub-contracts with Sierra Leone, southern Vietnam, Jordan, and Columbia by the late 1960s. As land-grant university deans throughout the United States expanded the scope of their dealings with AID, professors of agriculture like Joseph Kastelic found greater control over the administration of these sub-contracts as they localized their authority to mediate transitions in the wake of empire. By pursuing the inter-imperial ties and local knowledge thought to be necessary for intervening into postcolonial projects, agrinauts transformed themselves into a powerful segment of the academic workforce of international development.

CHAPTER 3

Disciplining White Academics in Town and Country

In his October 1961 letter to the faculty of Fourah Bay College, Dr. Davidson Abioseh Nicol, the principal, addressed the white academics working at the college. He called their attention to daily failures in interracial conduct, and how knowledge of this misconduct circulated through the campus. “It is unwise,” he wrote, “to make derogatory remarks to students about their country or their race. I mention this only to dismiss it, because it has been known to occur.”¹ While Nicol’s status as a pan-Africanist intellectual and renowned Cambridge-trained insulin researcher was relatively exceptional, the work he did to monitor and mitigate the threat of racism was not. From 1961 onwards, Nicol was forced to repeat (in a remarkable variety of formulations) the act of disciplining white academics. Others positioned high and low in the campus order, but nonetheless engaged in recording and interpreting anything “derogatory,” found an equal variety of ways to curb and critique white academics working in Sierra Leone. Nicol’s general public warning to the college was balanced by his more detailed management of the conditions of British and American academics working in 1960s Sierra Leone. Along with his Sierra Leonean colleagues at Njala University College, Nicol spent a great deal of his tenure as Fourah Bay’s first post-independence principal investigating everyday acts of abuse, and participating in formal and informal endeavors to prevent their reoccurrence.

This chapter focuses on the social contexts of disciplinary acts such as Nicol’s letter, and outlines the simultaneous development of initiatives to curb British authority over the urban

¹ Davidson Nicol, “Letter to All College,” October 19, 1961; PRO, FBC, University of Sierra Leone Archives (USL), Bundle 26, Fourah Bay College Senior Staff Association Records.

campus of Fourah Bay, and American authority over the rural campus at Njala. Efforts to correct, manage, and sometimes reprimand white academics, I argue, shaped a wider movement in town and country to counter the racial order of what Apollos Nwauwa has called “university imperialism.”² By mixing popular and administrative authority to regulate the behavior and privileges of white academics living and working on Sierra Leonean campuses, students, professors and campus staff upset the mechanics through which agents from a foreign university strived to “regulate the academic affairs” of another university.³ In doing so, students, professors, and campus staff generated a broad politicization of daily and material conditions that aided the Africanization of higher education in Sierra Leone and dissolved tensions at the end of empire into new forms of African autonomy.

Persistent questioning of the links between whiteness and daily manifestations of privilege had consequences. Disciplinary acts that resulted in deportations, firings, and a host of public and private critiques of white academics represent the everyday and consequential work of “eroding the accumulated privileges of Whiteness” in West Africa.⁴ The arena of daily life, from diets to working conditions, served as venues for African staff and faculty to contest the social and racial order of campus life at Fourah Bay and Njala. For example, disputes over the privileges and transgressions of the British and American expatriate community occurred publicly in newspapers and courtyards, and sometimes became the subject of private letters and police investigations. These disputes, whether in public or private, called attention to the fact that British and American families in Sierra Leone enjoyed favorable working and living conditions in Sierra Leone. In the responses of white academics to accusations of unwarranted housing and

² Apollos Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, 1860-1960* (Frank Cass, 1996); p. 208.

³ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁴ Jemina Pierra, *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race* (University of Chicago Press, 2013); p. 40.

salary privileges, for instance, a window is opened onto how British and American families defended, as well as depended upon the uneven distribution of power and resources in Sierra Leone. The cases of disciplining white academics that happened to make it into the archives of Sierra Leone, the U.K., and the U.S., thus allow some sense of the scope of everyday acts required to level the distribution of authority and privileges in postcolonial higher education in Sierra Leone.

Disciplinary acts translated into wider campaigns aimed at hollowing out the foreign claims to Fourah Bay and Njala. The uneven division of residential and financial resources that perpetuated foreign claims on both campuses was gradually reformed as a result of such campaigns. From the 1870s to 1967, Durham University (U.K.) exerted a form of remote control over Fourah Bay College. Throughout this period, Durham University was intimately involved in the imperial affairs of British West Africa and the British Caribbean, with Fourah Bay College managed as “colonial affiliate” through the Colonial College Advisory Committee at Durham.⁵ Until these bonds were severed in 1967, Durham University degrees were issued to Fourah Bay graduates, and the Advisory Committee in Durham kept (and often exercised) the right to intervene in the curriculum, budgets, and staffing of Fourah Bay.⁶

As shown in Chapter 2, American claims over the reproduction of the land-grant model at Njala exhibited similar paternalist and possessive tendencies. At Njala and Fourah Bay the excesses of American and British salaries, contracts and housing facilities attracted an astounding range of detailed critique from by their West African colleagues. These debates included questions of whether or not the British government should be able to subsidize British

⁵ Colonial College Advisory Committee Files. – 1967; Durham University Library, U.K., UND/CC3/F2/1, Fourah Bay College Records.

⁶ Daniel J. Paracka, Jr. *The Athens of West Africa: A History of International Education at Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone* (New York: Routledge, 2003); p. 179.

academics working in Sierra Leone, proposals for reforming the distribution of household comforts on the rural campus of Njala, and outright calls for the government of Sierra Leone to more rigorously manage the supply of expatriates in order to, as one Sierra Leonean student suggested, “restrict the importation of foreign personnel.”⁷ By questioning persistent inequalities in the division of resources, faculty students and workers aimed to disrupt and reform international and interracial relations at Fourah Bay and Njala. Struggles to delink Fourah Bay from Durham, and reign in American claims to Njala, indicate how the processes of decolonization continued after the formal end of British rule. As noted by A.P. Kup, a British historian who taught at Fourah Bay in the 1950s and 1960s, this was the struggle for university independence after national independence.⁸

Furthermore, the struggle for university independence had consequences beyond adjustments to everyday order and debates over the division of resources. Efforts to level privileges enjoyed by white academics altered the triangular relations between Sierra Leoneans, Americans and the British. As demonstrated in the final section of the chapter, Sierra Leonean assertions of authority over white academics altered how British and American academics identified or disidentified with each other. Additionally, Sierra Leonean comparative critiques of Britain and America structured faculty recruitment campaigns. And, in another instance, the delineation of Anglo-American differences shaped the 1967 law that merged Fourah Bay and Njala into one national university and severed the bonds between Fourah Bay and Durham.

⁷ Magnus Cole, “The Future of Stability” in the “Sierra Leone Student Voice,” published by the Sierra Leonean Students Union of the Americas, vol. 2, no. 1, 1969. University of Illinois Archives, “Joseph Kastelic Papers,” Box 2.

⁸ In his history of the development of the humanities at Fourah Bay, Kup concludes that “It was not, however, until after independence, first national, and then of the University, that syllabuses really could be satisfactorily reconstructed to reflect the needs of an African University as well as the frustrated teaching preferences of department staff, black and white alike, to say nothing of student desires.” From “The Development of the Humanities – History,” in *One Hundred Years of University Education in Sierra Leone, 1876-1976* (Freetown: Celebrations Committee/Government Press, 1977) p. 81.

These campaigns, laws, and everyday encounters between Sierra Leoneans, Americans and the British, indicate a wide-spread commitment to intervening into any manifestation of perceived Anglo-American “complimentary imperialism.”⁹ Anglo-American solidarity was not just a strategy coordinated between London and Washington after all. Rather, Anglo-American relations formed locally in Sierra Leone and had a particular iteration within debates over international education. For example, in 1964 American officials asked their Sierra Leonean counterparts if they were “unhappy with the relationship between Fourah Bay College and the U.K.?” To their British counterparts Americans inquired whether the British “suspect, know, or fear” that Sierra Leoneans may in fact be unhappy with that relationship. And lastly to each other, Americans wondered if the Sierra Leonean government had asked them to come to Njala in order to dislodge the British. In a significantly perceptive question a State Department education specialist wondered the following: “Is the development of Njala being used as a lever to establish indigenous institutions without foreign affiliation or control?”¹⁰ In this manner, three-way relations between Sierra Leoneans, Americans and the British pivoted around the possibility of African educational autonomy and the erosion of foreign claims to African campuses.

Though not the easiest to formulate, questions and concerns related to Anglo-American-Sierra Leonean relations were common throughout postcolonial West Africa. In Nigeria, Ogechi Anyanwu argues postcolonial educational policy emerged from the collision of interests

⁹ Anglo-American “complimentary imperialism” is the subject of H.V. Hodson’s “The Anatomy of Anglo-American Relations,” a Ditchley Foundation Lecture, given at Oxford University on April 27, 1962. A similar theme of “the human family” is referred by Secretary of State Dean Rusk and his British counterparts as they debated imperial strategies for the Pacific in 1968. The Ditchely lecture can be found at their website. The “Memorandum of Conversation” between Deak Rusk and Foreign Secretary George Brown can be accessed on the website of the Office of the Historian for the U.S. Department of State, as Document 288 in “Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XII, Western Europe.”

¹⁰ Quoted in memorandum by Dr. Harold Adams, Education Division, Central Africa Branch, U.S. Department of State; June 24, 1964. Budgets, CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project, 1950-1968, Box 16.

expressed by British policymakers, American corporations, and Nigerian nationalists.¹¹ In other instances of triangulation, American engineers worked for French operations in Cote d'Ivoire. As Abou Bamba shows, the Kossou hydroelectric dam incorporated Franco-American-Ivorian interests.¹² In Sierra Leone, as was surely the case in Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire, the capacity to develop consequential three-way relations was not only the province of political leaders and corporate elites. In the context of higher education, as demonstrated below, multilateral tensions were of popular concern, as workers, students, teachers, and administrators all intervened into Anglo-American-African relations.

Everyday Knocks on the Anglo-American Figure

The diverse forms of disciplining white academics stand in contrast to how many British and American policymakers and professors represented Sierra Leone as a comparatively exceptional location in the racial geography of postcolonial West Africa. In letters home we see how according to policymakers and professors Sierra Leone's racial climate was imagined as a unique space that lacked hostility to Americans and Britons. The head of AID in Sierra Leone, Ernest Neal, explained the history of higher education in Sierra Leone to colleagues in the United States by characterizing Sierra Leone as a friendly place where the uneasy connection between whiteness and colonialism was not a popular political subject. Sierra Leone, according to Neal, was thus a safe international partner. "Sierra Leone comes into its independence with no racial hatred for the European and its accompanying cycle of violence and bloodshed. Some look upon

¹¹ Ogechi Anyanwu, "The Anglo-American-Nigerian Collaboration in Nigeria's Higher Education Reform: The Cold War and Decolonization, 1948-1960," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 11: 3 (2010).

¹² Abou B. Bamba, "Triangulating a Modernization Experiment: The United States, France and the Making of the Kossou Project in Central Ivory Coast," *Journal of Modern European History*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2010).

this peaceful achievement as an indication of easy Western rapprochement.”¹³ Referring to decolonization and nationalism elsewhere in Africa, Neal concluded that this rapprochement was all the more valuable because, “there is evidence that the Sierra Leoneans feel the hurt of colonialism just as deeply as do the more vocal Congolese.”¹⁴

Sierra Leone, when placed next to the Congo, represented the quiet transition from empire. Neal’s assessment was echoed by a Kalamazoo College professor who worked at Fourah Bay in the mid-1960s. Stepping back to consider Sierra Leone’s position in global affairs, John Peterson was amazed that somehow the country managed to sustain an “unracial world.” To colleagues in America, Peterson explained that he had left racial segregation behind, and that Sierra Leone was a place where he had “never been made conscious of my racial difference.”¹⁵

The evidence of disciplining white academics at Fourah Bay and Njala offers a different view of the ‘racial world’ of Sierra Leone. It was not a world that adhered to binaries that differentiated Sierra Leone from other African countries, or from segregation in American and Britain. Rather, as we will see below, American and British desires to escape postcolonial racial tensions in Sierra Leone were upset on a daily basis, and the ‘racial world’ proved to be far more complex than the interpretations of officials and professors would suggest.

This section on everyday order begins with the politics of food then turn to the politics of two deportations. After looking at these deportations (the high-profile case of John Hatch and the lesser known case of Lionel Leslie Keevil Rickford) I analyze two separate public confrontations between Sierra Leonean and white staff at Fourah Bay. The section concludes with the case of

¹³ Ernest Neal, “Fourah Bay College,” International Cooperation Administration Airgram, May 31, 1961; NARA, RG 59, West Africa Desk, Box 161.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ John Peterson, Letter to Dr. Weimer K. Hicks, December 23, 1966; Kalamazoo College Archives, Sierra Leone Files, 1965-1966.

the less public and more subtle manner in which an Illinois professor was fired as an extension adviser at Njala. Though each case was unique, together they illustrate how daily interactions shaped the broader parameters of postcolonial education.

In 1960s Sierra Leone small cracks in uneven relations expanded rapidly and unexpectedly. The authority of British staff at Fourah Bay, for example, was refuted in debates about campus jurisdiction. In February 1961, two months prior to the planned independence ceremonies, a British professor went to dinner in the Fourah Bay student cafeteria. This was not an uncommon thing for professors to do. He sat and ate with five students, in between telling stories about his colonial service in Palestine and Hong Kong. He took note of what was happening at other tables. Later that week he wrote a letter to the Principal, listing the menu and complaining about the meal and student diet. “I consider that the evening meals are a very poor gastronomic reward to such a fine body of students as we have.”¹⁶ The letter was forwarded to the matron in charge of feeding students. Almost a month later, in a reply to the complaint, the charges of poor quality and insufficient quantity of food were refuted by Mrs. Thomas, the head Matron of the student cafeteria, “If you don’t know the correct names for the food don’t say or go against African food nor will I go against English food nor I go into English Colleges and ask for English food for nice English students... The dough was Puff Cake or Agrhi (African food). Did you expect to meet steak & kidney pies? Which the student wouldn’t eat & will not thank you for.” The matron continued by asking whether it would be acceptable if she were to come to the professor’s class and critique the syllabus and his teaching. She concluded with specific measurements of sugar used per day and the schedule on which students were provided fruit.¹⁷

¹⁶ Letter, February 23, 1961; PRO, FBC, USL, File 771 (2).

¹⁷ Letter, March 16, 1961; PRO, FBC, USL, File 771 (2).

This problem of the British professor in the African cafeteria, according to the matron, was not just that his illiteracy in West African cuisine or ignorance of the larger student food service schedule. The professor, according to the matron, did not understand the expectations of students and that there were places on campus where his authority was not recognized. Her dismissal of English taste, we might add, not only reminded the British professor that he worked at an African college, but suggested that he might not have known the boundaries of the campus. The British professor recognized this, and promptly wrote an apology to the matron.¹⁸

The coded tensions over food remained a consistent source of debate. Quantities and qualities of campus food often served as indicators of either postcolonial progress or postcolonial failure. Fourah Bay students in 1966, for instance, demanded that the matron involved in the dispute with the British professor replace the head matron. The head matron was a Lebanese woman whom had worked at the College since the mid-1950s. Under the banner of “more and better food” students circulated a petition to have the head matron replaced by her Sierra Leonean colleague, and called for the full Africanization of food service on the urban campus.¹⁹ Compared to the dramatics of deporting British academics, the politicization of food at Fourah Bay was a more discreet campaign. The process of deporting British and American staff was a more elaborate and chaotic process. Like the matron’s questioning of the knowledge of the British academic, however, the induced departures of British and American departure became part of postcolonial academic culture in Sierra Leone.

The Extra Mural Studies (EMS) Department at Fourah Bay saw two of its staff members deported during the first decade of Sierra Leonean independence. Following the university

¹⁸ Letter, March 22, 1961; PRO, FBC, USL, File 771 (2).

¹⁹ “Student Union Correspondence,” 1964; PRO, FBC, USL, File 775 (1), “Open Policy Files.”

extension model the EMS Department was one of the more open and publicly engaged units on the campus. Its staff dealt with numerous government agencies, coordinated projects with diverse urban and rural communities, and often worked with Freetown based newspapers and radio stations. The deportation of two British citizens sparked heated debates as well as threatened many of the communal ties between Fourah Bay College and communities in Freetown.

In 1962 John Hatch was the Director of the EMS Department. Hatch's eight months working in Sierra Leone extended from his political and academic career. Prior to assuming the directorship of Fourah Bay's EMS, Hatch worked as the chair of the U.K.'s Labour Party sub-committee on Commonwealth Affairs. This committee required that he liaise with numerous colonial and postcolonial governments in the changing African political landscape.²⁰ The tours he made of Africa in the 1950s were bookended by two publications, *The Intelligent Socialists Guide to Africa* (1953) and *Everyman's Africa* (1959). In 1960 he apparently wanted to put his ideas into practice. As a result he applied to numerous African universities founded under British colonial rule.²¹

Hatch tested political and institutional boundaries in his first (and only) academic year at Fourah Bay. He co-organized "Fourah Bay College on the Air," a broadcast program heard in Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Ghana. Hatch also trained college students in off-campus community programs and campaigned for an expansion of adult literacy programs. He then translated these experiences into political commentaries published in the Sierra Leonean and British press.²² As he did this work he also made numerous requests that irritated the Sierra Leonean administrators of Fourah Bay. According to Nicol, Hatch "wanted to be consulted by

²⁰ "Obituary: Lord Hatch of Lusby," *The Independent* (U.K.), October 13, 1962 (Accessed May 2014).

²¹ John Hatch, Faculty File; PRO, FBC, USL, Bundle 24.

²² Davidson Nicol, "Letter to All College," October 19, 1961; PRO, FBC, USL, Bundle 26, "Senior Staff Association Files."

the Sierra Leone Government about its development plans, but the Government quite properly decided that our Professor of Economics who is also British, was more suitable.” Hatch’s requests to form a steering committee focused on the “development of the College” and to acquire “an advance copy” of the Sierra Leone national development plan were also rebuffed. Nicol informed Hatch that his limited academic experience required that he take his concerns to the faculty Senate rather than establish an entirely new committee. Development plans under negotiation, Nicol also pointed out, were confidential.²³

Apparently frustrated by these rejections, Hatch published an article that saw him declared a “prohibited immigrant” by the Sierra Leone government and subsequently deported back to the U.K. In an article published in the June 8 edition of the *New Statesman* Hatch claimed that the postcolonial government was taking the country in the wrong direction. “Sierra Leone lacks any sense of national ambition or indeed any ideological approach to its development,” he wrote.²⁴ Over the next two months Hatch’s article was the subject of diverse public debates, as well as the subject of government press-conferences in Freetown and at key embassies overseas. During this time of international debate Hatch failed to follow a Fourah Bay College request that asked him to not make any public statements or give any interviews.²⁵ In a letter to *Times* of London, Davidson Nicol indicated that Hatch had crossed a line. “White liberals in West Africa,” wrote Nicol, “will find that their outlook is most welcome but that it cannot be used as an excuse for patronising or arrogant behaviour.”²⁶ Hatch, in other words, lost his privilege to both be heard and be in West Africa.

²³ Davidson Nicol, letter to *The Times*, February 6, 1963 (London).

²⁴ David Nicol quotes the *New Statesman* article in his “Letter to All Academic Staff,” August 26, 1962; PRO, FBC, USL, Bundle 26, “Senior Staff Association Files.”

²⁵ John Hatch File; PRO, FBC, USL, Bundle 26, “Senior Staff Association Files.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Hatch's critique of Sierra Leone in the *New Statesman* article hinged upon his interpretation of the contradictions of international development. In particular he described what he saw as the gap between the daily life of those excluded from international development projects and the daily expansion of neo-colonial operations in Sierra Leone. His most infamous quote was republished on the front page of the Freetown-based *Daily Mail*.

Freetown has its luxury Paramount Hotel, television is due to open on August 1 and Sierra Leoneans will be found on mail boats or aeroplanes travelling each year to Europe and America. Yet from the modern language laboratories in Fourah Bay College can still be heard the screams of girls undergoing circumcision in the Bundu, school children chant Latin or English history, while their families half-starve for nearly six months every year; the new buildings and industries are constructed by Israelis, Egyptians, Swiss, Dutch, Italians and Americans. It seems to be assumed that foreign aid will always provide the capital for development. No one, however has yet realised that any coherent development demands a choice between alternatives.²⁷

Along with the quotes from Hatch's article, *The Daily Mail* published the official response to Hatch issued by the government of Sierra Leone. Mr. Nelson Williams, the spokesperson for the Prime Minister's cabinet, conceded that some elements of Hatch's observations were acceptable. Williams noted that there was a real difference between on-campus and off-campus life, and that foreign loan and trade agreements were rapidly increasing. He even went so far as to issue a general statement of reassurance to the expatriate community in Sierra Leone.²⁸

It was, Williams explained, Hatch's tone and posture that set him apart from the other expatriates, and made him a target for discipline. "I wish, however, to reiterate Government's tribute to those fine, dedicated and genuine expatriates who have been realistic to understand,

²⁷ "Cabinet's Tough Decision – First Deportation Order: John Hatch to go," August 23, 1962 *Daily Mail*, Freetown.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

accept, subject themselves to and co-operate with their new masters in Africa whom they faithfully serve.”²⁹ Hatch’s public sin was even more egregious because he was in charge of numerous public programs at Fourah Bay. Williams feared that Hatch would inject “contempt and ridicule” into Fourah Bay programs.³⁰

Nicol, along with the college’s legal counsel, attempted to intervene and save Hatch from being barred from returning to Sierra Leone. During this affair Hatch was at home in England. The negotiations culminated with an agreement to allow Hatch to return to Freetown for three days, during which the College, its troubled employee, and the government would look for a resolution. One day after returning to Freetown, however, Hatch violated Nicol’s request that he not make public statements or be interviewed by the local press. This violation ended the negotiations, and Hatch was quickly moved out of his college housing. For his “sudden loss of employment,” Hatch was given an “ex-gratia non-taxable sum of £2,200.”³¹

The episode did not conclude in Freetown. The will to correct and refute Hatch followed him home to the U.K. This is evidenced in an exchange of letters in the *Times* of London. On June 28th the *Times* published Hatch’s analysis of what he saw as disruptions to the labor pool of expatriate teachers willing to work in Africa. “Invasion of civil liberties,” Hatch explained, “raise fears amongst those who wish to serve anywhere in the continent.” Hatch’s concern over what he saw as the “political hazards now endangering educational recruitment to Africa,” led him to liken his case to that of Terence Ranger in what was then Rhodesia.³² Nicol took particular exception to this, and in his rebuttal offered a broad interpretation of whiteness in Africa.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Davidson Nicol, letter to *The Times*, February 6, 1963 (London).

³² John Hatch, letter to *The Times*, January 28, 1963 (London).

The statements now made twice in the British Press by Mr Hatch, and which have also been made since then to me several times by others, about the difficult position of liberals serving in Africa, constitute another reason why I have been forced not to remain silent any longer over this matter. It is quite wrong to compare what happens in West Africa with what happens in Central and South Africa. The degree of prejudice shown against Africans in the latter places is so enormously greater than the rare and sporadic variety shown against white people in West Africa. In fact, the Government of Sierra Leone has often been criticised by some of the younger generation for its very pro-western and benevolent attitude toward foreigners and foreign capital.³³

Hatch, according to Nicol, misunderstood the racial order of things in Africa on a very general level. More specifically, Hatch was accused of being unable to understand his own “difficult position” as a white liberal seeking employment in Africa. Taken as an example of “rare and sporadic” prejudice, Hatch’s deportation, Nicol argues, is not equivalent in any way to daily life under apartheid. In fact, as Nicol suggests, Sierra Leonean “benevolence” may actually make the country vulnerable. Overall, Nicol’s refutation of Hatch in the British press offers a basic point about the capacity of Sierra Leoneans to manage foreign and domestic educational resources. Hatch’s concern over the supply of “expatriates” was not shared by Nicol. “There are many of your countrymen [in Sierra Leone] who are our valued colleagues and who have worked in this country and college some for over twenty years”, Nicol wrote. British professors who know how to successfully navigate Sierra Leonean politics, he concluded, “enjoy our complete confidence and respect.”³⁴ In response to Hatch’s doubt, Nicol asserted confidence in his and his colleagues’ ability to manage Fourah Bay, and when necessary, define the position of white liberals in postcolonial West Africa.

³³ Davidson Nicol, letter to *The Times*, February 6, 1963 (London).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

As seen in the Hatch episode, disciplining white academics could be a combative and fast-moving process. Hatch was declared a “prohibited immigrant” by the Sierra Leone government just two-months after his *New Statesman* article was published in the U.K.³⁵ Yet no two paths back to Britain look exactly the same. The deportation of Lionel Leslie Keevil Rickford resulted from the order of his daily life falling apart gradually in Freetown. Rickford’s academic and domestic worlds collapsed together, but hardly fast enough to constitute a newsworthy scandal.

Rickford claimed to have served for twenty years in the “Colonial Administrative Services” of British West Africa. Rickford’s colonial career included five years as an officer in the Royal West African Fighting Forces, two years in the Nigerian High Commission in London, and two years working for the Christian Missionary Society office in Lagos. From 1967 to 1970, Rickford worked as the administrative secretary for the Fourah Bay’s Extra Mural Studies program. His primary task was to support E.R. Cole, a Sierra Leonean man who took over as director of the EMS program after Hatch was deported. Rickford acted as Cole’s courier, arranging meetings with local and international officials, organizing supplies for community workshops, and managing the program’s finances. Cole and Rickford did not get along well, and Rickford lobbied the Fourah Bay administration for a promotion, and applied unsuccessfully for bursar posts at Njala University College and the Milton Margai Teacher Training College in Freetown.³⁶

Due to alcoholism, violations of campus policies, and frequent sick-leave trips for psychiatric diagnoses home in the U.K., Rickford slowly drew the scorn of family members and

³⁵ Hatch, *The Times*, January 28, 1963 (London).

³⁶ Rickford File; PRO, FBC, USL, File 772 (4).

colleagues in the months prior to his deportation. He was married to Joyce, a Sierra Leonean woman twenty-six years younger than he.³⁷ By early 1970, Joyce and Rickford's superiors at Fourah Bay College had little doubt about the likeliness of future trouble. Recommending Rickford be fired from Fourah Bay before something unforgiveable occurred, Cole concluded that, "there is no doubt that Mr. Rickford has held senior and responsible positions in reputable institutions prior to taking up his present appointment. However, he is now a moral wreck."³⁸

The episode that finally triggered his deportation was allegedly a brief argument with a Government Minister at a Freetown bar. The British High Commission and the Fourah Bay Principal tried to protect Rickford but were unsuccessful. His reputation in the academic and expatriate circles of Freetown was too poor. His supervisor concluded, "his proclivities are too well known in town to be taken seriously...it is an open secret that he is in the vanguard of a campaign of slander against the College."³⁹ Rickford was fired from Fourah Bay, forced to leave Sierra Leone, and traveled home to Sussex alone. His Sierra Leonean wife and adopted children remained in Freetown.⁴⁰

Rickford's deportation resulted from the accumulated effects of friction between him and his family, colleagues, and neighbors. Rickford, a British member of the Fourah Bay academic staff, was dislodged from his home and work in Freetown through a convergence of multiple social forces. Problems at home, so to speak, and problems at work, escalated mutually. His wife accused him of failing to meet his domestic responsibilities. Referring to his history of

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ C.R.R. Cole to H. Sawyerr, June 22, 1970; File 772 (4).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ According to one of Rickford's adopted sons, Les Rickford, the family was reunited in England some years later. The son claims that his adopted father underwent electro-shock treatment after being deported from Sierra Leone. Found at Les Rickford's website, <http://www.multimedia-storytelling-unlimited.com/Memoir-Storytelling-From-Burpham-to-Benguema-Birth-and-Burpham.html> (accessed January 2014).

alcoholism and depression she explained to him that, “I refuse to go through all the emotional and physical upsets I’ve had through this singular lack of facing the truth of your past.” She demanded that he seek medical treatment in Freetown and in the U.K, and threatened to divorce him if failed to do so.⁴¹ The Principal of the College threatened to fire Rickford if he continued to call “officers of the college” late at night or move around campus “full of liquor, filling the air with the stench of alcohol.” The content of the “incoherent and sometimes indistinct” phone calls, according to the principal, were attempts at “blackmail.”⁴² As result the principal and the EMS director began assembling a case against Rickford. This “worthless expatriate,” Cole told the principal, is “an individual exploring the four corners of the earth in search of happiness which he will never find as long as he makes alcoholism his bed mate.”⁴³

Rickford was not as lambasted as Hatch in the Sierra Leonean and British press. His firing also did not generate any press-release or official government decree. Nevertheless, Rickford’s treatment in Freetown and at Fourah Bay was a public affair. Expectations for marital and campus order provided almost daily opportunities at home and at work to critique Rickford’s violations of that order, and anticipate the demise of his social life in Sierra Leone. His displacement from Sierra Leone however was not inevitable, as it was not the case that every foreigner with a negative reputation was deported. Rather, Rickford’s deportation stemmed from the monitoring of social transgressions at home and at work that yielded evidence in the case for his removal from Fourah Bay and Freetown.

The dramatic departures of Hatch and Rickford from Sierra Leone highlight how everyday social relations on Sierra Leonean campuses harbored the possibility for discipline that

⁴¹ Excerpt from “Letter from Joyce,” November 9, 1969, Rickford File 772 (4).

⁴² Sawyerr to Rickford, April 8, 1970; File 772 (4).

⁴³ Cole to Sawyerr, June 22, 1970; File 772 (4).

served larger agendas of Africanization. In mid-1962 a Sierra Leonean man came to the office of his former boss on the campus. Three days prior he had been dismissed from his job as a temporary clerical worker for the College accountant. The accountant was a British man who worked at Fourah Bay since the mid-1950s. After pushing and punching the British accountant, the former employee broke the window of the office door with his elbow. He went to the campus hospital to have his elbow stitched. Afterwards he returned to the accountant's office, continuing to threaten the accountant until the police arrived. The accountant did not file charges against the former employee, but evidence and testimony were still collected by the police and by College officials. A week later the police brought charges against the accountant on behalf of the man who attacked him. The charge was that the attack had been provoked, and that there were no legitimate grounds for the initial dismissal of the temporary employee. The dismissal was based on a missing £12.⁴⁴

College officials knew that the British accountant "had poor relations with his junior staff." Officials charged with investigating the incident and then eventually with providing legal support to the accountant did so with caution.⁴⁵ During the investigation, the concern of the College was that in taking the side of a white staff member, particularly one with a poor reputation, more problems would emerge. The British professor leading the investigation conveyed this sentiment to the College's top administrator. "I very much took into account that any action of mine might be interpreted as 'the protection afforded by one white man to another' and for this reason I was doubly ~~anxious~~ cautious and spent much more time on the case than I would otherwise have done. If the former employee had been British and the accountant an African, I would have not referred the matter to you, nor would I have done so if the Registrar,

⁴⁴ PRO, FBC, USL, File 772 (8).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* The accountant allegedly "[knew] nothing about the legal set-up of the country."

the former employee, the accountant and myself had all been the same nationality.”⁴⁶ Evidently it was best to literally cross-out anxiety related to whiteness at Fourah Bay, and cover it with a more confident sense of efficiency. This efficient “caution” is secured by the idea that somehow the solution to this case would be easier if it was either not an interracial assault or if the attacker been white and his supervisor black. An underlying assumption was that everyone on campus knew how to police and punish one’s own race or “nationality.” Even if the attacker was British, his fellow Briton running the investigation would be able to sort out the problem with greater ease, less anxiety and more caution. For a British administrator at Fourah Bay an episode of white violence against African staff would apparently be easier to explain than an episode that drew unwanted attention to the historical foundations of white-privilege at Fourah Bay. Since this was not the case the investigating officer of the College “went carefully into the question of prior provocation”, hoping to find no specific instance of provocation or be forced to bring a piece of the campus’ colonial history to the surface.⁴⁷ After charges against him were dismissed in a Freetown court, the accountant and his family returned to the U.K. before his contract expired.

Formal and informal pressure to leave Sierra Leone was not just applied to the British. In 1967 the Njala University College Extension Specialist, Quinn Douglas, was not officially deported, but he was not allowed back in the country after going home for a holiday.⁴⁸ The professor, spouse and children left Njala in July expecting to return prior to classes resuming in September. They traveled back to their home near the University of Illinois, leaving their temporary home and belongings at Njala. In early September, they were notified that their

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Crossing out of “anxious” in original.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Name altered to protect identity.

contract with the U.S. and Sierra Leone government was not renewed, and that their belongings in Sierra Leone would be sent back to them.⁴⁹

According to the “Chief of Party” representing Illinois at Njala, this related to a set of tensions over off-campus projects and the pace of Njala’s development. The Sierra Leonean and U.S. administrators at Njala had expected Douglas to complete numerous projects during his two-year contract. These included projects to initiate an agricultural and rural development extension worker training program; develop a youth organization “in any chiefdom in Sierra Leone”; administer the distribution and monitoring of “improved varieties of rice”; and help determine how Njala’s extension efforts related to the rural extension interests of diverse Sierra Leonean government ministries. No progress was noted by Douglas’ supervisors. Where they had hoped to find progress, they instead found that he had “alienated” his colleagues and subordinates.⁵⁰

While the “rescinding” of the Specialist’s approval to work at Njala was delivered by USAID and Illinois officials, Sierra Leonean professors and government staff were involved in building and prosecuting the case for Douglas’s replacement. Douglas’s failure to perform his job was documented by the Sierra Leonean extension staff working under his direction. For example, they recorded his absence from on-campus training programs and relayed this to officials in the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry officials informed Ray Karnes, the Illinois “Chief of Party” at Njala, and demanded that Karnes review Douglas’ work and reports. After reading Douglas’s reports, Karnes sided with those working under Douglas. The reports, he told the Director of AID Projects at the University of Illinois, “make reference to nearly every thing

⁴⁹ Ray Karnes, Correspondence, 1967; University of Illinois Archives, Record 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University-College Subject File 1963-74, Box 6, Participant Files.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

good that has happened at Njala and in Sierra Leone during the last two years. It is far more accurate to say that good things happened in spite of Douglas as a result of his efforts.” Karnes concluded that “[we need] the continuation of the disruptions caused by Douglas like a hog needs hip pockets.” Additionally, Karnes accused a colleague back in Illinois of performing “well-couched whitewash jobs” in a recent oversight review of University of Illinois international development projects in Sierra Leone and India. Misrepresentation, in general, and covering up Douglas’ failures in particular, Karnes pointed out, risked putting the authority and reputation that Illinois faculty had in Sierra Leone in jeopardy. For Karnes the “preaching” of an American professor, who claimed to represent the “special brand of Illinois,” exposed that brand to unwanted oversight and criticism from Sierra Leonean colleagues and students.⁵¹

The disciplining of Douglas illustrates that the work of white staff on the campuses of Fourah Bay and Njala was governed by administrative and popular authority. Administrative action taken by principals and government officials merged with the improvised disciplinary acts of matrons, trainees, and subordinates. The disciplining of white academics, and the ability to shape the racial order of day to day campus life, sprang from many sources.

In one such occasion a Sierra Leonean professor confronted an American professor in front of a classroom, and did so again a few days later in a crowded campus courtyard. In the first confrontation, D. M. Foley, an American with a one-year appointment in the History Department at Fourah Bay, gave a lecture in 1966 on the “state of historical research on the West African slave trade.” During the question session his Sierra Leonean colleague in the History Department, J. Gyebi-Ofosu, announced to the audience that he “completely disagreed” with Foley and that “only a black man can write African history.” After calling for a full and swift

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Africanization of the college, Gyebi-Ofosu, according to Foley, “took this opportunity to launch a series of anti-American political and racist remarks.” To the audience Gyebi-Ofosu claimed that “the United States government used atomic weapons against the Japanese and not the Germans...and has involved itself in Viet Nam simply to test new and terrible weapons against non-whites.”⁵² Public critiques of American empire thus merged with critiques of American academics. As illustrated by Gyebi-Ofosu’s outburst, empire and the employment of white academics could be targeted at the same time.

Days later Foley and Gyebi-Ofosu happened to cross paths in the main courtyard on the Fourah Bay campus. Foley tried to elicit an apology from Gyebi-Ofosu on the grounds that “all academic work is careful and complete investigation and an impartial weighing of the evidence.” Gyebi-Ofosu disagreed, and claimed Foley was “dangerous for African students” and that he was “anti-African.” In front of onlookers Gyebi-Ofosu “followed” Foley, and “stood under the staircase, and repeated his statements in a loud voice.”⁵³ Gyebi-Ofosu’s public performance epitomizes the sporadic and situational articulation of demands for the Africanization of higher education and campus working conditions. Within this everyday history of anti-racism is the everyday work of opposing “the continuation of institutional white privilege on the ground.”⁵⁴ Such expressions translated into wider movements to hollow out foreign authority at Fourah Bay and Njala. Desires for the reform of campus life, as we will see in the next section, were inseparable from those for reforms to the institutional designs governing the division of campus resources.

⁵² D. A. Foley, letter to Davidson Nicol, June 6, 1966; Personal File for D. A. Foley; PRO, FBC, USL, 772 (4).

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ J. Pierra, (2013) p. 38.

Dividing Resources and Unsettling Academics

In their analysis of the academic and political contexts of the 1960s, the authors of *The African Experience with Higher Education* conclude that African academics and politicians agreed that, “universities, dominated as they were by expatriate staff, [are] part of the apparatus of imperialism, comparable to multinational corporations, which had to be decolonized.”⁵⁵ What came after this agreement, the authors argue, was a regrettable pact made between African academics and African politicians. The African academic invited the politician into the university to initiate a state led program of “rapid Africanization.” After pushing expatriates out, however, the politician never left the academy, yielding “one of the most enduring legacies of the colonial situation.” This legacy, they argue, developed from the combination of the politician’s role in the Africanization of the academy with the “failure of many African academics to fully appreciate the necessity to defend [their] autonomy.” According to this account, African academics handed over the work of Africanization to the politician, and lost academic freedom in the process. By the end of the 1960s, the politician led Africanization of the academy resulted in campuses subjugated to new forms of state control that arrived in the wake of the departure of expatriates.⁵⁶

While the history of politicians overstaying an invitation into the academy is important and difficult to generalize, overemphasizing the role of African politicians significantly risks undervaluing campus based agendas that preceded and endured the misbegotten invitation of the state into the academy. As demonstrated in the previous section, the details of Africanization

⁵⁵ J. F. Ade Ajayi, Lameck K.H. Goma, G. Ampah Johnson, *The African Experience with Higher Education* (London: James Currey, 1996); 95. The analogy of “the university as a multinational corporation” comes from Ali Mazrui, *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) pp. 285-319.

⁵⁶ Ajayi, et al, (1996).

indicate that faculty, workers and students advanced Africanizing initiatives on a daily basis. This popular pursuit of Africanization, and the attendant disciplining and displacement of expatriates, I argue, was never something that could be completely handed over to political leaders. Furthermore, academic and worker led initiatives to undo expatriate privileges in the African academy developed momentum well ahead of any effort by state officials to accelerate or take control over the means of Africanization on campuses. In other words, rather than see the desire to erode foreign privileges on African campuses in the wake of empire as fulfilled through an unfortunate compromise between academic and politician, it is important to see how African campus communities generated and sustained the conditions of Africanization on their own terms.

In Sierra Leone, African professors and students at Fourah Bay and Njala assembled agendas for altering the distribution of financial and residential resources on the two campuses. They aimed to reform the social economy of campus life, particularly targeting policies that maintained inequalities in salaries, housing and access to campus facilities. Their agendas for challenging the racialized division of resources in Sierra Leone stemmed from a politicization of resource distribution and consumption at Fourah Bay and Njala. In early 1966, for example, African professors at Fourah Bay attempted to reform the campus salary structure by challenging what they called the “subsidized Britisher.”⁵⁷ Specifically, they tried to abolish a policy that allowed British professors to earn more than their African colleagues. The British professors at Fourah Bay benefitted from a supplemental income policy that saw their salaries “topped up” with British governmental funds channeled through Durham University. This policy, one

⁵⁷ Minutes, February 2, 1966, “Joint Negotiating Committee – Senior + Junior – Fourah Bay College, 1965-68”; PRO, FBC, Box 524, Ministry of Education Files.

established during the colonial-era, remained in effect until the formal relation between Durham and Fourah Bay was dissolved in 1967.⁵⁸

When the policy was challenged in the faculty senate, British professors defended it as a necessary and legal policy. Recruitment and retention of expatriate academics, argued A.P. Kup, depended on the continuation of a policy of “financial inducement.” Speaking on behalf of British faculty appointed to Fourah Bay after 1950, Kup argued that their status as tenured, “pensionable officers” was protected by Sierra Leonean law.⁵⁹ Reauthorized in 1960, one year before independence, the “topping up” policy authored by the Colonial College Council at Durham had been passed by parliament and remained in effect after independence. The “gross deterioration of status” that would result from the cessation of the supplemental income policy, Kup argued, “seems illegal.” Furthermore, he argued, this threat to status had regional implications. British academics in Sierra Leone were aware that other British academics elsewhere in West Africa did not have the same problem. “Our colleagues in Nigeria tell us they have been topped up already, without strings.”⁶⁰ Whether Fourah Bay was about to set a good or bad precedent depended on how one assessed the international risks of institutional reform.

In response to claims that the racialized salary structure had a legal basis and regional precedent, African professors warned against the consequences of its continuation. The effort to reform the pay scale, and effectively undermine one component of Durham University’s authority over Fourah Bay, was led by a group of twenty-four Sierra Leonean and Nigerian professors who called themselves “the 1963 Committee.” Composed of professors who had been hired after independence, the committee claimed their interpretation of the topping-up policy

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

represented “the considered opinion of the indigenous and African members of the teaching staff.” In rather blunt terms they argued that supplements to British faculty was not money well spent, and it had negative academic consequences. “As our educational system improves and more and more first rate Sierra Leoneans graduate from Honours Schools at home and abroad,” the spokesperson for “the 1963 committee” explained in a faculty senate meeting, “it would be pity if ‘topping up’ resulted, over the years, in places on the academic staff being blocked for them by relatively low-calibre, subsidized Britishers.” Using monetary incentives to keep British faculty at Fourah Bay prevented ‘systemic’ educational improvements from taking hold at Fourah Bay. The present and future value of British academics was also questioned. Topping up, they argued, “attracts a lot of run-of-the-mill Britishers to stay here for the whole of their working lives,” and would continue to attract “poor academics, whose market value would have been inflated.” Those opposed to the topping-up scheme also viewed it through the prism of Sierra Leone’s foreign policy. “Should foreign policy change drastically,” and the topping-up program was still operating, Fourah Bay’s financial resources would be “particularly vulnerable to sanctions from Britain.”⁶¹ The threat of the “subsidized Britisher” was thus articulated as a stake in the struggle for institutional independence after national independence.

It proved difficult, however, to directly challenge the topping-up program. The specific counterproposal made by “the 1963 Committee” did not call for an immediate end to the topping-up scheme. Rather, they proposed a measure that would make possible the gradual phasing out the program. Specifically, they proposed for all British professors who received supplemental, foreign income to be ineligible for tenure or permanent positions at Fourah Bay. According to the proposal, all British professors who were topped-up would have their terms of

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

employment governed by a contract that was subject to biannual review. In this plan the temporal scope of employment was reduced, and in the process, generated new forms of control over college finances and the duration of British employment at Fourah Bay. As a managerial process, a short-term contract triggered by foreign subsidies, made it possible to render British academics to the status of a temporary, short-term employee.⁶² Within a year after this proposal was put forward, the Sierra Leone government severed the official ties between Durham University and Fourah Bay. With these ties broken, authority over contracts and salaries at Fourah Bay moved into hands of Sierra Leonean academics and government officials.

The Sierra Leonean administrators of Njala faced similar questions related to income. The problem was not the “subsidized Britisher,” however, but the overpaid American. In 1966 the twelve Illinois professors on the Njala staff received the highest salaries on the campus. They received more compensation than Americans from other American universities, and more than any of their European and African colleagues. Like the pay scale at Fourah bay, the hierarchy at Njala had a formal and legal basis. The AID administrators in Freetown and Washington designated all Illinois professors as “contract advisees,” who they regarded as the on-the-ground managers of the AID project at Njala. The majority of the AID-Njala budget, as a result, was channeled through the University of Illinois, and either came to Illinois professors at Njala as deposits or as subsidies for travel, housing or the education of their children. American professors working at Njala, but who were from other American universities, made significantly less than their colleagues from Illinois. In 1966, for instance, each Illinois professor received on average \$23,000, while a professor from a Kansas State University or Oklahoma State

⁶² *Ibid.*

University, for example, received roughly half of that.⁶³ British employees at Njala earned even less. As for Sierra Leoneans in 1966, “the [AID] Mission [saw] no way of bring equity to expatriates and Sierra Leone staff members.”⁶⁴ Though this hierarchy was written into the international contracts governing the development of Njala, the division of financial and material resources was still subject to challenges and revisions. While the battle over the pay scale at Fourah Bay was between one committee founded in the colonial era and another founded after independence, at Njala it was a triangular affair where Sierra Leonean administrators mediated tensions between Americans with different status.

The Sierra Leonean principal of Njala developed subtle methods to address the consequences of uneven payment scales by asserting control over divisions between Illinois professors and their expatriate colleagues. Dr. Sahr Thomas Matturi formed the administrative link between AID and the Sierra Leonean government, and as result was well acquainted with the overall distributive design for financial and residential resources at Njala. However, since Matturi did not necessarily have direct control over AID resources, he used more indirect, but nonetheless innovative methods of questioning the priorities guiding the distribution of international funds.

On numerous occasions Matturi relayed his concerns to AID officials on what he viewed as the problem of Illinois professors acquiring “personal gains” through the development of

⁶³ Project Agreement Between AID and Development Office, An Agency of the Government of Sierra Leone,” FY 1966, pg. 6; University of Illinois Archives, Series Number 8/4/40, CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project File, 1950-1968, Box 29, “University Contracts.”

⁶⁴ Newman Jeffrey, “Conference Between Illinois and OES Contract Employees,” Department of State Airgram, October 19, 1966; University of Illinois Archives, Series 8/4/40, CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project, 1950-1968, Box 16, “AID Internal Documents.”

Njala.⁶⁵ In addressing these problems, Matturi strengthened his position as mediator of American tensions at Njala, and represented himself as an authoritative interpreter of American priorities. For example, when three American members of the Njala staff hired from other American universities alleged that the “special privileges possessed by U. of I. – AID contract personnel” threatened the “morale of the college,” Matturi used this as an opportunity to present evidence to AID administrators in Washington and Freetown of the deleterious effects of high pay for the Illinois professors.⁶⁶ At first Matturi asked the three staff hired through the Overseas Educational Service to write down their grievances.⁶⁷ The three Pd.D. holding Americans—J.B. Ellery, lecturer in education, J.V. Alexander, lecturer in crop sciences, and J.A. Holt, lecturer in chemistry—provided Matturi with written statements and documentation to support their claims. Matturi reviewed their allegations, then forwarded them to the AID office in Freetown. The allegations included instances of “statements made by Illinois contract members which stress their liberal allowances,” and evidence of how “the Illinois group receives observable equipment, e.g. air conditioners” when other staff did not. They added that, “British expatriates” also “have been very critical of [the] allowances of the Illinois group.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ David Milligan, “OES and Pay Problem,” AID Memorandum, December 20, 1966; University of Illinois Archives, Series 8/4/40, CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project, 1950-1968, Box 16, “AID Internal Documents.”

⁶⁶ Jeffrey, “Conference Between Illinois and OES Contract Employees,” Department of State Airgram, October 19, 1966; University of Illinois Archives, Series 8/4/40, CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project, 1950-1968, Box 16, “AID Internal Documents.”

⁶⁷ According to the authors of *The University Looks Abroad: Approaches to World Affairs at Six American Universities* (1965), the Overseas Educational Service, “an affiliate of EWA (Education and World Affairs), was established in 1963 to help bring together overseas vacancies in education and well-qualified persons in the American academics community. Operating under the general authority of EWA, its sponsors, in addition to EWA, are the American Council on Education and the National Academy of Sciences, in cooperation with the American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council and the Institute of International Education” (268).

⁶⁸ Jeffrey, “Conference Between Illinois and OES Contract Employees,” Department of State Airgram, October 19, 1966; University of Illinois Archives, Series 8/4/40, CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project, 1950-1968, Box 16, “AID Internal Documents.”

This evidence of rifts in the expatriate community at Njala persuaded AID officials to reconsider the contract terms for the Illinois team. The initial response from AID officials was that American professors at Njala needed more money and the campus needed better housing. The AID Affairs Officer in Freetown regarded it as a “fact that top U.S. professors will not come to Njala unless salary and allowances are liberal,” and it followed that “the best solution would be to place all Americans on the Njala campus under the same contract.” He concluded, “if equity is not achieved, the present relationships will deteriorate.”⁶⁹ The assumption that Illinois academics should be paid the most lost some of its validity. Through Matturi’s efforts the campus salary hierarchy with Illinois at the top was thus reinterpreted by American officials as a threat to, rather than efficient strategy for the development of Njala.

Along with the grievances sent to Freetown, Matturi submitted his own letter of support that endorsed reforms to AID policy. He used this letter as an opportunity to question American priorities and question American strategies for the management of the financial and material resources they had control over in Sierra Leone. Flaws in in American policy, according to Matturi, had resulted in “undesirable tensions” over the distribution of resources at Njala. Referring to Njala and his authority as principal, Matturi explained to AID officials that, “those far from the ‘troubled spot’ [of Njala] cannot feel the effects of these tensions in the way I do.” In exchange for offering his support for those Americans aggrieved by campus salary hierarchies, Matturi was allowed an occasion to suggest that privileges allowed to Americans at Njala was the source of many types of “undesirable tension.” In this way, Matturi positioned himself as a confident manager of resources who was the best equipped to identify the causes of international problems at Njala.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

In identifying with those who felt excluded from the privileges allowed to the Illinois contract team, Matturi was also voicing a common discomfort with the manifestation of expatriate privileges on the campus landscape. For instance, numerous Sierra Leonean colleagues surveyed the housing situation on the Njala, and concluded that the Americans disproportionately occupied the best houses on the rural campus. Erection of new prefabricated homes and the construction of new residential infrastructure (from piped water to garages), Sierra Leonean professors argued, catered to American families who had the largest incomes. Though new housing facilities were funded by AID, and intended to house AID contract personnel, this situation nonetheless led to the perception of many campus community members and Sierra Leonean academics that, “at Njala, American money is spent on Americans, on the comfort of its own citizens.”⁷⁰ In some cases Sierra Leonean academics accused some American professors of not being committed to the development of Njala. In one case, Njala professors believed that an Illinois professor of plant science only worked at Njala in order to earn untaxable income late in his career. His Sierra Leonean and American colleagues apparently confronted him, asking him what really motivated him to live in Sierra Leone.⁷¹

Issues of faculty housing in Freetown provoked similar questions of motivation and status. Fourah Bay professors either lived in staff quarters on the hilly Mt. Aureol campus, or the College paid for the rental of a downtown, inner-city apartment. Downtown rental arrangements often proved expensive, and occasionally Fourah Bay administrators forced professors and their families to relocate to less-costly, on-campus quarters. The eviction of a Welsh family from their downtown residence, as well as their resistance to the command to relocate, demonstrated the

⁷⁰ Memorandum, June 1965, “National Extension Services, 1964-1965”; PRO, FBC, Box 70, Ministry of Agriculture Files.

⁷¹ Interview, April 2013, Urbana.

complexities of housing negotiations. John and Margaret Davies lived in Freetown with their one child. John Davies worked in Fourah Bay's Department of Economics, while Margaret worked at the Sierra Leone Ministry of Social Welfare. Initially the family was ordered to leave by their landlord, a Sierra Leonean lawyer who worked for Fourah Bay and was regarded as "a distinguished alumnus and benefactor of the College and a respected member of the community."⁷² The eviction became a test of status in Freetown. The Davies refused to move, claiming that the eviction of a senior professor at Fourah Bay violated college policy. The principal of Fourah Bay did not agree with their assessment. Their status was not superior to the lawyer, and based on the principal's own experiences with faculty housing in the United Kingdom, he was surprised that the Davies thought they could overrule a landlord. In addition to blaming the Welsh professor for failing to "get on well" with their landlord, Nicol reminded them that he had once "occupied college and university houses in Britain." The authority of the landlord in Freetown, Nicol claimed, was the same as the authority of the landlord in Britain. Nicol, as a result of this, sided with the landlord and commanded them to move.⁷³

The details of this "complete domestic upheaval" illustrate how local and international agendas intersected in one household.⁷⁴ The lawyer claimed that his work was disrupted by the Welsh family living upstairs, above his office. The building saw a lot of traffic. The coming and going of the nanny, two cooks and one steward employed by the Davies, as well as the lawyer's clients, provoked many conflicts over the shared lock on the front door. The Davies claimed that the electrical wiring in the apartment was equally confusing. They believed they had paid the lawyer's electricity bills for one year, and demanded to be reimbursed. For his part, the lawyer

⁷² John Hathren Davies, Personal File; PRO, FBC, USL, Bundle 772 (4).

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ John Davies, Letter to Nicol, December 13, 1965; PRO, FBC, USL, Bundle 772 (4), Davies File.

claimed that the Davies' child was too noisy and disrupted his meetings. In response, the Davies blamed the child's nanny for the noise, saying that she did not follow their instructions on how to care for the child. In a letter to their landlord they explained that, "Mrs. Warouton, the child's nanny, is most inefficient and seems incapable of keeping the child occupied and does not take him out as often as she is ordered to do so by my wife."⁷⁵ The Davies offered to buy a carpet to muffle the noise. Whether or not the proposed carpet was thought a good idea, the Davies insisted that they were "thoroughly settled," and did not want to move. Particularly, they insisted, that Margaret lived close to her office, and that she needed the "very airy bedroom" for her "periodic asthma."

Despite these appeals, the College insisted the family vacate the apartment, and choose one of the more affordable staff residences up on the campus above the city. Their relocation was delayed when they found a suitable downtown apartment, close to Margaret's place of employment. All that is needed, they told the principal, was "a new sink unit, a fan and decorating."⁷⁶ The housing negotiations however failed. Shortly after the professor applied for jobs in the U.K., Uganda and South Africa, and within months the family packed and left Freetown.

The Davies's attachment to their downtown apartment might have surprised some of their white colleagues. Leslie Proudfoot, a British professor of Extra-Mural Studies at Fourah Bay, forecast that immediately after independence white academics would willingly yield to African authority. Writing on "race relations in the new West Africa" in the *American Journal of Sociology*, Proudfoot proclaimed that whites in West Africa clearly understood the racial

⁷⁵ Davies, Letter to Barlett, December 29, 1965; PRO, FBC, USL, Bundle 772 (4), Davies File.

⁷⁶ Davies, Letter to Nicol, December 20, 1965; PRO, FBC, USL, Bundle 772 (4), Davies File.

implications of independence. In his 1961 article he concluded that, “the coming or proximity of independence has not seriously disturbed the Europeans who service in these countries. Since there are not settlers among them, they are not concerned with hanging on to political or social privileges. They are transients and know it.”⁷⁷ Particularly in the case of the urban dwelling of a Welsh family, it seems that many white academics did not see themselves as “transients,” and that they did indeed try to hang to “political or social privileges.” Knowledge of their status as transients was not obtained automatically upon independence. It was, rather, something taught to them.

Control Over Anglo-American Identifications

In addition to explicit efforts to use the disciplining of white academics as means to change the everyday social order and division of resources, Sierra Leonean professors intervened more generally in the formation of white identities. The disciplining of white academics occasionally rose to the level of an effort to control relations between white academics from different countries. How Sierra Leonean academics managed the importation of British and American academics, as well as the relations between them, indicate wider measures designed to shape the conditions in which Britons and Americans identified and disidentified with each other in Sierra Leone. Regional debates over the consequences of what the editors of *West Africa* called “Anglo-American differences in Africa” informed Sierra Leoneans’ attempts to influence how British and American academics worked collaboratively or competitively.⁷⁸

West African scholars have begun to dissect how the “triangular nature” of postcolonial international relations formed on the ground during the making of Anglo-American-African

⁷⁷ Leslie Proudfoot, H.S. Wilson, “The Clubs in Crisis: Race Relations in the New West Africa,” *American Journal of Sociology* 66 : 4 (January 1961); p. 317.

⁷⁸ “Anglo-American Differences in Africa,” From A Correspondent, *West Africa*, June 30, 1962.

projects.⁷⁹ These authors are contributing to a growing body of work that demonstrates how West Africans in the 1960s anticipated and countered what Ebere Nwaubani refers to as “the translation of decolonization into neocolonialism.”⁸⁰ Together they show how a range of West African actors asserted control over all the elements in these complex triangulations turned hyphenated phrases. What constituted an American or a Briton, for example, was not taken for granted, but rather challenged through reinterpretations of “Anglo-American differences,” and disrupted through acts of playing one side of the hyphen against the other. This was the case in international recruitment campaigns at Njala, and the University of Sierra Leone Act of 1967. In the recruitment campaigns the principal of Njala went to Britain in order to change the minds of Americans in Sierra Leone. And in the University of Sierra Leone Act—one that effectively severed Durham from Fourah Bay and reined in American influence at Njala—legislative debates revolved around competing ideas for how to distinguish British education from American education. Legislating the inter-institutional relation between the British modeled Fourah Bay and the American modeled Njala proved to be an exercise in the Africanization of Anglo-American difference.

This evidence counters the tendency to represent British and American relations in Africa in a sequential order, with the 1960s depicted as a moment of covert and overt imperial hand-off. The British-then-American narrative remains oddly intact at the end of Julian Go’s fantastic revision of Anglo-American imperial history, where he concludes that “the American state took

⁷⁹ Ogechi Anyanwu, “The Anglo-American-Nigerian Collaboration in Nigeria’s Higher Education Reform: The Cold War and Decolonization, 1948-1960,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, vol. 11, no. 3 (2010). For a treatment on Franco-American-Ivorian postcolonial relations see Abou B. Bamba, “Triangulating a Modernization Experiment: The United States, France and the Making of the Kossou Project in Central Ivory Coast,” *Journal of Modern European History*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2010).

⁸⁰ Ebere Nwaubani, *The United States and Decolonization in West Africa, 1950-1960* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2001); p. 239.

over in the spaces that the British empire (and European empires) left behind.”⁸¹ Larry Grubbs takes the sequences a step further, adding on a departure of American power from Africa in the late 1960s that was followed by the return of “European neocolonialism.”⁸² While the British-then-American (then back again) sequence may have been inscribed into the imperial policies of the 1960s, it rarely translated into such a sequential order on the ground. Close analysis of British and American relations in Sierra Leone reveals that fixing those relations into a successful, successive order proved elusive, and was, in fact, rarely under full Anglo-American command.

Another instructive example comes from the recollection of an American academic, and his impression of an American ambassador. In March 1965 the U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Andrew Vincent Corry, had a family from Illinois over for dinner. Bill Thompson, a University of Illinois professor working as an administrator in Njala, along with his spouse and two children, ate and conversed with Corry. Forty-five years later Thompson recalled his encounter with Corry. “I think he had some of his education in the U.K. Some [Americans] accused him of being more British than the British. I remember him saying that he took the view of U.K. first and U.S. second. He was obviously trying to play down the colonial, the idea that, well, the U.S. was in there to replace the U.K.”⁸³ Thompsons’ recollection is as accurate as it is exemplary. Corry had been a Rhodes Scholar, and shortly after ending his brief career managing gold mining and mineral research expeditions in Montana, had attended Oxford and Yale.⁸⁴ Corry’s trajectory personifies the Anglo-American figures discussed above. But is also the “play” between things American and things British in Sierra Leone that this chapter has brought

⁸¹ Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) p. 237.

⁸² Larry Grubbs, *Secular Missionaries: Americans and African Development in the 1960s* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2010) p. 124.

⁸³ Interview, April 2011.

⁸⁴ Thomas Schaeper, *Cowboys into Gentleman: Rhodes Scholars, Oxford and the Creation of an American Elite* (Berghahn Book, 1998).

into view. The desire to serialize, and have “the U.K. first and U.S. second,” did not work for either Corry or Thompson. Thompson’s world in Sierra Leone was populated with British academics whose departure from Sierra Leone he witnessed, as well as British colleagues whom he depended on at Njala.⁸⁵ The desire to fix British and American relations sequentially was not mirrored in reality. This was in part due to how Sierra Leoneans at Fourah Bay and Njala disciplined the simultaneity of Anglo-American power. To discipline Anglo-American academics, and in the process manage postcolonial reform, the commandeering of a hyphen proved a useful tactic.

Individual educational experiences of Sierra Leonean students and professors also shaped understandings of how British and American policy diverged and overlapped. Students at Njala, for instance, compared their encounter with the land-grant university model with their experiences in the colonial-era with a secondary school system designed according to British colonial policy. While at school students dissected the origins and consequences of American and British education systems, and compared “the Durham breed” at Fourah Bay with the “roots of the land-grant American college.” Their conversations, one former student recalled, resulted in assessments of the differences and similarities, as well as limitations and possibilities, of British and American international policy.⁸⁶

While overseas, the principal of Njala pursued similar questions, and pressed British and American policy makers to explain their differences. In the United Kingdom, for example, Matturi carried with him a personal knowledge of the country and its local education institutions. As noted in the introduction to the dissertation, Matturi lived in east-central England from 1954

⁸⁵ Interview, Bill Thompson, April 2011.

⁸⁶ Interview, Edward Rhodes, Freetown, January 2012.

to 1957, where he studied and taught at the University of Hull. He returned to Sierra Leone to teach at Fourah Bay, eventually earning his doctorate in mycology from Hull in 1961. Afterwards, Matturi maintained connections with Hull for the remainder of his life.⁸⁷

In the 1960s, Matturi used his experience working in the British education system in England, Nigeria and Sierra Leone to manage Anglo-American-African relations. To his American interlocutors in the American embassy in London, Matturi defined British higher education in Sierra Leone as fundamentally indifferent to agricultural and rural development. When addressing an American audience on one occasion, he offered his observations of British conduct in Sierra Leone as evidence of their difference from Americans. British professors, he explained, “concern themselves more with theoretical knowledge than with practical experience.” Americans were inclined to do the inverse, and thus, according to Matturi, could help “counteract” British tendencies.⁸⁸ When conversing with British officials, a slightly different story proved useful. In meetings in London, Matturi expressed doubt over American capacity to successfully operate in Sierra Leone without British assistance. Maintaining British interest in Sierra Leone, while explaining British limitations to Americans, was a complex exercise. Yet as Ogechi Anyanwu has shown for Nigerian professors, Matturi was an active manager—rather than passive consumer—of Anglo-American difference.⁸⁹

British and American differences in Sierra Leone, however, could be ambivalent and occasionally upset Matturi. To Maurice Jones, the Sierra Leonean Minister of Natural Resources,

⁸⁷ In 1979 Matturi served as the Sierra Leone High Commissioner. He organized a delegation from Freetown to visit Hull, which resulted in the two cities becoming “sister-cities” and Hull City Council forming “the Freetown Society.” Matturi was also awarded numerous academic honors from Hull. See “twinning” section on the Hull City Council website, hullcc.gov.uk (accessed December 2013).

⁸⁸ Clarke M. George, March 12, 1965, Letter to Edwin Gales (Sierra Leone Desk Officer) with quotes from Matturi; University of Illinois Archives, Series Number 8/4/40, CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project File, 1950-1968, Box 16.

⁸⁹ Ogechi Anyanwu, *The Politics of Access: University Education and Nation-Building in Nigeria, 1948-2000* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011) pp. 4-12.

Matturi explained that his frustration with British and American relations gave him “headaches.” In particular, Matturi and Jones became weary of American efforts to exclude the British from the development of Njala. Jones sent Matturi to London to recruit British, African and Asian academics working in British institutions, hoping to draw the attention of AID officials to staffing problems at Njala. Matturi described the intentions in a postcard to Jones. “I gather that some people back home including our American Friends were growing apprehensive of my visit to Britain on a staff recruiting campaign. I am fully aware of the implicatory nature of this particular move and I have had my wits about me all along.”⁹⁰

Matturi had apparently studied his “American friends,” and was confident that his trip to Britain would succeed in conveying his doubt to Americans in Freetown. His doubt was grounded in observations of American operations in West Africa, particularly projects between American universities and West African universities. He explained this to Jones. “Having discussed the future of Njala both at Njala and in Washington, and having seen some of the complex problems facing Nsukka where Michigan State University are operating in a similar manner as the University of Illinois will be at Njala I simply have to be on my guard all the time with the interest of our Country always uppermost in my mind.”⁹¹ The Michigan State project at Nsukka had been troubled by conflicts between American and Nigerian staff, as well as the chaotic and rapid development of campus infrastructure.⁹² Matturi had similar concerns for Njala. He feared that Americans would not get along with Sierra Leonean colleagues, and that the pace of AID development plans was too fast. Additionally, he lost American staff to illness. John Hagler, an Illinois professor of Agricultural Mechanics, died at Njala in 1964. His wife,

⁹⁰ Matturi to Sierra Leone Minister of Natural Resources, Maurice Jones, 4 April 1964, from 33 Portland Place, London; PRO, FBC, Box 36, “Njala Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1964-2002.”

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Arthur A. Goldsmith, *Building Agricultural Institutions: Transferring the Land-Grant Model to India and Nigeria* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990) pp. 172-181.

who was involved in the design of home economics curriculum, returned to the U.S. with the body. Shortly after Hagler's death, another Illinois couple (both employed by Njala) returned to the U.S. for emergency medical treatment. Despite Matturi's requests, the University of Illinois and AID were slow to fill these vacancies.⁹³ Matturi's interest in drawing attention to these problems, as well as preventing those in Nigeria, legitimated something provocative. Protecting the Sierra Leonean interest in the development of Njala—the “uppermost” interest in Matturi's mind—meant influencing American interests through British involvement.

Matturi, however, had limited success in stirring up Anglo-American rivalry. Shortly after Matturi completed his tour, the AID director in Sierra Leone was asked to explain to his counterparts in Washington the status of British and American relations. Clarke George, writing on behalf of the American ambassador, explained that British and American relations proceeded in Sierra Leone with “a spirit of sensible conciliation.” U.S. State Department officials pointed out that Anglo-American tension threatened the development of Njala. George agreed, writing that “it would indeed be regrettable if understanding cannot be reached on the US-UK level.” He argued, however, that AID possessed overall control of the international situation at Njala. “The British,” he explained, “should be assured that contributions of financial or staff resources for Njala from them would be welcome.” The only condition if the British chose “to join us,” George concluded, was that any arrangement be “mutually acceptable to us as well as to the Government of Sierra Leone.”⁹⁴ Matturi may have been reassured that the Sierra Leone government had some say in the determination of what was “mutually acceptable” between Britain and America. However, his postcard to Jones suggests that he hoped for something more

⁹³ S. T. Matturi, Letter to Royden Dangerfield, December 8, 1964; University of Illinois Archives, CIC-AID Rural Development Research Project File, Box 16.

⁹⁴ Clarke M. George, “Njala University College,” Department of State Airgram, July 31, 1964; NARA, RG 59, Box 38, Sierra Leone Desk.

concrete. His recruitment trip to London was done out of the need to grow the supply of expatriates interested in working for Njala. He had also hoped to push AID and Illinois officials to speed up candidate selection. Matturi's trip did not result in any drastic shift in the importation of academics to Sierra Leone. One immediate outcome, however, was the affirmation delivered by Sierra Leone's American partners that they were open to the involvement of other international partners. Though AID officials in Freetown maintained a possessive posture toward Njala, Matturi tested the flexibility of American possessive claims by inviting British participation.

In early 1967 Sierra Leone parliament members tried to sort out British claims to Fourah Bay and American claims to Njala. In one of the last legislative acts before the military takeover of the country later that year, parliament members passed the University of Sierra Leone Act (USL). The act created a national university, and designated Fourah Bay and Njala as two constituent colleges within the university. Though a coup shut down the government and prevented the Act from coming into full effect until 1972, the merging of Fourah Bay and Njala had immediate consequences for British and American relations in Sierra Leone.⁹⁵

The USL act nullified the official connection between Durham University and Fourah Bay, and intensified government control over the relationship between the University of Illinois and Njala University College. In practice this meant that Fourah Bay administrators no longer had to recognize Durham as having any formal authority over curriculum, budgeting, staffing, and the awarding of degrees. After the USL act, Fourah Bay students received University of Sierra Leone degrees, and full authority of campus affairs was entrusted to the new University of Sierra Leone Council inside the Ministry of Education. For Njala, the act put in place legal

⁹⁵ Ajayi, et. al.(1996); 138.

provisions that strengthened state authority over American activity, as well as set new restrictions on American influence of agricultural and rural development policy.⁹⁶ Prior to the act Njala University College was considered to be a Ministry of Natural Resources agricultural education project. The USL Act, however, transferred Njala to the Ministry of Education. This centralized the administration of higher education within a ministry that had historically been more skeptical of the expansion of American influence in Sierra Leone.⁹⁷ Lastly, the act increased the size of the political body with authority over the two campuses. It created a USL Senate, composed of professors from both campuses, as well as a USL Council that was composed of elected representatives. Thus, in addition to effectively granting independence to Fourah Bay, and integrating Njala more deeply into a nationwide system, the act also made legal a new form of popular control over the nation's two universities.

When compared to the adjustments in everyday order and the division of resources examined above, the USL Act represents something slightly different. The Act wrote into law the government's capacity to determine and categorize Anglo-American relations in Sierra Leone. For example, while speaking on the floor of the parliament the Ministry of Education, S. Jusu Sheriff, rather favorably acknowledged the Anglo-American dimensions of what he referred to as "the Bill...to give academic autonomy to our highest institutions of learning."⁹⁸

After describing the logic of autonomy, Sheriff offered his view of what distinguished Sierra Leonean relations with the British from its relations with Americans. He began by acknowledging, "our debt to the two Universities without whose generous assistance we could

⁹⁶ University Status Committee, Minutes, April 3, 1965; PRO, FBC, Box 36, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources Files..

⁹⁷ Ernest Neal, *Hope for the Wretched: A Narrative Report of Technical Assistance Experience* (Washington: United States Agency for International Development, 1972) pp. 74-79.

⁹⁸ S. Jusu Sheriff, "Minister Introducing University Bill," 1967; PRO, FBC, Box 524, "Creation of the University of Sierra Leone."

not even have attempted to establish a University.” Continuing, he explained how the debt could be divided. “The relationship of Durham with Fourah Bay was one of affiliation, and therefore ever intimate as well as much longer than that of Illinois and Njala, which is one of assistance.”⁹⁹ The difference between what Sheriff terms affiliation and assistance is rather straightforward. Sierra Leonean connections to Britain were granted a duration and intimacy that American connections had yet to acquire. Illinois and the United States were rendered a partner in the project of postcolonial assistance, and any aspiration for Njala becoming a satellite, affiliated campus, was rhetorically preempted.

Sheriff was more than merely present at the moment when the USL Act authorized the nationalization of Sierra Leonean higher education. His comment is representative of a more popular interest in categorizing and managing relations between white academics in 1960s Sierra Leone. This is evident in that when the parliament granted the postcolonial state a new legal power Sheriff asserted a similar power. Sheriff marked the authorizing of new legislation with his own authority to control the mutual constitution of what was Anglo and what was American in Sierra Leone. The Act granted elected and appointed officials new authority over the determination of how the supposedly British oriented Fourah Bay would relate to the supposedly American oriented Njala. In doing so, it immediately opened the links between Fourah Bay and Njala to new forms of popular and local influence.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Sherriff’s comments on the search for autonomy and local control echo the African words and deeds examined throughout this chapter. Throughout the 1960s, interruptions of the

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ David Gregg Imig, “An Analysis of Social Factors Affecting Education in Sierra Leone, 1951-1966,” Dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (1969) pp. 263-274.

reproduction of whiteness occurred on a daily basis. Campaigns to level pay scales and residential privileges advanced African authority over expatriate labor. And the institutionalization of national control over Fourah Bay and Njala intervened into the Anglo-American axis in Sierra Leone. Altogether, Sierra Leoneans, from the cafeteria worker to the parliamentarian, consistently injected the urgency of Africanization into the material and interracial conditions of higher education.

CHAPTER 4

The Roots Under the University: Ginger Farming and the Model Village in the Njala Area

Though they resided outside the university, village residents were essential to configuring postcolonial higher education at Njala. Around the edges of Njala University are seven off-campus communities. Since the 1940s, and to this day, the villages of Makonde, Old Mosongo, Kania, Bonjeima, Bonganema, Gbesibu and Pelewahun have been the home of hundreds of families, farmers, students, laborers and traders. Though each village varies in size and status, with Makonde historically the largest and most influential, the seven villages have much in common. Over the years, residents of each village built homes and communal buildings from mud pulled from the banks and tributaries of a river that encompasses the Njala area. The Taia River also provides local residents water for farming, and muddy banks for planting. In their fields in the 1960s, farmers grew fruits, vegetables, tubers and rice for sustenance. What was not consumed in a particular village was either traded with another village, or sold for a small amount to cooks working in the kitchens of the university. The cooks, along with the other domestic and maintenance workers of the campus, lived in in one of the seven villages. By the mid-1960s, some villages had half of their adult population working for wages on the campus. As the size and workforce of the university increased during the rest of the decade, some villages saw more than half of their adult population building, maintaining, and cleaning a new rural university that without them would not exist.

The presence of village residents on campus was not accidental. As examined in Chapters 1 and 2, when the new university opened in in 1964, professors and administrators initiated a

wide range of projects to expand the size of the campus and expand relations with village residents. In addition to changing the local division of labor, these projects changed the organization of local agriculture. As the university expanded and pulled in more workers, a radius of non-commercial, subsistence food farming formed around the large-scale, intensive agriculture concentrated on the campus. Like many of the resources in these seven communities, the labor necessary for large-scale agriculture was absorbed into the farming and maintenance demands of the plantations on the university campus. Farmers in the seven villages did try to grow cash-crops like cocoa, coffee, rubber and ginger. With the exception of ginger, however, these experiments proved unprofitable as families did not have the necessary supply of farm labor. As the division of labor and organization of local agriculture changed, village residents began to see more university resources and university personnel arrive in their villages. Professors and students went to the villages more frequently to conduct surveys, introduce seeds, acquire pieces of land for experiments, and, overall, test the capacity of the university to sponsor rural development in the Njala area. Thus the liminal space between the university and the villages was both porous and constantly breached, mainly in order to forward the development interests of the university.

Village residents, however, frequently contested the developmental agendas of the university and frequently questioned any claims of university authority over the villages. In providing the essential labor and testing grounds for the university, village residents enabled the expansion of the university. But in critiquing its agendas and repurposing its resources, village residents also set limits upon, as well as bargained the conditions of that expansion.¹ Amidst the

¹ Charles Piot addresses the Kabre and Togolese politics of interpenetration and resignification in *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 1999). See for instance his remarks on an oppositional Kabre modernity on pages 172-178.

rapid influx of international personnel, rising availability of wage work, and an increase in the number of off-campus projects, village residents used these new resources to try to cope with and influence the expansion of the university. To do so, they drew from a gradient of possible strategies to contend their incorporation into the university. As Aidan Southall argues with respect to the politics of rural development, such schemes represent village residents “shaping, adapting and perhaps distorting intrusive forces to their local situations and their advantage.”²

Two such strategies are analyzed in this chapter. The first half of the chapter analyzes why farmers in several villages maintained an interest in ginger, an export crop of declining economic value. Then the chapter examines how residents of Makonde, one of the villages in the Njala area, first gained from then later refashioned the idea of a model village—an idea that pervaded international development planning of the time. While the preceding chapter illustrated how Sierra Leoneans disciplined white academics in order to Africanize their campuses, this chapter demonstrates how village residents coped with and repurposed international development agendas shaping the foundation of a new rural university in the process.

The first part of the chapter examines the relationship between the increase in demand for on-campus labor demands and the persistence of ginger farming despite pressure from the university to abandon it. Here I draw from a 1968 report authored by a Njala University student. This report documents the range of agricultural and political tensions between the student’s campus and the village of Bonjeima. The record of the student’s interactions with Bonjeima residents allows for a rare glimpse into the world of ginger farming in 1960s West Africa. On its surface ginger farming during the second expansion of the Njala campus appears to be out of

² Aidan Southall, “Small Urban Centers in Rural Development: What Else is Development Other Than Helping Your Own Home Town?” *African Studies Review*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1988; 3.

sync with global trends in the ginger trade. By the late 1960s, exports of ginger from West Africa dropped as importers in North America and Europe bought more and more from countries in Asia and the Caribbean. During this time Sierra Leone also lost most of its standing in the West African market of ginger to Nigeria, and the aggregate production and monetary value of Sierra Leonean ginger declined rapidly.³

The downward trend in the economic value of Sierra Leonean ginger in international markets did not dissuade farmers in the Njala area. In fact, ginger farming around the Njala area indicates that farming a crop that is losing overall economic value can have different values when used at the right time and in the right place. Around Njala University, the rhythms and comparatively minimal labor demands of ginger farming allowed farmers to earn wages on the campus without sacrificing the chance to profit from the global trade in ginger. When banks and investors saw value disappearing, farmers around Njala maintained a form of alternative agriculture value, and farmed ginger despite international and national pressures to abandon it.

In addition to countering international economic trends, the ginger farmers and wage earners of the Njala area contradict certain trends in the interpretation of postcolonial development. The success or failure of postcolonial institutions in rural West Africa is often attributed to whether or not the production of agricultural exports could be scaled upwards. Some argue that the development of a postcolonial economy hinged on the capacity of state and international agencies to pressure families into transitioning from growing smaller crops on

³ K.P. Prabhakaran Nair, *The Agronomy and Economy of Ginger and Turmeric: The Invaluable Medicinal Spice Crop* (Elsevier, 2013); pp. 228-290. Other scholars provide background on the volatile, but low value of ginger. See Gibril Cole, *The Krio of West Africa: Islam, Culture, Creolization and Colonialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013); 116-118. See also, A. Oyebade and T. Falola, "West Africa and the United States in Historical Perspective," from *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations*, Alusine Jalloh, Toyin Falola, eds. (University of Rochester Press, 2008).

smaller farms to growing export crops on bigger farms.⁴ The value of a particular crop, and the fate of postcolonial West African institutions, others have argued, lay in how that crop directly contributed to furthering the “expansion of the open economy.”⁵ New nations and postcolonial institutions were supposedly compelled to live and die by export booms and busts. In this approach development is equated with expansion, and export crops that do not happen to fit into this equation are largely ignored in the history of postcolonial West Africa.

Ginger farming in the villages around Njala allow for a reassessment of how export crops acquire economic value in relation to the work of building postcolonial institutions. As explained below, the economic value of the ginger root in Sierra Leone was not defined through a scaling up of its production. Ginger in the Njala area neither boomed nor busted. Rather, that value was catalyzed precisely by the proximity and inseparability of the university and the villages. Around the Njala area maintaining an export crop of declining economic value was timely, and provided a marginally profitable means to engage and withstand the demands of an expanding institution. As examined below, the ginger farmer that also earned wages working on the campus was not solely motivated by the pursuit of a dual income. In the case of ginger in the Njala area, social values conditioned the perception of economic value. As university expansion translated into more local residents becoming dependent on university wages, growing ginger allowed village residents an option for safeguarding their autonomy and maintaining a capacity to counter university agendas.

After examining the politics of ginger, this chapter turns to the ideas and aspirations that contributed to the rise of Makonde to the status of a well-known village in Sierra Leone. Its

⁴ Melissa Leach, *Rainforest Relations: Gender and Resource Use Among the Mende of Gola, Sierra Leone* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994) p. 198.

⁵ A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (Columbia University Press, 1973) p. 289.

popularity throughout contemporary Sierra Leone results from a perception that it is the village closest to Njala University. Some people from Makonde claim that their village is “the hometown” and “the root of the university.”⁶ University administrators often publicly dismiss these claims. Instead they insist that their university is based at, “a real campus...not located in a village.”⁷ Regardless of such dismissals, bus drivers, students, faculty and business people use Makonde to locate and characterize the university. When students and faculty board the Njala University bus, for example, the driver will ask them which Njala University campus they need to go to: the campus in the city of Freetown; the campus in the city of Bo; or the campus near Makonde.⁸ The name Makonde also has acquired forms of symbolic value. For example, one graduate of Njala University opened a restaurant on the popular Aberdeen beach on the west-side of Freetown. Guests at the bar named after the alma mater can sit in a variety of gazebos, each bearing the name of a popular site associated with Njala University. Currently Makonde is the only village from the Njala area to have been honored with a gazebo. At the bar Makonde is understood as a key landmark of the reimagined campus, and around the country as a village synonymous with a university.

Makonde’s postcolonial status has been significantly shaped by its residents’ engagements with the rural development agendas of Njala University. Beginning in the mid-1960s, faculty and university officials envisioned Makonde as a future model village for the Njala area, and possibly the country. At the time the model village was a ubiquitous concept deployed across the global terrain of international development. When put into practice the

⁶ Rev. Frederick H. Lavai, Interview, February 2012, Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁷ Dr. Abu Sesay (Vice-Chancellor, Njala University), interview aired on Sierra Leone Broadcasting Company, March 2012.

⁸ The driver needs to know because after the regional war of the 1990s Njala University expanded to three campuses. Previously it had one campus in the Njala area, but now has a College of Community Health in the city of Bo and a College of Communications Technology in central Freetown.

model village was intended to function as a place where experts tested and assessed supposedly modernizing interventions.⁹ Professors and students at Njala tried to transform the material and economic conditions in Makonde according to this idea of a model village. But as many Makonde residents can attest, university sponsored projects bolstered the social status of their village without improving day-to-day material conditions. Makonde became a model village mostly in name only, and in the process acquired a popular but uneasy association with the university.

The politics of that association, as well as Makonde residents' efforts to repurpose its somewhat hollow status, suggest that a model village is something other than an arena of expert-led trial and error. Model village projects drew a lot of attention to Makonde that today is used to bolster claims by residents that their popular social status should actually translate into what they see as overdue material improvements. They claim that the university should extend piped water, roads and electricity into Makonde, as promised in the 1960s.¹⁰ In these more contemporary claims, residents draw from their experiences and the experiences of their families in the 1960s, and do so in order to perpetuate a history of village-level efforts to determine the development of a rural university at Njala.

Ginger Farming on the Margins

In postcolonial West Africa, economists and exporters often defined the value of agricultural exports by tracking a specific crop's rise and fall in global markets. They measured changes in the volume of cash crops leaving a country, and then translated these figures into a story about the pace with which a crop's value was either expanding or contracting, booming or

⁹ Nicole Sackley, "The village as Cold War site: experts, development, and the history of rural reconstruction," *Journal of Global History*, vol. 6 (2011) pp. 481-504.

¹⁰ Mr. Freddie, Interview, Makonde, February 2013.

busting. Telling the story of agricultural exports in this manner works particularly well if there is a lot of a given commodity, and trade is conducted at a high volume. Bankers at the Bank of Sierra Leone, for instance, had an easier time defining the value of agricultural commodities if there was a lot of it leaving the country. In other words, Sierra Leone's most abundant agricultural export in the 1960s, raw palm products, was the crop that drew the most attention and was consistently placed at the center of narratives about Sierra Leone's postcolonial economy. If a crop is exported at a significantly lower volume, however, it was less easy to fit it into conventional narratives of rising and falling financial value. In fact, if trade was so low, bankers and researchers often abandoned attempts to narrate and analyze low volume trading.¹¹

This was the case with ginger in 1960s Sierra Leone. The production and exportation of ginger did not boom or bust, nor did it command any national or international investment. In 1964, ginger was Sierra Leone's least valuable agricultural export, and represented roughly one-percent of overall agricultural exports. In that year, the *Sierra Leone Trade Journal* estimated that the country exported 140 million pounds of agricultural commodities. Around 104 million pounds of palm kernels were shipped from Sierra Leone in 1964. At the bottom of the export rankings, total ginger volume was estimated at 1.4 million pounds.¹² Only three years later, in 1967, the volume of ginger exports sank so low that many bankers and traders stopped tracking of this particular rhizomatic root crop. That year the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board announced ginger had been removed from the list of crops it would monitor and support.¹³

¹¹ See Bank of Sierra Leone Research Department, "Agricultural Exports," *Economic Trends* (Freetown: Bank of Sierra Leone, 1967-1969, vols. 1 – 6).

¹² Ralph Gerald Saylor, *The Economic System of Sierra Leone* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1967) p. 38.

¹³ Bank of Sierra Leone Research Department, "Agricultural Exports," *Economic Trends* (Freetown: Bank of Sierra Leone, 1967) p. 10.

With the announcement that ginger was now below any level of national and international interest, the downward trend in Sierra Leone continued apace. The general decline was exacerbated by shifts in the global and regional geography of the ginger trade. In the mid-1960s the global regime of ginger production was rapidly shifting out of West Africa to Asia and the Caribbean. China and Australia expanded the exportation of ginger, and largely controlled the market in dried and fresh ginger throughout the Indian Ocean and the Pacific.¹⁴ Jamaican ginger, much like Indian ginger, was widely desired by producers of cosmetics, spices, medicines and beverages for its mild aroma and palatable flavor.¹⁵ In addition to pleasing the senses, Jamaican ginger also pleased the accountants. Cheaper logistics persuaded refiners of ginger in the United States and Canada to significantly increase their importation of Jamaican ginger.¹⁶

In addition to losing its share of the North American markets, Sierra Leone also lost most of the European market to its closest rival in the ginger trade. Compared to those in Sierra Leone, ginger traders in Nigeria were able to bring more ginger to the Atlantic market at a cheaper price in the 1960s. The number of farmers who grew ginger in Nigeria was immensely greater than those in Sierra Leone. As a result Nigeria not only produced four times as much ginger as Sierra Leone, but had a larger population of farmers reading and engaging trends in the world market.¹⁷ For example, ginger farmers in Nigeria had the time and available labor to carefully slice each ginger root before drying it under the sun. The cut was not meant to split the root in half, but rather partially peel and fillet it open to aid the drying process. This became known as the

¹⁴ D. Edwards, "The Market for dried, preserved and fresh ginger" (London: Tropical Products Institute, 1975) pp. 6-9.

¹⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Spices: Trends in the World Market," Commodity Bulletin Series, no. 34 (Rome, 1962) p. 77.

¹⁶ D. W. Rodriguez, "Ginger: A Short Economic History" Commodity Bulletin no. 4 (Kingston: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1971) p. 6.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 30.

“Nigerian cut” in the spice trade, and was deemed to provide a product superior to the unpeeled Sierra Leonean ginger.¹⁸

Farmers in Sierra Leone liked ginger precisely because they did not have to do the labor of peeling or splitting. But the minimal labor required for harvesting and drying ginger proved to be not enough of an advantage to maintain Sierra Leone’s share of the market. By the end of the 1960s Nigeria consolidated what was left of the West African ginger market. In response, the Sierra Leone government claimed that ginger no longer fit into the big picture of national development. And by 1974, the Central Planning Unit in the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning excluded ginger production from their five year national development plan.¹⁹

The disinterest of the postcolonial state and international institutions has made archival records of ginger farming difficult to come by. Between 1967 and 1974 state agencies and banks in Freetown essentially ceased monitoring and analyzing ginger. The lack of ginger farming records, along with the small scale of its production and exportation, partially accounts for why the historical geography of ginger farming in postcolonial West Africa is largely unstudied. The well-documented and large-scale export crops like oil-palm, cocoa and rubber take up the most space within the relative literature.²⁰ But volume does not necessarily determine value, and the minimal records of ginger farming that do exist suggest an export crop with definitive utility for those who grew it.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁹ Ministry of Development and Economic Planning Central Planning Unit, *National Development Plan: 1974/5 – 1978/79* (Freetown: Government Printing Department, 1974) pp. 125-158. See also, Saylor (1967) pp. 30-45.

²⁰ See Susan Martin, *Palm Oil and Protest: An Economic History of the Ngwa Region, Southeastern Nigeria, 1800-1980* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Polly Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana: A Study in Rural Capitalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2nd edition, 1997); Gareth Austin, “A. G. Hopkins, West Africa, and Economic History” in *Africa, Empire, and Globalization: Essays in Honor of A. G. Hopkins*, Toyin Falola, Emily Brownell, eds. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2011) pp. 51-80.

What is known is that despite ginger's marginal status in Sierra Leone and its absence from the national agenda, some Sierra Leonean farmers persisted and grew ginger for commercial purposes. Ginger was off the agenda of the Sierra Leonean Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and those teaching agriculture at Njala University actively discouraged ginger farming around the country. Yet during this time ginger was still grown, dried and brought to the market. Manufactures of perfume and condiments in Europe still got their desired oleoteresin and oleoresin stored beneath the thick skin of Sierra Leonean ginger. The amount they bought and processed had decreased, but ginger farmers in Sierra Leone were still able to make a small profit from their labors.²¹ It is difficult to know exactly how many farmers found ginger to be of some value in the late 1960s. One calculation suggests that anywhere from two to six thousand Sierra Leonean farmers grew and sold ginger during this time.²² Since there were approximately one million farmers in Sierra Leone at that time, those who farmed ginger were a significant minority in the country.

Like the handful of researchers who noticed ginger in the late 1960s, Sierra Leonean farmers might have found ginger itself to be a bit odd and difficult to categorize.²³ It was not a plantation crop, like oil-palm or cocoa. Nor was it a subsistence crop, like fruits, vegetables or cassava. Dried ginger had no local culinary value. To many the "importance" of ginger in Sierra

²¹ Rodriguez, "Ginger: A Short Economic History" (1971) p.10.

²² This estimate is based on Saylor's figures for ginger exports in 1964 (1.4 million pounds), and an Njala student's observation of the average weight of a bag of ginger (160 pounds) and the average quantity of total bags an Njala ginger farmer brought to the trader (2-3 bags). Assuming that ginger traders wanted a relatively uniform bag size throughout the country, then this makes possible the guess at the range in the number of ginger farmers in the country.

²³ R. T. Odell, J.C. Dijkerman, W. van Vuure, S. W. Melsted, A.H. Beavers, P.M. Sutton, L.T. Kurtz, and R. Miedema, "Characteristics, Classification & Adaptation of Soils in Selected Areas in Sierra Leone and West Africa," Bulletin 748, Agricultural Experiment Station, College of Agriculture, UIUC, 1974 / Bulletin 4, Njala University College, University of Sierra Leone; pp. 85-86.

Leone, as two Njala University researchers concluded in 1969, was “declining.”²⁴ But to others in the late 1960s, the economic importance and international value of ginger never reached zero. The market in ginger may have been falling, but opportunities to adapt the minimal value of ginger to circumstance remained.

Land, Labor and the Ginger Option in the Njala Area

The downward trend of Sierra Leonean ginger’s economic value in international markets was contradicted by pockets of farmers committed to its local strategic value. One cluster of the small population of ginger farmers lived around the Njala campus: the ginger farmers of Njala found that farming ginger offered valuable options within the contexts of international development and the expansion of state institutions. When the new Njala University College opened in 1964 it began to assert control over more land and labor in the area. The increase in population and new financial resources of the university enabled this expansion. More houses, more dorms and more kitchens pulled more local village residents into the domestic labor economy of the campus. The expansion of campus’ experimental farmland also required more local hands to clear trees, sow seeds and guard the crops at night. Within this context ginger appeared as a good option to help families navigate changes to the local division of land and labor. Compared to labor intensive crops that demanded a lot time to harvest and dry, the physical demands of ginger farming were significantly less. Farmers in the Njala area found that growing ginger gave them the time to work for wages on the university campus without sacrificing farming income.

²⁴ J.C. Dijkerman, H. Breteler, *Soil Survey of the Oil Palm Station and the Northwest Extension of the Njala University College Farm* (Njala: Njala University College, 1969) p. 4.

A dual income from ginger and campus wage work allowed village residents to participate in the expansion of the campus, but to also cope with the imposing qualities of that expansion. In its first year the size of the campus increased by nearly five square miles. The boundary of the campus was extended in nearly every direction after a range of large and small acquisitions. The largest acreage was acquired by the university not through transactions with village residents, but through transactions with Kori chiefdom authorities.²⁵ These authorities lived in the chiefdom's head town of Mano, seven miles from the campus, near the highway and railway that cut through the southern part of the country. Though these figureheads did not live in the immediate campus area, they had authority over the seven off-campus villages, and thus could offer land around the campus.²⁶

Village authorities made comparatively smaller transactions in land with the university. After the initial large-scale expansion of campus land, professors and their students negotiated access to plots of land in and around the seven off-campus villages. In the village of Bonjeima, according to one student of agriculture at Njala, the university "acquired a big portion of the land owned by the village at a cheap cost." A university professor wanted to build a model farm in Bonjeima to perform fertilizer demonstrations. In return, he agreed to pay rent to Bonjeima residents. Similar negotiations of cash for land went on in other villages. But like in Bonjeima,

²⁵ W. N. Thompson, "The University of Illinois and Njala University College—The First Two Years. Terminal Report of a Two-Year Assignment as Chief of Party and Adviser to the Principal, Njala University College, March 1, 1964" (Urbana, University of Illinois AID Projects, Contract AID/Afr-132, 1966) pp. 29-30. University of Illinois Archives, Record Series 24/2/7, Office of the Chancellor, International Programs, Njala University College Subject File, Box 3.

²⁶ Mrs. Mansaray, February 2012, Interview, Taiama, Sierra Leone.

many other nearby villages found that the university was slow to pay.²⁷ Cash, for most residents, had to be acquired a different way.

The wage labor required for the domestic work needed by nearly fifty faculty and administrators, cooking for over one-hundred students, and maintaining the oil palm and cocoa plantations on the campus, took up the time of those who might otherwise try to operate small cash crop farms on village land. In addition to the expansion of university land, one of the most consequential reforms brought by the AID-Sierra Leone partnership at Njala was the dramatic reduction in the amount of campus labor performed by students. From 1940 to 1963, students did the majority of the farming, maintenance, and construction work on campus. During that period Njala students cooked their own food, and built, and then maintained, everything from the farms to roads. When the amount of campus labor performed by students dropped, as it did upon the opening of the new university in 1964, farmers and workers throughout the Njala area filled the gaps.²⁸

Though some villages had a slightly larger population, and were therefore in a better position to risk commercial farming, the expansion of campus work after 1964 further strained an already tenuous local situation. In years prior, the labor needs on Njala had more loosely constrained the development of cash crop farming in land around the campus. During that period many residents of the off-campus villages had the time to farm crops like cocoa, palm kernels, and coffee.²⁹ These looser constraints tightened quickly with the sudden drop in student labor

²⁷ Njala University College Student, "1968 Report on Extension Projects in Bonjeima"; Njala University Reference Collection, Njala University Library, Sierra Leone; p. 5.

²⁸ Dr. Edward Rhodes, Interview, Freetown, January 2012. See also, Edward Rhodes, "A Sketch of the Development of Agricultural Education in Sierra Leone," in *One Hundred Years of University Education in Sierra Leone* (Freetown: University of Sierra Leone Press, 1977) pp. 70-73.

²⁹ "The Closing of Njala Teacher Training College, 1963-1967," Ministry of Development Box 514, Public Records Office, Freetown.

and the attendant spike in the demand for communal labor. As a result, the relation in the villages between non-commercial, subsistence food farming and commercial cash-crop farming became significantly polarized. After 1964, the labor needed in the villages for intensive commercial farming was used on the campus. The leftover labor was used to meet immediate sustenance needs.³⁰ By the late 1960s, a radius of subsistence farming thus developed around the large-scale, intensive cash-crop farming concentrated on the campus of the new university.

The expansion of the campus constrained agricultural production in local villages. The university employed the majority of men from nearby villages, men who typically did the larger-scale, and more intensive farming. A survey of Bonjeima, for example, estimated that its population was 222 people, with 100 women, 60 children, and 62 men. In this survey, the population of women was estimated to be 60 “able bodied women” and 40 “old women.” When they were not working in their homes, drying and preparing food, or caring for those needing care, the women and many of the children farmed vegetables and herbs in small garden plots. Along with the 46 “able bodied men,” many of the women also built and worked on larger rice and ginger farms. Eleven of these men, however, worked as tailors, carpenters, and weavers. The rest, the 35 “wage earners” noted in the survey, worked on the Njala campus.³¹ They worked as farm laborers on the campus’ experimental plantations, helped clear land for new campus projects, cooked for students and did the domestic work in the houses of faculty and administrators. “In the morning,” the author of the survey noted, “most of the youngmen come to work at Njala and go back [to Bonjeima] tired to do any hard work.”³² As a result, the available

³⁰ “1968 Report on Extension Project in Bonjeima,” p. 21.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

³² *Ibid*, 12.

agricultural labor in Bonjeima was used for growing food for local consumption, rather than growing crops for sale.

Ginger, however, proved to be somewhat of a temporary exception. Ginger was not grown on campus but was grown by farmers in nearby communities. The durable, slow-growing rhizome proved to be a transitional crop that helped off-campus community members cope with the rapid development of Njala. Farming ginger fit into the schedule of the women working in the village and the men working on the campus. In May, families planted pieces of ginger in semi-cleared fields. With little maintenance, the ginger would reproduce itself, expanding beneath the soil into a knotty bundle of roots, and eventually shooting up fragrant stalks. When it came to harvesting, some of the rhizomic ginger roots would be pulled from the soil. Other roots were left in the soil to provide seeds for the following season.

Compared to palm oil and cocoa processing ginger is relatively easier and can be done faster by fewer people. In Bonjeima, families who lost labor power to the campus, could still farm ginger. During harvest season, they shred and dried the ginger by hand in one to two weeks. This work yielded two or three bags (roughly 300 pounds) of ginger that sold for eight cents per pound. After carrying the bags up narrow and steep footpath to the campus, the farmers would locate an “itinerant ginger trader” known to roam the area. After he was located, the trader paid the farmer seven cents per pound. After the transaction, the trader set the ginger in motion to be shipped out of the port of Freetown or sent overland to one of the many other ports in the region.³³ The combination of wage work and ginger farming in the Njala area was thus one way that an export crop of declining national interest still entered the international market.

³³ *Ibid*, 5.

Farmers' interests in ginger stood in stark contrast to how the disinterest in ginger at the national level had been reiterated at Njala University. No ginger was grown on the campus' experimental farms or laboratories. The agricultural land of the university was instead dedicated to the more popular cash crops like palm oil and cocoa. Furthermore, the production and commerce of ginger in the Njala area was mostly independent from the university, and ginger farmers maintained trading networks without common forms of governmental assistance provided for growers of corps prioritized by state agencies.³⁴

The university was not interested in prioritizing the expansion of ginger production in the area. In fact, professors of agriculture and university administrators at Njala actively discouraged ginger farming. In 1968, for instance, students were sent out to nearby villages to help displace ginger farming by introducing improved and supposedly faster growing varieties of oil palm and cocoa. In order to do this they had to ask for land in the villages. Residents in some villages convened and debated the question of whether or not to participate in a transition away from ginger.³⁵

In two villages residents were ultimately not interested in making their village agriculture look like the agriculture on campus. When a Njala student met with the village councils in Bonjeima and Gbesibu, he found that they had no interest in offering him land. "People are dissatisfied, [they] have become very much apprehensive about any approach toward acquiring even a small portion of their land for any purpose."³⁶ They explained to the student that his university was always late in the payments for the land they already had been given. When no land was forthcoming, the student offered to help reorganize how the village harvested,

³⁴ Saylor, *The Economic System of Sierra Leone* (1967) pp. 112-116.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 19.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 5.

processed and sold their ginger. Village residents interpreted this as an unnecessary intervention, and told the student that he should not get involved in how they farmed ginger for he would only create extra work for their community. When the student asked residents of Bonjeima to name their “immediate needs” they asked for something to aid the movement of ginger. They asked the university to help widen and pave the steep path taken by workers, as well as those hauling harvest loads from Bonjeima up the hill to the campus.³⁷

Maintaining ginger farms in spite of university disapproval allowed farmers to try to negotiate access to developmental resources. Village level requests for ginger related assistance went unanswered, and students and professors persisted in advocating for the abandonment of ginger farming. Opposing university requests to abandon ginger allowed farmers to continue to acquire funds independently. However, these funds often were often invested back in the university, and used to access resources on the campus. In exchange for guarding the campus farms and buildings at night, the son of one ginger farmer recalled that his father earned a very small amount of cash. When Frederick Lavai’s father wasn’t working as one of the dozen in the Njala Farm Guards, his father maintained a small, but commercially viable ginger farm on the village land of Makonde. According to Lavai, dozens of other Makonde residents divided their labor between “full time odd jobs” on campus and ginger farming.³⁸

Lavai’s father combined the wages he earned from the university with the small profits made from ginger farming to pay for Lavai, his eldest son, to attend school on the Njala campus. While many of his classmates from Makonde had their fees paid through a government subsidy, Lavai relied on his father. Lavai explains that his father wanted him to become familiar with the

³⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

³⁸ Interview, Rev. Frederick H. Lavai, February 2012, Fourah Bay College, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

university, and to eventually apply for admission to the college. As a result, Lavai attended the Njala University College primary and secondary schools. His father died in the early 1970s, however. This occurred right at the time Lavai was to set finish secondary school and apply to the college. He could not afford to attend, and did not apply. Having lost his source of finances, Lavai was sent to live with an uncle employed by the Mt. Aureol Tobacco Company in Freetown. According to Lavai, his father's ability to work as a farm guard and ginger farmer eventually paid off. Lavai was one of the few Makonde residents in his generation to actually complete secondary school. After working a range of small and odd jobs in Freetown, Lavai used his secondary school certificate to apply for a government scholarship for post-secondary education.³⁹

For Lavai and others who grew up around Njala, ginger and the local campus were inseparable. When the amount of land and labor controlled by the university increased, the ability to grow and sell ginger proved to be a useful means to cope with the gravity pulling people into an expanding postcolonial institution. Families persisted in growing an export crop that was losing overall economic value and had been written off the national agenda. This type of oppositional agriculture—a form of farming against the tide of international markets and the imperatives of postcolonial economic expansion—made the expansion of the university possible. Villages managed to supply the labor needed on campus without fully sacrificing their ability to participate in the global trade of cash crops. Furthermore, in maintaining ginger farms, despite university requests they be abandoned, residents demonstrated their ability to parse and influence any interest that professors and students might have in intervening in village life.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

The Model Village Idea and the Development of Status

When it came to engaging the university, ginger farming was one strategy that villages in the Njala area had in common. Yet, beyond this common crop, some villages had additional opportunities to engage the university as it increased the overall amount of off-campus projects in the Njala area. One village in particular was targeted by a series of university sponsored projects in the late 1960s. American and Sierra Leonean officials working at Njala University envisioned that the village of Makonde could become the model village for the campus area. In theory, this meant that conditions in Makonde would be improved to an exemplary condition, and set new standards for village life in the area. Makonde was to be the village with the closest ties with the university, and as a result farming, housing, diets, health and education in Makonde would be the best. According to the idea of the model village, these improvements would then spread from the model village, and be emulated by those in other villages interested in following Makonde's example. Thus, farming ginger while working for campus wages was not the only option Makonde residents had to manage the relations with an expanding postcolonial institution.

Based on the idea of making Makonde a model village, residents were offered an exclusive role in representing the future of village life and acting out a popular theory of rural development. The theory was that national or international institutions had to concentrate a range of experimental projects within a particular rural community in order to demonstrate the promises of developmental interventions. The model village could bring to life a vision of things to come was, and provide "miniaturized futures for people to visit and emulate."⁴⁰ Ideally, in the model village, model farms would inspire higher yields and a new clinic would insure children were healthy enough to attend the model school. This idea was intensely attractive.

⁴⁰ Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) p. 161.

The model village idea had been used throughout twentieth-century Africa. During the colonial and postcolonial eras in Africa, the idea of a model village guided a wide array of projects, and was translated into everything from experiments in village-level taxation to state-sponsored relocations of families into new rural settlements.⁴¹ Communities in southern and east African endured some of the most dramatic experiments in village making. In order to integrate rural society into channels of state authority, “villagization” programs established new state administered villages.⁴² However, as we will see in Makonde, faith in the model village was often tested by inherent limitations or redefined by participants. Indeed, as we see in eastern and western Africa, the capacity of state officials to administer a bureaucracy of model villages was countered by a capacity within rural communities to coopt or evade the aspirations and methods of model village planners.⁴³

University relations with Makonde between 1965 and 1969 suggest an equally complex iteration of the model village in the Njala area. Evidence derived from university projects indicate how the idea of the model village guided attempts to transform Makonde into a new type of village, one that would gradually be incorporated into and co-evolve with the university. If these projects succeeded, Makonde would not only be incorporated into the university system at a higher level than other villages in the area, but additionally, a transformed Makonde would help display the university’s capacity to sponsor and study local rural development.

⁴¹ Sara Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993) p. 129. See also, Peter Duignan, L.H. Gamm, *The United States and Africa: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) p. 357.

⁴² James Giblin, *A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth-Century Tanzania* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005) p. 247.

⁴³ Giblin (2005) p. 267-8. See also Monica M. van Buesekom, *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office du Niger, 1920-1960* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002) p. 192.

This vision for Makonde reflected a common perspective held by many Njala University faculty and students. This perspective was one that saw the villages in the off-campus area as sites for university experiments. Robert Long, for example, the AID Specialist of Extension Education, claimed that a popular “outlook” amongst faculty and students was one that saw the area “immediately surrounding Njala University College as the laboratory for agricultural extension”⁴⁴ The off-campus laboratories offered faculty and students the opportunity to observe rural livelihoods, and then experiment with interventions into village-level agricultural practices. To this end the university sponsored the establishment of numerous “pilot villages” in the campus area.⁴⁵ A pilot village was used as an initial test-site for specific experiments. If the experiments worked in the pilot village, they would be reproduced in another village. Particular experiments in pilot villages ranged from irrigation management to the clearing of new rice fields. In these experiments residents of pilot village often received tools, lumber, seeds, and an occasional visit by the university’s tractor.⁴⁶ However, experimental development projects were not limited to agriculture. Any social factor of village life seen as inhibiting development could also be targeted. Writing in the Njala Agricultural Newsletter, faculty explained how “villages [were] also being used as laboratories to demonstrate to students how Community Development work operates.”⁴⁷ In these situations, professors and students observed village councils discuss the status of the village and set agendas for improvement. Professors and students would then interject and do any number of things: offer input or university resources; request access to village space in order to demonstrate improved methods; or, as was often the case, recruit village

⁴⁴ Robert. F. Long, “Terminal Report of Robert F. Long: Special in Extension Education, Njala University College (University of Sierra Leone), October 1, 1970 – August 31, 1972” (Urbana: University of Illinois Overseas Projects/Contract A.I.D./Afr-648, 1972); 7. Accessed January 2012, Njala University Reference Library.

⁴⁵ Njala Student, “1968 Report on Extension Project in Bonjeima,” 7.

⁴⁶ “Annual Research Reports, 1967-1968,” Office of the Research Coordinator (Njala University College/University of Sierra Leone, 1968) pp. 22-4. Accessed at Njala University Library.

⁴⁷ *Njala University Newsletter*, Faculty of Agriculture, (Njala University College: October 1969, vol. 1) p. 2. Accessed January 2012, Njala University Reference Library.

residents to campus so that they might demonstrate to students any domestic, commercial or agricultural skills they might possess.⁴⁸

For students and faculty living on the Njala campus in the late 1960s Makonde was expected to be the largest off-campus laboratory and the most important pilot village. Such aspirations, however, often proved difficult to realize. At Njala, the prospect of making Makonde into a model village, and thus providing a new venue for university sponsored rural development in the immediate campus area, encountered significant obstacles. Funding problems undercut efforts to bring electricity into Makonde. Campaigns to subsidize small-scale textile manufacturing and the construction of new education facilities stalled. Internationally sponsored experiments, particularly those designed to make life in Makonde distinctly better than in any other village, also failed to deliver model conditions. By the end of the 1960s, signs that Makonde was transformed into a model village were not manifest in its households or on its farms. The evidence of how the idea of the model village changed Makonde lay elsewhere. What changed for Makonde was not its material status, but rather its social status throughout the university and around the campus area.

Efforts to transform Makonde into a model village succeeded in altering what it meant to live there, but they did not necessarily change how one lived there. Compared to the other villages in the campus area, Makonde residents witnessed more university projects that, on average, were larger in scope and required more resources. These university projects delivered marginal material improvements and often provided Makonde residents with exclusive access to university resources. However, by the end of the 1960s, living and agricultural conditions in Makonde did not reflect the material aspirations encapsulated within the idea of the model

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 3-4.

village. Instead of living conditions distinctly and visibly superior to those in neighboring villages, Makonde residents found that they lived in the center of the university's interests in rural development. The social meaning of things brought into Makonde by university projects mattered more than their function. The experiments and flow of resources gave Makonde residents a new status in the Njala areas, a status that identified Makonde residents as living in in a village that was becoming indispensable to the university.

Status acquired through university projects did not accumulate automatically. Initially, changes to Makonde's status were enabled by its proximity to the campus. It was the most populated and most visible village in the campus area. With approximately 650 people living in Makonde, it was nearly three times the population of Bonjeima and the other villages in the campus area.⁴⁹ This comparatively larger population lived close to a busy part of the campus. The main roads of the campus intersected at a roundabout just north of Makonde. This juncture was a popular meeting and commercial point for anyone moving around the campus area. Students, faculty, workers and traders mingled at the juncture, exchanging stories for stories or currency for produce on a daily basis. As is true today, those meeting at or passing through this intersection on campus could see into Makonde. In the 1960s the northern boundary of Makonde nearly overlapped with this busy part of the campus, and students and faculty frequently encountered off-campus residents moving between the university and Makonde. For some Njala University students, the proximity of Makonde, as well encounters with its mobile inhabitants, was an important site in their education. A student who studied at Njala between 1964 and 1968 recalled how the short road connecting the university to Makonde was where "campus and

⁴⁹ Commission of Higher Education, Njala University College (University of Sierra Leone) *1964-1969: Summary Progress Report on the Work of the College and Recommendations for Future Development* (Freetown: Government of Sierra Leone, 1969) p. 10.

village merged.”⁵⁰ The blurry boundary between the university and Makonde was a place of both contrast and connection. It was where the difference between campus and village, as well as the inseparability of campus and village, was most prominently on display.

The proximity of Makonde also interested many who had never lived in rural West Africa before. The American faculty working and living at Njala marveled at how easily they could visit small rural communities from the campus. Makonde, in particular, was the most accessible window into village life. Bill Thompson, a University of Illinois professor, recalled how easily his colleagues could either stroll or drive into Makonde. According to Thompson, Makonde was “a village that was right contiguous to the main part of the campus, not far from it. You know, you had pretty typical village life very close by. And we wandered around that village, drove around that village, observing and talking and taking Polaroid pictures, giving them Polaroids, watching the little kids see the image of themselves in the hubcap of a car.”⁵¹ The houses and farms of Makonde, as well as any dialogue with its residents, thus provided a venue for Thompson and his colleagues to study and categorize rural conditions and village life in Sierra Leone. As Americans living at Njala claimed to know more and more about rural Sierra Leone, Makonde served as referential basis of that knowledge. Essentially, for American faculty living at Njala, Makonde provided a sense of what might be expected to be average or “typical” in the wider social patterns of rural Sierra Leone.

The interests of Thompson and his colleagues in Makonde represented a broader trend. American mid-century expansion into postcolonial nations, Nicole Sackley argues, relied heavily on “the rise of the village as a laboratory increasingly under the microscopes of specialized

⁵⁰ Dr. Edward Rhodes, Interview, January 2012, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

⁵¹ Bill Thompson, Interview, August 2011, Urbana, Illinois.

experts.”⁵² And indeed Makonde provided an accessible space for Americans to exercise their powers of observation. But the village laboratories were not just places to practice deductions, and a village “contiguous” with a campus was not only for close observation. If the new rural university wanted to lead local rural development, then the Polaroids and drives around Makonde had to aid the translation of observation into something more physical and experimental. The order of daily life in Makonde, in other words, was not just something to be looked at and studied. Its proximity to campus allowed the reordering of Makonde to be not just theorized, but also tested on numerous occasions.

One of the first university efforts to transform living conditions in Makonde occurred when the university tried to bring electricity into Makonde. In 1965, the university administration instructed campus workers in charge of the dual-generator electricity system on the campus to extend a power-line into Makonde. The proximity of Makonde to the central junction of the campus made their work a bit easier. In addition to serving as a junction for people and campus traffic, this junction was also a central node in the campus wide electric grid. The closeness of Makonde to the grid aided the extension of it into the village. Once the line was installed, three homes in Makonde had electrical light and radio in the evening and nighttime.⁵³

The new power-line connected Makonde to the infrastructure of the college campus in ways that other villages were not. With this new power-line, Makonde was the first village in the Njala area to have access to electricity. Though only three homes were electrified, residents in Makonde and the other six villages were nonetheless impressed. The extension of electricity to three homes in Makonde was seen by other households to be the start of a wider electrification of

⁵² Sackley, “The Village as Cold War Site” (2011) p. 482.

⁵³ Lavai, Interview, 2012.

the off-campus area. “The college collected electricity bills from those lucky enough to have light,” former Makonde resident Frederick Lavai recalled.⁵⁴ According to Lavai, only three families in Makonde could afford to buy electricity. No one else could afford to fund the extension of electricity.⁵⁵ With a line now in Makonde, electrical power might be branched out. However, an announcement from the college about how any expansion would be funded diminished hopes of electrification.

Despite the significant limits of electrification in Makonde, the fact that three homes received electricity still mattered. The power-lines symbolized the privileges extended to Makonde as a result of its proximity to the center of the campus. Additionally, the power lines indicated that Makonde residents might begin to consistently benefit from the expansion of the university in ways that other villages could not expect to.

The extension of electricity into Makonde was carried out at a time when households in each village in the campus area felt the pressures of the rapid development of the college. By early 1965, the majority of senior faculty and administrative positions had been filled. Shortly afterwards the college launched a blitz-like recruiting campaign to hire new junior faculty. In 1965, a wave of junior faculty arrived to the Njala campus.⁵⁶ Upon arrival they found that the university had a significant housing problem. All senior staff and administrators had homes, and lived in quarters either built in the colonial era or hastily assembled in 1964. The junior faculty housing, however, had yet to be completed. To accommodate the new faculty, college administrators arranged for them to live temporarily in the seven villages in the campus area. The

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Those three families in Mokunde paid their bills and kept their electricity through the 1960s. At some point in the mid-1970s, however, the power-line broke and was not repaired.

⁵⁶ Minutes of the Njala University College and Fourah Bay College, University College of Sierra Leone Status Committee, June 24, 1965, pp. 1-2; PRO, FBC, Box 36, Ministry of Agriculture Files.

families living in the houses selected by the university had to move out. The displaced families had to move in with other families in the campus area.

While it is unclear exactly how university administrators acquired access to these houses, it is clear that life in the villages was cramped after the arrival of the junior faculty. The 1965 Junior Staff Housing Survey noted that, “every house in all the surrounding villages is jam packed with people—kitchens are invariably utilized as bedrooms.”⁵⁷ The burden of hosting new faculty was spread throughout the households in each of the seven campus areas villages. Any discomfort and exacerbated living arrangements was supposedly necessary to accommodate the growth of the university. Crowding families together in order to make space temporarily available for faculty also brought new risks to the Njala area. “The rapid increase in population has created a serious health problem,” the survey authors warned. “Unless proper facilities are provided immediately some form of epidemic is not beyond the realms of probability.”⁵⁸ Stalled construction on campus put each village in a similar position. Each was required to offer space in order to support the university. As a result, sacrifices and risks had been more or less evenly distributed amongst the villages. Yet, the prioritization of Makonde meant that the possible benefits of supporting the growth of the university did not get as evenly distributed.

Electricity was extended into Makonde at a time when the residential infrastructure throughout the Njala area was strained. Particularly at night, the three electrified houses called attention to the benefits of living in the village closest to the campus. Some living in the area may not have been that impressed. After all, only three houses got a connection to the campus power sources. However, the symbolic value remained. Those in Makonde could participate in a

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p. 5.

process that saw their proximity to the campus translated into unprecedented living conditions in the Njala area. Furthermore, the emerging status of model village allowed Makonde residents more frequent interactions with university officials and students. They had more opportunities to discuss designs for development in the area. In some instance, they also had more opportunities to ask for things and to negotiate what is meant to live in the model village.

Some Makonde residents attempted to broker the terms of the model village's relation with the university. One example of involved a loom and a weaver's interest in shaping the outcome of his incorporation into a university project. The weaver, a man from Makonde, negotiated with college officials to have the college install a loom in his home. The loom was a considerable piece of technology. It was one of two "48 inch hand-foot power looms" loaned to the college by the Sierra Leone Ministry of Trade and Industry. The weaver proposed that the college keep one keep one loom on campus and that the other should be given to him as a "supplement to the family income." He was in a good position to make such requests, and would have been familiar to project coordinators on the campus. The weaver had been one of two Makonde residents taken by the college to Freetown to be trained to use the 48 inch looms. The months they spent in Freetown were part of the college's campaign to make Makonde a model village with model weavers. According to a college newsletter, training Makonde weavers in Freetown would, "promote small private industry and thereby bring employment and wages into the village."⁵⁹

The weaver apparently took the college's interest in Makonde very seriously. After returning from the training in Freetown, he participated in the production of 28 yards of cloth

⁵⁹ "Home Economics News," *Njala University College Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 1 (December 1965) p. 23; University of Illinois Archives, "Joseph Kastelic Papers," Box 1, "Miscellaneous."

using the new looms on campus. He was, however, not satisfied having to walk to the new looms on the campus. Instead, if the college was truly interested in helping Makonde, then one of the new looms should be provided to his family.⁶⁰

From his perspective, he thought it fair to ask the college to share its new textile manufacturing resources. The weaver's perspective of what was owed to him and his village was likely informed by an awareness that the college needed to frequently and publicly demonstrate its commitment to Makonde. His request for a loom was made during a moment when there were rising expectations for the material benefits of living in the model village.

If Makonde was to be the primary site for the college to test a capacity to sponsor rural development, then residents could expect looms and other resources to come their way. For example, at the same time that the college was sending weavers to Freetown, they also announced plans to build the "Mokonde Village Center." Though it was never actually built, this proposed centre was promised to introduce new resources and strengthen ties between Makonde and the campus. According to the college's proposal, the centre would "contain a large classroom space for instruction, a kitchen for cooking demonstration, and storage space."⁶¹ The college estimated that building the centre would take a full year. At some point during that year, however, the plans fell apart. In this context, it was logical to expect that if the college was willing to erect a new building in Makonde then they might be convinced to give a weaver a new loom.

The issue of the proposed Village Centre—though it was never built—nonetheless reveals some features of how Makonde residents positioned themselves in negotiations with the

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

college. When attempting to secure access to resources housed on the campus, residents often reaffirmed the notion that they were willing partners in the drive to make Makonde a model village. Initially, Makonde residents had been enthusiastic about the proposed centre. They allegedly demonstrated a strong “willingness to co-operate.” Writing in the College Newsletter, a Njala professor noted that “[a] piece of land has been provided by the village community and the villagers are rallying round to provide labour and locally available materials.”⁶² The new centre was not to be built by students. The college had no intention of wheeling into Makonde its cement mixer. Rather, Makonde residents would dry mud bricks, and erect the new building “under the supervision of College technicians.” Aware that the college wanted to sponsor construction, and eventually instruction in Makonde, residents responded with a guarantee that they could provide the required land, labor and materials.

However, their “rallying” and “willingness” was not just mere excitement. Expressions of interest in college sponsored projects not only maintained the developing status of Makonde as a model village. Gradually residents also succeeded in securing the idea that Makonde was a necessary component to any developmental initiative in the Njala area. Three years after the opening of the college at Njala, more and more signs pointed to how the college’s off-campus initiatives depended on the involvement of Makonde. This was true in the designing of the college’s off-campus oriented curriculum, and in the distribution of developmental resources acquired to support the expansion of the college. It became a reflex of the college to defer to Makonde first when implementing new off-campus projects. Additionally, as more researchers arrived to study rural life in Sierra Leone, Makonde functioned as a necessary transit point for

⁶² *Ibid.*

these researchers. For them, and the college officials facilitating their travels, Makonde was convenient. The researchers arrived and had a test-site within reach.

Directing researchers to conduct their work in Makonde very often meant that new resources were introduced to Makonde to test their success. Scientific interests in having a control group meant that the same resources were withheld from other villages in the Njala area. In these situations, Makonde positioned against other villages in order to test a hypothesis. For example, the prospects for a new nutrition supplements or medicine in the Njala area were measured by comparing their in Makonde to their absence in another village. If researchers found the trial in Makonde to be successful, then they might recommend the program be scaled up to include all villages in the campus area. If the trial was not successful, or ran out of funding or support (as was often the case), then Makonde was the only village to have access to the food or medicine used in an experiment. In these cases, it was better to live in the model village than in the control village. But whether or not a trial succeeded, the use of Makonde as the primary site for experiments in rural development sustained its evolving status in the campus area.

As a result of its rising status, Makonde became the base and baseline for the production of knowledge about village life in the campus area. In mid-1967, a researcher from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations came to Njala from Ghana. The researcher oversaw a seven-month nutrition project in Makonde. The focus of the project was to test whether a protein concentrate could increase improve the health and increase the body mass of children ages one to five. The protein concentrate (made from powdered fish) was distributed in Makonde while it was withheld from Old Mosongo. Children in Makonde were given the protein concentrate through a lunch served at a specially built shelter near the campus border with Makonde. After lunch, the children were weighed. Children in Old Mosongo, what the

researcher referred to as “the control village,” were not provide any lunch or supplements. Rather, numerous children were just weighed over the course of the seven month experiment.⁶³

At the start of the seven month period participation in Makonde was high. Seventy-one children were registered by their parents for the feeding program. The registered children were allowed to receive the lunch containing the protein concentrate five times per week. Additionally, those who escorted the children to lunch shelter could also receive instruction about child nutrition and advice on how to increase protein intake throughout the family. Despite the initial success, the project encountered numerous obstacles. Participation in Makonde dropped down to a third of those who originally had registered. It also proved challenging to coordinate the paperwork necessary to track changes in weight in both Makonde and Old Mosongo during the seven month period. Ultimately, the FAO researchers concluded that the fish protein concentrate had a minimal impact on improving the weight of children in Makonde. At the end of the experiment, they were nearly the same weight as the children of Old Mosongo.⁶⁴

Makonde and Old Mosongo remained more alike than researchers had anticipated. Their experimental intervention—“a feeding program to ascertain the effect of high quality protein”—caused no significant changes in the relation between villages.⁶⁵ The protein concentrate failed to produce a distinction between Makonde and Old Mosongo, and the only observable “effect” was that things remained largely the same.

⁶³ “Annual Research Reports, 1967-1968,” Office of the Research Coordinator (Njala University College/University of Sierra Leone, 1968) p. 28. Accessed at Njala University Library.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*; 29-30.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*; 28.

When the FAO project coordinators tried to explain why the protein concentrate made no difference, they suggested possible ways that the project did not align with the schedule and interests of Makonde residents. “Children were frequently absent because they had to go to the farm, they were sent to another village to live for a time, and/or some children were carelessly supervised. Many of the parents referred to the food as medicine and request it when a child was sick. However, children were required to eat the [fish protein concentrate] dish at the shelter.”⁶⁶ A variety of social factors had limited attempts to draw Makonde residents into experiments, and to generate distinctions between Makonde and the other six villages. A protein rich FAO lunch was not a sufficient instrument to alter what Mellissa Leach defines as village-level interests in maintaining “residential fluidity.”⁶⁷ The feeding program could not change the patterns of movement between villages and to their farms. Children moved with their families, and either slept, played or ate while their relatives farmed. Additionally, the “residential flexibility” of Makonde residents also frustrated project coordinators. Sometimes children from Makonde moved between villages to live with relatives and family friends. It was possible that a child from Makonde stayed in “the control village” of Old Mosongo at some point during the FAO project. The reverse was equally possible. A child from the other six villages may have lived with a relative in Makonde at some point during the FAO project. While living in Makonde meant a free lunch, to an extent this (along with other new resources brought into Makonde) was the only distinction between Makonde and the other six villages that researchers could guarantee.

It was not only the social dynamics of inter-village relations that lay beyond the control of the university. In proposals and experiments between the mid-1960s and the early-1970s, the university was unable to facilitate the transformation of living conditions in Makonde. The

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Leach, *Rainforest Relations* (1994) p. 55.

proposed Village Centre was not built. Feeding programs did not make the children in Makonde any healthier or heavier than their peers in another village. And a weaver had to wait patiently for those in the university to decide whether or not it could provide a new loom. Instead of remaking Makonde into a place of model material conditions, what the university proved capable of doing was continually reinforcing the idea that Makonde belonged atop the local social order. What this meant was that Makonde's status was not easily seen, but it was widely known. Village residents throughout the Njala area likely knew that Makonde was the head village, and they knew this even though it was not something that could be easily seen or touched.

From Model Village to Intermediary Village

Around the campus of Njala University, village residents live with the material and intangible byproducts of university sponsored experiments. In Makonde, residents have inherited a contradictory social status generated through the scattered efforts to make a model village in the Njala area. For them, the model village was something that worked in name, but not in practice. Initially, interests in transforming Makonde stemmed from a combination of material factors. The advantages of proximity, visibility and a larger population provided the material basis for university officials and researchers to imagine remodeling Makonde in the image of an idealized village. This remodeling proved difficult, however, and as a result projects fizzled and improvements underwhelmed. Nonetheless, the projects had consequences. The flawed attempts to transform Makonde still granted the village a position atop the local order of village life, and granted to residents a set of tenuous advantages in relation to other villages.

Emmanuel Fannah grew up in Makonde as its model village derived status was taking shape. He recently retired after teaching secondary school level classes in Makonde and on the

Njala campus for thirty years. The history and development of Makonde village, Fannah argues, is inconsistent. He defines Makonde by contrasting its well-known-ness with its unfulfilled model-ness. “We are *the* pilot village in the area. Makonde is *the* village where other villages can come for help. This is where we can come together and do community work...But we are not happy with the university. We still have no electricity, running water, not even a real road.”⁶⁸ For Fannah, and his generation, Makonde’s history has been made through an incongruent clash of high social status with low material status. Makonde is a village that acquired local stature without acquiring the landmarks of a “happy” developmental relation with the university next door.

In the wake of the flawed implementation of model village programs, the children fed by the FAO generated new ideas about what it means to live in Makonde, and new agendas to guide Makonde’s relations with other villages. For Fannah and his generation, Makonde could never just be a test site for rural development and university extension projects in the past. They still hope for such developments, and foresee a time when Makonde might actually share electricity, running water and a road with the campus. As Fannah explains, “We want a lot of facilities. That is why we gave them [the college] land...There is infrastructure that the college is supposed to give us.”⁶⁹ But no one has simply waited for infrastructure. Over the past decades, Makonde families have tried to repurpose Makonde’s status in the Njala area in order to have a larger influence over local politics and the distribution of resources based at Njala University.

Beginning in the early 1970s, attention in Makonde has been focused on moving away from what many see as the idle role of playing model. Instead, they have opted to play the role of

⁶⁸ Emmanuel Fannah, Interview, Makonde, February 2013. Emphasis is original. Despite Fannah’s playful objection to any modification of his remarks, the interview benefitted from the interjections of Fannah’s friends, Joe Tahun and Abdul Haddi.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

intermediary, to be the conduit between the university and the rest of the villages in the campus area. As an intermediary village, Makonde residents maintained their status as the head village in the area, and used this status to try and pull university resources into to Makonde. If they succeeded, then residents of other villages could try to access those resources through Makonde. This marked a shift away from the idea that Makonde might serve as a space to model improved living conditions, and then influence other villages through display. Instead, Makonde was used as a place for residents of other villages to voice their interests in how any university resources made available to Makonde ought to be distributed, and how inter-villages relations might be coordinated to influence the agendas of the university. This remaking of Makonde as the intermediary village provides the historical basis of Fannah's definition of Makonde. For him Makonde is the presumed destination for both university resources and residents of other villages seeking assistance. To ensure that Makonde is "where other villages can come for help," families in Makonde had to step into the role of broker between the university and the villages in the area.

Through a range of minor and major political acts Makonde families have tried to translate the status of the supposed model village into leverage over the university. Examples of the repurposing of Makonde's status as a model village by its residents vary from issues of school enrollment to claims over land. Members of Fannah's generation recall that when a young man or woman wanted to enroll in the secondary school operated by the university they had to be from Makonde. This was not a process policed by Njala University staff however, but rather by the head families who loosely governed Makonde. If a school applicant was not from Makonde,

they had to either have a relative living in Makonde or receive permission from a head family to seek enrollment in the university's secondary school.⁷⁰

Filtering access to secondary schools, at least on the surface, may not appear to be the revenge of the model village. However, such acts helped redefine Makonde as the place where inter-village relations could be mediated successfully. A starker example of this redefinition began around 1975 and continues to the present day. During this time families in Makonde have organized a campaign to collect rent, or some other form of compensation, from the university. Their main claim is that the university has not kept promises it made when university representatives bargained with villages to acquire land needed to facilitate the expansion of the campus. The expansion, as noted above, relied on a haphazard acquisition of pieces of land in each of the villages in the campus area. Large pieces of land were granted upon the opening of the university in 1964. In subsequent years professors and students negotiated for smaller pieces of land in order to conduct agricultural experiments in the villages. Over time families in each village have tried to establish a record of these agreements, and also determine whether or not the university has failed to distribute agreed upon compensations. It is likely that these efforts are complicated by the range of agreements that the university made with nearby villages. Sometimes the university gave seeds and tools for farmland. Other times, particularly when the university wanted to expand its large oil palm and cocoa plantations, the university agreed to pay a small annual rent to the head families in villages.⁷¹

Despite any confusion or difficulty, over the past decades verbal accounts and documentation of land agreements with the university have been archived in Makonde.⁷² This

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Mr. Freddie, Interview, February 2013, Makonde, Sierra Leone.

oral and written evidence was brought to Makonde because residents from other villages expected those in Makonde to be able to organize and then deliver a formal complaint to the university. In this case, the “help” they wanted from Makonde was that it use its standing with the university to lobby on behalf the villages. If representatives succeeded as mediators, then they could pressure the university to settle accounts and relieve tensions between the villages and the campus. Eventually a formal complaint was drafted in Makonde, and submitted to the university on behalf of all the villages in the Njala area. In addition to submitting their grievances, a “Letter of Revoke” was turned in to the university administration. This second letter warned that unless they agreed to pay all outstanding debts, the villages could revoke all claims that the university had to village land. They backed this up with an additional threat. If the university failed to respond to the request from Makonde, village residents would “encroach on campus land” and “give it to village families to build homes on.”⁷³

Through the “Letter of Revoke,” families in Makonde tried to demonstrate to those in other villages that Makonde was willing to risk its particular status in order to represent the general interest of the off-campus population. In addition to the letter, they also lobbied the district branch of the national government. They petitioned the secretary of the Moyamba district to intervene on behalf of all the villages who share a border with Njala University. After multiple visits to the Moyamba district headquarters, a state employed surveyor was sent to Makonde to meet with those who wrote the initial letter. The surveyor spent a brief time in Makonde, and then was led on a tour of the Njala area by a spokesperson from Makonde. Allegedly, the surveyor agreed to return to perform an extensive survey of the Njala area. The survey would help determine the present boundary between the university’s campus and the villages’ land.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

According to Makonde residents, the surveyor's map would then be used to establish how the borders between the campus and the villages have changed over time. If the surveyor's map is found to support the evidence gathered in Makonde, the head families of Makonde could then strengthen their position as the intermediaries of any resolution. To this date, however, the survey has yet to be conducted. If it is not done soon, a handful of Makonde residents have vowed to go see the president, and further publicize their grievances against the university.⁷⁴

Building a case against the university over land claims dramatizes the emergence of Makonde's role as the intermediate village at the center of the politics and development of the Njala area. It is now the governmental hub between the population living on the campus and those living around it. This new role, however, was made out of an older one.

Beginning in 1965, just one year after the new university opened at Njala, Makonde was forecast as the model village of the seven in the campus area. In subsequent years, efforts to electrify, stimulate, reconstruct and nourish Makonde established its reputation as the foremost university partner and as the most important venue for university sponsored experiments in rural development. Ultimately, these efforts changed what it meant to live Makonde, granting its residents a social status not enjoyed by other villages. But while the meaning of Makonde within the Njala area changed, the day to day conditions targeted by developmentalist interventions largely did not. As the new university approached the end of its first decade, the incongruence between social and material status spurred Makonde residents to reevaluate their relationship with the university and with other villages in the area. What began in the early 1970s, and continues today, is an effort by Makonde residents to cautiously translate their unfulfilling social status into a more consequential form of leverage within the political processes that have

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

historically bound the campus and village together. Though Makonde residents are not willing to fully sacrifice the status afforded to them through experiments in modeling village life, they have shown they are willing to risk some portion of that status in order to expand it into new forms of recourse with all of their neighbors.

An Architect Walks into a Village

In 1976, the administration of Njala University recruited a landscape architect to visit the campus. They invited Edward Pryce, an African-American professor of landscape architecture at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Pryce was asked to design a new master plan for the Njala campus area. In addition to using Pryce's plan to budget a ten year plan for future development, university administrators also hoped Pryce's plan would help them resolve problems created by the previous groups of Americans who had lived at Njala.⁷⁵ Their invitation to Pryce came three years after the termination of the contract with USAID and the University of Illinois. While the USAID-Illinois team had facilitated a significant outward expansion of the campus, Njala administrators felt that the American group had not succeeded in facilitating an internal coherence to the vastly expanded campus. Americans in the 1960s had mainly focused on overhauling the residential infrastructure, and acquiring more farmland at the edges of the campus in order to expand the scale of agricultural experimentation. Despite this growth, when the AID-Illinois team left Sierra Leone, many at Njala University felt that their campus was significantly underdeveloped.

Pryce's experience in rural Alabama, as well as time spent at Tuskegee's partner university in Liberia, made him an attractive candidate to aid the development of Njala. Pryce

⁷⁵ Kirk Muckle, "Edward Pryce's Democratic Plan," *Landscape Architecture* (July/August 1984) p. 78.

lived at Njala for three months through a fellowship from the Phelps-Stokes Foundation. During that time he walked all over the area. He visited the campus' dorms, labs, plantations, and he walked through some of the seven villages just beyond the border of the campus. While in the villages he asked residents for their thoughts about the university. He eventually incorporated some of their ideas for improved commercial relations between the villages and the university into his final proposal. In addition to proposing more faculty housing, more roads, a new water treatment plan, street lamps, and a sewer system (just a few of his many proposals), Pryce urged the university to better “foster the life of the village and college community.” To do this he envisioned a special area of the campus dedicated to fostering social and commercial ties between campus and village residents.⁷⁶

Pryce was mostly enthusiastic about the future of the Njala area. After his three months there he drew what some referred to as “an ecologically sound, functional model.” Despite his excitement for how this model looked on paper, Pryce was less enthusiastic about the relations between the campus and the nearby villages. He was troubled by what he saw and heard in the villages. He concluded that if university officials wanted to faithfully build his model campus, then they had to dramatically reform relations with the villages. To this end, his vision for a remodeled Njala was inspired by “a concept that converts the physical structure of the British colonial system—exemplified by the separation of the experiment station from the Makonde Village—into a more democratic arrangement of town and government.”⁷⁷

To Pryce, in the mid-1970s, it appeared that the structural and social hazards of the “British colonial system” had stubbornly rooted themselves into the Njala area. Buildings, roads,

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p. 80.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Muckle, p. 80.

and plantations from the colonial-era remained intact and functional. The borders drawn in that era also appeared intact. Pryce observed this by contrasting campus space with and its closest village. Makonde, elevated by Pryce to the full title of “the Makonde Village,” helped demarcate the end of the campus and the beginning of what lay beyond it. In surveying the Njala area, Pryce also bore witness to the persistence of colonial systems, and noted the specific manner in which the physical and social structures of that system had become intertwined at Njala. Looking around Njala he saw the colonial-era still standing. The footprint of British colonialism had withstood more than a decade of postcolonial international development. Similarly, programs to integrate the campus and the surrounding villages appeared to have had a minimal impact. Despite their proximity and shared boundary, the campus and the villages remained apart and at odds with each other. To uproot the source of friction between the campus and the villages Pryce proposed to remodel the area and introduce a “more democratic arrangement.”

Conclusion

What Pryce saw at Njala is as important as what he may have been unable to see. Since the opening of Njala University began in 1964, residents of surrounding villages had coped with and influenced the development and expansion of the university. Farming ginger as a means to a dual income, and the gradual repurposing the model village are just two example of how village residents intervened into the history of the Njala area. Their methods may not have amounted to the establishment of formal democratic relations between campus and village. Supplanting one system for another is neither quick nor easy. But their actions demonstrate a capacity within each of the villages to engage and refashion the contradictions of postcolonial rural economies and postcolonial rural universities.

CONCLUSION

Education and Development between Independence and War, 1961-1995

In the chapters above I have outlined the daily political conditions of postcolonial higher education in Sierra Leone. Set in the early 1960s, Chapter 1 underscores the contingencies of British departure from a former colony. This chapter provides the necessary context to understand what was closed down and displaced at Njala in order to make room for a more aggressive form of internationally sponsored rural development. Following chronologically from Chapter 1, the second chapter uses Joseph Kastelic's time at Njala from 1964 to 1966 to examine the relationship between the African postcolonial university and the American land-grant university. Against the backdrop of expanding inter-university relations, this chapter demonstrates that agrinauts like Kastelic were inter-imperial figures who performed ideological and agricultural work that was inseparable from the domestic and intellectual conditions of postcolonial rural development. As I argue in the introduction and carry through with in Chapter 2, Kastelic's work at Njala and his relations with Sierra Leoneans consistently relied upon inter-imperial references, and these British referents framed much of the American project at Njala and provided an important baseline for American sponsored expansion of the campus. While Chapter 1 argues that agrinauts and the "ugly Americans" from Illinois envisioned a form of rapid real estate development for the campus at Njala, by the end of Chapter 2 the stakes of this residential and administrative vision are fully apparent.¹ Yet, while showing that "ugly Americans" wanted pretty houses and privileged positions, Chapter 2 also provides a basis for appreciating the urgency behind efforts to curtail American and British excess in Sierra Leone.

¹ William Lederer, Euguene Burdick, *The Ugly American* (W.W. Norton, 1965). First published in 1958.

As current Sierra Leonean professors at Njala and Fourah Bay argue, the haste and scale of American and British development projects in the 1960s contributed to numerous contemporary educational dilemmas. Former principals and government officials in Sierra Leone argue that the Americans inflated a huge and unsustainable budget for Njala, built themselves nice homes, and then left. Funding the oversized budget and high-maintenance households at Njala in the 1970s and 1980s proved exceedingly difficult, and generated financial and material dampers on efforts to continue to Africanize and localize the curriculum and policies of Njala University. Furthermore, a contemporary antagonism between Fourah Bay College and Njala University partly originated in the political and developmental contexts of 1960s. Today, professors at Fourah Bay argue that British preferences for classical education unnecessarily turned rural citizens in Sierra Leone away from seeking education in the city of Freetown. Many today regret that had it not been for British objections to studying farming and home economics at a tertiary level, there could have been a Fourah Bay College of Agriculture, or Fourah Bay College satellite campuses in the rural interior of the country. The same Sierra Leonean professors also point out that instead of one unified university with multiple campuses, today two separate universities unnecessarily compete for scarce government funding and face a national government that has to push Fourah Bay and Njala toward external support from the U.S., U.K. and a growing list of new international partners.²

But today, Sierra Leonean educators and campus workers face these contemporary issues in a manner similar to how their predecessors faced the problems of the 1960s and early 1970s. Chapter 3 and 4 show how Sierra Leoneans navigated and altered the expanding international projects of the immediate postcolonial era. In Chapter 3, I show how everyone from the cafeteria

² Anonymous interviews, Freetown, 2011-2013.

worker to the parliamentarian engaged in a flexible critique of Anglo-American privileges and successfully intervened into Anglo-American relations in order to generate new forms of national and popular control of higher education. Similar issues of autonomy are raised in Chapter 4, where I show how village residents inscribed their own agendas over those of the new rural university, and by doing so tempered and refashioned international projects. The teachers and farmers that populate Chapters 3 and 4, generated ideas and agendas that continue to shape the trajectory of higher education in Sierra Leone. And the daily work examined in Chapters 3 and 4, I argue, illustrates a vital legacy that contemporary efforts draw from in order to overcome scarce funding and strained campus infrastructure in the city and the countryside of postwar and hopefully post-Ebola Sierra Leone.

Altogether, the chapters above raise new questions about periodizing decolonization and Africanization in Sierra Leone and West Africa. Chapter 1 starts off with incipient agendas for Africanization in the wake of British departure, and chapter 4 ends on a note of emerging forms of local control in the wake of American departure. So, in a sense, the story I tell above starts in 1961, with Pa Taylor and his colleagues initiating something like a takeover of Njala. And by 1974, where the Chapter 4 ends, the possibility of local control remains open as village residents tangle with Njala faculty after they have both endured a decade of American involvement. The postcolonial drive to go beyond British control, then beyond American control is seemingly fulfilled in the last chapter where Njala is controlled by a hybrid form of state and village authority. And with chapter 2 and 3 in the middle of this progression, the hard work of recruiting American resources to transform British colonial institutions is effectively grounded in the local layers of colonization and Africanization in Sierra Leone. Yet, I have also sought to provide some degree of nuance and insight into the nature of this three-way Anglo-American-African

progression and the messiness of Africanization. As I argue in the introduction, any two-way international relation fostered by Sierra Leoneans always seemed to reference another international axis. These triangular affairs proved useful but also quite hazardous.

The hazard ridden struggle for local control of higher education took a dramatic turn three decades after independence. Having displaced the British and endured the Americans, Njala campus residents and the residents of nearby villages watched in horror as the rural university became a battle zone in the regional war of the 1990s. During the decade long war between West African state forces, the Rebel United Front (RUF), and militarized hunting societies known as *komajors*, fifteen separate incursions took place on the Njala campus and in the surrounding villages. The scope and intensity of these “battles of Njala” varied significantly.³ On a few occasions, professors and families witnessed small bands of armed men roam the campus searching for food and setting small cooking fires. On other days, entire buildings, rooms of records, and laboratory equipment were raided and set ablaze. Some witnesses claim they recognized former Njala University students in the RUF. It is rumored that the students had come to campus to burn their transcripts, destroy any records of financial debt to Njala, and confront former professors.⁴

These personalized and armed interventions into the material history of educational sites in Sierra Leone were not random. According to anthropologist Catherine Bolten, the leaders of the RUF championed the symbolism of capturing Njala out of a need to “hold the imagination and loyalty of its young cadres.” If young men could take control of “one of the major attractions for students from rural areas,” then they would further the RUF agenda of occupying

³ Catherine Bolten, *I Did It to Save My Life: Love and Survival in Sierra Leone* (University of California Press, 2012) pp. 55-68.

⁴ Interviews, anonymous; 2011 and 2013.

as many state institutions and industrial sites in the countryside as possible.⁵ Thus while some RUF soldiers forced themselves into state hospitals and seized everything from mines to plantations, other soldiers targeted the resources, records and residences concentrated on the Njala campus. Their encroachment onto the campus was calculated, and the history of Njala informed their target selection. For example, on different occasions during the war soldiers formed ad hoc garrisons in faculty housing. According to one witness, the soldiers' capacities to formulate distinctions between the Americans and the British guided their housing preferences. Indicative of the grounded and coexistent Anglo-American elements of Njala's history, the soldiers allegedly passed over the older, wooden houses built for the British in favor of concrete houses built for the Americans in the 1960s and 1970s.⁶

Despite the RUF raids, many Njala residents refused to flee to a city or a refugee camp. Rosaline Tijani, a senior Home Economics professor, lived at Njala for as long as she could during the war. While living at Njala during the war, Tijani witnessed at least two of the fifteen incursions from her campus home. On one occasion, she and her family sat silently in their house for ten hours while armed young men picked through Tijani's garden and sat under the shade of a nearby tree. Though she acknowledges the difficulty of distinguishing between the members of the multiple warring parties, Tijani believes those who stayed near her house were RUF members. She desperately wanted to look at their faces to see if she recognized any of them, but at night the soldiers moved to a different part of the massive, dark campus.⁷

Months later, after a few brief and failed RUF attempts to take the campus, Njala area residents witnessed a massive escalation. Commanders in the Sierra Leone Army sent a brigade

⁵ Bolten, *I Did It to Save My Life* (2012) p. 55.

⁶ Bob Katta, Interview, November 2011, Njala Campus.

⁷ Rosaline Tijani, Interviews, January 2012 and January 2013, Njala campus.

of soldiers to defend the campus from a takeover. At the same time, *komajor* militias loyal to local the chiefdom governing structures, mobilized to defend Njala. In what was becoming a common episode in the war, the State Army mistook the *komajor* militias for the rebels. Believing they had encountered an enemy force, the Sierra Leone Army and the *komajors* fought each other on the campus for an entire day. Dozens died, and eventually Army soldiers were jailed for failing to distinguish between rebels and militia members.⁸ The failure of the Army and the *komajors* to clear the wider area of RUF forces convinced professors and families living in staff quarters to pack up their belongings and begin the chaotic search for safer quarters. The college shut down once most of the professors left. Many professors had kept their classes open during the war. But once it appeared that the campus could not be defended, all classes were cancelled and any remaining students had to find safe passage to the home of a family member or friend.⁹

Though closing the campus appeared to be a necessary precaution it also carried certain risks. The flight of students, professors and their families to Freetown and the second largest city of Bo dramatically exposed the tensions between the university and the villages examined in Chapter 4. For example, state agencies and the Sierra Leone Army facilitated a wave of caravans to help relocate professors to the cities.¹⁰ Village residents received no such aid, and could not afford to flee or pay their way to a refugee camp. Despite village initiatives to level relations with the campus, a hierarchal order endured. To this day, many village residents resent being left

⁸ Bolten, *I Did It to Save My Life* (2012) p. 68.

⁹ L. Fortune, Interview, November 2012.

¹⁰ R. Tijani, Interview, January 2012.

behind, particularly after sheltering professors and their families during some of the RUF raids on the campus.¹¹

In addition to exacerbating tensions between the university and adjacent communities, the departure of professors exposed them to the precarious and rapid urbanization unfolding in Freetown. The population of Freetown reached unprecedented levels, doubling by the end of the war to reach two million inhabitants. Amidst the worsening conditions, university officials, faculty and students searched for a way to reconstitute Njala University somewhere in Freetown. Eventually administrators brokered a tentative deal with the Sierra Leone government to use an assortment of government buildings that included part of the headquarters of the national radio and television service. Despite government support, claiming a space for Njala in Freetown proved extremely difficult and the school had to relocate four times within the city.¹²

Njala University thus became a school in flight, one exiled from its home campus. Along with one million other West Africans, the Njala faculty fled to Freetown. While living in the city many faculty longed for their Njala home. The Tijani family, for example, had little housing security in Freetown, and had to move three times during their four years in the city. The family experienced significant hunger and malnourishment as they moved throughout Freetown. Tijani also ached for the special bed she had made to accommodate her size.¹³ Tijani's colleagues from Njala also suffered in the city. Frannie Dania, a Home Economics professor like Tijani, and her husband, Mohamad Dumbuya, could not escape a particular group of rebels that had been targeting them since the start of the war. According to Tijani, a band of RUF soldiers and former

¹¹ Anonymous, Interview, Njala Area, January 2013.

¹² Sunusi Deen, interview; October 2011.

¹³ R. Tijani, Interview, January 2012.

Njala students, wanted to exact revenge on the couple. The RUF soldiers found Dania and Dumbuya, who perished along with thousands of others packed into Freetown.¹⁴

As Njala University faculty relocated to Freetown, the inhabitants of the hilly campus of Fourah Bay College on Mount Aureol suffered a similar fate. The RUF forced out Fourah Bay students, faculty and staff living on a campus located on high-ground in the center of the city. This marked a radical repurposing of a campus originally built as an airy respite for British professors who wanted to live above the city. After evicting campus residents, the RUF transformed this strategic location into a firing range. Residents of the neighborhoods at the base of Mount Aureol recall bullets raining down from Fourah Bay College. At night, artillery rounds launched from atop dormitories pounded into the neighborhoods below the campus. During the day, Nigerian operated fighter-jets returned fire and bombed the wooded areas on the top of Mount Aureol. Some of these bombs remain buried in the campus area.¹⁵

Fourah Bay College faculty feared their campus would be totally destroyed by the end of the war. Likewise, Njala faculty feared they might lose their rural campus. Despite finding shelter and reopening the school in temporary quarters, Njala faculty felt that their rural university had been urbanized by force and might become permanently trapped in the city. Part of the effort to ensure Njala University returned to its rural campus involved a calculated appeal for American aid. The sentiment of the Sierra Leonean appeal for American involvement echoes those examined in the preceding chapters. In the middle of the war three Njala University

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Sonny Kargbo, Interview; January 2012. Ten years after a disarmament campaign slowed the war to a halt, campus maintenance workers located an unexploded two-ton bomb on the Fourah Bay College campus. The Sierra Leone Army, along with trainers from the British, Australian and American Army, used this as an opportunity to test their controlled detonation skills, and in the process shook every building and person on the campus. The bomb was uncovered, rewired, reburied, and then detonated. The Public Records Office on the Fourah Bay College campus is approximately a seven minute walk from the blast site. After detonating the bomb blast shook the archive walls, and after dusting ourselves off, the archivist and I spent a quiet half-hour replacing everything that had been knocked to the ground.

professors wrote to the American ambassador, the president of the University of Illinois, and numerous college deans in the United States. They argued that the United States in general, and the University of Illinois in particular, had an obligation to defend Njala University's right to a rural campus. If Americans did not act, the Njala professors warned that the "American Education orientation of Njala University College" and "her 'Land grant College' spirit" would be a casualty of the spreading war.¹⁶ To illustrate their point the faculty members argued that, "the longer Njala University College remains located in Freetown, the greater the chances for the provinces to lose out in this battle for locating higher educational facilities nearer to the majority users." Essentially, they insisted the Ambassador mobilize resources for this "battle" for Njala within the larger war. Though their appeal for immediate assistance went unanswered, they nonetheless insisted that their university be "restored back to where she rightly and profitably belong – Njala and the rural setting."¹⁷

In this dissertation I have provided the necessary context to understand the invocation of the mythical 'land grant spirit' in Sierra Leone. Like the Sierra Leonean professors in the 1960s, those writing during wartime in the 1990s fit the idiom of land-grant university education to their immediate needs and according to their own developmental agendas. In doing so they furthered an inter-generational initiative for a rural university that was distinct from the urban university and free from British association. However, rather than assume complete buy in on the part of the Sierra Leoneans to the reproduction of supposedly American education models, this dissertation has argued for a more grounded approach. When seen from the perspective of Sierra Leoneans committed to the complex and highly contested task of building rural universities, the

¹⁶ S.W. Tucker, N.G. Kuyembeh, T.M. Dugba, letter to American Ambassador, December 15, 1995; PRO, FBC, Box 36, Ministry of Agriculture Files, "Njala University Finance Records, 1977-1998."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

‘land grant spirit’ appears as just one of many ways to talk about the relationship between education and the soil beneath it. In 1990s, when Njala faculty argued that a rural university driven from its home campus violated the ‘land grant spirit, this wartime appeal referenced the local struggles at Njala catalogued and analyzed throughout this dissertation—from the claims of Makonde residents to criticism of the excess of expatriates. If rural universities belong on a certain soil, and the ongoing efforts to rebuild the Njala campus after the war seem to support this notion, then that sense of an educational home will rightly remain subject to competing local agendas and subject to the hazards of merging education with development.

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