

Chapter 5

Kru Labor in the British Caribbean

Beyond the expansion of Kru labor in the Royal Navy, expeditions, and military campaigns, Kru accepted the opportunity to work in agricultural and marine labor in the British Caribbean. The British understood that Emancipation in 1834 and the cessation of Apprenticeship in 1838 caused a labor shortage in some British colonies that led the British to experiment with indentured labor on plantations in the Caribbean.⁵⁵² While most indentured workers came from the Indian sub-continent, there were efforts to require Liberated Africans taken off slave ships to serve as indentures in the Caribbean.⁵⁵³ By contrast, the Kru willingly agreed to the terms of free wage labor contracts and went to the Caribbean, although their numbers were not sufficient to meet the labor needs of the British colonies. They were one of many African and Asian groups who went to the Caribbean during the 1840s under contract alongside Indian, Chinese, Indonesian, Igbo, Yoruba, and Congolese workers.⁵⁵⁴ Kru employment in Trinidad, Jamaica, and British Guiana was dominant between 1841 and the 1890s.

The nature of Kru contracts and their laboring activities on wharves, canals, and estates in Trinidad, Jamaica, and British Guiana shows that the Kru extended their diaspora in the Caribbean. Surfboats and other small watercraft remained foundational to their marine activities while Kru also increased their role in agricultural labor for a time. They established villages that resembled Kru-

552 “Topic: Labour Problem and African Immigrants,” West Indies Committee Papers 1833–1843 Box 4, Folder 1, Minutes July 1833–June 1843, Resolutions of the Standing Committee of West India Planters: On Immigration, February 18, 1842, 109. West Indiana Special Collections Library, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.

553 Daniel Domingues da Silva, David Eltis, Philip Misevich, and Olatunji Ojo, “The Diaspora of Africans Liberated from Slave Ships in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of African History* 55, no. 3 (2014): 347–369; Richard Anderson, “The Diaspora of Sierra Leone’s Liberated Africans: Enlistment, Forced Migration, and ‘Liberation’ at Freetown, 1808–1863,” *African Economic History* 41 (2013): 101–138.

554 For a discussion on the diversity of African and Asian laborers who migrated to the Caribbean on contracts see David Hollet, *Passage from India to El Dorado: Guyana and the Great Migration* (Madison: Associated University Press, 1999), 85, 321; Walton Look Lai, *Indentured Labour, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838–1918* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 154–270; K.O. Laurence, *A Question of Labor: Indentured Immigration into Trinidad and British Guiana, 1875–1917* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1994), 8–38; Juanita De Barros, *Reproducing the British Caribbean: Sex, Gender, and Population Politics after Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 16–39.

towns in West Africa albeit on a smaller scale. Settlement patterns and the Kru mark continued to signify Kru identity in the Caribbean. However, some of the economic structures that had governed Kru communities in West Africa did not survive in the Caribbean. Factors including the decline of headmen and traditional channels of gift-giving, the purchase of privately owned land, and intermarriage with Creole women inhibited their regular return to the Kru Coast and undermined the long-term stability of Kru diaspora communities in the Caribbean, thereby altering the pattern of Kru migration.

Policy and Immigration

In the post-slavery period, the British government provided economic initiatives for West Africans to work in the Caribbean plantation setting. British planters understood hiring migrant workers as a strategic maneuver to compete with slave-produced crops in French, Spanish, and Dutch domains. In 1842, the planters' position was clearly expressed by the Standing Committee of West Indian Planters:

That in addition to the immediate and direct advantages which West India Colonies would derive from such a Free Immigration of Labourers from British Settlements on the Coast of Africa as would render the supply of labour sufficient, the most effective means of abolishing the Slave Trade would be afforded; for, by an adequate supply of labour, the British Planters would be enabled to compete with the grower of Sugar by Slave Labour, and the motives for continuing the Slave Trade would no longer exist.⁵⁵⁵

The challenge the British planters faced was how to produce crops at competitive prices using free labor over slave labor. Their remedy was believed to reside in the immigration of workers in their colonies so that the supply of labor equaled the demand.⁵⁵⁶ Workers were sought from Sierra Leone and the Kru Coast based on their previous work experience with the British and for their ability to work in tropical climates. Freetown was the main hub for acquiring Kru labor in the initial stages of British Caribbean immigration.⁵⁵⁷ However, Michael Craton has suggested the reason for encouraging migrant workers from West Africa, India, and

⁵⁵⁵ "Topic: Labour Problem and African Immigrants," West Indies Committee Papers 1833–1843 Box 4, Folder 1, Minutes July 1833–June 1843, Resolutions of the Standing Committee of West India Planters: On Immigration, February 18, 1842, 109. West Indiana Special Collections Library, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁵⁵⁷ Schuler, "Kru Emigration," 164.

China was also meant to secure the planters' hegemony over emancipated African descendants (Creoles) by creating competition for jobs and inserting a new class between the planters and former slaves.⁵⁵⁸ Regardless, from the planters' perspective the common denominator was rooted in the need to continue to make a profit following Emancipation and the ending of Apprenticeship in 1838.

Between 1834 and 1917, the British Caribbean received 300,000 immigrants of which only a tiny minority, about four percent, came from Africa.⁵⁵⁹ There are discrepancies as to the number of Kru who entered Jamaica, Trinidad, and British Guiana. Trinidadian historian Donald Wood has suggested that between 1,000 and 2,000 Kru entered the British Caribbean between 1840 and 1860.⁵⁶⁰ G.W. Roberts provides an even more conservative figure, estimating that only 400 Kru laborers immigrated to the West Indies.⁵⁶¹ Records suggest that in the 1840s and 1850s, 2,421 migrant laborers from the Kru Coast went to the British and French Guianas, however.⁵⁶² In 1848, Acting Governor of Sierra Leone, Benjamin Pine, claimed that 500 Kru workers went to Demerara in British Guiana, 200 to Jamaica, and 150 to Trinidad.⁵⁶³ Pine's figures may only be accurate until 1848 as Kru continued to arrive in the British Caribbean until 1853.

Schuler provides the best estimate of the number of Kru landing in British Guiana based on ship records. Schuler's ship muster lists show that 989 Kru arrived in British Guiana between 1841 and 1853.⁵⁶⁴ Their number may have been even higher because some officials did not distinguish Kru workers from other

558 Michael Craton, "Reshuffling the Pack: The Transition from Slavery to Other Forms of Labor in the British Caribbean, ca. 1790–1890", *New West Indian Guide* 68, no. 1–2 (1994): 41. See also Mary Turner, "Chattel Slaves into Wage Slaves: A Jamaican Case Study," in Malcolm Cross and Gad Heuman, eds., *Labour in the Caribbean: From Emancipation to Independence* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 14–31; Richard B. Sheridan, "Changing Sugar Technology and the Labour Nexus in the British Caribbean 1750–1900, with Special Reference to Barbados and Jamaica," *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 63 (1989): 59–93; Monica Schuler, "The Recruitment of African Indentured Labourers for European Colonies in the Nineteenth Century," in *Migration: Indentured Labour Before and After Slavery*, ed. Pieter C. Emmer (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1986), 125–161.

559 Schuler, "Kru Emigration," 155–156.

560 Donald Wood, "Kru Migration to the West Indies," *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 2, no. 2–3 (1981): 266–282.

561 George W. Roberts, *The Population of Jamaica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 110.

562 Schuler, "Kru Emigration," 155.

563 Accounts and Papers, Papers Relative to the Emigration of Labourers from Sierra Leone and St. Helena to the West Indies, "Despatch from the Acting Governor Pine to Earl Grey," Government House, Sierra Leone, June 5, 1848, vol. 8, no. 1 (1850), 643, The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom.

564 Schuler, "Kru Emigration," 165.

Africans. When combined with the numbers offered by Pine, Schuler's figures reveal that the number of Kru entering British Guiana was in line with Donald Wood's estimates of between one and two thousand Kru. Schuler claims that British Guiana had the second largest Kru population outside of Freetown in the period.⁵⁶⁵ Therefore, their settlements in Berbice, Essequibo, and Demerara represent important nodes in the Kru free wage labor diaspora in the British Caribbean.

Kru are sometimes distinguished in ship emigration records while in other instances they are not and were included under the general category of African immigration. Although their contracts were significantly longer in duration (five years) than they had previously accepted in the Royal Navy (three years), Kru were given special privileges including free return passage to Freetown and the Kru Coast following the completion of contracts, which was not always the case for Liberated Africans who went to the Caribbean under contract.⁵⁶⁶ Based on their history as preferred workers on British contracts in West Africa, Kru, perhaps more than any other immigrants to the West Indies, "felt themselves in a position to state terms" to their employers.⁵⁶⁷ Based on past labor experiences, the power dynamics between the British and Kru, as compared with the British and other laboring groups in the Caribbean, remained unique.

Although Kru had ventured into Caribbean waters as early as the 1830s on board Cuban slave ships that were sometimes seized and delivered to British authorities in Havana, British contracts offered between 1841 and 1853 created new opportunities for their employment. The several thousand Kru who worked in the British Caribbean were drawn by contracts promising higher wages than previously offered as compensation for the lengthy duration of five years (in some cases shortened to three years). Kru who accepted these contracts engaged in seaborne and agricultural labor that bore both similarities and differences to the nature of their work on the Kru Coast and in their diaspora communities in West Africa.

Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guiana became the workplaces in Britain's "experiment" with Kru labor in the Caribbean.⁵⁶⁸ In the early 1840s, the British

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 155–156.

⁵⁶⁶ CO 111/210, no. 107, "Henry Light to Lord Stanley," May 16, 1844.

⁵⁶⁷ West India Committee Papers, "Report of the Committee Appointed to Confer with Her Majesty's Government, [and], Meeting of Merchants, held in Bishopgate Street, on the 26th Oct 1842," A. Colville, February 22, 1843, Box 4, Folder 1 (1843), 3, West Indiana Special Collections Library, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.

⁵⁶⁸ *The Economist*, January 15, 1848, in *The Economist Weekly Commercial Times, Bankers Gazette, and Railway Monitor*, vol. 6 (London: Economist Office, 1848), 60.

hoped to develop a labor scheme between Freetown, the Kru Coast, and their colonies in the Caribbean. They sought Kru labor in ports and plantations.⁵⁶⁹ The first Kru arrived in the Caribbean in 1841 before any formal act of legislature had been created regarding the terms of their employment.

On May 21, 1841, Kru landed in Jamaica on board the *Hector* along with an unnamed barge. Sixteen Krumen disembarked in Port Royal.⁵⁷⁰ The length of their informal contract was initially for one year.⁵⁷¹ The British hoped that by bringing a Kru headman, he would recognize the benefits and encourage a steady flow of recruits to immigrate to Jamaica on contract.

Within a year, in 1842, a series of acts calling for the regulation of Kru workers and African migrants to Jamaica focused on their role as farm workers. The call for labor was mandated in the *Laws of Jamaica*, which sought to direct the flow of immigrant laborers towards cultivation on plantations.⁵⁷² The laws governing the length of contracts and free return passage were enacted in 1843.⁵⁷³ Contract periods were raised from one year to five years and if that number was exceeded with two additional years the Kru were required to give six months notice in order to receive free passage home.⁵⁷⁴

However, the impulse to hire the Kru for plantation labor in Jamaica failed to generate the steady flow of workers that the British government had anticipated. Kru immigration from West Africa to Jamaica ended in 1843 with Kru arriving on the *Glen Huntley*.⁵⁷⁵ The Kru seemed to be disinterested in the plantation contracts offered in Jamaica as compared with those in Trinidad and British Guiana. Some Kru found the voyage too long as it could take up to one week longer to travel from Sierra Leone to Jamaica as compared with the 28 days to sail to Tri-

569 House of Commons Papers, Select Committee on West Coast of Africa, "Copy of Mr. Barclay's Address to the Headman of the Villages in Sierra Leone Freetown, Sierra Leone 12 April 1841, Appendix to Report from the Select Committee on West Coast of Africa," no. 24 (1841), 467, The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom.

570 *Ibid.*, 467.

571 *Ibid.*, 467. Initially, the British experimented with different contract lengths as short as one year before implementing contracts that ranged between three and five years.

572 "The Acts of Jamaica Passed in the Year Annual Laws of Jamaica, Cap 51 Act to make Provision for the Introduction of Emigrants to this Island, 1842," in *The Laws of Jamaica* (Kingston: Government Printer, 1843), 116.

573 Parliamentary Papers, "Papers Relative to Emigration," no. 52, Enclosure no. 10, vol. 8, April 20, 1843, p. 142.

574 *Ibid.*, 143.

575 Accounts and Papers, vol. 35, "Correspondence Relative to the Emigration of Labourers to the West Indies and the Mauritius, From the West Coast of Africa, the East Indies, and China, R. Bruce, Agent General of Immigration, King's House, May 13, 1843," in *Papers Relative to the Emigration from the West Coast of Africa to the West Indies* (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1844), 21.

nidad and British Guiana.⁵⁷⁶ Census records in Jamaica do not distinguish between the Kru and other African immigrants. As such, the exact number of Kru who immigrated is unknown. Only a single account in *Littell's Living Age* in 1884 referenced the failed attempt of the British authorities to procure a steady flow of Kru workers on Jamaican plantations whose population dwindled by the 1880s.⁵⁷⁷

Kru immigration to Trinidad occurred on a slightly larger scale than to Jamaica. The first Kru workers arrived in Trinidad from Sierra Leone on a merchant vessel named the *Elizabeth and Jane* in January 1841.⁵⁷⁸ Sixteen Krumen out of a total of 180 laborers landed at Port of Spain.⁵⁷⁹ In 1843, a second Kru labor gang arrived on the *Senator*.⁵⁸⁰ Although the exact number of Kru on board is not known the total crew numbered 102, including 12 delegates and 90 workers.⁵⁸¹ The arriving Kru had high monetary expectations for working in Trinidad. In 1843, Captain Denman noted that Kru laborers demanded an advance payment

576 Accounts and Papers, vol. 31, Emigration, Session February 3-August 12, 1842, Correspondence Relative to Emigration, no. 13, "Copy of the Despatch from Lord John Russell to John Carr, Esq. or the Officer Administering the Government of Sierra Leone, Enclosure in No. 13, Extract of a Letter from Mr. Marryat to Lord John Russell," 469. The *Elizabeth and Jane* made the journey from Sierra Leone to Trinidad in 28 days, while the *Superior* took 36 days to land in British Guiana. This was abnormally long perhaps due to weather and sea conditions and should have taken roughly the same amount of time as Trinidad.

577 E. Pluribus Unum, *Littell's Living Age*, 5th series, vol. 46 (Boston: Littell and Co., April-June 1884), 40.

578 General Report of the Emigration Commissioners, vol. 1, no. 2 "Copy of the Despatch from Lieutenant-Governor Sir Henry MacLeod to Lord John Russell, 20 May 1841," 47. The number of Kru on board is provided. However, in many documents, the name of the merchant ship is not mentioned. This was not uncommon as the ship that accompanied the *Hector* to Jamaica was also an unnamed brig. However, a description in another source described the Kru and other African workers landing in Trinidad from Sierra Leone on a vessel called the *Elizabeth and Jane*. See Accounts and Papers, vol. 31, Emigration, Session February 3–12 August 1842, Correspondence Relative to Emigration, no. 13, "Copy of the Despatch from Lord John Russell to John Carr, Esq. or the Officer Administering the Government of Sierra Leone, Enclosure in No. 13, Extract of a Letter from Mr. Marryat to Lord John Russell," 469.

579 Parliamentary Papers, "No. 5, Paris 17 June 1842, No. 5 Letter from S. Cipriani to Messrs. Jos Marryat & Sons 17 June 1842," in *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers Report from the Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Together With Minutes of Evidence Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Appendix and Index Part II, 1842* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), 480.

580 E. Littell, *Littell's Living Age*, vol. 8 (1846): 188.

581 *Ibid.*, 188.

of T20.00 (Trinidadian dollars) before their departure.⁵⁸² Kru felt it was their right to ask for an advance, which was standard practice on British contracts in West Africa.⁵⁸³

British officials and the plantocracy in Trinidad seem to have been very interested in acquiring thousands of Kru workers. As part of their strategy, Captain Denman proposed bringing over a headman to observe the working conditions in Trinidad.⁵⁸⁴ Similar to British officials in Jamaica, the West Indies Committee hoped that the headman would be impressed with the working conditions and would encourage a regular flow of Kru laborers. The proposal suggested that the Kru embark directly from their homeland on the Kru Coast, although in the 1840s, Kru were hired on the Kru Coast as well as in Freetown.⁵⁸⁵

By 1852, the British began to attribute their success in sugar cultivation in Trinidad to the immigrants brought to work the plantations, including the Kru. The West Indies Committee recognized that immigrant labor was at the heart of British enterprise in the Caribbean because it lowered the costs of production.⁵⁸⁶ While the precise number of Kru workers who immigrated to Trinidad for contracts is unknown, Dr. Louis De Verteuil suggested that “several hundred” Kru workers made the journey.⁵⁸⁷

Censuses in the nineteenth century rarely distinguished the Kru from other African laborers in Trinidad. A census in 1891 shows that Africans accounted for 1,288 or 1.8 percent of the total population. Although Kru are not identified as a unique group in the census, they formed a small segment of the population as their presence was singled out by several sources. Since all African immigration had ceased in 1861, any Kru laborers that had immigrated to Trinidad were elderly in the census year of 1891 and only formed a small group within the total number of African immigrants.⁵⁸⁸

582 Parliamentary Papers, “Evidence of the Honorable Captain Denman R.N.,” Acting Committee November 14, 1843, vol. 6 (1843), 119–120.

583 *Ibid.*, 119–120.

584 *Ibid.*, 119–120.

585 CO 111/210, no. 107, “Henry Light to Lord Stanley,” May 16, 1844.

586 West India Committee Papers, “The West India Committee Minutes from 9 January 1852–19 February 1857,” Acting Committee January 9, 1852, Box 4, Folder 3, (1852), 1, West Indiana Special Collections Library, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.

587 Louis De Verteuil, *Trinidad: Its Geography, Natural Resources, Administration, Present Condition, and Prospects* (1855), 2nd ed. (London: Cassel and Company, 1884), 341.

588 Trinidad Registrar-General’s Department, *Census of the Colony of Trinidad, 1891* (Port of Spain: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1892), vii, 26; Daniel Hart, *Trinidad and the Other West India Islands and Colonies*, 2nd ed. (Trinidad: The Chronicle Publishing Office, 1866), 66.

The majority of Kru laborers were destined for British Guiana. Sixty Kru laborers among a total Kru of 226 African laborers were landed in British Guiana at the port in Demerara on September 22, 1841 on the *Superior*.⁵⁸⁹ Kru were hired both in Freetown and on the Kru Coast. However, in 1844, there was a conscious shift towards hiring the Kru directly on the Kru Coast. R.G. Butts, planter and representative of Berbice and Demerara planters, proposed a labor scheme between the Kru Coast and British Guiana due to a supposed dislike of Liberated Africans hired at Freetown, who the planters regarded as less productive and skilled as compared to the Kru.⁵⁹⁰ The Kru had been noted for their “prodigious capacity and organization for work,” a perception that informed the planters’ decision to only hire Kru workers.⁵⁹¹ The British thus sent delegates to the Kru Coast to acquire laborers for contracts in British Guiana. They were selected from the colonial immigration department and from the body of labor recruiters for planters and headmen. Butts met with King Freeman, who agreed to send his attendant and son as delegates to British Guiana at the rate of £1 per month for one year.⁵⁹²

Cape Palmas, Grand Cess, and Settra Kru became the main villages on the Kru Coast for recruitment in British Guiana. The Proper Kru from Settra Kru, Kru from Grand Cess, and Grebo laborers from Cape Palmas came to form the demographic composition of the Kru working in British Guiana. A direct connection between Grand Cess and Berbice (British Guiana) was established by Jack Purser, a merchant from Settra Kru, who worked as a sub-agent for emigration. He requested that his son, who had worked in Berbice, return to the Kru Coast in order to share his experiences of working in British Guiana. As was the case in West Africa, connections between diaspora communities and specific villages on the Kru Coast can be traced, which reveals the demographic composition of the Kru diaspora in British Guiana.

By 1846, the British government reassessed the strategies used to attract Kru labor in British Guiana. Five-year contracts were largely replaced by three-year contracts. Some reports also suggest that salaries were higher at £1 per month as compared with lower rates back in West Africa.⁵⁹³ From the Kru perspective,

589 Schuler, “Kru Emigration,” 165; Frost, *Work*, 166.

590 CO 111/123, “H. Light to Lord Stanley, 30 September 1844, enclosing R.G. Butts to H.E.F. Young, 23 July–7 August 1844, no. 200,” The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom; CO 111/121, “Light to Stanley enclosing Butts to Young, 13 March 1845, no. 57,” The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom.

591 Schuler, “Kru Emigration,” 155–156.

592 *Ibid.*, 166–167.

593 *Ibid.*, 171.

contracts in British Guiana enabled young Krumen to gain experience and an “education” in long-distance migratory labor.⁵⁹⁴ Workers were offered a pay rate of 8d. per day and free passage to British Guiana.⁵⁹⁵

In 1850, there remained a strong market for Kru labor in British Guiana. Incentives including free passage home, advance payments, and higher wages than those offered in West Africa continued to be offered by the British. Kru now had the option of remaining for a period of five years with free passage home or three years without paid passage.⁵⁹⁶ The option for free return passage following a five-year contract may have enticed some Kru to remain for the longer contract. Direct appeals on the Kru Coast continued to attract workers for several years as emigration from the Kru Coast to British Guiana continued until 1853. The final voyage from the Kru Coast to British Guiana was made on the *Elphinstone* in 1853, decades before the ending of Indian and Chinese migrant labor in the British Caribbean.⁵⁹⁷ Mounting tensions and the frequent outbreak of war between the Kru and Liberian settler communities in Kru territory was probably a factor which led the Kru to use a portion of the funds from their workers who had served in British Guiana towards their war effort against the Liberian settlers.⁵⁹⁸

Nature of Employment

Kru workers continued their tradition of working in wharves in the British Caribbean. The first Kru workers who arrived in Trinidad in January 1841 were selected by British contractors to work at the wharf of Port of Spain. Their duties included serving as stevedores, loading and unloading cargo.⁵⁹⁹ Kru were also responsible for manning ferries and tenders (small boats) transporting people, raw materials, and commodities between ship and shore.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 167–168.

⁵⁹⁵ West India Committee Papers, “General, Communicated by the Demose,” Oct 8, 1844, SC 89, Box 4, no. 2 (1844), 206. West Indiana Special Collections Library, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.

⁵⁹⁶ Accounts and Papers of the House of Commons, vol. 9, Enclosure in no. 19, no. 340 Downing Street (July 5, 1850): 401–403, The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom.

⁵⁹⁷ Schuler, “Kru Emigration,” 171.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 172; Jo Mary Sullivan, *Settlers in Sinoe County, Liberia, and their Relations with the Kru, c. 1835–1920* (Boston: unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1978), 209–219.

⁵⁹⁹ Parliamentary Papers, “No. 5 Letter from S. Cipriani to Messrs, J. Marryat and Sons,” June 17, 1842, vol. 12 (1842), 480.

⁶⁰⁰ *Trinidad Royal Gazette* 7, no. 3, March 18, 1846.

Similarly, Kru who arrived in Port Royal, Jamaica, several months later in May 1841, were employed in the dockyards.⁶⁰¹ Immediately following their arrival, Robert Montgomery Martin reported that the Kru were employed at the wharves in both Port Royal and Kingston.⁶⁰² They performed the same duties as in Port of Spain, moving cargo on small craft. Kru labor in Trinidad and Jamaica was an extension of their work with the British in Freetown and other diaspora communities in West Africa.

Kru who landed in Demerara in September 1841 were employed in marine labor that was slightly different from their work on the dockyards in Trinidad and Jamaica.⁶⁰³ Rather than working on the dockyards, Kru were required to sail flatboats while transporting crops and individuals on canals between the plantations and ships.⁶⁰⁴ An intricate system of canals enabled the transport of commodities directly between plantation and ship in many cases without having to employ porters to deliver goods to the dockyards before loading them on vessels.

In 1841, Henry Light provided details on the Kru's occupation as boatmen on estates in British Guiana who were "separated in squads" and paid at a rate of between \$10.00 and \$12.00 per month, which was more than double what they made for marine services in the Oil Rivers at the best of times.⁶⁰⁵ Agent-General James Hackett described the Kru as "free agents" who "remained unindentured" making their "own bargains for daily, weekly, or monthly work."⁶⁰⁶ Kru were at liberty to decide where they wanted to work in British Guiana. Most significantly, they were not indentured, meaning they had mobility and could move between dockyards, estates, and other work environments. Based on their long history of

601 House of Commons Papers, Select Committee on West Coast of Africa, Appendix no. 24, "Copy of Mr. Barclay's Address to the Headman of the Villages," vol. 12 (1842), 467.

602 Robert Montgomery Martin, ed., "West Indies," *The Colonial Magazine and Commercial Maritime Journal* 6 (1841): 118.

603 Schuler, "Kru Emigration," 155–156; Frost, *Work*, 166.

604 Accounts and Papers, Emigration, Session 3 February to 12 August 1842, vol. 21, Correspondence Relative to Emigration, Enclosure in No. 8 Government House, Demerara 6 June 1841, Henry Light (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842), 373.

605 Accounts and Papers, Emigration, Session 3 February to 12 August 1842, vol. 21, Correspondence Relative to Emigration, 1842, Enclosure in No. 8 Government House, Demerara 6 June 1841, Henry Light (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842), 373. For a comparative salary range see salaries offered in the Niger Delta in Chapter 4.

606 Accounts and Papers, Emigration, Session 3 February to 12 August 1842, vol. 21, Correspondence Relative to Emigration, 1842, Extract Minute from the Proceedings of the Immigration Committee, Tuesday the 25th May 1841, James Hackett, Agent-General (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842), 368.

employment with the British, Kru continued to occupy a privileged position in British Guiana. The rules described by Hackett as applying to the Kru were completely different from those that applied to Indian and Chinese indentured laborers, who were compelled to remain on their assigned estates by virtue of their contracts, through fines and the threat of violence.⁶⁰⁷

Many Kru elected to continue their traditional job in surfboats and other watercraft moving cargo on rivers and canals as shown in Table 5.1. As such, Kru had the ability to service a number of estates and were most certainly hired in small groups in order to complete jobs efficiently. It is not clear from the list, however, who the headmen were but the hierarchal structures informing Kru labor were very much intact upon their arrival in British Guiana. As Table 5.1 shows, Kru also maintained their practice of using English names in their workplaces.

Table 5.1: Kru working sea transport in Demerara, 1842.

Kru not living on any particular Estate		
Kingson	Jim George	John Davis
Tom Walker	Salt Water	Sea Breeze
Jack Passer	Seargent	Tom Lee
Big Gum	George Andrews	Yellow Will
Peter Jumbo	Tom Nimmey	Peter Warman
Thomas Nimmey	Tom Freeman	Jim Freeman
John Grey	Tom Toby	Tom Brown
Bottle Beer		

Source: Accounts and Papers, Emigration, Session 3 February to 12 August 1842, vol. 21, Correspondence Relative to Emigration, 1842, Enclosure in No. 8 Government House, Demerara 6 June 1841, Henry Light (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842), 372.

The note accompanying the list of Krumen explained their role:

The above [Kru] being principally boatmen, and very intelligent and active people, were all readily engaged to work on board the steamers and drohergs [droghers] belonging to estates at a high rate of wages, none of them receiving less than at a rate of 10 dollars per month, besides houses, food &c.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁷ For a discussion on the differences between free wage labor and indentured labor in the British Caribbean see Northrup, *Indentured*, 4–10; Mahmud, “Cheaper than a Slave,” 215–243.

⁶⁰⁸ Accounts and Papers, Emigration, Session 3 February to 12 August 1842, vol. 21, “Correspondence Relative to Emigration, 1842,” Enclosure in No. 8 Government House, Demerara 6

Kru served as boatmen on steamers and droghers and received housing and food in addition to a salary of \$10.00 per month.⁶⁰⁹ Their specialization in manning craft ensured that they experienced a degree of mobility and pay rate that distinguished their service from other immigrant laborers in British Guiana.

Besides continuing their tradition of seaborne labor, Kru also performed agricultural labor on estates in Trinidad, British Guiana, and Jamaica. While they had worked on plantations in Fernando Po as early as the 1830s, their numbers were small and any large-scale plantation work did not commence until the later decades of the nineteenth century. It was hoped by planters that the Kru would adapt quickly to the task system working in groups as they had under headmen on ships and shoreside in Freetown.⁶¹⁰

In Trinidad, Kru found employment on Belmont Estate, Bellevue Estate, and Beauxjour Estate, among others. Belmont Estate was located close to Port of Spain, Bellevue Estate was near Freeman's Bay in Oropuche, and Beauxjour Estate was in the southwestern region of the island in South Naparima.⁶¹¹ The Kru labored in sugarcane, cocoa, and later, coffee production. Kru workers were initially sent to a specific estate and later had the opportunity to switch locations.

In 1842, a letter from S. Cipriani, the owner of the Beauxjour Estate, reveals the number of Kru laborers on his estate and their wage rate:

The Kroomen who went from Sierra Leone to Trinidad were on their arrival engaged by me, and employed on the Beauxjour Estate, South Naparima, a property I own in partnership with Mr. M.P. Bagné; their number, I believe, was 16. In consequence of a dispute among themselves, some left the estate a few months after; the remainder are still on it. The rate of wages out of crop is 40 cents per task; during crop they receive 50 or 60; they

June 1841, Henry Light (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842), 372. A drogher was a small freight barge used to transport sugar, cotton, rum, and lumber in the West Indies.

609 Accounts and Papers, Monthly Return of African Emigrants located in District G, County of Essequibo, August 1, 1841, A.W. Lyons, Stipendiary Magistrate, District G, Affairs of British Guiana, General Report of the Emigration Commissioners, vol. 1 (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1842), 55.

610 Parliamentary Papers, "No. 5, Paris 17 June 1842 no. 5, Letter from S. Cipriani to Messrs. Jos Marryat & Sons, 17 June 1842," Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers Report from the Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Together With Minutes of Evidence Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Appendix and Index Part 2, 1842 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), 480.

611 Parliamentary Papers, "No. 5 Letter from S. Cipriani to Messr. J. Marryat and Sons," June 17, 1842, vol. 12, 480.

also receive an allowance of salt fish. They did not contract to work for any given time; they were employed in field labour.⁶¹²

The pay rate model in Trinidad differed from the Kru's past experience working on commercial and Royal Navy ships. Whereas the Kru received standard wages on commercial vessels every month and wages were determined by rank in the Royal Navy, in Trinidad, their wages on estates were seasonal, increasing, and decreasing depending on crop cycles. Their pay rate at 40¢ per task in out of crop season and between 50¢ and 60¢ per task during crop season was described as much higher than what they could receive in Sierra Leone, which was given as 4d. per day during the same period.⁶¹³ Equally significant, the above passage also shows that the Kru left estates for work elsewhere on the island where "they did not contract to work for any given time." The Kru were promised return passage to Sierra Leone after three or five years of service. However, once they arrived on the island they were not obliged to remain on a single estate for the duration of the contract and they most probably shifted between marine and estate labor depending on the season and the availability of jobs.

In British Guiana, Kru served on the following plantations in Essequebo: Plantation Hamburg, Bathsheba's Lust, Lima, Reliance, Land of Plenty, Aberdeen; and in Demerara: La Resouvenir, Helena, Enmore, Greenfield, Turkeyen, Annandale, and Dochfour.⁶¹⁴ Their primary duties included harvesting the sugar cane.⁶¹⁵ In 1841, five Kru laborers were recorded at Plantation Hamburg

612 Parliamentary Papers, "No. 5, Paris 17 June 1842 No. 5 Letter from S. Cipriani to Messrs, Jos Marryat & Sons 17 June 1842," Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers Report from the Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Together With Minutes of Evidence Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Appendix and Index Part 2, 1842 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), 480.

613 William Hardin Burnley, *Observations on the Present Condition of the Island of Trinidad and the Actual State of the Experiment of Negro Emancipation* (London: Longman, 1842), 71. The Kru had some experience with task pay in Freetown in the 1790s before their pay became standardized on British commercial and Royal Navy ships in the early nineteenth century. They also received task-based pay for domestic work performed for settlers. However, in Freetown their pay rate was not informed by crop cycles to the same degree as it was in Trinidad. See Ludlam, "Account," 48.

614 Accounts and Papers, Emigration, Session 3 February to 12 August 1842, vol. 21, "Correspondence Relative to Emigration, 1842, Enclosure in No. 8 Government House, Demerara 6 June 1841 Henry Light (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842), 370–371.

615 H. Barkly, *Fifth Report from the Select Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting: Together with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix* (March 18, 1848), 24; Cruickshank, "African Immigrants," 81.

in Essequibo.⁶¹⁶ Their tasks are described as jobbing and performing field labor for which they received a salary of \$11.00 per month, notably higher than the neighboring plantation at Bathsheba's Lust, where African workers received between \$8.00 and \$10.00 per month. The Kru were further given an allowance of salt fish and allotted provision grounds for cultivation on estate grounds.⁶¹⁷

Jobbing could include maintenance of estate buildings or digging new canals to connect and expand the network of estates with waterways.⁶¹⁸ One official described a gang of ten Kru laborers building a canal on Montrose Estate in 1844.⁶¹⁹ In 1848, H. Barkly noted the Kru's strong work ethic: "All the canes on the estate, making 360 hogsheads... were cut by 16 Kroomen from the day of their arrival; an extent of work which had never been done by any number of slaves."⁶²⁰ Based on their positive reputation, they received contracts in the timber trade in British Guiana, which required floating timber downriver to awaiting vessels, much like their role in Sierra Leone.⁶²¹

Evidence for Kru agricultural labor in Jamaica shows that the Kru presence was small in scale. In 1843, an unknown number of Kru workers arrived in Jamaica on the Glen Huntley.⁶²² They landed in Montego Bay to be employed in agricultural labor.⁶²³ However, in the case of Jamaica, specific estate names where the Kru worked remains unknown in contrast to their worksites in Trinidad and British Guiana.

616 Monthly Return of African Emigrants located in District G, County of Essequibo, 1 August 1841, A.W. Lyons, Stipendiary Magistrate, District G, Affairs of British Guiana, General Report of the Emigration Commissioners, I (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1842), 55.

617 Ibid., 55.

618 Accounts and Papers, vol. 35, "Copy of a Despatch from Governor Light to Lord Stanley, no. 8, May 13, 1843," *Papers Relative to Emigration from the West Coast of Africa to the West Indies* (1843), 72.

619 Accounts and Papers, Colonies: Emigration, vol. 35, Session 1, February-September 1844 Papers Relative to Emigration from the West Coast of Africa to the West Indies (1844), 72, The National Archives, United Kingdom.

620 Ibid., 24; Walter Rodney, *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881–1905* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1981), 252.

621 W.H. Campbell, "The Forests of British Guiana, Appendix III," *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute* (London: The Institute, 1874), 153.

622 Accounts and Papers, vol. 35, Correspondence Relative to the Emigration of Labourers to the West Indies and the Mauritius, From the West Coast of Africa, the East Indies, and China, R. Bruce, Agent General of Immigration, King's House, May 13, 1843. Papers Relative to the Emigration from the West Coast of Africa to the West Indies (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1844), 21.

623 Ibid., 21.

Settlement Patterns

The Kru formed several diaspora communities in Trinidad. The British government gave land for Kru settlements. These lands were Crown lands that were set aside for immigrant worker villages.⁶²⁴ The primary example of such a scheme was the establishment of “Krooman’s Village.” Similar to Krutowns in West Africa, “Krooman’s Village” was established in Trinidad for the purpose of providing a steady labor pool for the British.⁶²⁵ The settlement was located within the vicinity of Freeman’s Bay in Oropuche. In 1855, De Verteuil described Krooman’s Village as one among many African settlements adjacent to the village of St. Mary’s.⁶²⁶ Based in their village, Kru worked as agricultural laborers on nearby plantations including Bellevue Estate and Otaheiti Estate.⁶²⁷ With access to Freeman’s Bay, the location of their village also enabled them to continue to load and unload cargo between British ships and shoreside using small craft, most probably including surfboats carved from local woodlands. Krooman’s Village in Trinidad represents the expansion of Kru diaspora communities first founded in West Africa to include the Caribbean.

Two other Kru settlements existed in Trinidad: one near Cipriani Estate, Beauxjour, in South Naparima, and the other adjacent to Belmont Estate.⁶²⁸ The number of Kru living in these settlements remains unknown but the concentration of Kru laborers in each region may date as early as 1842.⁶²⁹ Kru were en-

624 CO 295/261, “Sub Indendant of Crown Land Report, 1871,” The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom; “No. 5, Paris 17 June 1842 No. 5 Letter from S. Cipriani to Messrs. Jos Marryat & Sons 17 June 1842,” Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers Report from the Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Together With Minutes of Evidence Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Appendix and Index Part II, 1842 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), 480.

625 *Trinidad Royal Gazette* 12, no. 2, January 1, 1851– December 31, 1851, 2.

626 Verteuil, *Trinidad*, 313–314.

627 *Trinidad Royal Gazette* 12, no. 2, January 1, 1851– December 31, 1851, 2.

628 CO 295/261, “Sub Indendant of Crown Land Report, 1871,” The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom; “No. 5, Paris 17 June 1842 No. 5 Letter from S. Cipriani to Messrs. Jos Marryat & Sons 17 June 1842,” Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers Report from the Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Together With Minutes of Evidence Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Appendix and Index Part II, 1842 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), 480.

629 “No. 5, Paris 17 June 1842 No. 5 Letter from S. Cipriani to Messrs. Jos Marryat & Sons 17 June 1842,” Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers Report from the Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Together With Minutes of Evidence Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa Appendix and Index Part 2, 1842 (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), 480.

couraged to move closer to Belmont because of its proximity to Port of Spain and the hope that the Kru would begin regular immigration if their Kru headman could have his own residence built in the area.⁶³⁰ A Kru headman requested a piece of land be set aside for his gang of Kru workers to reside near Port of Spain, which may have been an attempt to replicate a miniature Krutown like those back in West Africa.⁶³¹

Reverend Alexander Kennedy described the diverse African groups who resided in Belmont between 1836 and 1849:

Belmont was, to a large extent, peopled by African settlers, brought hither by English vessels... They worked for the Government as free labourers – on the roads, the Savannah and Public Gardens. They were allowed to settle on the east of the Dry River, principally in Belmont, which became known as Freetown Valley – the free Africans having settled there. Among the settlers were the following tribes: the Mandingo, Eboe, Kramanti, Kroomen, Congo and Yarraba.⁶³²

All Africans are described as working as free laborers on the construction and maintenance of roads, the savannah, and public gardens. The African groups mentioned made for a diverse labor force. The area where they resided in the vicinity of Belmont Estate was named Freetown Valley, which most certainly reveals a connection with Freetown, where the majority were hired. More significantly, the mix of workers resembled Freetown as each group had its own quarter.

A major concern of both the British government and planters was to avoid a population of squatters. Giving the Kru and their fellow migrant workers the opportunity to live in villages reduced the problem of squatters on estates and in ports.⁶³³ In *Notice to Emigrants to the Island of Trinidad*, W. Hamilton revealed that the Kru were to be “furnished with a house and provision grounds.”⁶³⁴ Those Kru living in Krooman’s Village and Freetown Valley were provided with lodgings and land as part of their contractual labor.

630 *Caribbean Societies* no. 2 (1985): 50–51.

631 David Hollett, *Passage from India to El Dorado: Guyana and the Great Migration* (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), 85.

632 C.B. Franklin, *After Many Days: A Memoir. Being a Sketch of the Life and Labours of Rev. Alexander Kennedy, First Presbyterian Missionary to Trinidad, Founder of Greyfriars Church, and its Pastor for Fourteen Years: January 1836-December 1849. With an Introduction by Rev R.E. Welsh* (Port of Spain: Franklin’s Electric Printery, 1910), 76.

633 *Ibid.*, 341.

634 W. Hamilton, *Papers Relative to the Affairs of Trinidad*, March 18, 1841, General Report on the Emigration Commissioners, vol. 1, *Papers Relative to the West Indies, 1841–1842* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842), 48.

Communal land schemes resulted in Kru settlements that ensured traditional social, political, and economic structures would continue to inform Kru labor relations. Initially, Kru headmen remained responsible for organizing labor and continued the practice of exacting a portion of their labor gang's salary as was protocol in West Africa. They remained integral to ensuring the flow of Kru workers to Trinidad, Jamaica, and British Guiana. Upon their return to the Kru Coast, they continued to give a portion of their salary to the *krogba* of their village.

However, several developments would gradually limit Kru immigration and undermine the authority of headmen in the British Caribbean. Most significantly, the opportunity for Kru to purchase private property enabled Kru laborers to gain unprecedented economic, social, and political autonomy. Besides the creation of communal land schemes, the Colonial Office encouraged the Kru to purchase their own private land plots.⁶³⁵ The British hoped that by presenting the opportunity to own land, African migrant workers including the Kru would consider permanent settlement in Trinidad.

The price of land in Trinidad as authorized by the British colonial government was "one Pound per Acre."⁶³⁶ Land purchases were to be paid in cash and were to range in size between 40 and 50 acres.⁶³⁷ At £1 per acre, a 40-acre lot cost £40. Kru who worked at a rate of approximately 2 shillings per day could make £1 in ten days (20 shillings equalled £1) and roughly £3 in a month.⁶³⁸ It took Kru workers between 13 and 14 months to afford the cost of a lot. In 1855, De Verteuil reported that a migrant worker in Trinidad had the opportunity "to commute his return passage in exchange for £5 in money and five acres of land."⁶³⁹ The financial incentive and ability to own land were appealing for some Kru.

Similarly, Kru in British Guiana were encouraged to purchase land plots. Upon their arrival in the early 1840s, they were housed in estate lodgings and cottages.⁶⁴⁰ However, by the 1850s, Crown lands were available for purchase in plots of less than 100 acres in the Canal No. 1 district, along the Demerara

⁶³⁵ CO 295 /132–133 (1840), 181.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, "Lots, Living quarters and Pay Rate," 135.

⁶³⁹ Verteuil, *Trinidad*, 348.

⁶⁴⁰ Accounts and Papers, Emigration, Session 3 February to August 12, 1842, vol. 21, Correspondence Relative to Emigration, 1842, Enclosure in No. 8 Government House, Return of Emigrants from Sierra Leone working as Labourers or Trademen in District E County of Demerara July 1, 1841, J.O. Lockhart Mure Stipendiary Justice of the Peace, District E (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1842), 378.

River, where the Kru largely resided.⁶⁴¹ According to J.A. Veerasawmy in 1919, “many Kroomen and Oku people from Oruba [Yoruba] from West Africa, and Congoes were settled there” in the 1890s.⁶⁴² Veerasawmy estimated their population to have grown from 100 in 1891 to 1,000 by 1911.⁶⁴³ The size of the Kru community at Canal No. 1 is unknown, but a large community of African laborers consisting of Yoruba, Kongo, and Kru continued to live in the vicinity into the early twentieth century.⁶⁴⁴

The ability to purchase private property reveals a major transformation in the Kru diaspora. In 1853, John Brummel suggested that land purchase enabled Kru workers to gain a new identity in British Guiana.⁶⁴⁵ Their independence may explain why some Kru laborers were recorded as being reluctant to give a percentage of their wages to headmen in the Kru villages and to the Kru *krogba* on the Kru Coast upon completion of contracts.⁶⁴⁶ Brummel contended that land ownership became a way of liberating Kru from the traditional gift-giving protocol altogether since they remained in British Guiana and effectively ended ties with their homeland.⁶⁴⁷ The opportunity to own land individually differed from their experience on the Kru Coast where land was communally owned by their respective *dako* and where they remained subject to the authority of the *krogba*. The combination of the Kru’s ability to own land outside of the communal village and complete task-based work on an individual basis as jobbers enabled the Kru to function beyond traditional societal norms. Employment could be obtained without having to wait for a headman to secure a contract. As a result, the practice of giving a portion of their wages to headmen gradually became redundant. Similarly, the authority of the *krogba* on the Kru Coast was maintained through gift-giving rituals associated with homecomings. In the British Caribbean, there was no equivalent figure that structured relations in their com-

641 Josephine Boenisch, “Ethnic Differences in Peasant Agriculture: The Canals Poulder” (Master’s thesis, McGill University, 1971), 28.

642 J.A. Veerasawmy, “The Noitgedacht Murder,” *Timehri* 6, Third Series (1919): 116. See also Boenisch, “Ethnic Differences,” 28; Brian L. Moore, *Cultural Power, Resistance, and Pluralism: Colonial Guyana, 1838–1900* (Montreal: McGill Press, 1995), 139, 144; B.W. Higman, Carl Campbell and Patrick Bryan, *Slavery, Freedom and Gender: The Dynamics of Caribbean Society* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2003), 138, 144.

643 Veerasawmy, “Noitgedacht Murder,” 116.

644 See E.P. Skinner, “Ethnic Interaction in a British Guiana Rural Community: A Study in Secondary Acculturation and Group Dynamics” (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1955), 258.

645 John Brummell, *British Guiana: Demerara after Fifteen Years of Freedom, by a Landowner. By John Brummell* (London: T. Bosworth, 1853), 78.

646 *Ibid.*, 77.

647 *Ibid.*, 78.

munities. Both the decline of the headmen's authority and the absence of the *krogba* played a role in creating an unprecedented sense of Kru individualism.

The demographic imbalance between Kru males and females was another factor that influenced the development of Kru communities in Trinidad and British Guiana. Very few Kru women made the voyage to the Caribbean and none were recorded as having joined Kru workers in Jamaica. In 1841, the Superior carried the wives of several Kru workers to British Guiana.⁶⁴⁸ A report by W.M. Humphrys, Agent-General for Immigration, in 1844, described the arrival of the Arabian in 1843 containing 48 immigrants, 15 of whom were Krumen accompanied by a single Kru woman.⁶⁴⁹ British colonial and consular authorities provided various incentives to increase Kru female immigration in Trinidad and British Guiana. In 1844, free passages were offered to those Kru who brought their wives.⁶⁵⁰ The British government certainly seemed to think that the option of bringing wives would result in a permanent labor force, as demonstrated by their desire for every ship sailing from Freetown to contain a manifest of one-third women.⁶⁵¹ Despite these incentives, few Kru women migrated. Similar to Kru communities in West Africa, those in Trinidad and British Guiana were overwhelmingly male. The main factor discouraging Kru women to immigrate may have been the three to five-year duration of contracts and the long distance between the Kru Coast and the Caribbean.

Based on the low number of Kru women in Caribbean, the Kru diaspora was transformed through intermarriage with Creole women.⁶⁵² Many of the Kru who migrated were young laborers and unmarried, which also explains the low numbers of Kru women who immigrated to British Guiana. An unmarried Kru woman found it much more difficult to survive if she was not supported by a husband. With few Kru women available, Kru males married beyond their community. Single Kru men were reported to be more likely to settle permanently in British Gui-

⁶⁴⁸ Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons and Command, "Affairs of British Guiana Immigration Office, September 23, 1841," vol. 29 (1842), 113.

⁶⁴⁹ Accounts and Papers, Colonies, Emigration, vol. 35, Session 1 February-5 September 1844, Papers Relative to Emigration from the West Coast of Africa to the West Indies, Enclosure in No. 13 Immigration Agent's Office, Georgetown, Demerara, September 19, 1843, W.M. Humphrys, Agent-General for Immigration (1844), 89, The National Archives, United Kingdom.

⁶⁵⁰ Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey* 1: 83. For more discussion on incentives see Frost, *Work*, 21.

⁶⁵¹ Parliamentary Papers, Acting Committee November 14, 1843, "Evidence of the Honourable Captain Denmase R.N.," November 1843, 6, 119–120.

⁶⁵² Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons and Command, vol. 29, "Affairs of British Guiana Immigration Office September 23, 1841" (London: HM Stationary Office, 1842), 113.

ana as compared with those Kru who had wives back in Freetown or the Kru Coast.⁶⁵³

Creole women outnumbered men in British Guiana, as reported by the Commissioners of Immigration in 1850: "British Guiana, where it so happens that of the African race there are more females than males, and that Africans coming to this colony without their wives readily form alliances with the Creole population."⁶⁵⁴ These unions resulted in a new generation marked by what Stuart Hall terms "hybridity" as plural societies with multiple ancestral origins creolized.⁶⁵⁵ Kru laborers were among many laboring groups in British Guiana, and in the second half of the nineteenth century a new generation of creolized Kru became the norm.

Despite these changes within Kru communities, a traditional practice that endured was the Kru mark. According to Henry Kirke in 1898, "men, with... tattoos on their noses and cheeks... tireless oarsmen... they roused their spirits by chanting wild Kroo songs, which marked the time to the measured beat of the oars."⁶⁵⁶ Kirke's comments reveal that the Kru continued to practice their tradition of scarification, although Kirke refers to the scars as "tattooes," in British Guiana. He also showed that Kru identity continued to be intimately bound with marine service and that paddling continued to be marked by song. However, due to their low numbers and intermarriage with the Creole population, the Kru eventually disappeared as a distinct ethnic group in the twentieth century. The ability to study their diaspora in the Caribbean with a degree of certainty is mostly limited to the nineteenth century.⁶⁵⁷

In the British Caribbean, Kru continued to engage in the labor they were familiar with on marine vessels in dockyards, estates and rivers in Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guiana. The establishment of Krooman's Village in Trinidad enabled the Kru to maintain a cultural space with a distinct identity alongside Indian, Chinese, Yoruba, and Congolese workers for a period that lasted several decades. In British Guiana, Kru seemed to have had a greater degree of mobility in terms of contracts and living quarters than elsewhere in the British Caribbean.

653 Accounts and Papers, Sugar Growing Colonies, "Despatch from Governor Barkly to Earl Grey," September 25, 1850, vol. 9, no. 49, 1851, 188.

654 Accounts and Papers, vol. 9, Enclosure in no. 49, W.B. Wolseley, Acting Secretary, "Minute of the Proceedings of the Commissioners of Immigration Correspondence, at a Meeting Held at the Guiana Public Buildings, Tuesday, 20 August 1850," 189.

655 Hall, "Cultural Identity," 235.

656 Kirke, *Twenty-Five Years*, 171–172.

657 The one exception being the use of genealogies, which may reveal the descendants of the Kru workers.

While they maintained the tradition of the Kru mark that distinguished them from other laborers, their community was transformed through the ability to own private land and obtain contracts independent of headmen. The relationships the Kru formed with Creole women and the decision of many Kru to remain in mixed ethnic communities along the Demerara River and elsewhere led to their creolization and eventual absorption. One crucial distinction between the Kru experience in the British Caribbean and West Africa was that while the Kru were assimilated into an emerging creole society in the former, their diaspora communities in West Africa continued well into the twentieth century and, in some cases, the twenty-first century.