

Methodology and Resources

To accurately unearth black women in the colonial enterprise of Sierra Leone.

Particularly the role and lives of women from Nova Scotia, a social and cultural study are



Figure 2: Rose Fortune, ca 1854, Nova Scotia Museum

important. Women participated in economic and political institutions as leaders and helpmates in black communities. Whether their position and importance altered in Sierra Leone will add to current knowledge of how enslavement and disenfranchisement affected gendered identity.

Uncovering women's role in the colony, as well as their relationship between themselves, requires an analysis of cultural history as well.

Women's gender role carried meaningful expectations for themselves and the community of

women as a collective. Their identities were shaped not only by their productive activities in home and town life but in their cultural productions of stories from their pasts and expectations of the future.

Several historians have produced valuable gender history on African women in freedom. These secondary sources give a broader picture of the general activities and expectations of white women and black women by communities and society.

The use of monographs dealing with the workings of black women within Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone before migration is also necessary. Analysis of letters from those who lived in the colony of Sierra Leone offer insight into the workings and expectations of the time. These same notions are voiced in official documents and newspapers. Newspaper articles give a picture of the expectations and intentions of white peoples gave toward black colonial migrations. Weaving both secondary and primary sources allows for both a historiographical underpinning in research and acknowledging the many pasts, alongside representing many stories in a single narrative.

I also propose to use many images that represent this history. Artists created lasting depictions of the world they lived. This skews reality toward hope or representation of despair. Images that show variances in expectations of Nova Scotians are necessary to illustrate a



Figure 3: "Bedford Basin near Halifax, by Robert Petley, 1835.

moment in time that took the effort to capture. The created artifact that survives time shows people and places as they were but also as some think they ought to have been.

The images of the women of Nova Scotia illustrate a white gaze on the black body that later generations must contend in Sierra Leone and across the globe. In the illustrations of ship and harbor show the expectations of black peoples that energized their migration and fueled their disappointment. The use of these methods will help

unfold a deeper understanding of the black women from Nova Scotia who moved to Sierra Leone. Fondren

Library has several classes to enhance students' ability to utilize tools for digital humanities. The classes and tools available through the

GIS lab could prove useful in creating a map of the journeys that

black peoples endured in their quest for expanded freedoms.

Many of available sources on Sierra Leone are found in primary source anthologies and online archives such as Gale News Vault, Google Books which has nineteenth-century travel journals, the Black Loyalist website from Cassandra Pybus and the Canadian Online Archives. Fondren Library also houses microfilm from the Huntington Collection of the Zachary Macaulay Papers. Macaulay was present in Sierra Leone and offers first hand knowledge about the inner workings and relationships in the colony. Fondren Library makes available the Sir George Cranfield Berkeley papers that concern the British navy. In the War of 1812 African Americans followed the path of black soldiers in the American Revolution and fought with the British in order to gain freedom. The Jefferson Davis letters and related materials collection presents resources for scholars of not only Civil War research but race and identity as well. Davis' correspondent penetrates the ideology of the Confederacy that led to sustained migrations of African Americans away from the South. The Sam Houston papers could add to



Figure 4: Ships of free slaves from Nova Scotia arrive in Sierra Leone, January 15, 1792.

understanding about the role of women in establishing colonies and territories. Houston had expectations in Texas as a land of promise and likely discussed his outline for ensuring the promise realized.

These papers could help further knowledge about expectations of men and women after freedom was attained. Gale News contains historical newspapers from England and her colonies. What the hierarchy and how they phrased the events in Sierra Leone sheds light on the workings in the colony that may have involved women. Newspapers are also an expression of societal frustrations. The unrealized expectations of Granville Town provide ink for journals.

Travel journals present a contemporary view of the place from individuals closer to the events. Although they have their challenges in concealing voices, they are useful to understand the networks within colonies. The Black Loyalist Website from Cassandra Pybus provides background on connections in the colony and a road map toward deepening knowledge of the people who lived in Sierra Leone. The archives online from Canada and the resources available at Fondren Library; such as the Zachary Macaulay papers, Sir George Cranfield Berkeley papers, The Jefferson Davis letters and related materials collection, and The Sam Houston papers, give sources and allows researchers to read against and along the grain. Without such varied materials narrating the past would be difficult.