

**BUNCE ISLAND**

**A BRITISH SLAVE CASTLE  
IN SIERRA LEONE**

**HISTORICAL SUMMARY**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Bunce Island is a slave castle located in the West African nation of Sierra Leone. Slave castles were commercial forts operated by European merchants during the period of the Atlantic slave trade. They have been called “warehouses of humanity.” Behind their high protective walls, European slave traders purchased Africans, imprisoned them, and loaded them aboard the slave ships that took them on the middle passage to America. Today, there were about 40 major slave castles located along the 2,000 miles of coastline stretching between Mauritania in the north and Benin in the south.

British slave traders operated on Bunce Island from about 1670 to 1807, exiling about 30,000 Africans to slavery in the West Indies and North America. While most of Bunce Island’s captives were taken to sugar plantations in the Caribbean Basin, a substantial minority went to Britain’s North American Colonies, and especially South Carolina and Georgia. Given the fact that only about 4% of the African captives transported during the period of the Atlantic slave trade went to North America, Bunce Island’s strong link to that region makes it unique among the West African slave castles.

Bunce Island’s commercial ties to North America resulted, as we shall see, in this particular castle and its personnel being linked to important economic, political, and military developments on that continent. Bunce Island figures in several significant ways in the history of the American Revolutionary War. And, later, after the war ended, the castle interacted intensively for twenty years with a community of freed slaves from North America established only 15 miles downriver. For these and other reasons, Bunce Island is arguably the most important historic site in Africa for the United States.

When African Americans finally discover Bunce Island’s significance for their own history, they will likely pay less attention to the slave castles in other West African countries that are now so often visited but whose histories are linked more to the West Indies than to North America. Visiting Bunce Island, they will also find it a very different experience from the other castles, many of which are in built-up areas and were used for various purposes until quite recently. An uninhabited island in a remote area, Bunce Island was abandoned soon after the slave trade ended. In many respects, it is a slave trade Pompeii, and going there today one has the sense that history stopped 200 years ago. A Sierra Leonean historian once called it a place “where history sleeps.”

## **SIERRA LEONE RIVER**

Bunce Island is located in the Sierra Leone River, a vast estuary forming the largest natural harbor in the African continent. It lies about 20 miles upriver from the Atlantic Ocean and about 5 miles below the mouths of the Rokel River and Port Loko Creek, the two large rivers that flow into the great harbor. A tiny finger-shaped island, it is only about 1600 feet long and 350 feet wide. The castle is located on a round hill on the north end of the island about 35 feet above sea level. The land dips to the south, and then rises

again to form a long ridge at the southern end of the island. The African workers who served the castle lived in a village of traditional houses built along the top of this ridge.

Visitors to the island often ask why the slave traders chose such a small and seemingly insignificant place for their castle. The answer is that Bunce Island is strategically located at the limit of navigation in the great harbor. The castle on the north end of the island overlooks the point at which deep-draft ocean-going ships sailing into the harbor had to stop to avoid running aground. This gave the castle significant advantages for defense. Bunce Island was attacked several times by pirates and the French navy, and in each case its geography helped protect the defenders. The fact that there was deep water only on the downriver side meant that attacking warships could fire their guns only from that one side; and the shallow water on the upriver side of the island provided a convenient escape in shallow-draft boats. When attacked, the Bunce Island traders normally fired their cannons for a few minutes to delay the enemy's landing while quickly organizing an evacuation to safety upriver in a friendly African village.

But Bunce Island also had advantages for trade. Its position at the limit of the deep water in the great harbor made it the logical meeting point for the big slave ships that came from Europe and the light sailing craft coming downriver with slaves and goods. The Bunce Island men got the first look at the trade coming from the interior, and could thus offer visiting slave ship captains their choice of Sierra Leone's slaves and local products.

## **TWO COMERCIAL PERIODS**

Bunce Island's commercial history is divided into two distinct periods.

During its Early Period, the castle was controlled by two crown chartered companies: the Gambia Adventurers (1670-1678) and the Royal African Company of England (1678-1728). These were joint stock enterprises that held official charters from the English Crown granting them monopoly rights to trade on specified portions of the African coast. Members of England's royal family and wealthy overseas merchants invested in these enterprises. Crown-chartered companies suffered, though, from all the ills of monopoly business -- undependable personnel and poor management -- and they generally failed to turn a profit. But Bunce Island's problems were compounded by the fact that the volume of slave trading in the Sierra Leone region at this period was extremely low, and the castle often failed to defray its own expenses. The Early Period came to an end in 1728 when an Afro-Portuguese competitor in the slave trade, named Jose Lopez da Moura, drove the Royal African Company garrison from Bunce Island and burned the castle.

Bunce Island was abandoned for more than a decade. Then, in the 1740s a British merchant named George Fryer took it over and did some minor repairs. A few years later Fryer sold his interest in the castle to a much bigger player in the Atlantic slave trade.

During its Late Period, Bunce Island was operated by two privately owned companies: Grant, Oswald & Company (1748-1784) and the Company of John & Alexander

Anderson (1784-1807). Like the chartered companies that controlled the castle before them, these firms were both based in London; but unlike their predecessors, they were owned by private merchants with no official connection to the Crown. These private firms were efficient and profitable. They took great pains to ensure that their ships arrived from England with the best goods and at the right time of year for trade. They also made efforts to recruit dependable staff. Many of the men they employed at Bunce Island were either family members or the kinsmen of close business associates. But if the private firms were more efficient than their predecessor, they were also operating under far more favorable commercial circumstances. Soon after the Royal African Company was driven out, the volume of slave trading in Sierra Leone increased substantially. The private firms had much more opportunity for profit than their predecessors.

Bunce Island became one of the most lucrative slave trading operations on the West African coast. By the mid-1700s most slave trading was done by private ships sailing directly from Europe, and the slave castles generally served more as bases of operation for shipping than as actual trading posts. European governments allowed the official chartered companies to control their slave castles even after they went bankrupt and after the Africa trade was opened up to private ships. Governments even gave the companies subsidies to support the castles' operations. But Bunce Island became the unusual case of a slave castle that was both privately owned *and* highly profitable. Visitors in the mid- and late 1700s often remarked that it was more prosperous and better equipped than the castles European governments were spending so much public money to maintain.

The changes in management at Bunce Island gave rise to different names at different periods. The castle was originally called "Bence Island" for Captain John Bence, an official of both the Gambia Adventures and the Royal African Company of England. At that time the name was often spelled "Bense Island." Later, when the private companies took control, it was called "Bance Island." And during the twenty years between the two commercial periods, it was called "George's Island." It would not be called "Bunce Island" until after the Atlantic slave trade had been outlawed the early 1800s.

### **CASTLE SOCIETY**

Bunce Island's commander, or "chief agent," controlled the entire operation. The agent lived with his senior men in "Bance Island House," the headquarters building or, "factory house," at the center of the castle. During the Royal African Company period, the chief agent carried the official title "Governor of Sierra Leone," though his sway extended no farther than Bunce Island and a few other nearby harbor islands. Later, when Bunce Island was controlled by the two London-based private firms, the agent was addressed simply as "captain." The agent was responsible for controlling the castle's workforce, overseeing trade, maintaining good relations with local African rulers, and sending reports back to London on a regular basis. He commanded a British garrison that included "factors" (merchants), "writers" (clerks), and craftsmen such as shipbuilders, masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths. But the agent also controlled an African workforce that became more and more important for the castle's operations as time went on.

The Royal African Company sent out a large European workforce to Bunce Island and employed relatively few local Africans who were mostly “castle slaves” and were freed only after they became “old and useless.” But the private firms in the Late Period adopted the more efficient strategy of sending out comparatively fewer whites and assigning some of the castle’s critical functions to local African workers, many of whom appear to have been free and paid a good wage. An African foreman who answered to the chief agent -- and no one else -- supervised the work of hundreds of these free African workers, or “grumetes.” The grumetes maintained the castle’s buildings, guarded the slaves, built and crewed local coasting vessels, repaired visiting slave ships, and grew the rice and citrus used to provision the ships bound for America. During Bunce Island’s most prosperous years there were, in effect, two separate hierarchies at the castle -- one British and the other, African -- with the agent presiding over each of these separate, but linked workforces. In many respects the private owners had Africanized their operation.

British traveler Joseph Corry described Bunce Island’s grumetes in 1805:

*The Grumittas, or free black people, are assembled outside the fort, in houses or huts built with mud...This group of buildings...is denominated Adam’s Town, from the black chief who presides over these labouring people. Their number may be estimated at about 600...Among these people are artisans in various branches, viz. smiths, carpenters, joiners, masons, &c....who for the ingenuity and adroitness in their respective capacities, would deserve the approbation even of the connoisseur in these arts (Corry 1807: 4-5).*

As Bunce Island’s commercial functions became more complicated in the Late Period, the private owners also experimented with more sophisticated forms of labor organization for their European workers. At one point they divided the operation between two chief agents -- one who supervised the castle’s coastal trade and its relations with African rulers and another who supervised its complicated shipping activities. The grumetes were also divided between the two agents, but it would appear that the majority of African workers -- including the most influential ones -- were attached to the shipping operations. The grumetes were expert pilots, sailors, ship’s carpenters, and stevedores.

The local African king, or “landlord,” also exerted considerable power at Bunce Island. The castle paid rent throughout its history to a king with the royal title “Bai Sama” who resided on the north shore, or “Bullom Shore,” of the great harbor. Bai Sama came to the castle once a year to collect his rent in the form of trade goods. He also exacted customs duties on all the slaves and products the castle exported. The king required the Bunce Island men to marry local women, often his own daughters or nieces, and the traders had to pay bridewealth (dowry) to Bai Sama and his noblemen in order to obtain their wives. The women watched their husbands’ activities and reported them to the king. But Bai Sama also provided valuable services to the Bunce Island men. He guaranteed the castle’s protection as long as the traders showed him respect and abided by his local laws. He also provided a form of commercial insurance. If the British traders advanced goods

to one of the king's subjects in return for slaves to be delivered months later and the man failed to return, as long as the king had guaranteed the contract from the start, he would compensate the traders for their loss. The relations between the Bunce Island men and their landlord were generally warm and amiable.

### **THREE TYPES OF TRADE**

The Bunce Island traders dealt in slaves, but also in such local products as gold, ivory, beeswax, cowhides, and camwood (*Baphia nitida*). The later was a dyewood valued in Britain for the manufacture of a red dye used in the textile trade. To obtain slaves and these valuable products, the Bunce Island men engaged in three types of trade. Their strategy was to cast as wide a net as possible in order to draw trade to the castle.

“Castle trade” referred to the purchase of slaves and local products at Bunce Island itself. African traders coming down from the interior went directly to Bunce Island during the dry season (October through April) when the Rokel River and Port Loko Creek were safe for boat traffic. Arriving at the castle, they could see that Bunce Island was the center of a slave trade archipelago. The British merchants leased neighboring Tasso Island and most of the other harbor islands from Bai Sama, carrying out commercial activities of various sorts throughout the harbor area. They also maintained a permanent base at Cape Sierra on the Sierra Leone peninsula at the entrance to the harbor. When slave ships entered the great harbor, Bunce Island's grumetes signaled their willingness to pilot them through the deepwater channel that leads 20 miles upriver to Bunce Island.

“Sloop Trade” referred to the small, single-masted coasting vessels, called “sloops,” used to conduct trade along the Atlantic coast north and south of the Sierra Leone River. Bunce Island's sloops, captained by white men or grumetes, patrolled the mouths of neighboring rivers where African traders arrived from the interior. The sloops covered a stretch of about 600 miles of Atlantic coastline, extending the castle's reach into what is now Guinea to the north and Liberia to the south. During the Late Period a French visitor marveled at Bunce Island's “small navy” of coasting vessels built by grumetes.

“Outfactory trade” referred to Bunce Island's extensive network of trading posts, or outfactories, located at the mouths of the rivers patrolled by the castle's sloops. Bunce Island had a resident “factor,” or trading representative, at each outpost who conducted trade on a regular basis, often hundreds of miles from his employers in the Sierra Leone River. The factors were either white men or trusted grumetes, and it was their responsibility to maintain good relations with the African rulers in their respective areas. Bunce Island's sloops came periodically during the dry season to collect the slaves and products the factors purchased and return them to the main headquarters in Sierra Leone.

All three types of trade involved bartering trade goods sent from Europe for slaves and local products. The African traders generally wanted an assortment of goods that included guns, gunpowder, cloth, metal goods (swords, axes, knives, etc.), alcoholic drink (rum, wine, brandy, cider, beer), and trinkets (glass beads, gunflints, clay tobacco

pipes). The Africans were discerning customers, always inspecting the European goods closely and insisting on high quality. The bartering typically went on for hours, as the African traders insisted on haggling over every individual slave or ivory tusk. At the end of each transaction, they also demanded a bonus, or “boonyar,” in the form of a handful of glass beads or a shot of rum. The African traders who came to Bunce Island were usually Mandingo, Fula, or Susu, tribes involved for centuries in long-distance trading. But the castle also dealt with European and Euro-African traders based on the coast.

## **MILITARY HISTORY**

Britain and France engaged in a fierce contest for global hegemony during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and almost every time war broke out in Europe between these determined rivals it resulted in a French attack on the castle. French naval forces attacked Bunce Island during four major wars: the War of the League of Augsburg (1695), the War of Spanish Succession (1704), the American Revolutionary War (1779), and the French Revolutionary War (1794). The Bunce Island men were merchants, not trained soldiers, and they could do little against heavily armed French warships other than firing their cannons long enough to keep the enemy from landing until they could make their escape into the shallows upriver. The French destroyed the castle during all four attacks, and the British traders returned each time to rebuild their fortifications and warehouses.

A contemporary newspaper article on the French attack on Bunce Island in 1794 provides a clear account of the merchants’ strategy when confronted by superior force:

*Mr. Tilley, the chief [agent] ... was fully convinced, that it would be impossible to preserve the settlement, when attacked by an enemy so greatly superior. He very prudently divided his small garrison into two parties, one of which was employed in removing the most valuable effects from the island to an interior factory, while the other kept up a constant and well directed fire upon the shipping, which made it imprudent to land their troops . -- Every thing being accomplished that could reasonably be expected he withdrew his garrison, unperceived by the enemy. The batteries being silent, and the colors still flying, they landed with great force and much caution, momentarily expecting that the springing of a mine would blow them into non-existence -- on entering the castle and finding it deserted... (Connecticut Gazette, Oct 20, 1795)*

Pirates also attacked Bunce Island in 1719 and 1720 during what some have called the Golden Age of Piracy. Bartholomew Roberts, known as “Black Bart,” launched the 1720 attack. The most notorious pirate of his time, Black Bart flew a flag showing himself standing on top of two human skulls. Arriving at Bunce Island, he hailed the chief agent from his ship telling him he would sail away if the castle handed over its gold dust, cannonballs, and gunpowder. When the agent refused, he rained cannonballs on the castle, and because the agent returned fire too long before trying to escape, Robert’s men were able to capture him before he could get away. Period accounts show that Black Bart

would have decapitated the agent, but he swore back at the pirate so furiously and with such violent language that his cutthroat crew intervened, saying that anyone who could out-swear Black Bart deserved to be spared. The Royal African Company records report that Bunce Island's chief agent saved his life by "mere dint of swearing and damning."

The many attacks on Bunce Island resulted in the castle being destroyed and rebuilt several times. The castle found on the island today may represent the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> castle built on Bunce Island. It was constructed after the last French attack in 1794.

### **THE CASTLE -- MAIN AXIS**

We can create a clear image of Bunce Island's last castle by drawing on archaeological clues in the ruins and a number of vivid contemporary accounts of the castle in its final years of operation. We also have a drawing of the last castle made by Joseph Corry in 1805. Corry's rendering appears in his book *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (1807), but the original watercolor -- which provides even more detail -- can be found in Britain's National Maritime Museum. Corry's rendering is helpful, but far from perfect. Archaeology and some first-person period accounts help to fill in the picture.

The castle is divided into three parts: a main axis composed of structures that run through the middle of the castle from one side of the island to the other, and two peripheral building complexes that parallel the main axis on the north and south.

The main axis begins with the fortification which faces downriver toward approaching ships. Bunce Island House rises behind the fortification and stands at the middle of the castle. The open-air slave prisons are immediately behind the house, and behind the prisons are the remains of what appears to be an elegant formal garden. Finally, behind the garden was a high stone wall protecting the castle at the rear. This odd assortment of structures exemplifies Bunce Island's strange and unsettling character -- it was a combination fortress, trading post, prison, and rich man's estate.

The fortification is made up of two semi-circular bastions connected by a long curtain wall. Originally built to hold sixteen guns, it was later altered to hold eight when the four cannon holes in the two bastions were blocked up. A flagpole stood in the middle of each bastion, one for the Union Jack, and the other probably for the company flag. A wheel-shaped structure made of stone and mortar in the north bastion was almost certainly a flagpole base. A similar structure in the south bastion has disintegrated into a heap of rubble. The iron cannons, their wooden carriages long decayed, still point through the eight cannon holes, or embrasures, in the curtain wall. Several bear the royal cipher of King George III ("GR3"). The British traders used their guns primarily for firing salutes to visiting slave ships, and only rarely in anger. During its 137-year history as a slave castle, Bunce Island was attacked on average only about once every twenty years.

"Bunce Island House," the two-story residence of the chief agent and his senior men, stands behind the fortification at the center of the castle. Built in the tropical Georgian



style with an elevated, covered veranda that wrapped around the rectangular building on three sides, it was called the “factory house” or “great house.” An elegant building, it resembled the homes of wealthy West Indian sugar planters or South Carolina low country rice planters. The middle room on the ground floor was probably the chief agent’s office. An impressive arched doorway and a false fireplace in the rear of the room suggest an attempt at elegance. The chief agent and his senior men lived on the upper story. The slave traders were proud of their factory house, and the agent liked to impress visitors by entertaining them at lavish dinner parties upstairs.

British naturalist Henry Smeathman visited Bance Island House in 1773 and jotted down a description of Bance Island House in his diary. The house Smeathman saw was destroyed by the French six years later during the American Revolutionary War, but it was similar to the building whose ruins can still be seen on Bunce Island today:

*The Fort House which is built over a range of magazines [cannons] is a plain, neat building enough with a very cool and convenient gallery [veranda] in the front, where the gentlemen can walk and see every thing almost that is passing about them (Fyfe 1964:70).*

The slave prison was built immediately behind Bance Island House so that the chief agent and his officers could observe their captives from their rear upstairs windows 24-hours-a-day. The men’s slave yard -- a large, open-air enclosure -- was directly behind the house, and a smaller slave yard for women and children was built behind the men’s yard. While the men’s slave yard was completely open to the elements, the traders constructed two small rooms inside the women’s yard, probably to provide some minimum shelter.

Finally, on the east, or upriver, side of the castle there are several interesting structures that seem to have been used mainly for recreation. A 1726 drawing calls this area the “Orange Walk.” It appears to have been a formal garden with three descending terraces connected by stone stairways. A semi-underground vaulted room built into one of these terraces may have been a springhouse where food and drink could be kept cool. Behind this garden at the very rear of the castle was a high stone wall, now collapsed. This provided security on the vulnerable upriver side of the castle facing toward the interior.

## **THE CASTLE -- PERIPHERAL STRUCTURES**

Two elongated building complexes form the northern and southern sides of the castle. For descriptive purposes we can call these the “north complex” and the “south complex.” Each building complex was made up of several different structures, and each served a range of functions related to trade, defense, and the guarding of prisoners.

The north complex faces across the water to the northern shore of the harbor and the modern village of Pepel. This area was described by one contemporary observer as “other necessary buildings.” Standing opposite the slave yards, it served as a service area for the prison. It included a blacksmith shop, a cookhouse, and a three-story tower that

may have been the castle's business offices where clerks drafted dispatches and kept their business records. In its design, the tower appears to be a smaller version of the London office of the two private companies that operated the Bunce Island during its Late Period. Located on Philpot Lane in the City of London not far from the Thames docks, the London office was a typical business office, or "Counting-House," of the period.

The south complex faces the south, or landward, approach to the castle. Its principal feature is a long, high stone wall that spans the entire width of the island, rising to nearly 40 feet as the land drops on the upriver side. The main gate, which held two large wooden doors, was built at the west end of the wall near the jetty. A small room perched above the gate enabled guards to observe visitors seeking entrance to the castle through windows facing south, and ships on their way upriver through other windows facing west. Joseph Corry described the gate when he visited Bunce Island in 1805:

*The entrance into the fort is through a folding door or gate, over which, throughout the night, a watch is constantly placed. The expectations excited by its external appearance were by no means lessened by a view of the interior of the fort, in which were assembled several traders, and chiefs, with their attendants (Corry 1807: 4).*

East of the main gate is a two-story building built against the outer wall on the inside of the castle. It probably served as a warehouse on the ground floor and a dormitory on the upper floor. Lower-ranking white workers probably lived here separate from the senior men who resided with the chief agent in the factory house. Farther to east on the upriver end of the outer wall was the underground powder magazine, also built up against the wall inside the castle. Today, the Temne fishermen who live on the nearby islands believe that this underground vault was the slave prison, but local folklore is clearly wrong in this case. Contemporary accounts make it clear that this was the gunpowder magazine where explosives were stored underground and at a safe distance from the main structures. A 1750 inventory of Bunce Island lists "a Magazine under ground."

### **EXTRAMURAL FEATURES**

Trading activities probably took place mostly outside the walls of the castle in the wide, open space south of the main gate. Period drawing show several open-sided thatched huts -- or "bafas" -- erected in this area. These temporary structures probably provided a convenient place for visiting merchants to display the captives and local products they brought to sell. During the dry season when the trade was at its height, African traders and locally-based European merchants would have been waiting in this area for their chance to transact business. Bunce Island's only water well is located here. The well was probably used more by the grumetes and visiting traders and their captives than by the Bunce Island men themselves. Most of the castle's water was brought in large barrels from neighboring Tasso Island where there is a spring near the modern village of Roku Town. The slave traders also used the spring to provision visiting slave ships.

The grumete village was located on the high ridge on the south end of the island. Visitors in the early 1800s described it as a long street lined with traditional African houses with thatched roofs. The African foreman had the largest house at the end of the street facing back toward the castle. There were two cemeteries here, one for the African workers and another for the British traders. The Temne people in the vicinity of Bunce Island, like other ethnic groups in Sierra Leone, believe that after human beings die their spirits remain in the community. They believe the ancestors provide the living with their “blessings,” advice, and moral guidance, and they welcome their presence. This probably explains why the African and European cemeteries are *both* located inside the grumete village. Unlike their British employers, the grumetes were not afraid of “ghosts.”

Two lime kilns are located on the beach below the grumete village on the west side of the island. The slave traders burned locally-obtained oyster shells to make lime for the mortar and wall plaster they used in the construction of their buildings. The Joseph Corry drawing of Bunce Island (1805) shows these kilns with smoke coming from them. The castle’s walls are mostly made of locally obtained stone, though the upper stories of some structures are made of red brick bought out from England as ballast on the slave ships. The Bunce Island men covered the outside of their most important buildings with a brilliant white plaster. This was especially true of Bunce Island House and the other buildings that faced downriver toward approaching ships. The slave traders wanted their castle to have “a good appearance from the road” as ships approached the castle.

Throughout the castle’s history the Bunce Island traders always controlled Tasso Island, the much larger island a mile west of the castle. In addition to the fresh water they obtained there, they also employed their grumetes to grow rice, citrus, and other provisions for visiting slave ships on Tasso’s abundant farmland. At modern Roku Town, one can still see the spring the slave traders used. They built a brick curtain around it. One can also see a pile of stones jutting out into the water facing directly across to Bunce Island. These stones may have been the foundation for a jetty where Bunce Island boats came to take away fresh water in great barrels. Near the spring and the jetty there is also the grave of an Englishman named David Hamilton, almost certainly a Bunce Island trader. At another village on Tasso Island, called Sangbulima, there is a cannon identical to some of those at the castle itself. Sangbulima faces the straights that lead directly to Bunce Island. In 1702 the Royal African Company instructed John Freeman, Bunce Island’s chief agent, that, “There is one point of the Island [Tasso] that if Fortified will hinder any Shipp coming up the River.”

## **HUMAN COMMERCE**

We can describe the slave trading activities at Bunce Island based on some valuable contemporary accounts and clues found in the ruins.

African captives arrived at Bunce Island in several ways. Some were delivered by sloop captains who brought them from the castle’s network of outfactories along the Atlantic coast up to 300 miles away. Others were brought by middlemen in the slave trade. Some

of these middlemen were African merchants (typically Mandingos, Susus, or Fulas) coming downriver from the interior. Others were Euro-Africans from the Sierra Leone coastal region (Afro-Portuguese in the Early Period and Afro-English in the Late Period), or European traders resident on the coast. These local traders probably paraded their captives in the large open area outside the castle's main gate or inside the castle in the open space between the south end of Bance Island House and the dormitory building.

When the Bunce Island traders purchased their captives, they imprisoned the men in the large slave yard immediately behind Bance Island House, and the women and children in the smaller yard behind the men's prison. Contemporary accounts show that the slave traders could watch their captives from the rear upstairs windows of the factory house. But the ruins also provide valuable information on the monitoring and imprisoning of the captives. A niche running horizontally near the top of the wall on the north side of the men's and women's slave yard probably supported an elevated walkway where guards could patrol the periphery of the slave yards and observe everything that went on inside. A window on the north wall of the men's slave yard with slanted, or splayed, sides like a cannon hole, and some smaller vertical slits in the south wall may have allowed the traders to point firearms into the prison if the slaves rioted or tried to escape.

The most important feature in the ruins associated with the management of the slaves, though, is a double-door entrance into the slave yards on the north side of the prison. This double-door arrangement stands opposite the north complex where food was prepared for the captives. Grumetes taking food into the prison would pass through a door that was locked behind them before being allowed to open a second door into the men's yard on the right or the women's yard on the left. Returning from the prison, they would have to do the reverse -- lock the door to the men's or women's yard behind them before being allowed to exit back through the first door to the outside.

In 1791 a British traveler named Anna Maria Falconbridge had dinner with the slave traders on the upper story of Bance Island House and was surprised to see the slaves in the yard immediately behind the elegant residence. Her description of the men's slave yard is the most vivid contemporary account we have of the captives at Bunce Island:

*...judge then what my astonishment and feelings were, at the sight of between two and three hundred wretched victims, chained and parceled out in circles, just satisfying the cravings of nature from a trough of rice placed in the centre of each circle (Falconbridge 1802: 32).*

## **AFRICAN CAPTIVES**

Many of the Africans brought to Bunce Island had been kidnapped from their rural villages. Slave catchers burned their towns, often killing old people or the very young to terrorize the rest into submission. The slave catchers were looking for young men between about 15 and 30, the category most valued by the European traders on the coast. But they would also take young women and children old enough to survive the long

march from the interior. Literally sold down the river, the captives were forced to walk for long distances, often carrying ivory tusks and other heavy items to be sold to the white men. Many captives arriving at Bunce Island had passed through Port Loko, the trading settlement at the headwaters of Port Loko Creek 20 above the harbor. There, they might be resold to another African slave merchant, or a to Euro-African or European trader, who put them in boats for the trip downriver to the British slave castle.

At Bunce Island the slave traders inspected the captives like animals at auction -- their eyes, mouths, teeth, ears, genitals -- and struck them on the legs to make them jump to make sure they were not lame. The Royal African Company men branded the slaves on the right breast with the letters "RACE" (Royal African Company of England) when they purchased them, and on the left breast with the letter "S" ("Serelion") when they put them aboard the slave ships. The captives, seeing that they were being treated like cattle at auction and horrified at the implications, often believed that white men were going to butcher and eat them. Unable to cope with the reality of their situation as they saw it, some captives became catatonic, a condition that occurred often enough that the slave traders had a name for it: "the lethargy." Slaves in this condition often died of starvation. During Bunce Island's Late Period, the private traders tied colored strings to the captives' hands instead of branding them and hired translators to tell them where they were going. After that, references to "the lethargy" seem to disappear from the records.

When they were put aboard the slave ships, the Africans were packed into the hold in great numbers and in terrible unsanitary conditions. Many died on the middle passage to America, their bodies thrown overboard. It was said at the time that sharks followed the slave ships all the way across the Atlantic. If the ship experienced good weather and fair winds and reached America in only a few weeks, then only a few of the slaves might die. But if the ship struck a storm or was caught in the doldrums until the water and food supplies began to run out, then many more of the slaves would die. Modern historical studies show that about 15% of the Africans perished on an average voyage. Some went mad in these unspeakable circumstances. Others tried to commit suicide by refusing food, only to be beaten until they agreed to eat. Others developed boils and cysts on their skin which in the filthy hold where they were kept became badly infected. An English traveler who boarded a slave ship in Sierra Leone in the 1770s described "two or three slaves thrown overboard every day dying of fever flux, measles, worms all together."

## **THE PORT**

Visitors to the castle in the mid- and late 1700s remarked at the sophistication of Bunce Island's port facility and the surprisingly large volume of business carried on there. A French commercial official named S.M.X. Golberry who came to Bunce Island in May, 1786 described with great admiration the scene he witnessed there:

*...I counted sixteen ships in this road [channel], namely, three English vessels of six hundred tons burthen, five brigs, and six boats of the same*

*nation, together with two Danish three-masted ships of seven hundred tons burthen (Golberry 1808: 193).*

Bunce Island offered a variety of valuable services to visiting ships. The castle's grumetes could repair large vessels and even careen them on the shore and clean their hulls. The castle could supply vital shipbuilding materials, such as masts, planks, and tar. It could also provision visiting ships, supplying such essential items as fresh water (brought from the spring on neighboring Tasso Island) and rice and citrus (also from Tasso Island where it was grown by grumete farmers).

But Bunce Island also possessed many boats of its own. Golberry describes a "small navy very well run with almost entirely all black seamen." The grumetes manned and sometimes captained the castle's small sloops used to bring back slaves and goods from Bunce Island's far-flung outfactories. The grumetes also built the small coasting vessels and, if Golberry's account is accurate, perhaps even some large ocean-going ships as well. The Frenchman described a shipyard at Bunce Island run by grumetes:

*A small bay situated on the western side of the isle was made with much skill and attention into a shipyard and repair yard and there they made a brig of 200 tons with native wood and Negro workers (Golberry 1802: 280).*

A drawing of Bunce Island made in 1749 illustrates the powerful role the grumetes played at Bunce Island's port. A flagpole standing outside the castle's walls is labeled "Capt. of the Ports flag." It symbolized the authority of the grumete leader who held that title "from his office of attending to examining all that goes and comes to the Island."

Today, the only visible remains of the port facility is the stone-built jetty on the downriver side of Bunce Island. The jetty was connected to the castle's main gate by a roadway lined with curbstones, some of which are still visible. Slaves were marched out the gate, down the roadway, and finally to the end of the jetty. There, they were put in shallow-draft boats to be taken out to the deep water where the slave ships lay at anchor. Many thousands of captives set foot in Africa for the last time at the end of the jetty.

## **NORTH AMERICAN CONNECTIONS**

Beginning around 1756 Bunce Island's principal owner, Richard Oswald, established a close business relationship with Henry Laurens, one of the richest slave dealers in South Carolina. Laurens became Oswald's business agent in Charles Town, receiving the slave ships that came from Bunce Island, advertising the slaves for sale in the local newspaper, and organizing the auctions of slaves for local planters. Laurens sent the proceeds of the slave auctions to Oswald in London, taking a 10% commission for his efforts.

In dispatches he sent to Oswald, Laurens makes it clear that slaves from Bunce Island were in great demand in South Carolina. Rice was the colony's staple crop, and local rice

planters were willing to pay high prices for slaves from what they called the “Rice Coast” of West Africa, the region between what is now Senegal and Gambia in the north and Sierra Leone and Liberia in the south where Africans had been cultivating rice for hundreds of years. Rice Coast Africans were experts at this technical form of agriculture, and Carolina planters were anxious to have their expertise. The rice industry spread to neighboring Georgia in the 1760s, and Oswald employed another agent in Savannah to receive his slave ships from Bunce Island there. Both agents sent the proceeds of their sales to London, often in the form of barrels of rice grown by African slaves.

In October, 1764 Henry Laurens wrote:

*Another Cargo from Bance Island belonging to Mr. Oswald & Co... sold...under my direction, &...they certainly have made better averages than any other.... They have as great advantages as any and greater than almost every other in ... [Charles] Town (Papers of Henry Laurens, vol. 4, p. 478).*

But Henry Laurens’ connection to Richard Oswald extended beyond just handling Bunce Island’s slave ships arriving in South Carolina. In 1759, Laurens shipped materials to Bunce Island that were produced by South Carolina’s forest industry - oars, plank, masts, pine tar, pitch, and turpentine -- which were used in the castle’s shipyard. Later, Laurens made arrangements to build a large, ocean-going ship for Oswald in South Carolina, and in 1764, he sent his own ship to Bunce Island to obtain slaves for two new rice plantations he was establishing in coastal Georgia (near modern Darien). That same year, he helped Oswald establish several new plantations of his own near St. Augustine in British East Florida which Oswald populated with slaves he sent directly from Bunce Island.

American rice planters were keenly aware of the value of rice-growing slaves from Sierra Leone, and slave ships owned by other private merchants also called at Bunce Island, purchasing slaves from the chief agent and taking them to Charles Town and Savannah. The names “Bance Island” and “Sierra-Leon” often appeared in advertisements for slave auctions in South Carolina and Georgia that were *not* handled by Laurens. During the mid- and late 1700s thousands of captives were taken from Bunce Island and other slave trading entrepôts in Sierra Leone to South Carolina and Georgia.

Most of the slave ships that called at Bunce Island were British. But North American ships also called there. Newport in Rhode Island was the major port for the Atlantic slave trade in North America, and Newport ships took slaves from Bunce Island to the West Indies and South Carolina on a regular basis both before and after the American Revolution. Slave ships from other ports in North America also called at the castle, including New York; New London, Connecticut; and Salem, Massachusetts. Bunce Island’s connection to North America, thus, runs in two directions: British ships took slaves from Bunce Island to North America, but American ships also came to buy them.

## AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Henry Laurens and Richard Oswald both rose to international prominence during the American Revolutionary War, and their personal connection forged through their business dealings over Bunce Island would affect the course of American history.

In 1777, Laurens was elected President of the Continental Congress, the head of America's provisional government, and was later named American envoy to Holland. But before Laurens could reach Europe to take up his post, he was captured by the British Navy on the high seas and imprisoned in the Tower of London. He was the highest-ranking American official captured during the Revolutionary War. Laurens' old business associate, Richard Oswald, intervened on his behalf with the British Government and later posted bail so that Laurens could be released from prison. In the process, Oswald became known to British authorities as a loyal Briton with notable diplomatic skills and many close and trusted acquaintances among the most prominent Americans.

When the Americans won their revolution on the battlefield, the British Government appointed Richard Oswald to negotiate the Treaty of Paris under which Britain would formally acknowledge U.S. Independence. The American negotiators in Paris were Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, John Jay and, by an extraordinary turn of events, Henry Laurens. Laurens had been released from prison and was now available to attend the discussions. The two former slave trading partners -- one British and the other American -- sat across the table from one another in Paris in 1782 at one of the most fateful negotiations in world history. U.S. Independence was, thus, negotiated in part between Bunce Island's British owner and his American business agent from South Carolina.

During the negotiations Laurens convinced Oswald, his old partner in the slave trade, that the British strategy of recruiting American slaves into the British Army was a violation of the rules of war. The slaves were American property, Laurens argued, and the British had no right to take them away. Oswald agreed that under the terms of the treaty the British would return the slaves to Americans, but Sir Guy Carleton, the British North American Commander, refused to hand over the former slaves, and despite a personal appeal from George Washington, he made arrangements to send them to Nova Scotia. The British general told Washington that sending the former slaves back into bondage after their military service to the Crown would be "a breach of the public faith."

Far away in Sierra Leone Bunce Island was, itself, caught up in the tumultuous events of the American Revolutionary War. A battle of the Revolution was actually fought there in 1779 when America's French allies took the opportunity of the war to attack British interests in West Africa. The French naval commander, de Pontevèz, took great pride in the total destruction of the castle, and in a report he filed with the Admiralty in Paris he lists every structure he demolished and all the slaves and goods he took away. When the French finally departed, the Bunce Island men returned and rebuilt their castle as usual. Seven years later when Monsieur Golberry visited, he remarked that the entire castle was remade "with less luxury...but [with] comfort, strength, and some ornament."



## **BUNCE ISLAND AND FREETOWN**

Sierra Leone's history took a decisive turn in 1787 when British philanthropists established a colony for freed slaves on the Sierra Leone peninsula, the mountainous landmass that forms the entrance to the great harbor. The "Province of Freedom," as the new colony was called, was built near the site of the "Watering Place," a central meeting point where visiting ships purchased fresh water, timber, and provisions. The Bunce Island traders regarded the new colonists -- former slaves from England -- as a threat to their interests. The slave trade was still in full swing, and Bunce Island -- not this fledgling colony -- was the center of commerce in the harbor. Bunce Island's chief agent conspired against the colony, at one point selling some of the colonists who were accused of stealing at the castle to a passing slave ship. The agent ultimately succeeded in turning King Jimmy, the Temne ruler on the Sierra Leone peninsula, against the settlers by inciting a visiting British warship to fire on the king's town. In retaliation, King Jimmy burned the Province of Freedom in 1789, just two years after it was established. Bunce Island continued to reign supreme in the great harbor.

Three years later, British anti-slavery activists succeeded in reestablishing the colony. The new settlers, called "Nova Scotians," were the former slaves from North America who had fought on the British side during the Revolutionary War, the very people Laurens and Oswald tried to send back to slavery. Although the British had given them their freedom in Canada, they were unhappy with the cold climate and harsh conditions there and eager to leave. Arriving in Sierra Leone in 1792, they called their new settlement "Freetown," and for the next 15 years, while the slave trade was still legal under British law, Freetown and Bunce Island maintained a strained relationship. The two British settlements -- one based on freedom, and the other on slavery -- cooperated at times and competed at others. The early governors of Freetown came to Sierra Leone on slave ships owned by John and Alexander Anderson, the nephews of Richard Oswald who took control the castle after their uncle's death in 1784. The British governors also sent to Bunce Island for their mail and newspapers from Europe and manufactured goods like window glass and door hinges. But the Bunce Island men also conspired against the colony. They interfered with the Freetown's trade whenever they could, urging the local kings not to sell the colony foodstuffs and essential goods.

When French naval forces burned Freetown in 1794 and then sailed upriver and destroyed Bunce Island, the slave traders employed the Nova Scotian settlers to rebuild their castle. The former slaves from North America had no love for the slave traders, but with their colony demolished and their wives and children at risk, they had no choice but to accept work at the castle. There was no work in Freetown at this period, and ships entering the harbor were still sailing past the tiny colony to Bunce Island, the only significant port in Sierra Leone. Ironically, these workers were the same people Oswald and Laurens had tried to send back to slavery after the American Revolutionary War. And just as ironically, many were from South Carolina and Georgia which had received so many slaves from Sierra Leone. The last castle at Bunce Island -- the one whose ruins stand there today -- was actually built by African Americans in a situation of great peril. No other slave castle has so many complex and interwoven links to North America.

When public debate over a proposed law to ban the Atlantic slave trade reached a head in Great Britain, John and Alexander Anderson, fearing the loss of their livelihood, petitioned Parliament in 1798. They had “invested a very great Capital” in Bunce Island, they said, and stopping the slave trade would render their castle “useless” and their investment “wholly lost.” They had also spent £20,000, they said, to rebuild the castle after the French attack of 1794. The Andersons were “praying that the said bill not pass.”

## **LATE HISTORY**

When Britain’s Parliament outlawed the Atlantic slave trade in 1807, the tables finally turned for Bunce Island. Freetown would now be the dominant force in the great harbor. The British Government made Freetown a Crown Colony in 1808 and sent out a royal governor to maintain order. Britain based a naval squadron at Freetown to patrol the West African coast in search of slave ships violating the ban. When the Navy captured illegal slave vessels, it brought them to Sierra Leone and freed the slaves into the colony. Between 1807 and about 1855, the British freed about 55,000 “Liberated Africans” in Freetown. The descendants of the various groups of freed slaves that settled there came together to form the Creole people (now called “Krios”). By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Krios were proudly calling their city the “Athens of West Africa.”

The Bunce Island traders shut down their operation immediately after Parliament prohibited the slave trade. Their castle was too large, too visible, and too close to Freetown to carry on its former activities. John and Alexander Anderson tried to convert their castle into a cotton plantation, using their African workers and the lands on nearby Tasso Island to grow the crop. But Bunce Island’s grumetes rioted in 1809 likely because their employers could no longer hire them in such great numbers or pay them at the same high rate. The Freetown governor sent troops to put down the riot in order to preserve the castle’s valuable buildings in case the colony needed them. A local newspaper reported:

*On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October last, information was received in this Colony that an insurrection existed in the British Settlement of Bunce Island, and that the island was in possession of the insurgents. A detachment of regulars and militia was immediately sent up, and at the request of the European Superintendent took charge of the island. (African Herald, Nov. 25, 1809)*

The British would later use the castle briefly as a recruiting station for African troops raised among the Liberated Africans for service in the Napoleonic Wars.

In 1817, a British merchant named Henry Williams took over the castle and converted it into a saw mill. “African teak,” a valuable hardwood, was in great demand in Britain at that period for shipbuilding. African workers cut the timber upriver and floated it down to Bunce Island and other sawmills built on the harbor islands. The timber industry eventually petered out, though, and by the early 1840s Bunce Island was probably abandoned. Freetown grew into a large and prosperous city, and by the late 1800s the

memory of Bunce Island had faded. Period accounts show that British civil servants often made weekend excursions to the picturesque island, but had little idea of its history or even its original purpose. A visitor in 1889 said he could “gather little or no information” and speculated that the castle might have been used in the slave trade “or built to prevent the slave trade.” Even the name was lost. Sometime after the island was abandoned, the original names -- “Bence” and “Bance” -- were lost, and it became known as “Bunce Island,” probably through confusion with the Bunce River near Freetown. The slave castle that had dominated the harbor for almost 150 years was now forgotten.

### **M.C.F. EASMON’S RESEARCH**

M.C.F. Easmon was a Sierra Leonean medical doctor and amateur historian who generated a great deal of popular interest in the country’s history and culture in the years after World War II when Sierra Leone was approaching Independence. Easmon founded the Sierra Leone National Museum and the Monuments and Relics Commission, the government agency charged with designating and preserving historic sites. In 1948, Dr. Easmon and his associates on the Commission made Bunce Island Sierra Leone’s first officially declared historic site under the Monuments and Relics Act.

Dr. Easmon led an expedition to the island the previous year. His team cleared the ruins of vegetation for the first time since the castle was abandoned a century before. A photographer went along and took a series of black-and-white photographs of the ruins after the vegetation was cut back. The photographs show enormous trees growing inside the buildings and on the tops of the stone walls. Surveyors from the Public Works Department also produced a topographical map of the island and a ground plan of the castle. The surveyors would later create a model of the ruins as they appeared at that time. The model and the black-and-white pictures are still in the collections of the Sierra Leone Museum. Easmon built a “Rest House” on Bunce Island and hired a caretaker for the first time whose job was to reside there and protect the ruins from vandalism.

Notes Dr. Easmon left in the Sierra Leone National Museum files give an impression of his early work on Bunce Island:

*When the Commission took over in 1947 nothing of the ruins could be seen from the river and way had to be hacked through to them. The general clearing of the undergrowth took place leaving numerous large trees in front of around and growing on the numerous walls. The help of the Forestry [Department] was enlisted to fell the trees so that the remaining walls were not damaged leaving alone those growing on the walls and sending a dense lattice work of roots to the ground supporting and destroying the walls.*

Easmon’s pioneering work is still important today. The photographs and the model of the ruins his team prepared are invaluable. They show a number of structures that have collapsed during the past 60 years, including the guardroom that surmounted the main

gate, the upstairs interior walls of Bance Island House, and the castle's rear outer wall. They also show a vaulted building with its roof still intact in the landward complex that has now completely collapsed. But, unfortunately, Dr. Easmon's good efforts did not survive him. After his death in 1972, Sierra Leone authorities paid little attention to Bunce Island. The caretakers went unsupervised and sometimes unpaid, and at least one broke some of the gravestones and sold the pieces to tourists. Tourists also took away thousands of artifacts they found on the ground -- pottery shards, gunflints, glass beads, etc. These objects had no commercial worth, but were of great scientific value. One monetarily valuable object was stolen, though -- a French bronze ship's cannon dated 1794. It may have come from one of the French ships that attacked the castle that year.

### **JOSEPH OPALA'S RESEARCH**

Joseph Opala was a young Peace Corps volunteer when he began research on Bunce Island in 1976. A recent graduate in anthropology, he was directed to the castle by U.S. Ambassador Michael Samuels who had seen the ruins and was impressed by their historical importance. Samuels gave a small U.S. Embassy grant to the Institute of African Studies at Sierra Leone's Fourah Bay College for a fieldtrip to Bunce Island for lecturers and students, and Opala, who was on the Institute's staff, went along to conduct an archaeological survey. He made corrections to the ground plan prepared by Dr. Easmon's surveyors, adding details they had missed. He also identified several concentrations of artifacts, particularly on the slope beneath the fortification where the slave traders consistently tossed their rubbish. Opala analyzed the artifacts, identifying a wide range of European ceramics and some African pottery. He submitted his report on the castle -- *Archaeological Resources on Bunce Island: A Preliminary Survey* (1976) -- to the Sierra Leone National Museum and the United States Embassy.

Opala later obtained a grant from the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities for a more extensive study of the ruins. He made repeated trips to the island in 1977 and 1978, mapping and photographing the ruins and observing features of the buildings that provide clues to their original appearance, including grooves that show the locations of verandas and notches that indicate where stairways were attached to the inside and outside of buildings. Opala was also able to locate a contemporary drawing and several contemporary accounts of the castle in the Fourah Bay College Library, and armed with that information, he determined the probable functions of many of the structures.

During the past 30 years, Opala has continued his research on Bunce Island. He has collected many contemporary descriptions of the castle recorded by visitors during the 137 years it was used for slave trading and the roughly 30 years it was used for other purposes. He has also identified five contemporary drawings of the castle, made in 1682, 1726, 1749, 1792, and 1805. Opala has been working since 2004 with Gary Chatelain, a colleague of his at James Madison University in Virginia and a specialist in Computer Assisted Design. The historian and the artist are reconstructing the Bunce Island castle in the computer as it appeared in 1805 when the last drawing was made just two years before it was shut down for slave trading. Opala and Chatelain are basing their

reconstruction on all the available historical and archaeological data. One of the advantages of their computer-generated image is that it can be altered and added to as new information comes in. Their computer animation can serve, in effect, as an expanding database. It can also be used -- when the island is preserved and interpreted -- to show visitors to the castle exactly what the buildings looked like 200 years ago.

## **ORAL TRADITIONS**

Historical and archaeological data can tell us a great deal about Bunce Island, but oral traditions are also a valuable source of information. When asked about Bunce Island, the Temne people who live in fishing villages on the nearby islands all point to Bai Adam, a chief who lives in the village of Madina seven miles upriver from the castle. "Bai Adam" (Bai means "chief" in Temne) is the hereditary title given to section chiefs presiding over the Kamasondo Section of Loco Masama Chiefdom, one of Sierra Leone's 149 chiefdoms. In 1979, Joseph Opala visited Madina and asked Bai Adam Balay Kamara to relate his family history. Bai Adam donned his ceremonial gown, sat on his throne, and recited all the generations of his family back to a founding ancestor he called "Bai Adam Bensali" (Bai Adam Bence Island). Bai Adam maintained that his family is directly descended from Bunce Island's last African foreman, the headman in charge of all the grumetes, or African workers, when the castle closed for business in 1807.

Bai Adam Balay Kamara's account can be validated through both history and archaeology. Visitors to Bunce Island in 1791 and 1805 reported that an African man named "Adam" was the foreman of the castle's 600 African workers. Adam was said to live with his men and their families in a village at the south end of Bunce Island called "Adam's Town." Today, Adam's grave can still be seen on that part of the island. The beautifully carved stone slab sent out from England has been badly vandalized in recent years, but Opala recorded the inscription when he first saw it in 1976. The slab was dedicated to "Adam," a ship's carpenter. It said the stone was "placed over his Remains by the Proprietors of this Island in Debt of Gratitude for his faithful Services."

British traveler Anna Maria Falconbridge described her visit to Adam's Town in 1791:

*Adam's Town was the first place they took me to; it is so called from a native of that name, who has the management of all the grammattos, or free black servants, but under the control of the Agent. The whole town consists of a street with about twenty-five houses on each side:--on the right of all is Adam's house. This building does not differ from the rest, except in size, being much more spacious than any other, and being barricaded [sic] with a mud wall (Falconbridge 1802: 26-27).*

Bunce Island's African foreman was a powerful figure by the late 1700s, and without him the slave traders' operation would have come to a halt. Adam presided over hundreds of African workers. These workers, or their parents or grandparents, had come to the castle seeking employment and safety at a time when the slave trade made raiding and

kidnapping a daily occurrence. The British traders, for their part, were probably more likely to employ Africans from outside their immediate area, as outsiders would likely be more loyal to their British employers than to the local king. When Bunce Island closed down after 1807, the grumetes would have no place to go, and it would appear they settled under the authority of their foreman Adam, or perhaps his son, in an area upriver which the British had once leased from their African landlord. To this day, the citizens of Madina still call their hereditary chief “Adam” for Bunce Island’s last foreman.

Today, Paramount Chief Bai Sama Lamina Sam II of Loko Masama Chiefdom is the traditional ruler on the harbor’s north shore. Bai Sama is almost certainly the direct descendant of the kings called “Bai Sama” who acted as Bunce Island’s landlords. In 1979, Bai Sama became angry at Bai Adam Balay Kamara after Kamara, who was his subordinate, claimed the right to secede from Loko Masama Chiefdom and form his own independent chiefdom, basing his claims on his ancestors’ links to Bunce Island. Bai Adam believed that the British slave traders had given Bunce Island to his ancestor “Adam Bensali” before they left Sierra Leone and returned to Britain. Bai Adam and his people had lost the memory of Bai Sama’s sovereignty over the area, including Bunce Island, going back to the days of the slave trade. The angry paramount chief removed Kamara from office and suspended the rights of his family to rule in Kamasondo Section for several years. But after Kamara’s death, Bai Sama allowed a new Bai Adam to be crowned in 1990. Today, Bai Adam Foday Kabbah III governs Kamasondo Section and makes the traditional libations at the grave of the first Adam at Bunce Island. But the current Bai Adam acknowledges the authority of Bai Sama, just as the slave traders at Bunce Island did in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Amazingly, almost two hundred years after it was abandoned, Bunce Island is still playing a role in the politics of the great harbor.

### **“THE GULLAH CONNECTION”**

The Rice Coast Africans exiled to slavery in South Carolina and Georgia and their modern descendants have a unique history. The slave ships coming from Africa brought disease-bearing mosquitoes that thrived in the semi-tropical climate of the “low country,” the swampy area along the coastline. Mosquitoes proliferated as more and more plantations were opened up, breeding in the shallow, slow-moving waters of the rice fields and spreading malaria and yellow fever. The African slaves had some resistance to these tropical fevers, but the British colonists, coming from a cold climate in Europe, were extremely vulnerable. While many white colonists died, the black population increased as the rice industry expanded, and by about 1708, there was a black majority in South Carolina. The Africans outnumbered their European masters. Later, when the rice economy expanded into coastal Georgia, a black majority developed there as well.

The Africans living in the South Carolina and Georgia low country became known as “Gullahs,” a people with a distinct language and culture. With so few whites around to influence them and with slave owners and their families leaving the plantations during the spring and summer months when fever ran rampant, the Gullahs developed their own language. Like the Krio language of Sierra Leone, Gullah is an English-based creole

with African loan words and many African influences in its grammar and sentence structure. Many Gullah words and expressions have been traced to Sierra Leonean languages, particularly Mende. The Gullahs also have a unique culture with strong African influences on their foodways, customs, crafts, folklore, music, dance, religious beliefs, and family life. The Gullah people still have a traditional diet based on rice, and still prepare dishes similar to those common in West Africa today.

Modern Sierra Leoneans have a special link to the Gullah people. The Sierra Leone region has always had a small population, and the captives taken from there to the West Indies found themselves among much larger numbers of Africans from more populous places like the Gold Coast (Ghana), Slave Coast (Benin and Nigeria), the Congo, and Angola. Outnumbered by Africans from these other regions, the slaves from Sierra Leone had relatively little impact on the development of language and culture in the Caribbean Basin. But in coastal South Carolina and Georgia, where Rice Coast slaves predominated, Africans from Sierra Leone had an impact that persists even to the present day. Sierra Leoneans and Gullahs have powerful and lasting family connections.

### **GULLAH HOMECOMINGS**

The Sierra Leone public has an abiding fascination with the “Gullah Connection,” the historical thread that links them to the Gullah people in South Carolina and Georgia. When Joseph Opala began giving lectures on that subject in Sierra Leone in 1985, he was astonished at the popular reaction. Every radio station and newspaper in Freetown wanted to cover the story, and people constantly stopped him in the streets to ask about the Gullah people and their links to Sierra Leone. Popular excitement continued to grow, and in 1988 Sierra Leone’s President Joseph Momoh made an official visit to Penn Center, the famous Gullah community organization on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. The Gullahs performed traditional stories for the president, served him their rice dishes, and showed him the mortars-and-pestles and “fanner” baskets their ancestors used to process the rice. When Momoh spoke to a group of Gullahs in the Krio language, there was a powerful response as the similarity between the two languages was clear to all.

President Momoh was so impressed with Sierra Leone’s cultural affinities to the Gullah that he invited a Gullah delegation to make a homecoming journey the following year. In November 1989, fourteen people came to Sierra Leone on what was officially called the “Gullah Homecoming.” The Gullahs spent a week touring the country, causing a sensation. Their visit was the lead item in all the country’s media every day they were there. But the most powerful moments came when the Gullahs visited Bunce Island. A.K. Turay, the president’s chief of staff, read a proclamation calling upon the “common ancestors of Sierra Leoneans and Gullahs” to bless the homecoming and never allow their single family to be torn apart again. Emory Campbell, the leader of the Gullah delegation, was called forward and anointed on his forehead with the soil of Bunce Island as a symbol that, through his visit to Sierra Leone, all Gullah people were being reconnected to their ancestral homeland. That day, a Sierra Leonean cabinet minister called Bunce Island, “a little piece of Africa that was destroyed to build America.” South

Carolina Educational Television later produced a documentary film on the Gullah Homecoming called *Family Across the Sea*. The film's most poignant moments are when the Gullah visitors visit Bunce Island and enter the men's slave yard.

Sierra Leoneans were so moved by the Gullah Homecoming that many people called on Joseph Opala, the historian, to find "more specific" links between Sierra Leoneans and Gullahs. "Can you find a particular family with a link to Sierra Leone," they asked, "or a particular person whose ancestors came from here?" Responding to the public's strong desire for more information about their lost family in America, Opala and fellow researchers located a Gullah woman in 1990 whose family has preserved a song in the Mende language of Sierra Leone. Mary Moran, an elderly Gullah woman from coastal Georgia, can sing a 5-line song that has been passed down in her family, mother-to-daughter, for 200 years. Opala and his colleagues later discovered a Mende village in Sierra Leone where people still sing the same song, an ancient funeral hymn. As a result of their research, the "Moran Family Homecoming" took place in 1997. Mrs. Moran visited the Mende village where her song is still sung and made a tearful journey to Bunce Island. In a documentary film based on her visit, called *The Language You Cry In* (1998), Moran's son, Wilson, stands in the slave yard at Bunce Island and says: "I feel a lot of pain here, a lot of pain." It is terrible, he said, to think "what man can do to man."

A third Gullah homecoming took place in May, 2005 when Thomalind Polite, a 32-year old schoolteacher from South Carolina, arrived in Sierra Leone for a week of national celebration. Mrs. Polite is the 7<sup>th</sup> generation descendant of "Priscilla," a 10-year-old girl taken on a slave ship from Sierra Leone to South Carolina in 1756. "Priscilla's Homecoming" was made possible by the discovery of a paper trail -- including slave ship records, slave sale records, and plantation records -- that connects Mrs. Polite to her ancestor from Sierra Leone. The paper trail was discovered by writer Edward Ball, a descendant of Priscilla's owners who researched his own family records, and Joseph Opala who discovered the records of the slave ship that took Priscilla to America. The extraordinary paper trail begins with a letter from a slave ship captain dated April 8, 1756. Records show that the ship purchased some of its slaves at Bunce Island, and thus Priscilla may have passed through there. When Mrs. Polite entered the slave yard for women and children, she said she could feel Priscilla's presence by "walking where she walked." She could feel the little girl's agony, she said, at being torn from her family forever. Wiping tears from her eyes, she said, "I know she yearned for them everyday."

The three Gullah homecomings (1989, 1997, and 2005) and the African Americans' poignant encounters with the terrible reality of Bunce Island are now a part of the castle's modern history. Today, Bunce Island is playing a powerful role as a place of memory.

### **U.S. PARK SERVICE STUDY**

In 1989, the United States Park Service sent an expert team to survey Bunce Island at the request of the Sierra Leone Government. The three-man team -- including David Reynolds, the team leader; David Ates, an historic architect; and Daniel Murphy, a



specialist in historic site interpretation -- spent a week observing the island. Joseph Opala took the team through the ruins, explaining his interpretations of the buildings. He also provided the group with the improved maps he had produced based on Dr. Easmon's original 1947 survey. Seeing the condition of the ruins, and recognizing their historical importance, Murphy, the historical interpreter, said that he had "never seen an historic site so important for the United States in such urgent need of preservation."

The Park Service team ultimately issued a 49-page report containing an outline of Bunce Island's history, a description of the ruins, recommendations for the castle's preservation, and suggestions for how Bunce Island can be interpreted for the public. The team suggested that the remaining structures be preserved with unobtrusive metal braces to support the walls. The walls can also be strengthened by chemical treatments that make them more resistant to moisture and the effects of weather. Some walls that have fallen down, but not shattered or crumbled, can also be raised and put back in place. The report suggests that all-weather displays be placed in front of each structure, containing text, a drawing showing how the structure originally appeared, and facsimile documents. The Park Service team suggested that a museum devoted Bunce Island be built in Freetown, since the island itself is too small for such a structure, and that a dock be built nearby to accommodate the boats that would make daily trips to the island from the capital city. The 1989 report estimates the cost of preserving the castle at that time at \$2,255,000.

Before leaving Sierra Leone, the Park Service team met with Sierra Leone Government officials and U.S. Ambassador Cynthia Perry who made strenuous efforts to facilitate their trip. The team also held a public meeting at the U.S. Embassy for Sierra Leoneans engaged in historical scholarship and public history work. The Park Service team was surprised, though, when several prominent citizens objected strongly to their recommendations. A Sierra Leonean historian said that their notion of preserving the castle without reconstructing it was insulting. Why preserve ruins, the historian asked, when you can rebuild the entire castle? The Park Service team had not considered reconstructing the castle as that could entail destroying many of the original walls and lead to a Disneyland effect with new buildings replacing the historically valuable existing structures. But the team's ideas made little sense to many people at the meeting.

This controversial meeting suggests that a great deal of public discussion should take place before any preservation plan is implemented. Sierra Leoneans should be made aware of the value of the existing historical structures and the possibilities for vivid interpretation of those structures afforded by modern museum display methods. The public also needs to understand what makes Bunce Island so special. Dr. Easmon expressed it best when he called Bunce Island a place "where history sleeps." The most frequently visited slave castles in other parts of West Africa are in built-up areas where time has moved on, but Bunce Island is an isolated setting where visitors have the sense of time standing still. Even the most boisterous visitors become quiet when they climb the hill from the beach and find themselves standing amidst ancient ruins on an uninhabited island. Bunce Island's unique ambiance and its singular links to African Americans can potentially make this castle one of the most frequently visited historic

sites in West Africa. But those advantages can also be squandered if the castle is preserved and interpreted in the wrong way.

The U.S. National Park Service followed up the survey with another visit to Sierra Leone in April, 1992 by Herb Cables, then the NPS Deputy Director. Cables came to discuss the preservation of the castle with President Momoh, but after Momoh's government was overthrown by the NPRC military coup only a few weeks later and the subsequent expansion of Sierra Leone's civil war, momentum was lost. The Park Service waited until 1997 when it appeared that the war was winding down before taking a further step. Another Park Service delegation was set to visit Sierra Leone in July of that year, but the AFRC military coup two months before prevented the meeting from taking place.

### **DAVID HANCOCK'S RESEARCH**

In 1995, a young American historian, named David Hancock, published an extraordinary book called *Citizens of the World*. Hancock's book is a history of Grant, Oswald & Company, the private merchant firm that took control of Bunce Island in 1748 and converted an unprofitable castle abandoned by the Royal African Company into one of the most lucrative slave trading operations on the West African coast. Hancock provides a densely detailed account of the lives of the various partners in the firm and the business strategies they used to project themselves into positions of wealth and political influence. Hancock shows that the London merchants used a system of "backward integration" to enhance the efficiency and profitability of their various interconnected enterprises. During the height of their prosperity, Grant, Oswald & Company controlled a commercial empire that stretched from Great Britain, to West Africa, to New England and the Southern Colonies, to the West Indies, to India. Hancock even gets into the minds of the London partners by analyzing the layout of their counting house in London, the designs of their country homes in Scotland, and even their collections of paintings and fine arts.

Hancock's chapter on Bunce Island is particularly detailed. The author shows how the partners rebuilt the castle, organized their British and African workers, obtained the most attractive trade goods, and secured lucrative contracts from wholesale buyers. He also shows how they used their commercial advantages in the slave trade to benefit their plantations in the West Indies and North America. Much of this detail comes from Hancock's access to a unique source of information -- the private papers of Richard Oswald. Oswald's modern descendants are still a wealthy and influential family in Great Britain, and they have preserved their ancestor's large body of personal records. Gaining the family's trust, Hancock became the first scholar to obtain access to these invaluable documents. Hancock's purpose was to write a general book on Oswald and his partners' commercial empire, not a book focused solely on Bunce Island, and there is undoubtedly a great deal more information on the castle to be mined in the Oswald records. Hancock's work suggests that when scholars have the time and resources to look, they will find many valuable documents relating to Bunce Island in archives all over the Atlantic Basin.

## **POPULAR INTEREST**

Bunce Island was unknown to most Sierra Leoneans until the mid-1980s. Before then, when the subject was brought up, most people confused it with Sherbro Island -- often called "Bonthe Island" -- a hundred miles away off the coast of southern Sierra Leone. But even Sierra Leoneans who lived near Bunce Island and knew it well often called it "those old Portuguese houses." Many rural Sierra Leoneans refer to the oldest evidence of European activity in their country as "Portuguese" since the Portuguese were the first white people to come to West Africa in the 1400s. Indeed, Bai Adam's people upriver from Bunce Island still refer to their founding ancestor in some contexts as "Adam Potogi," even though the Bunce Island foreman served British slave traders and was born long after the Portuguese had left the Sierra Leone River. Until very recently Bunce Island was either unknown to Sierra Leoneans or completely misunderstood.

But the U.S. Park Service team's visit in 1989 and the three Gullah homecomings that followed gave saturation publicity to Bunce Island, and today many Sierra Leoneans are keenly aware of the castle and its links to African Americans. Sierra Leoneans responded to these events with enormous enthusiasm. When the first Gullah homecoming group went to Bunce Island in 1989, a thousand people showed up in launches, boats, and canoes to be there for the historic occasion. This was undoubtedly the largest number of people on Bunce Island since the slave trade ended there 200 years ago. Today, Bunce Island is an "evergreen" story in the Sierra Leone media -- a story of continuing popular interest guaranteed to draw attention whenever it appears in the local papers. Although many Sierra Leoneans remember President Momoh as an ineffectual leader, they give him credit, nonetheless, for launching the efforts to highlight Bunce Island. Sierra Leoneans see the preservation of Bunce Island and the nurturing of historical and family ties with African Americans as important aspects of their national development.

The three Gullah Homecomings also generated a great deal of publicity in the United States. All three events were covered by U.S. newspapers, radio, and television. The Gullah Homecoming of 1989 resulted in *Family Across the Sea*, an award-winning documentary film produced by South Carolina Educational Television; and the Moran Family Homecoming of 1997 gave rise to another film, *The Language Your Cry In*. Both videos contain poignant scenes of African Americans visiting Bunce Island. These films appeared on TV and have been purchased by thousands of schools and colleges throughout the country. Edward Balls's book *Slaves in the Family* (1998) with its account of Priscilla and the author's visit to Bunce Island also drew attention to the castle. As a result of this publicity, many Americans interested in black history are aware of Bunce Island to some degree. A few years ago Googling "Bunce Island" yielded only two or three websites, but now the list goes on through several screen changes.

There are now several organizations devoted to the preservation of Bunce Island. The Friends of Sierra Leone (FoSL) is a group made up of former Peace Corps volunteers and Sierra Leoneans living in the U.S. FoSL has a "Bunce Island Committee" that aims at educating the American public on the importance of Bunce Island and contributing to the castle's preservation. The Sierra Leone-Gullah Heritage Association (SLGHA),

based in Washington, DC, is composed of Sierra Leoneans who immigrated to the U.S. in recent years. It aims at promoting person-to-person contacts between Sierra Leoneans and Gullahs and spreading information on the historical bonds between the two peoples. FoSL and SLGHA are now sponsoring a traveling exhibit on Bunce Island prepared by Joseph Opala that will tour the U.S. and Sierra Leone in 2008. Bunce Island Preservation, Inc. (BIPI), based in New Haven, Connecticut, is a group of Americans and Sierra Leoneans living in the U.S. The group has reached out to the U.S. Congress and UNESCO in search of funds to preserve the castle. And, finally, an organization in Sierra Leone called Bunce Island Preservation Initiative, is also striving to preserve the castle. The Sierra Leonean group was one of the sponsors of Priscilla's Homecoming in 2005.

Sierra Leone government agencies have also focused on the castle's preservation in recent years. The Monuments and Relics Commission, which has official responsibility for Bunce Island's protection, sponsored the 1989 Park Service initiative and the 2006 archaeological survey led by Christopher DeCorse. Sierra Leone's Ministry of Tourism and National Tourist Board are also actively supporting Bunce Island's preservation.

### **FUTURE OF BUNCE ISLAND**

African Americans are visiting the slave castles in Ghana, Senegal, and Gambia in increasing numbers. Elmina Castle and Goree Castle are now household names to many African Americans who often assume that their own ancestors likely passed through them. But if Bunce Island is preserved as a national monument and interpreted with easily available published materials, it will likely garner even more attention from African Americans. As we have seen, Bunce Island functioned at the right time and place to be closely linked to the North American slave trade and even to events in U.S. history. One famous African American given a private tour of Bunce Island had an emotional response to the castle that many who follow him will also likely have. In his autobiography, *My American Journey* (1995), Colin Powell describes a multi-nation tour of Africa he took in 1992, but the only part of the tour he mentions in detail is Bunce Island. After visiting the castle, Powell said:

*I am an American...But today, I am something more...I am an African too...I feel my roots here in this continent.*

But if history is drawing African Americans to Bunce Island, so is biology. Thousands of African Americans have taken DNA tests in recent years to determine where their ancestors came from in the African continent, and one of the most common results is Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone Embassy in Washington frequently receives calls from African Americans who have been linked to their country through DNA tests and are now asking how they can make a connection to Sierra Leone. Some who have taken DNA tests have actually gone to Sierra Leone and set up assistance projects of various sorts. The most high-profile example is the TV actor Isaiah Washington who recently established a foundation to help the country. Washington built a school, and in March,

2007, he donated \$25,000 to Opala and Chatelain's computer animation project on Bunce Island. He will likely become a celebrity spokesman for the castle's preservation.

Scholars will also be drawn to Bunce Island more and more in the coming years. Bunce Island is arguably the most important historic site in Africa for the United States, and there is still much more to be learned about it through archaeological and historical research. Excavation of the castle complex will undoubtedly yield a treasure-trove of information on the history of the castle, the lives of the British slave traders, the treatment of African captives, the African grumete village, and the business of slave trading. An intensive historical effort involving the search for documents in Europe, North America, and the West Indies will also yield a vast quantity of new information.

Given its importance for American history and the enormous amount of popular interest generated in recent years, it is clear that Bunce Island will eventually be the subject of preservation efforts like those that have taken place at other slave castles in West Africa. But supporters of Bunce Island's preservation must keep two limiting factors in mind -- time and deterioration. If we compare Bunce Island's ruins today to the photographs and scale model Dr. Easmon's team made 60 years ago, we can see that every single structure has suffered degradation. The two bastions in the fortification are inching down the cliff face at the front of the castle; parts of Bunce Island House have fallen; and the vaulted building south of the house whose roof was still intact in 1947 has completely collapsed. We must remember that time is against us and if we wait too long, there may be little left to preserve. Bunce Island's preservation is a matter of great urgency.

The World Monuments Fund recently put Bunce Island (and other historic sites in the Freetown area) on its 2008 Watch List of the World's hundred most endangered historic sites. One hopes that this will make it easier to obtain the resources necessary to preserve the castle and transform it into a vivid and well-interpreted historic site.

### **DECORSE'S SURVEY**

Professor Christopher DeCorse's archaeological survey is, therefore, extremely welcome news. DeCorse is the preeminent specialist on West African slave castles, having done the major research on Elmina Castle in Ghana, the oldest and largest castle in the region. But DeCorse also has some previous experience with Bunce Island. In October, 1993, he conducted a preliminary archaeological reconnaissance of the castle with Leland Ferguson, an archaeologist at the University of South Carolina, with support from the U.S. Embassy. DeCorse and Ferguson did a surface collection of artifacts and identified a wide range of objects dating to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

DeCorse's current efforts are much more detailed, though. His team of archaeologists from the U.S., Ghana, and Brazil spent two weeks surveying the castle. Sponsored by the U.S. State Department and Syracuse University, this is the most extensive research carried out on the ruins to date. DeCorse's report -- to which this essay is attached -- will be a strong foundation for future research and preservation efforts. We can only hope

that good use will be made of this valuable contribution before the natural forces that threaten Bunce Island completely destroy its remains. Time is running out.

**ADDENDUM:**  
**HISTORICAL SOURCES FOR BUNCE ISLAND**

Historians have not yet written a complete history of Bunce Island detailing its commercial operations under all four of the companies that operated there between about 1670 and 1807. When they finally undertake that task, though, they will find more than enough information to produce a detailed history. Below, there are five categories of historical information on Bunce Island along and some of the most important sources in each category. But new and valuable sources of information on Bunce Island -- especially archival records -- will, no doubt, be discovered in the coming years.

**Archival Collections**

These collections contain significant primary documents relating to Bunce Island:

- British National Archives, T. 70 series.  
This collection contains the records of the Royal African Company of England.
- Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh, GD Series
- Oswald Papers, Sudlows  
Privately owned papers of Richard Oswald (1705-1784), principal partner in the firm Grant, Oswald & Company.
- Grant Papers, Tomintoul House, Flichity, Scotland  
Privately owned papers of Sir Alexander Grant (1705-1772), principal partner in the firm Grant, Oswald & Company.

**Published Primary Documents**

These published collections contain many useful references to Bunce Island:

- Donnan, Elizabeth. *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* (4 volumes). Octagon Books, New York, 1965.
- Fyfe, Christopher. *Sierra Leone Inheritance*. Oxford University Press, London, 1964.

- Hamer, Philip M., George C Rogers, and David R Chesnutt (editors). *The Papers of Henry Laurens* (16 volumes). University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 1968-2003.
- Kup, A.P. "Instructions to the Royal African Company's Factor at Bunce, 1702 -- Parts 1 & 2." *Sierra Leone Studies*, New Series, Volumes 5 & 6, December, 1955 and June, 1956.

### **Published Primary Sources**

There are many contemporary travelers' accounts of visits to Bunce Island. These accounts are particularly valuable:

- Barbot, Jean. *The Writings of Jean Barbot on West Africa, 1678-1712* (2 volumes edited by Paul Hair). The Hakluyt Society, London, 1992.
- Corry, Joseph. *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa*. Frank Cass & Company, Ltd., London, 1968 (first published in 1807).
- Falconbridge, A.M. *Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone*. Frank Cass & Company, Ltd., London, 1967 (first published in 1802).
- Golberry, S.M.X. *Fragmens du'un Voyage en Afrique* (2 volumes). Printed by Treuttel et Wurtz, Paris, 1802.
- Golberry, S.M.X. *Travels in Africa* (2 volumes translated from the French by W. Mudford). Printed for Jones and Bumford, London, 1808.
- Spilsbury, F.B. *Account of a Voyage to the Western Coast of Africa*. Printed for R. Phillips, London, 1807.

### **Modern Secondary Sources**

These are the best modern historical works with information on Bunce Island:

- Brooks, George. *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. Ohio University Press, Athens, 2003.
- Davies, K.G. *The Royal African Company*. Longmans, Green & Company, London, 1957.

- Hancock, David. *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1995.
- Kup, A.P. *A History of Sierra Leone, 1400--1787*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1961.
- Rodney, Walter. *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545 to 1800*. Monthly Review Press, New York, 1970.

### **Other Secondary Sources**

These modern historical works also contain valuable information on Bunce Island:

- Ball, Edward. *Slaves in the Family*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1998.
- Farrow, Anne, Joel Lang, and Jenifer Frank. *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery*. Ballantine Books, New York, 2005.
- Fyfe, Christopher. *A History of Sierra Leone*. Oxford University Press, London, 1962.
- Hancock, David. "Scots in the Slave Trade," in *Nation and Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600--1800* (Ned C. Landsman, Editor). Bucknell University Press, Cranbury, New Jersey, 2001.
- Hochschild, Adam. *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves*. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 2005.
- Opala, Joseph. *The Gullah: Rice, Slavery, and the Sierra Leone-American Connection*. United States Information Service, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1987.
- Wilson, Ellen Gibson. *The Loyal Blacks*. G.P. Putnam Sons, New York, 1976.