

# Sierra Leone: A Historical Cultural Capital of Pan-Africanism

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## Abstract

This paper examines the concept of Sierra Leone serving historically as a cultural capital of Pan-Africanism. Culture is examined from the perspectives of race, language, formal educational attainment, and religion, especially Christianity. Racially and ethnically, the people of Sierra Leone today are the descendants of not just native Sierra Leoneans, but also natives of dozens of other Sub-Saharan African nations, and people of Black African descent from North America, the Caribbean and the United Kingdom. As a result, the Sierra Leone Krio/Creole language is a Pan-African Krio/Creole. Historically, Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone has served as one of the most important academic/intellectual institutions in the Black world that have contributed to the brain trust to Pan-Africanism. Finally, Sierra Leonean Christianity can be explained as a Pan-African Christianity.

## Keywords

Sierra Leone, Pan-Africanism, Christianity, Culture, Krio/Creole, Fourah Bay College, Education, West Africa

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## 1. Introduction

There are geographic regions or countries across Africa and the world that tend to hold very special meanings in the hearts and minds of people of Black African descent all over the world. For example, Ethiopia, with a population of 108.113 million as of July 2020, holds a very special meaning to people of Black African descent primarily because it was never colonized like almost all other African nations by any European nation. That is part of the reason why the African Union's parliament is based in Addis Ababa, its capital (Griffiths, 2005: p. 2; van Walraven, 2004; Wubneh, 2013). Liberia, with a population of 5.1 million as of

July 2020, is also an African country that holds a special place in the hearts and minds of people of Black African descent because it was never colonized by any European nation and freed Black Americans settled there in very large numbers with their descendants still inhabiting that land at this moment (Ungar, 1989: pp. 87-120; Van Sickle, 2011).

Kenya, with a population of 53.5 million as of July 2020, is viewed as the hub of not just East Africa, but to some extent the entire continent of Africa. Its Mau Mau Rebellion against the British, which lasted from 1952 to 1960, and led to its independence in 1963, might have contributed to other East African countries and African countries earning their independence from the British without a rebellion. According to Mabera (2016), “Kenya matters regionally and globally. It is the economic powerhouse of East Africa and a long-standing hub for multilateral diplomacy” (p. 365). Tanzania, with a population of 58.6 million as of July 2020, is known as an ideological capital of Pan-Africanism (Bjerk, 2010; Mazrui, 1997).

Ghana, with a population of 29.3 million as of July 2020, is the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain its independence in 1957 and today a substantial number of people of African descent not only have traveled to Ghana, but also increasing numbers of them are relocating to Ghana or intend to do so (Commander, 2007; Williams, 2015). Kaba (2009a) points out that the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with a population of 101.8 million as of July 2020, should become one of the primary political capitals of a full-fledged African Union because it shares land border with nine countries on the continent. Geographically, the DRC is located in the center of Africa. One can get to any country from the Democratic Republic of Congo relatively faster because of its strategic location. It shares land border with Sudan, which borders Egypt and Libya to the North of the Continent. It shares land border with Malawi, which borders Zimbabwe and Botswana to the South of the continent. Due to its strategic location in Africa, the DRC has the potential to become a political, financial or trade center of the African continent (p. 16).

Nigeria, with a population of 214 million as of July 2020, is not only the most populous Black African nation, but as noted by Kaba (2008), Nigeria has come to represent people of Black African descent all over the world. This means that the experiences of Nigerians are the experiences of people of Black African descent just as the experiences of people of Black African descent are the experiences of Nigerians. Umezurike and Isike (2018) point out that Nigeria is considered a “giant” in Africa because of “...having real or perceived capacity to play strategic roles in Africa’s political-economic settings” (p. 135).

In the New World, Haiti, with a population of 11.1 million as of July 2020, is a very special nation to people of African descent because: “Upon declaring independence, Haiti claimed a singular place in world history. The Haitian revolution, lasting from 1791 to 1804, culminated in the first independent nation in the Caribbean, the second democracy in the western hemisphere, and the first black

republic in the world” (*History of Haiti*, 2015).

This brings us to the special place that Sierra Leone holds within Pan-Africanism. The importance of Sierra Leone to the legacy of Pan-Africanism far surpasses its relatively small geographic size or population of 6.6 million as of July 2020. Long before the birth of the concept of Pan-Africanism, Sierra Leone was experiencing that concept.

This paper examines the concept of Sierra Leone as a historical cultural capital to Pan-Africanism. The paper begins by presenting definitions of cultural capital and Pan-Africanism, doing so through race, language, formal educational attainment and religion, especially Christianity. Next, the paper presents examples illustrating that the people of Sierra Leone today are the descendants of people from dozens of Sub-Saharan African nations. Next, the paper presents examples showing that the Sierra Leone Krio/Creole language is Pan-African Krio/Creole. Next, the paper illustrates that historically, Fourah Bay College has served as one of the most important academic/intellectual institutions in the Black world that has contributed to the brain trust to Pan-Africanism. Finally, the paper argues that Sierra Leone Christianity is Pan-African Christianity.

### **1.1. Defining Cultural Capital and Pan-Africanism**

To get a better understanding of the role that Sierra Leone has historically played in promoting the well-being of people of Black African descent over the past two centuries, it is important to present definitions of the terms cultural capital and Pan-Africanism. The reason is that words or terms can have many definitions or meanings to different individuals.

### **1.2. Cultural Capital**

The word culture has been reported to have over 150 definitions. Some definitions of culture focus on abstract ideas, while other definitions look at material things that a particular group or people create. At the core of many of these definitions is that a group, society or people have a distinct way of life—acting, thinking and the use of material objects (Fischer, 2007: p. 1; Kaba, 2008: p. 2; Kyslan, 2016; Lu, 2006: p. 192; Matviuk, 2007: p. 254). Culture is defined as the unified organization of the mind of a group of people, which differentiates the members of that group from other groups (Lu, 2006: p. 192). Fischer’s (2007) definition of culture includes an entity: “...whose parts cannot be changed without affecting other parts...mediated through powerful and power-laden symbolic forms...whose multiplicities and performatively negotiated character...is transformed by alternative positions, organizational forms, and leveraging of symbolic systems...” (p. 1). Culture is also defined as a: “way that leads from closed unity through the unfolded multiplicity to the unfolded unity” (Kyslan, 2016: p. 160). Kaba (2008) “...broadly defines culture as the way of life, beliefs and behavior of a particular group of people or a society” (p. 2). In this paper, culture is examined from the perspectives of race, language, education,

and religion.

A capital is a word that might have different meanings. It can mean something one has in abundance, especially relative to others, such as human capital or social capital. The word capital can also mean a physical geographic location that a people or society designates as the official seat of government or seat of commerce—government capital and commercial capital. In the United States, for example, Washington, D.C. is the capital city of the United States federal government. New York City is viewed by many as the commercial or financial capital of the United States, partly because it is where the United States stock market is located.

### 1.3. Pan-Africanism

A careful examination of the term Pan-Africanism finds many interrelated definitions that sometimes tend to be in layered forms. The term Pan-Africanism is used to make people of Black African descent aware that regardless of their geographic location in the world, they share genetic/DNA heritage. This then means that they are responsible for the well-being of one another. This is the reason why people of Black African descent and Black majority nations fought to free Black people or Black nations from slavery and colonialism. This also shows that the concept and acts of Pan-Africanism started long before the introduction or coining of the term.

According to [Clarke \(2013\)](#), Pan-Africanism is a phenomenon that “...seeks to regenerate and unify Africa and promote a feeling of oneness among the people of the African world. It glorifies the African past and inculcates pride in African values” (p. 156). [Nantambu \(1998\)](#) cites the late internationalist George Padmore as saying that: “the idea of Pan Africanism first arose as a manifestation of fraternal solidarity among Africans and peoples of African descent” (p. 561). [Mungwini \(2017\)](#) points out that, “...the ideology of pan-Africanism has always been premised on an otherwise universal telos—the preservation and promotion of human well-being” (p. 170). [Ani and Ojajorotu \(2017\)](#) note that: “The Hegelian synthesis of the [Pan-African] movement...includes the general idea of solidarity amongst the descendants of Africa irrespective of their location, whether in Africa, West Indies, Europe etc” (p. 8). [Kumah-Abiwu and Ochwa-Echel \(2013\)](#) present a definition of Pan-Africanism as promoting a sense of: “cooperative movement among peoples of African origin to unite their efforts in the struggle to liberate Africa and its scattered and suffering people” (p. 123). [Kumah-Abiwu and Ochwa-Echel \(2013\)](#) cite the African Union as saying that as an ideology and a movement, Pan-Africanism promotes solidarity among people of Black African descent all over the world, emphasizing the belief that unity will lead to economic, political and social advancement. It also intended to unite and uplift people of Black African descent (p. 124; [Asante, 2012](#); [Kaba, 2014](#)). According to [Eze \(2013a\)](#): “Pan Africanism set an ideal rallying point for people of African origins despite coming from different ethno-cultures

to unite with one voice against colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism” (p. 665).

Pertaining to the claim that Pan-Africanism was being practiced long before the coining of the term, *Ani and Ojatorotu (2017)* note that: “...in studying Pan Africanism, one must endeavour to avoid...the tyranny of dates and labels” (p. 10). *Ani and Ojatorotu (2017)* note that: “Pan Africanism in Africa can be traced to the earliest phase of Atlantic Slave Trade. It was a time when the African people in different societies rose up with arms to fight the ‘pale’ strange men that invaded their societies and began to forcefully abduct their people before exporting them under dehumanizing situations to the New World...” (p. 10). *Kumah-Abiwu and Ochwa-Echel (2013)* point out that: “The expression of ‘Pan-Africanism’ did not come into use until the beginning of the twentieth century when Henry Sylvester-William of Trinidad, and William Edward Burghardt DuBois of the United States of America, both of African descent, used it at several Pan-African Congresses which were mainly attended by scholars of African descent of the New World” (p. 125; *Clarke, 2013: p. 164; Eze, 2013a: p. 663; Esedebe, 1977; Fosu, 1999*).

*Clarke (2012)* discusses Pan-Africanism from the perspective of brain or knowledge circulation within or among societies with Black African heritage. Pan-Africanism existed “...in the minds, hearts and consciousness of those who fought for freedom from the shackles of mental and physical slavery” (pp. 102-103). Clarke then wonders whether a former slave from the state of Virginia (USA) named Rev. George Liele, who traveled to Jamaica in the late 1700s to build a Baptist church and school in Kingston is a Pan-Africanist because of that mission. The Rev. George Liele is noted to be “...the first American of any race to leave his country as a missionary. Again, how would we classify Liele’s colleague Moses Baker, another ex-slave who worked among slaves in western Jamaica? Baker was thought to be of Bahamian origin” (p. 103).

Pan-Africanism is also a concept that encourages people of Black African descent to form racial solidarity through political unity or political mobilization—a global nationalism (*Ani & Ojatorotu, 2017: p. 8; Bolaji, 2015: pp. 7-8; Eze, 2013b: p. 677; Kumah-Abiwu & Ochwa-Echel, 2013: p. 123; Marx, 2017: p. 130; Oginni & Moitui, 2016: p. 42; Paracka Jr., 2003: p. 72; Sesanti, 2017: p. 12; Turner, 1997: pp. 171-177*).

Pan-Africanism is also examined from the perspective of shared geographic location. In this instance, the continent of Africa is shared with Arabs who may or may not have significant to substantial Black blood or DNA. So the founding in 1963 of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and in 2002 “repackaged” as the African Union, is Pan-Africanism based on geography because it includes Arab countries in Africa—shared land. For example, from the 1970s to present, Egypt, the most populous Arab nation in the world, with a population of 104.1 million as of July 2020, had two leaders who are Afro-Arabs or Black Arabs: Anwar Sadat and Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawy Soliman. When

these two men visited the United States during their leadership of Egypt, for example, they were seen and counted by the United States Census Bureau as Black people. Muhammad Hosni El Sayed Mubarak was a president of Egypt after the assassination of Sadat in 1981. When Mubarak visited the United States, however, he was seen and counted by the U.S. Census Bureau as a White man. Nantambu (1998) writes of: "...five dimensions or levels of Pan-Africanism: Sub Saharan, Trans-Saharan, Trans-Atlantic, West Hemispheric and Global Pan-Africanism" (pp. 562-563; also see Asante, 2012: pp. 14-15; Bolaji, 2015: p. 65; Fosu, 1999: p. 7). Pan-Africanism has also been examined from the idea of spirituality or religion, especially Christianity, but also Islam and Traditional African Religions (TAR) (Ani & Ojatorotu, 2017: p. 8; Nantambu, 1998: p. 562). Pan-Africanism has been examined from the perspective of language (Grant, 1993; Hancock, 2017; Thompson, 2013). Finally, Pan-Africanism has been examined from the perspective of knowledge—intellectual perspective (Ani & Ojatorotu, 2017: pp. 9 & 11; Clarke, 2013: p. 156; Eze, 2013a, p. 664; Oginni & Moitui, 2016: p. 142). Let us now examine each of these important four phenomena on the historical greatness of Sierra Leone and the special place it holds in the Black world.

#### **1.4. Sierra Leone: Ethnically, Racially, and Historically a Pan-African Nation**

Scholars have provided data on Africans from dozens of ethnic groups from the entire continent of Africa who have become Sierra Leoneans going back centuries. Indeed, it is because of the substantial numbers of Africans from dozens of ethnic groups who had made Sierra Leone home by the early 1800s that resulted in that nation becoming one of the first places in Africa that a large number of Africans became aware of themselves as Africans in tropical Africa. In discussing the dozens of African languages spoken in Sierra Leone by tens of thousands of Africans who were rescued by British troops and African volunteers from slave ships on the Atlantic Ocean, and resettled in Sierra Leone in the early 1800s, Northrup (2006) points out that: "Sierra Leone recaptives became aware of their pan-African identity through encounters with Europeans and with people from other parts of Africa. Sierra Leone was one of the first places in tropical Africa where people identified themselves as 'Africans'..." (pp. 3 & 8-12).

#### **1.5. Resettlement from the New World and Europe to Sierra Leone**

Scholars have identified four main groups of people of Black African descent from Africa, Europe and the New World or the Americas who settled in what is today Sierra Leone starting in the late 1780s: the Black poor, the Nova Scotians or Settlers, the Maroons, and the recaptives or liberated Africans. According to Hanciles (2014): "Abolitionism and mission In America, as in England, the black Atlantic movement was stimulated by the conflux of abolitionism, repatriation,

colonization, and missionary purpose.” The author adds that abolitionism contributed substantially in the events that connected to the Black Atlantic because it brought together groups from Britain, the Caribbean and North America who shared similar beliefs. As a result, it “...fostered transatlantic alliances in which blacks participated” (p. 212). Scanlan (2016) points out that “The British colony at Sierra Leone was something new, and something made by anti-slavery” (p. 1087; Grant, 1993: pp. 1-4). According to Blyden (2004): “Sierra Leone’s origins were closely tied to the antislavery movement in Britain. Humanitarians who were influential in founding the colony believed that establishing a free settlement on the African coast would be the best way to destroy the slave trade” (p. 23). Thompson (2013) points out that: “Freetown was founded as a consequence of the abolition of slavery and the slave trade. This settlement soon acquired a complexity that was to have a tremendous impact not only in Sierra Leone, but also all along the West coast of Africa and even beyond” (p. 41; Scanlan, 2016: p. 1093).

The first group of Blacks to settle in Sierra Leone are commonly referred to as the “Black poor” who resided in England as freed persons. A substantial number of the Black poor were loyalists who had fought on the side of the British during the American Revolutionary War to get their freedom from slavery. Scanlan (2016) points out that in 1787, Freetown, which was first named the “Province of Freedom” received its first Black settlers known as the Black poor, described as “...indigent soldiers and sailors living in London after the American Revolutionary War” (pp. 1093-1094; Thompson, 2013: p. 41). Northrup (2006) claims that “The first settlers of the colony had been 400 free blacks from England in 1787” (p. 3). Hancock (2017) points out that the Black poor lived in England and that some of them were born in England, a third of them were from the Caribbean, and that the majority of them were from North America. In addition to the 350 of them that arrived in the Province of Freedom in 1787, they were also accompanied by 41 White women. Almost three dozen (35) of them died during the journey (p. 6; Paracka Jr., 2003: pp. 14-16).

The second group of Blacks to settle in Sierra Leone were mostly also loyalists to the British during the American Revolutionary War who had been resettled in Nova Scotia after the war. They were known as the “Loyalists” or the “Settlers.” According to Blyden (2004), “In 1792, loyalist blacks from Nova Scotia settled in Sierra Leone...” (p. 23). Grant (1993) claims that there were 4000 Black loyalists who fought for the British during the American Revolutionary War. After the War, the British resettled them in Nova Scotia, Canada, Jamaica and St. Augustine (p. 51; Scanlon, 2016: pp. 1093-1094). Thompson (2013) notes that the Black poor “...were joined by 1100 Blacks from Nova Scotia, Canada, who arrived in Freetown in 1792” (p. 41). Hancock (2017) notes that “...1000 of them [Black loyalists] reached Sierra Leone in 1792...” (pp. 6-7; Northrup, 2006: p. 3). According to Grant (1993), the “Black Loyalists became the life blood of the Colony, creating wealth and prosperity through trade...” (p. 4; Paracka Jr., 2003: pp.

14-18).

The third group to settle in Sierra Leone is the Maroons. According to [Grant \(1993\)](#), the Maroons "...were a people of African descent who had been deported from their home on the Jamaican mountains for rebellious activity. They had initially been brought to Nova Scotia before being sent to Sierra Leone" (p. 4). [Hancock \(2017\)](#) claims that the Maroons: "...were the descendants of rebels who had resisted English colonialism in Jamaica and had established autonomous communities in the interior fastness of the island. In 1796 after sustained fighting, several hundred of the rebels were exiled to Nova Scotia" (p.7). Although they were welcomed in Canada, they were provided land that was not fertile enough for them to survive on. As a result, most of them decided to resettle in Freetown in September, 1800 (p. 7). [Paracka Jr. \(2003\)](#) claims that "The Maroons were descendants of Ashanti warriors who had proved ungovernable as slaves in Jamaica..." (p. 16; [Thompson, 2013](#): p. 42). According to [Hancock \(2017\)](#), 600 Maroons settled in Freetown in 1800 (p. 7). [Northrup \(2006\)](#) points out that 550 Maroons settled in Freetown in 1800 (p. 3; [Scanlan, 2016](#): p. 3; [Paracka Jr., 2003](#): pp. 14-16).

### **1.6. Resettlement from Other Sub-Saharan African Nations to Sierra Leone**

Finally, the fourth and largest of the groups of settlers in Sierra Leone are called the "Recaptives" or "Liberated Africans." According to [Keefer \(2013\)](#): "Following the 1807 British abolition of slavery, the colony of Sierra Leone became the seat of a Vice Admiralty Court and, after 1819, a Court of Mixed Commission, which adjudicated cases involving seized slave ships sailing for the Americas" (p. 542). [Scanlan \(2016\)](#) notes that the presence of the British in Sierra Leone started as: "Freetown became the judicial and military capital of slave-ship interdiction in the British Empire" (p. 1094). According to [Thompson \(2013\)](#), the receptive Africans were identified in that manner because of "being captured the first time and enslaved, they had been recaptured and freed by the British Navy" (p. 42). They were resettled in Freetown "between 1808 and 1863 and came from different parts of Africa, they were also known as the Liberated Africans" (p. 42; also see [Proudfoot & Wilson, 1960](#): p. 86). [Paracka Jr. \(2003\)](#) points out that Freetown became a center to suppress the slave trade by stopping: "...the vicious cycle of violence that had developed through the Atlantic slave trade was no easy undertaking. It took a concerted effort that involved both indigenous and returned diasporan Africans as well as Europeans. The returned diasporan Africans, as former soldiers and seafarers, possessed the awareness and skills needed to help suppress slave trading in the area. They served with the British Naval squadron and even captained some ships" (p. 8). [Blyden \(2004\)](#) claims that Sierra Leone as a colony became diverse: "...characterized by various African ethnicities and multicultural New World black populations, made it an interesting place during the nineteenth century" (pp. 23-24).



It is noted that the first slave ship seized in 1807 by the British and African volunteers was carrying Sierra Leonean youths from one of that country's largest ethnic groups (the Temnes) (Keefer, 2013: p. 542). Keefer (2013) notes that: "Between 1808 and 1862, 92,230 enslaved Africans were systematically removed from slave ships captured by the British West Africa Squadron and from coastal barracoons holding captives waiting to be transported onto vessels bound for the Americas" (p. 542). Scanlan (2016) claims that in the 1800s, no less than 81,745 Africans "...were repatriated in Sierra Leone, including nearly 13,000 between 1814 and 1824" (p. 1088). Paracka Jr. (2003) claims that: "The Africans rescued by these ships landed in Freetown. Between 1807 and 1840, more than 60,000 Africans arrived in the Liberated African Yard in Freetown. These 'Liberated' Africans included people of Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa, Bambara, Bassa, Congolese, and Ashanti descent" (p. 8). It has also been noted that there were other Blacks directly from the United States who settled in Sierra Leone in the early 1800s (Beyan, 2005; Blyden, 2004: p. 24; Blyden, 2019: pp. 85-89; Hancock, 2017: pp. 6-9; Paracka Jr., 2003: p. 30). Let us now turn to the conceptualization of Sierra Leone Krio as Pan-African Krio, a creation of a common Pan-African language.

## **2. Sierra Leone Krio/Creole Language as Pan-African Krio/Creole**

Once Africans from dozens of ethnic groups from across Sub-Saharan Africa and from the Caribbean and North America were brought together in Sierra Leone in such large numbers, they would have to find a common language to use to communicate with one another. According to Hair (1987), an 1854 study found "...some 100 African languages spoken in Freetown..." (p. 561). Hancock (2017) notes that by the 1830s, "...the linguistic mix in the new colony [Sierra Leone] was overwhelming: by the mid nineteenth century, several hundred different languages were being spoken on the streets of the city [Freetown]", with the Yoruba accounting for over 40 percent (pp. 8-9; Paracka Jr., 2003: p. 37). Sesanti (2017) cites a number of scholars who discussed the importance of linguistic unity among Black Africans because it would result in 'national cultural unity' (p. 12). In an article discussing the study of African languages in Sierra Leone, Hair (1987) points to a British scholar named Hannah Kilhan who was in Sierra Leone in the 1820s and 1830s and "...collected brief vocabularies of thirty African languages, which she published in 1828" (p. 561). According to Hair (1987), Kilhan wrote in her diary in 1831 of her desire to see that African children in Freetown are instructed in school in their own language. That language according to Hair was Krio (p. 563).

The need to find a common language was also urgent as the population of the settlers was growing rapidly in the colony. Scanlan (2016) points out that an 1811 census showed that there were 1917 people in Freetown and "...nearly 1,000 people who had already been emancipated under the 1807 Act but had been sent to live outside the capital" (p. 1094; Paracka Jr., 2003: p. 17; Scanlan,

2016: p. 1089).

Since the British established the Freetown colony, their language became the most influential, even though their total population was very small relative to the Africans. For example, Northrup (2006) points out that “In 1820 the colony had only 120 European residents, mostly officials and merchants...” (p. 7). Northrup (2006) claims that: “Europeans were a distinct minority in Sierra Leone, but European speech, institutions, beliefs and customs dominated.... The diversity of the African languages that recaptives brought to Sierra Leone fostered the spread of English as the lingua franca of the colony” (pp. 5-6).

A significant number of settlers from the four main groups discussed above either spoke fluent English, pidgin English or could understand both. This means that Sierra Leone Krio became a Pan-African language, which had the potential to be understood across West Africa and beyond. Scanlan (2016) claims that, “In Sierra Leone, officials felt that they faced a more foundational problem. A majority of enslaved people in the West Indies spoke some English...” (p. 1087). Northrup (2006) points out that all four groups of Africans who settled in Sierra Leone either spoke English fluently or had knowledge of the language. Some enslaved Africans from Old Calabar (in what is today Nigeria) had already learned how to speak English (p. 6). Hancock (2017) points out that the Nova Scotians spoke “‘fairly typical...North American English from the period.’ In their new home they were reportedly in particular demand as Letter-writers because of their good command of English” (p. 7). Scholars have also pointed out that pidgin English or Krio/Creole was spoken in the Western coast of Africa going back to the 1600s when ships from Britain visited to conduct trade (Hancock, 2017: pp. 5-6; also see Eltis & Jennings, 1988; Paracka Jr., 2003: pp. 13-14).

It is useful to note that the word Krio/Creole in Sierra Leone emerged into two forms—Krio as a people and Krio as a language. Thompson (2013) discusses various definitions presented by scholars as to who is a Krio person in Sierra Leone from not just the four main settler groups, but also native Sierra Leoneans. One definition presented as to who is Krio “...is applied to the descendants of the original settlers, i.e. Poor Blacks, Nova Scotians, Maroons and the Liberated Africans” (p. 43). Thompson (2013) points out that in 1998, the Krios accounted for 700,000 (20%) of the population of Sierra Leone (p. 43). According to Hancock (2017): “Krio is the native language of nearly half a million Sierra Leoneans, and serves as a lingua franca among the fifteen or so indigenous peoples who together number over five million” (p. 4). For example, from April 1961 to December 2020, of the 12 leaders (prime minister, head of state or president) of Sierra Leone, 2 (16.7%) are Krios: Andrew Terence Juxon-Smith (March 27, 1967 to April 18, 1968) and Valentine Esegragbo Melvine Strasser (April 29, 1992 to January 16, 1996). This section of this paper focuses on Krio as a Pan-African language.

Sierra Leone Krio is argued to be a Pan-African language because in addition

to mostly using “broken” English words, it also contains words brought by the settlers from North America, the Caribbean and across tropical Africa. In addition, some words from the native languages from Sierra Leone are also included in the Krio language. According to [Hancock \(2017\)](#): “A creole is the result of speakers of several mutually-unintelligible languages finding themselves together in one place for an extended period of time, and having to work out a common means of communication. Such situations can be the results of various social factors: the massive upheaval of different groups because of natural causes such as floods or famine, migrant groups recruited for work, enslavement, forced relocation, or conscription into a national army. For those involved, in each case a way to speak to each other is both urgent and necessary...” (pp. 2-3). According to [Hancock \(2017\)](#), in addition to Sierra Leone, Krio was also spoken as a first language in the Gambia by a certain group (called Aku), Bioko, and coastal Equatorial Guinea, where they call it Krio or Pichi, and the language is spoken by an estimated 150,000 people. Krio is also reported to be part of a group of Creoles collectively called English Lexifier Atlantic Creoles (the ELACs). They include Sranan (which is spoken in Suriname), Jamaican, Belizean and Gullah (South Carolina, United States). They call them English lexifier because almost all of their lexicons or words are from the English language. However, their Creole pronunciation, meanings or existence are currently not found in that language. [Hancock \(2017\)](#) explains that: “...‘girl’ and ‘woman’ in Krio are gyal and uman, the way they were pronounced in English in the 18th century. Fen comes from ‘find’ but it can mean ‘look for;’ tray is from ‘try’ but it can mean ‘succeed;’ yeri comes from ‘hear’ but it can mean ‘understand.’ yu yeri French? ‘do you understand French?’; igen is from ‘again’ but can mean ‘any more’ (Dayo no lek Sami igen ‘Dayo doesn’t love Sammy any more’)” (p. 4; also see p. 7).

It has been noted that the Yoruba language has made a significant contribution to the Krio language. For example, [Thompson \(2013\)](#) explains that the word Kriyo: “...may have been contracted from Yoruba akiriyo (those who go about from place to place after church.” In Yoruba, an Akiriyo is a Protestant Christian (pp. 44-45). Thompson adds that: “...there is a strong Yoruba element, and in addition, there is a ‘sprinkling of words from other West African languages, and one or two French, German, Spanish and Portuguese influences” (p. 47). [Hancock \(2017\)](#) also adds that “...more than any other African language, Yoruba has influenced Krio in its vocabulary and idiom, as well as many aspects of the Krio culture” (p. 9).

[Thompson \(2013\)](#) points out that in Sierra Leone: “Krio has transcended its role as a community language of the Western Area or an urban code, to achieve the status of a national lingua franca bridging the linguistic gap between speakers of diverse languages of the country” (p. 48). In Sierra Leone and other parts of West Africa, it is the language used in business, religious services or sermons, radio and television broadcasts, and ordinary conversations among people (p.

48). Let us now turn to the claim that Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone has historically been an important academic or intellectual institution to Pan-Africanism.

### **2.1. Fourah Bay College: Historically a Pan-African Institution That Conferred Degrees to Numerous West Africans**

Educational attainment, especially tertiary or higher education is an important strategic goal utilized to lift up people of Black African descent. Up until the first few decades of the 1800s, there was no established higher education system in tropical Africa or Sub-Saharan Africa. The one important exception is Sierra Leone, where a higher education institution was established through Christianity. According to [Livsey \(2016\)](#), long before the colonization of Nigeria by the British in 1861, “West Africa was home to a self-consciously modern, literate Anglophone elite. Sierra Leone was an important centre of this intelligentsia. ...Fourah Bay College, West Africa’s first institution of western style higher education, was founded in Freetown in 1827 by the London based Church Missionary Society (CMS)” (p. 955). [Nwauwa \(1999\)](#) claims that: “...it is hardly surprising that the early demands for an indigenous university in Africa emanated from West Africa, and almost entirely from Sierra Leone” (p. 108). [Rimington \(1965\)](#) notes that: “It was symbolic of Britain’s place in Africa in the early nineteenth century that higher education should have had its beginnings in the Sierra Leone Colony” (p. 105). With the collaboration among members of the four settler groups discussed above, the London based Church Missionary Society (CMS), and the British government, Fourah Bay College (FBC) was established in Freetown, Sierra Leone in 1827. Writing about the missionary roots of Fourah Bay College, [Paracka Jr. \(2003\)](#) notes that Christianity has been “...a powerful vehicle for spreading Western education and culture...” and that Fourah Bay College “...is the oldest Western styled college in Africa” (p. 3).

Some of the settlers who were already Christians or became Christians in Sierra Leone, became known as the Krio people, and they took the lead in making sure that FBC remained open and successful. [Paracka Jr. \(2003\)](#) writes that the unique construction of Fourah Bay College as a social and cultural microcosm representing: “...the political, racial, religious, and social tensions that characterized the colonial and post-colonial revolution in West Africa makes its history a valuable resource for gaining insight into the ways certain epistemologies and ideologies collide to form institutions that shape society” (p. 3).

[Rimington \(1965\)](#) notes that the Krio who lived in the Freetown colony had brought “...an uneasy blending of the cultures of Africa, North America and England, which included the Christian faith and a respect for education. The origin of the present day University College of Sierra Leone lies in the Christian Institution...” (p. 105). [Thompson \(2013\)](#) points out that the Krios viewed education as a priority and it was one of the principles of the founding of the Freetown colony, along with Christianity during the entire colonial era: “On these

twin pillars were predicated the founding of institutions of learning...Against a strong Westernized background, the Krio soon came to embrace Western education with a passionate zeal” (p. 46).

Thompson (2013) claims that: “Interestingly, Freetown has a unique place in the history of theological education in West Africa. Fourah Bay College (FBC), the first higher education institution in West Africa, was founded by the CMS in 1827 specifically for the training of clergy...” (p. 191). Thompson (2013) points out that, “...Fourah Bay College, founded in 1827 as a theological institution, which soon came to be the main bastion for Krio education and students all along the West African coast” (p. 46; Lahai, 2015: pp. 315-317; Wada, 2010). Paracka Jr. (2003) claims that before 1807, “...the site [FBC] had been occupied by a slave factory, and the building that became the College had been the slaver’s homestead”, and that it was referred to as a Christian institution and established in 1827 (p. 25). Nwauwa (1999) claims that: “In 1828 new and larger premises were acquired out of the estate of the late Charles Turner for £320 11s 6d. Henceforth the college, which would play a significant role in the higher education of Africans, took root” (p. 108).

By 1876, Fourah Bay College became affiliated with the University of Durham in England and that expanded the institution’s curriculum. According to Hussey (1945): “Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone...was affiliated with Durham University in 1876” (p. 167). Hargreaves (1985) notes that in addition to Fourah Bay College being founded by the CMS in 1827, it had also: “...been successfully preparing Africans for degrees of the University of Durham since 1876...” (p. 324). Hargreaves (1973) points out that with its affiliation to the University of Durham, the students at Fourah Bay College study “...for a BA degree (with a classical and theological bias), and for a Licentiate in Theology, without leaving African soil. Here already was an educational institution perceived as a haven for the transformation of African society” (p. 27; Paracka Jr., 2003: p. 3; Redwood-Sawyer, 2012: p. 4). Fourah Bay College is reported to have continued its affiliation with the University of Durham until the 1960s (Rimington, 1965: p. 109; Wada, 2010).

From its beginning, Fourah Bay College had the characteristics of a Pan-African institution. Wada (2010) claims that: “As one of the few places in pre-Independence Africa to offer post-secondary education, Fourah Bay College attracted sons (and daughters) of elite Africans from across the continent.” Hussey (1945) points out that for many years, Fourah Bay College enrolled students from the British Colonies of West Africa (p. 167). The first student of Fourah Bay College when it was established in 1827 was Samuel Adjai Crowther, who also became its first graduate (Paracka Jr., 2003: p. 11; Hayden, 1987: p. 26).

Scholars have pointed out that although Fourah Bay College was officially established in 1827, the first full-time Black principal was not appointed until 1840. During this period, there were many Blacks, especially the Krios and other Blacks from abroad, including the United States, who held influential positions

in Sierra Leone and West Africa. One of these influential positions included Principal of Fourah Bay College. [Nwauwa \(1999\)](#) points out that the wish of the rising: "...African educated class to enter the elite ranks of the bureaucracy and participate in central political institutions and the establishment of European-style 'self-governing' states remained fundamental in both the nineteenth and twentieth-century concepts of an African university" (p. 107). [Paracka Jr. \(2003\)](#) notes that by the 1840s, people of Black African descent held top positions in Sierra Leone, including Governor of the Colony (p. 30).

[Paracka Jr. \(2003\)](#) claims that the Rev. Edward Jones was the first full-time Black principal of Fourah Bay College. He was the longest serving principal in the history of the college, holding that position from December 1840 to 1858 (p. 34; [Killingray, 2003: p. 5](#)). [Blyden \(2004\)](#) points out that the Rev. Edward Jones was the "...first African American graduate of Amherst College in Massachusetts..." (p. 24). [Paracka Jr. \(2003\)](#) points out that during his tenure as principal, Jones concentrated on promoting the academic capacity and rigor of Fourah Bay College. Rev. Edward Jones "held his students to the highest expectations and developed a rigorous course of study that emphasized Latin, Greek, Arabic, trigonometry, and theology" (p. 34; [Rimmington, 1965: p. 105](#)). [Paracka Jr. \(2003\)](#) notes that many alumni of the College during the tenure of Edward Jones "...became influential activists and community leaders including James Africanus Horton and James 'Holy' Johnson" (p. 34).

[Paracka Jr. \(2003\)](#) points out that during the missionary and colonial eras, West Africans, including Sierra Leoneans, constituted the dominant faculty at Fourah Bay College. The faculty and students opposed colonial rule and advocated for the teaching of African languages and culture at the institution (pp.3-4 &77). [Redwood-Sawyerr \(2012\)](#) points out that: "Freetown served as an attractive centre for the study of African languages as it had a rich diversity of over a hundred ethnic groups..." (p. 6; [Jones, 1970: p. 53](#)).

## 2.2. Producing Influential Graduates across West Africa and the World

Scholars have provided numerous examples illustrating that, graduates of Fourah Bay College became prominent individuals in Sierra Leone, West Africa, and beyond, holding very important positions in government, religious organizations, academia, and business. These Fourah Bay College graduates advocated for a larger university system in West Africa. They also advocated for the cultural and political independence of West African nations and nations in Africa. Blacks who left the New World and resettled in Sierra Leone in the 1800s also held high positions of influence and advocated for the establishment of a West African university system, and the independence of West (African) nations from colonialism.

According to [Hussey \(1945\)](#), the Church Missionary Society established Fourah Bay College because they "...were especially concerned with equipping Afri-

cans with the appropriate qualifications for service as clergy and teachers...” (p. 167; Thompson, 2013: p. 191). Paracka Jr. (2003) claims that: “A host of Africans educated in Sierra Leone became missionaries, teachers, and clerks employed throughout English speaking West Africa” (p. 77). Paracka Jr. (2003) adds that Fourah Bay College trained: “...future leaders including those closely in the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), an emerging political organization of African intellectuals” (p. 77). From 1827 to 1950 over seven out of every ten of Fourah Bay College’s graduates were non-Sierra Leonean West Africans, with graduates from Nigeria accounting for half of that figure. Although these West African students were from countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and The Gambia, they were not treated as foreigners. Instead they resided in homes of Sierra Leoneans in Freetown as part of their extended family. The Nigerian students in particular were reported to have stayed in the homes of recaptive Yoruba Sierra Leoneans in Freetown (p. 77).

According to Livsey (2016): “Western-educated Africans returned from Sierra Leone to Nigeria before both the arrival of European missionaries in the 1840s and the establishment of colonial rule, to form elite communities defined by their literary education and Christianity” (p. 955). According to Thompson (2013): “During the colonial period, the Krio came to staff diverse sectors of the administration and continued to do so for the greater part of the colonial period in Sierra Leone, as well as in other British colonies. Many Krio held positions ranging from those of medium status such as foreman, senior clerk, and clerk of the Legislative Council to more elevated positions such as Assistant Colonial Surgeon, Acting Chief Justice and Collector of Customs” (p. 47). Redwood-Sawyerr (2012) writes of graduates of Fourah Bay College as prominent scholars and writers, some of whom returned to: “...Nigeria, The Gambia and Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast), to become leaders in their various professions especially in the field of education, religion, medicine and the civil service” (p. 5). During a visit to The Gambia in February 2019, the President of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio paid a courtesy call on the former President of The Gambia from 1970 to 1994, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara. The then 95-year-old former Gambian president laments on the close relationship between his country and Sierra Leone and is quoted as saying that: “Sierra Leone and The Gambia have a long standing relationship that nobody can exactly explain how it all started. During my days in politics, the two countries witnessed a close tie that was beneficial. Education, farming and intermarriages were among the things that we can never forget in the two countries’ history” (The Fatu Network, 2019, February 24).

In addition, on November 5, 2021, the Gambian government released a press statement claiming that The Gambia and Sierra Leone “agreed to reciprocally waive Residence Permit fees for their respective citizens” (Office of the President, Republic of Gambia, 2021). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone noted on July 14, 2021, that: “...the similarity between The Gambia and Sierra Leone in the educational sector was a hallmark in their relationship. ...during

the colonial era, majority of Gambians received secondary school education in sierra Leone” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sierra Leone, 2021).

Redwood-Sawyer (2012) presents a table on pages 4-5 listing 20 prominent graduates of Fourah Bay College, going back to its first student accepted in 1827 (Samuel Adjai Crowther) to Akinotola Wyse (accepted in 1965). The remaining 18 students and the year they were accepted are as follows: George Crowley Nicol (1838), James Africanus Horton (1853), James Holy Johnson (1854), J. E. Casely Hayford (1882), T. J. Thompson (1889), Israel Ransome-Kuti (1913), Milton Margai (1915), Lamina Sankoh (nee E N Jones) (1915), Henry Lightfoot-Boston (1917), Ms. Lati Hyde-Forster (1918), Harry Sawyer (1929), Robert Kweku Atta Gardiner (1937), Kenneth Onwuka Dike (1939), Arthur Porter (1941), Eldred Dirosimi Jones (1944), Edward Wilmot Blyden III (1945), Cyril Foray (1951), and Vidal E Godwin (1957) (pp. 4-5). Paracka Jr. (2003) also lists the names of a number of the faculty and alumni of Fourah Bay College who made significant contributions in West Africa and beyond. Paracka Jr. (2003) writes that: “The dominant role of male figures within and outside the institution reflected the paternalism of the period and its historiography. These men played important roles in the educational, cultural and political leadership of West Africa” (p. 5). In addition to presenting most of the names listed above, Paracka Jr. (2003) also provided these names of faculty and alumni of Fourah Bay College: A.B.C. Sidthorpe, Henry Johnson, Obadiah Moore, Obadiah Johnson, Edward W. Blyden, Orishatukeh Faduma, A.E. Tuboku-Metzger, Charles Nicolas Lewis, Adolphus Williamson Howell, Thomas Sylvester Johnson, Magnus John Sampson, Victor Adolphus Tettey, Lapido Solanke, Arku Korsah, David Nicol, Daniel Chaytor, Awadagin Williams, Arthur Abraham, and Magbaily Fyle (p. 5).

One important contribution by some of these graduates and faculty of Fourah Bay College was the establishment of schools across West Africa “...usually by acting as Founding Principals. In that way, secondary schools were established between 1900 and 1920 in the 6 most prominent Yoruba towns [in Nigeria]” (Paracka Jr., 2003: p. 77). According to Paracka Jr. (2003), Samuel Adjai Crowther “was a scholar who valued learning and helped establish many schools and churches in Nigeria” (p. 11).

Another important contribution made by Fourah Bay College graduates and faculty was in scholarship, especially at a time when the findings of their research were needed. According to Redwood-Sawyer (2012): “The scholarship at Fourah Bay College was therefore very significant and provided a strong evidence of the potential of the African and rebuffed in factual terms some of the myths that had been forwarded to justify the inhumane slave trade, based on a lesser mental potential of the Black man” (p. 3). According to Paracka Jr. (2003), the institution was called the “Athens of West Africa” “...because of the unparalleled success of its graduates at home and abroad” (p. 3; Jones, 1970: p. 53; Redwood-Sawyer, 2012: pp. 6-7).

Graduates and faculty of Fourah Bay College also advocated for the increase in



student enrollments at Fourah Bay College and the establishment of a Western African university. They also advocated for the independence of West (African) nations (Paracka Jr., 2003: pp. 4, 10-11; Lynch, 1964: p. 395; Marah, 2012: p. 143; Nwauwa, 1999: p. 107; Roberts, 2016; Wada, 2010).

One graduate of Fourah Bay College who has received a lot of attention in scholarly or academic publications is James Africanus Beale Horton. He and Edward Blyden were reported to have actively advocated for the establishment of a West African university. According to Paracka Jr. (2003), James Horton was born in Gloucester, Sierra Leone, to a liberated father from the Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria in 1835, and died in 1883. He enrolled at Fourah Bay College in January 1853 at age 17 and graduated in 1855. He earned a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree from the University of Edinburgh in August 1859 (p. 41). His doctoral thesis, which was later published, is titled: *The Medical Typography of the West African Coast*. He returned to Sierra Leone after earning his MD and was appointed by the British government as "...assistant surgeon in the British army stationed in the Gold Coast" (Nwauwa, 1999: p. 107; also see Haynes, 2010). In 1868 Hurton published a work titled *West African Countries and Peoples, British and Native* (Redwood-Sawyerr, 2012: p. 6). James Horton was one of the leaders who led a movement for the establishment of a West African university (Nwauwa, 1999: pp. 114-115; also see Redwood-Sawyerr, 2012: p. 6; Rimmington, 1965: pp. 105-106). To this present era, Fourah Bay College graduates continue to be influential at home and abroad (Beoku-Betts, 2008; Dawuni & Kang, 2015: pp. 46-47 & 54). Let us now turn to the claim that Sierra Leone Christianity is Pan-African Christianity.

### **3. Sierra Leone Christianity as Pan-African Christianity**

Sierra Leone holds a very special place in Black tropical African Christianity. Freetown was established in the late 1700s as a Black Christian colony. For tropical African Christianity, Sierra Leone has the characteristics of a holy land to Pan-Africanism. Through primarily Fourah Bay College and other smaller Christian theological institutions in Freetown, Sierra Leone trained theologians and pastors to spread Christianity across West Africa and beyond. Christianity was brought to Sierra Leone by the settlers from Nova Scotia, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Caribbean, and the Christian Missionary Society from England. A high proportion of recaptive Africans from across West Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa who ended up in Sierra Leone also became Christians.

According to Hanciles (2001), "Freetown (the present capital of Sierra Leone) was founded as a Christian experiment in 1787..." (p. 63). Grant (1993) points out that: "Sierra Leone produced the first Christian Church in tropical Africa. It was a Church created and sustained by those of African descent, who had travelled the Atlantic with the assurance that God was leading them to their promised land" (p. 1). Hanciles (2014) claims that "...Sierra Leone formed a centerpiece in ambitious experiments aimed at the evangelization of the African con-

continent using former African slaves.” Hanciles notes that the Black settlers from Nova Scotia established the first church in modern Africa. They also established what the oldest Christian community in tropical Africa became. This shows that Christianity was brought to modern Africa not by Christian missionaries from Europe as many would have expected. Instead it happened with the “migration movement of black Christians.” Hanciles adds that it was Freetown, Sierra Leone, that became the location in modern Africa for the mass conversion of Black people to Christianity. By the 1820s, there were already more Christians in Sierra Leone than Christians in all of tropical Africa. By the middle of the 1800s, two out of every three people in the Sierra Leone colony claimed to be Christians. Hanciles quoted a prominent Black missionary and educator who wrote in 1853 that the Sierra Leone colony was “the cradle of missions, the mother of churches, and the parent of colonies.” Hanciles concludes by saying that by the middle of the 1850s, Sierra Leone, “...was well established as a major center of Christianity in the black Atlantic world and the springboard of African missionary initiatives” (p. 213).

Northrup (2006) points out that by 1820, there were many times more Black Christian settlers from North America and the Caribbean residing in Freetown, Sierra Leone than the 120 Europeans who were mostly officials and merchants, and that “...most of the process of instruction and leadership was in the hands of these ‘creoles’ and of the newly converted liberated Africans who organized religious instruction classes for the new arrivals in their own languages” (p. 7). According to Hanciles (2014), due to the emigration of Blacks to Sierra Leone from North America, they became the first missionaries from that part of the New World to many parts of Africa. Hanciles argues that every Black person who settled in Sierra Leone from North America in the late 1700s to early 1800s was a Christian missionary because of the: “...general belief that American blacks were representatives or purveyors of Christianity...The majority of these black emigrants ended up in two destinations in West Africa: Sierra Leone and Liberia” (p. 212; Killingray, 2003; Osinulu, 2017: p. 4)

Writing about the Settlers from Nova Scotia, Thompson (2013) points out that they were Christians who were members of “...the Baptist, Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion, and Methodist denominations.” Thompson presents this account of their arrival in Freetown in 1792: “Their pastors led them ashore, singing a hymn of praise...Like the children of Israel, Israel which were come out again out of the captivity they rejoiced before the Lord, who had brought them from bondage to the land of their forefathers. When all had arrived, the whole colony assembled in worship, to proclaim to the continent whence, they or their forebearers had been carried in chains...The day of Jubilee is come; return ye ransomed sinners home” (pp. 41-42). Thompson (2013) also adds that the Maroons who settled in Freetown in 1800 were Christians who were primarily members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church (p. 42).

According to Grant (1993), after their arrival in Freetown in 1792, the Black

settlers from Nova Scotia ensured "...that Christianity became a significant religion" in the colony (p. 4). [Redwood-Sawyer \(2012\)](#) points out that Samuel Adjai Crowther, who was a recaptive African from Nigeria, became the first Bishop of Niger in the Anglican church (p. 6). [Hanciles \(2001\)](#) also points out that Samuel Adjai Crowther returned to Nigeria "...to pioneer a massive missionary enterprise among his own people, and became the first black bishop of the Anglican Communion" (p. 63; [Climenhaga, 2014](#)). According to [Northrup \(2006\)](#):

"The captives liberated in Sierra Leone were generally put under the care of Anglican, Methodist or Baptist missionary societies, whose dedicated workers organized food, housing, medical care and schools, as well as religious instruction...Many liberated Africans gravitated to the Methodists because they were...more open than the Anglicans to appeals to the spirit. As they matured, some congregations built their own churches and hired (and fired) their own ministers" (pp. 6-7; [Scanlan, 2016: pp. 1089-1090](#)).

According to [Thompson \(2013\)](#): "Interestingly, Freetown has a unique place in the history of theological education in West Africa." The reason is that the initial goal for the establishment of Fourah Bay College in 1827 was to train clergy "...some of whom were to be sent to the mission field in other (British) West African countries like the Gambia" (p. 191; [Paracka Jr., 2003: p. 3](#)). From 1843 to 1899 there were 112 "native clergy" that served the Christian Missionary Society based in West Africa. Of that total, no less than 70 (62.5%) were born in Sierra Leone and no less than 100 (89.3%) were born in West Africa. Of the 112 native clergy, 55 (49.1%) were trained at Fourah Bay College. Of the 55 trained at Fourah Bay College, no less than 40 (72.7%) were born in Sierra Leone. Most of the native clergy born in Sierra Leone were from the Krio communities of Freetown and the Peninsula ([Paracka Jr., 2003: p. 11](#)). [Hanciles \(2014\)](#) also notes that "...Sierra Leone not only demonstrated the missionary potential of black Christians but also exhibited the inherent capacity of modern African Christianity." From 1840 to 1900, Sierra Leone provided over six out of every ten native or indigenous clergy in the Anglican Church across West Africa. "The Sierra Leone experience tells the story of a church that began as an Atlantic experiment initially settled by free black Christians-and became a major center of Christian missions on the African continent" (p. 213).

[Solihu \(2015\)](#) notes that "the Christian Missionary Society converted captives in Sierra Leone, trained them as missionaries and sent them to spread Christianity in the Yoruba region of Nigeria and West Africa. Among the most prominent of those captive missionaries was Samuel Adjai Crowther, who himself had been captured from the Yoruba region of Nigeria at age 12..." Solihu adds that: "Crowther preached Christianity in Sierra Leone and led or joined several missionary expeditions to Yorubaland, propagating Protestant Christianity among the Muslims and followers of the Yoruba traditional religion there" (p. 14). The native or indigenous clergy and other educated Sierra Leoneans also advocated for the cultural and political independence of the nations of West

(Africa) and within Christianity (Esedebe, 1977: pp. 185-186; Lynch, 1964: p. 395; Paracka, Jr., 2003: p. 10; Rimmington, 1965: p. 105).

Finally, although according to the World Factbook, by 2013 Muslims were estimated to account for 78.6% and Christians accounted for 20.8% of the population of Sierra Leone (also see Kaba, 2005, 2009b, 2022), it is useful to point out that from April 1961 to December 2020, of the 12 leaders (prime minister, head of state or president) of Sierra Leone, 11 (91.7%) are Christians and one (Ahmad Tejan Kabbah) is a Muslim.

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper began by providing examples of a number of Black African nations or Black majority nations in the world that hold special meanings in the hearts and minds of people of Black African descent. The nations discussed are: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, and Tanzania. The paper then claims that Sierra Leone also holds a special place in the hearts and minds of people of Black African descent despite its relatively small population of 6.6 million people. Due to its history, Sierra Leone, the paper claims, is a cultural capital of Pan-Africanism. The paper goes on to present definitions of cultural capital and Pan-Africanism. In addition to presenting standard definitions of culture, this particular paper examines culture from the perspectives of race, language, education and religion (Christianity). Various definitions of Pan-Africanism are presented, with many of them focusing on the need for people of Black African descent to unite in order to solve the challenges they face.

Sierra Leone is claimed to be a cultural capital to Pan-Africanism. The reason is that ethnically, Sierra Leoneans are West or Sub-Saharan (Africa) because they are genetically made up of Black people from North America, the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan (Africa)—a Pan-African nation. The Krio language of Sierra Leone is a Pan-African language because it includes words from many of the groups who settled in the country and the native Sierra Leoneans. Sierra Leone established Fourah Bay College in 1827, which became the first higher education institution in tropical Africa and it educated students from across West Africa, many of whom went back home to occupy important positions including as educators and civil servants at a time when their nations needed such professionals. The affiliation between Fourah Bay College and the University of Durham, which lasted from 1876 to the 1960s resulted in its students earning degrees from Durham. This also made Fourah Bay College the first Western styled higher education institution in Africa.

Finally, Sierra Leone Christianity is Pan-African Christianity. In terms of Christianity, Sierra Leone is a 'Holy Land' to Black Christianity in tropical Africa. The first church in tropical Africa was established in Sierra Leone. Most of the settlers from North America and the Caribbean who went back to make Sierra Leone home were Christians. Fourah Bay College was first established as a

Christian institution with the objective to train clergy and teachers, most of whom were sent across West Africa to spread Christianity.

Future research could also show that Sierra Leone cuisine is Pan-African cuisine. The reason is that each of the settler groups that arrived in Sierra Leone brought with them the knowledge of the way food was prepared in their community. This is the reason why a Sierra Leonean dish such as sweet potato greens, cassava leaves, Krain Krain, Jollof rice, or fufu and soup are also found in West African nations such as The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, or Senegal (Achidi et al., 2005; Atinmo & Bakre, 2003; Cusack, 2000; Meludu, 2010; Voeks & Rashford, 2013).

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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