

Matilda Newport: The Power of a Liberian Invented Tradition

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This article is about an historic symbol, an invented one at that, which was created, flourished and then was abolished. Invented history is not unique. It has occurred in many places around the world. Such creations occur to support a particular point of view or need. And as in this case, when the need is no longer there, that piece of history is abolished, or forgotten. Matilda Newport, and the day celebrated in her honor is one such example.

The central historical events were the conflict which occurred between the local people around Cape Mesurado and the newly arrived American black settlers, who wanted to occupy the Cape and the surrounding area. The Americans justified their occupation based on a treaty which was signed by local chiefs and representatives of the American government and the Colonization Society. Shortly after the signing of the treaty, the local chiefs rejected it and returned nearly all of the items which had been given them by the Americans at the time of the treaty signing.

The disagreement ultimately ended in two attacks by the local people on the settlers who had begun to build a settlement on the Cape. The first attack was on November 11th, 1822, followed on December 1st with a second attack. In both cases, the settlers were able to repulse the local warriors. Eyewitness accounts, and in particular the description by Jehudi Ashmun, the acting Colonization Society agent, describe both battles, the nature and directions of each attack, and who the settlers were, who manned each canon and where it was located.¹ What is particularly relevant here, is that there is no mention anywhere of any women being involved in fending off the attackers.

The successful defense by the small number of settlers against a numerous local army was seen by the former as providential, and thus worthy of remembering and celebrating. As a consequence, it became an annual holiday, particularly in Monrovia. The first reference found so far, was on the ninth anniversary in 1831. The pattern set on that occasion, was what seems to have been followed more or less for many years

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afterwards. At sunrise there was a nine gun salute and the Liberian flag was unfurled. At 9 a.m., the troops assembled on Broad Street, and took up the line of march to the Agency House, where the Agent and other officials, along with Clergy joined the procession. They then moved through the principal streets, and on this occasion stopped at the Baptist Church. There prayers were offered and then a religious discourse was delivered by the Reverend Colin Teague. After the services, the troops took up the march and returned to the Agency House, and then proceeded to the parade ground where they were dismissed. The day was concluded with a discharge of nine guns by the Artillery, and the colors were struck.² In later years, a meal was offered, often sponsored by the Mayor of Monrovia.

As late as 1840, one observer of the annual event referred to it as "Johudie Ashmund's" anniversary, and the "Ashmun battle." At this particular celebration, Colonel Elijah Johnson was presented with a sword from Judge Halsey of Newark, New Jersey.³

Most of the prominent settlers through the years were asked to give speeches. Beside the above named Colin Teague in 1831, H. W. Erskine in 1845,⁴ Hilary Teague, in 1846,⁵ John D. Moore, in 1852,⁶ Benjamin J. K. Anderson, in 1860 spoke on the topic of "The Duty of Liberia to Africa,"⁷ Edward W. Blyden, in 1861 in the Methodist Church, and on the following day, December 2nd, given over to the young men, there was an oration by J. T. Dimery, entitled "The Founders of Liberia- their condition in the land of Oppression; the motives inducing them to emigrate to Africa- and what they have done towards establishing a NEGRO NATIONALITY on the West Coast of Africa."⁸ And in 1863, Alexander Crummell, spoke on the topic "The Responsibility of the First Fathers of a Country for its Future Life and Character."⁹ In 1865, the address was by E. C. Howard, and the oration by S. G. Crummell, entitled "Progress of Civilization in Liberia."¹⁰

In all of the accounts, it is clear that there was a dwelling on the remarkable achievement of little more than thirty men defending the colony against thousands of local warriors. And in many cases the achievement was seen as the defeat of good over evil, or civilization over savagery. To take an example of the type of comments made, let me quote from President J. J. Roberts' annual message, of December 9, 1872,

"Standing at this point of time, and looking back to the heroic deeds of the wonderful achievement of our pioneer fathers – when opposed by hoards of barbarous warriors backed and encouraged by more than savage monsters in the shape of foreign slave-traders – which permanently established on this hill the foundations of our present political fabric. [He goes on to say, there] was gained that signal triumph of freedom over the implacable enemies of human progress and the rights of man..."¹¹

What is interesting is that at least in the published sources, there is absolutely no mention of Matilda Newport, until 1854, when a description by a visitor to Liberia was given of her and what she was alleged to have done. To quote Daniel H. Peterson,

"Liberia would never have been the home of the immigrants, had it not been for a woman. When the first settlers were preparing themselves resting places, the natives came upon them with hostile intent. *One* woman only remained in her home, the other inhabitants having fled. She fired upon the natives until she had succeeded in killing quite a number of them. The survivors fled. The name of the woman was Mrs. Newport; and she secured a *new port* for the colored people. The natives never returned."¹²

And thus began the printed accounts of Matilda Newport. The second account found so far, was in 1863 by Alexander Crummell, who mentions her, but calls her Mary Newport, and describes her "seeing the perilous position of the settlers, snatches a match and applies it to a cannon now held by the enemy, and scatters death among hundreds of the native foe." He goes on to say, "That single touch of woman saved the colony!"¹³

The question has been raised as to whether Matilda Newport, in fact, ever existed. She did, but the name given in the emigration list is Matilda Spencer, as she was married to Thomas Spencer. They were freeborn blacks, aged 25 and 32 respectively in 1820, when the emigrated from Philadelphia. They sailed from New York harbor on February 6th, 1820 on board the ship *Elizabeth*, the first vessel chartered by the American Colonization Society to carry people back to Africa. The Spencers and the rest of the emigrants arrived off of Freetown, Sierra Leone, on March 9th, and shortly afterward they were settled at Campelar on Sherbro Island, about one hundred miles to the south of Sierra Leonean colony.¹⁴ Unlike many of their fellow passengers, they were fortunate enough to survive the debilitating effects of the new tropical environment with its many diseases against which most of the immigrants had little or no immunity.

As disease and death took a very heavy toll on the immigrants, the decision was made to remove from Sherbro and thus they returned to Freetown where they were given asylum at Fourah Bay. Finally, in January 1822, the immigrants, having been joined by another group newly arrived from the United States, sailed southward landing at Providence Island, in Mesurado Bay, from where they were to form a new colony.¹⁵

Through all of these rigors, Thomas and Matilda Spencer endured. Thomas Spencer's skills as a mason must have been put to good use in the new colony. And in the midst of these challenges, Matilda gave birth to a child.

By the time of the arrival in August 1822, of Jehudi Ashmun as the acting agent of the American Colonization Society at Cape Mesurado, the settlers had already moved to the Cape, but it was clear that plans needed to be immediately set in motion to build a small fort, at what today is the cross point of Ashmun and Center Streets. The hope was that the fort might offer some degree of protection. It was built none too soon, as an attack by the local people occurred on November 11th, 1822.¹⁶ After a

short, but blistering crossfire, four settlers were either immediately killed or mortally wounded. Among the latter was Thomas Spencer.¹⁷

On the morning of December 1st, 1822, the second attack came. The settlement was surrounded and fire was received from three sides, which was returned by full use of the cannons within the fort. What with the effect of these shots, as well as from the few muskets available, three concerted attacks by the local people were repulsed. The attackers realizing their inability to overcome the settlers, retreated. The losses among the local people were high. Among the settlers, one man was killed and two were wounded. This would be the last attack. Fighting had finally ceased. The local people had to reluctantly accept the presence of the settlers.

Through these two attacks Matilda Spencer survived, though the trauma of losing her husband and being left with a very small child, must have been difficult. However, in a pioneer community such as Liberia, it was important to be resilient.

Among the immigrants on the *Elizabeth* on which the Spencers had sailed, there was another freeborn family from New York, namely Eliphalet and Sarah Newport, along with their son, Ralph.¹⁸ They too had suffered. Eliphalet Newport had not withstood the rigors of the climate and diseases of Sherbro Island and consequently died in April 1820.¹⁹ Likewise, his wife, Sarah, seems to have died during the same year.²⁰

As a consequence, it was only natural that Ralph Newport and Matilda Spencer should turn toward each other for comfort and assistance. The fact that Matilda was Ralph's elder by eight years hardly mattered.²¹ Although no date can be given for their marriage, it is clear that it occurred prior to July 20, 1823, when Matilda is listed in the settlement's census as Newport, rather than Spencer.²² The question is raised, of course, as to what surname she had at the time of the second battle.

Other than the basic facts, we know little about the life that the Newports led. Matilda was said on the emigration list to be illiterate, as were many others, and she was also said to be a member of the Methodist Church.²³ On August 12, 1823, Ralph Newport was granted a town lot in Monrovia and seven acres of farm land.²⁴ A little over a year later, on August 28th, 1824, to quote, "Mrs. M. Newport – Draws on right of child by Spencer" for two lots consisting of three acres.²⁵

Not unlike others in the community, when a group of Recaptive Africans – enslaved African people captured by the U. S. Naval Squadron on the high seas – were landed in Monrovia during 1827, the Newports opened their home to one boy.²⁶ Little else can be said about their family life. The one exception concerned Ralph Newport, along with S. Smith who were involved in a case of theft. Having been brought before the Court of Quarter Sessions, they were convicted in January 1831 with having committed Grand Larceny. Their punishment was 31 lashes.²⁷

On October 31, 1836, Ralph Newport set out in a canoe for an off-shore schooner lying in Monrovia's harbor. In crossing the bar, the canoe capsized and he was drowned.²⁸ The following year, 1837, Matilda Newport died of pleurisy.²⁹ Although the files are

not complete for the local newspaper, the *Liberia Herald*, more than half of these issues for that year are available, and in none of them is there any mention of her death. Likewise, the correspondence from the Colonial agents fail to comment on her passing. Thus, one legitimately wonders what the attitudes of the local community were towards this woman who was to assume such heroic proportions in Liberian settler history.

However, as noted by 1854, she is mentioned in a publication, and again in 1863. Nevertheless, it is not clear just when the First of December celebrations were transformed into Matilda Newport Day. There are indications, however, that in about 1864, a company of the militia of the first Regiment in Montserrado County was named the Newport Volunteers and presumably participated in the celebrations. On July 28, 1873, the Legislature granted the company a charter and they were formally recognized. These Newport Volunteers marched during the December 1st celebration, certainly into the early 1880's.³⁰

Over time it is possible to see how the descriptions of what Matilda Newport was supposed to have done, have an interesting evolution, which can be measured against what we know about her from the documented evidence. Although in 1891, Henry D. Brown, alludes to "Matilda Newport's heroic conduct [which] has been oft repeated in your hearing," he says nothing about what it was.³¹ It is really not until the early 20th century before, the descriptions begin in earnest.

One of the most fantastic accounts was that of E. J. Barclay, which was published in 1903. Matilda Newport formed a plan seeing the danger. "Silently she went forward, resolved to do, or die. Hundreds of the natives, their main body, were yet collected around the cannon. She walked fearlessly in amongst them and offered to teach them how to use that cannon. They listened to her attentively. She directed them to arrange themselves in a row, directly in front of the cannon's mouth. When she had got them arranged in a straight line, directly in front, with the cannon pointing straight at them, she coolly and quickly took a coal of fire from her pipe and placed it in the cannon's tube." Nearly all of the people were killed and the rest lost interest in the conflict and retreated.³²

In 1907, Irene A. Gant, assures us that "The feat of Mrs. Newport is historical and not traditional." She went on to say, that "it was ... our noble Matilda, seeing the handful of men dispirited, observing the shattered condition of affairs and the gloom which the menacing advance of the natives had cast upon the lives of the pioneers, stepped forth, lighted the cannon with the coal from her pipe (though we would prefer that she had gotten fire elsewhere), and the existence of the Republic became a possibility."³³ This description of the coal in her pipe was the most often repeated part of the Newport tradition.

In 1922, the French Consul in Monrovia, wired the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Paris, that he had witnessed the "national celebration for the Liberian Joan of Arc."³⁴ As this year marked the hundredth anniversary of the battles, it was also in this year

that the Cendtaph, better known as the Matilda Newport Monument, was erected. The inscription is modest, in that it states that the "Monument is erected and dedicated to the sacred memory of Matilda Newport who during the Battle of December 1st. A.D. 1822 performed a valorous deed which contributed in large measure to the ultimate success of the pioneers."³⁵

In 1926, the Liberian historian Abayomi Karna stated in his *History of Liberia*, that "the well-famed Mrs. Matilda Newport with lighted coal from her pipe put fire to a cannon which went off with such terrific boom and rather scared away, then did actual harm to, the massed and determined Dehs."³⁶ It is interesting to contrast this description with an earlier description he wrote in 1909, in which he states that after she ignited the cannon, "It showered volleys upon the Days and the countless host fled from before this mighty conqueress, leaving behind them over six hundred souls, dead or wounded."³⁷

Another Liberian historian, Ernest J. Yancy, in a 1934 publication, picks up on the great boom from the cannon which caused panic. However, he had the battle as occurring on Crown Hill, when it in fact occurred on Fort Hill, as mentioned before, at the juncture of Ashmun and Center Streets, one of the high points of the peninsula.³⁸

Another Liberian historian Thomas E. Beysolow, in 1940, adds a new dimension to the story. "The Special cannon used by Miss Matilda Newport on this occasion was one of those left to King Peter for signaling, by Millionaire Pedro Blanco, for the port of Monrovia, and it was always kept loaded, so when they made the attack on the Colonists, she being a member of their craft (The Grigri), at the time, she marched fearlessly through the bush, went to "Old Tom" and dropped a coal of fire upon the tube and firing, put the rebels to flight ..."³⁹

R. Earle Anderson, an American writer, in 1952, tells us that the "loaded cannon had been trained on the savages but failed to fire. A woman settler, Matilda Newport, rushed forward with an ember from a lighted pipe, touched off the recalcitrant weapon," and broke up the attack.⁴⁰ Susan S. Mitchell, an American teacher at the College of West Africa, in 1953, adds, a bit more to the scene, as Matilda Newport approached the cannon with her pipe in which she had placed a lighted coal, "she pretended to hide behind ... [the cannon], but quickly touched it off with the coal from her pipe."⁴¹

In 1954, A. Doris Banks, adds her slant on the event, when she tells us that "Matilda Newport, an elderly lady," quick-wittedly lit the cannon.⁴² And in 1958, Richard and Doris Henries, tell us that "An elderly lady, Mrs. Matilda Newport, was contentedly smoking her pipe when she saw hostile natives charging ..."⁴³ They also add, that "two capable, Christian women, Matilda Newport and Susannah Lewis..." began the first regular school.⁴⁴ It will be recalled that Matilda Newport, was listed as illiterate in the emigration list.

The English writer, Galbraith Welch, comments in 1960, that Matilda Newport "is the only national heroine who ever gained celebrity through the use of tobacco, ..." She goes on to add that "Near Miss Matilda was a charged untended cannon, one of

those chubby little pieces we see in old-fashioned pictures.”⁴⁵ The American, Lawrence A. Marinelli, in 1964, adds, that “the day was saved when Matilda Newport, a widowed pioneer from Georgia, ignited an old cannon...”⁴⁶

What one realizes from this collection of descriptions is that historians have good imaginations, and the writing of history is not a precise science. It would seem that a good story is what is worth presenting.

More, importantly, the question is why was Matilda Newport, and what she stood for, significant to the settler descendants. The late Augustus Feve Caine, pointed out that “people in social groups tend to develop myths which would integrate them or satisfy them in one way or another.”⁴⁷ In the annual messages celebrating “her” day, beginning in the twentieth century, it is possible to obtain some sense of why people thought she was important. She was a symbol of womanhood,⁴⁸ a symbol of “civilization,” a symbol of settlerdom⁴⁹ vs. the growing influence of “civilized” local people, who were beginning to challenge the monopoly which the settlers had over all institutions.

But with time, the celebration, and the symbol, Matilda Newport, herself, became dysfunctional. Edwin S. Munger, in 1960, is the first so far found, who directly questioned the celebration of Matilda Newport. As he points out, ... “what kind of a national holiday is this for the majority of the citizens of the capital of Liberia if they are proud that *their* ancestors were the ones that were fought off?”⁵⁰

Abeodu Jones, in 1962, gently questions that validity of the actions attributed to Matilda Newport. She points out that Jehudi Ashmun in his detailed account of the battles makes no mention of Newport, but she concedes that authors such as Charles Boone and Nathaniel Richardson gave accounts of her, and that most importantly the success of the defense by the settlers established that they were there to stay.⁵¹

The holiday was clearly at odds with the new direction which the central government wanted to steer the nation, for instance, toward national unity. By the 1970's there was a clamor to abolish the celebration. In December 1974, as Tipoteh Togba Nah pointed out, “He wondered why we say we are interested in unity when ‘we continue to celebrate Matilda Newport Day, a national holiday which glorifies the defeat of one group of citizens by another group of our citizens.’” His conclusion was that a national holiday should make all the people feel good, and thus he called for the abolition of the holiday, or more precisely, he was quoted as saying, “Stop Glorifying MatiNevertheless, in 1975, in celebration of the International Women's Year, the government issued a stamp honoring Matilda Newport. Whether it was that or something else, in August of that year a seminar was held at the Institute of African Studies, at the University of Liberia. Jane Martin gave a fine talk, summarizing what was historically known and what the nature of the writing about Matilda Newport had been.”⁵³

At the same seminar, Roosevelt Gasolin Jayjay, from Cuttington College, presented a paper and a quote from him, seems very apt. “By celebrating Matilda Newport Day, we only remind ourselves of how hostile we were to each other. The public display of

the wounds we have on our body political will not help us to unify the nation. It is our responsibility to heal the national wounds." And he went on to say, "History continues to serve the function of bestowing confidence and inspiration on a people. In this respect, an incident which reveals bitterness and resentment, which reveals a sense of pride in one section as victor, and a sense of revenge in the other as the vanquished fails to serve the purpose."⁵⁴

Not surprisingly, such a discussion of abolishing a national holiday, did not go unnoticed. Christian Abayomi Cassell, stated categorically, that "Matilda Newport is no myth. She is in fact the first Liberian Heroine." Cassell had been invited to the seminar, but after considerable thought, decided not to go. And in taking his defensive stand, he turned the tables and stated that "those who should be self conscious over this matter should be the scions of those who helped enslave their fellow Africans. For them I have no apology to make." He conceded, that "Myth, if indeed the story of Matilda Newport, is no less then the Greek Myths, which have endured through time ...," and he stated that he was "deeply shocked by the fact that there seems to be those who would debunk everything which does not please them."⁵⁵

Ultimately, President Tolbert abolished the celebration. What Matilda Newport had come to represent through time, was no longer functional in the changing society, and thus, demonstrated that symbols can be created and with time can be ended.

And though Matilda Newport is no longer celebrated, nearly all Liberians who have gone through formal education have read about her in school textbooks. So, she is not forgotten. And in fact, although the holiday is abolished, a street in Monrovia named after her still exists.

Footnotes

- ¹ Jehudi Ashmun, *History of the American Colony in Liberia, from December 1821 to 1825*. Washington: Way & Gideon, 1826.
- ² "Order of the Day, for the First of December, 1831," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, (January 26, 1832.
- ³ J. Lawrence Day's reconstructed Diary, - August 28, 1840-February 6, 1841, S.E.Holsoe, Indiana University, ff. 75-79.
- ⁴ [Francis Burns, editor], "The Memorable First of December," *Africa's Luminary*, 2/21 (December 19, 1845).
- ⁵ "The First of December," *Liberia Herald*, 15/4 (December 4, 1846).
- ⁶ "First of December," *Liberia Herald*, 3/10 (December 15, 1852), 39.
- ⁷ "The First of December," *Liberia Herald*, 7/20 (December 7, 1859).
- ⁸ *African Repository*, 39 (1862), 149.
- ⁹ Alexander Crummell, *Africa and America*. Springfield, MA, 1891, 130-1832.
- ¹⁰ "The First of December," *African Repository*, 42 (April 1866), 103-106.
- ¹¹ "Annual Message of President Roberts, December 9, 1872," *African Repository*, 49 (1873), 184.
- ¹² Daniel H. Peterson, *The Looking Glass*. New York, 1854, p. 103.
- ¹³ Alexander Crummell, *Africa and America*. Springfield, MA, 1891, 130-1832.
- ¹⁴ American Colonization Society (ACS), Register, 1820-1832, ms., f. 3; Census of July 20, 1823, *Seventh Annual Report of the ACS*, 160-161.

- ¹⁵ C. Huberich,
- ¹⁶ For a discussion of the circumstances leading up to this attack see, S. E. Holsoe, "A Study of Relations between Settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Western Africa, 1821 to 1847," *African Historical Studies*, 4/2 (1971), 331-339.
- ¹⁷ *Census of July 20, 1823*, p. 161. In Jehudi Ashmun, *History of the American Colony in Liberia from December 1821 to 1823* (Washington, 1826), 30, footnote, he is listed as Thomas Spinn, clearly a mistake on Ashmun's Part.
- ¹⁸ Emigration List.
- ¹⁹ "A Tabular View of the History & Actual State of the Colony," Ms. Liberian Government Archives (LGA). Thought in the U.S. Documentary List he is stated to have died of consumption.
- ²⁰ U.S. Doc.
- ²¹ Emigration List.
- ²² Census 1823
- ²³ ?
- ²⁴ ACS, "Laws and Land Records of Liberia,"
- ²⁵ ACS, "Laws and Land Records of Liberia,"
- ²⁶ ?
- ²⁷ U.S. Congress, House, Document No. 150, p. 406.
- ²⁸ ?
- ²⁹ 1843 census.
- ³⁰ *The Liberia Recorder*, (17 December 1904), 5; Liberian Government Archives, Department of State, Foreign Correspondence, 1872-1873, f. 389; *The Observer*, 2/17 (December 11, 1879); *The Observer*, 4/22 (December 8, 1881).
- ³¹ Henry D. Brown, *Character Sketches of the Early Settlers of Liberia, A Lecture delivered in the Senate Chamber, Monrovia, Liberia, August 1891*. Liverpool: Lionel Hart & Co., [1891], p. 11.
- ³² E. J. Barclay, Pictures from Liberian History, Montserrado County, in Julius C. Stevens, *Stevens' National Reader: New National Fourth Reader*. Monrovia: R. A. Phillips, Printer, Government Printing Office, 1903, pp. 40-41. The account was repeated by Nathaniel Richardson, *Liberia's Past and Present*. 1959, p. 37.
- ³³ "Introductory Address by Miss Irene A. Gant," in T. McCants Stewart, ... *The Significance of Newport Day in Liberian National Life .. Dec. 2, 1907*. Monrovia: College of West Africa Press, December 1907, p. 8.
- ³⁴ French Consul to Foreign Affairs, No. 24 Cable, n.d. [1921].
- ³⁵ I have Lami Taweh, of the National Museum, to thank for transcribing the inscriptions for me.
- ³⁶ Abayomi Karnga, *History of Liberia*, Liverpool, 1926, p. xiii.
- ³⁷ Abayomi Wilfred Karnga, *The Negro Republic on West Africa*. Monrovia, 1909, p. 11.
- ³⁸ Ernest J. Yancy, *Historical Lights of Liberia's Yesterday and Today*. Xenia, 1934, p. 32. He repeats the false location again in his book, *The Republic of Liberia*. London, 1959, p. 22.
- ³⁹ T. E. Beyesolow, "A Brief Synopsis of Prehistorical Liberia and Sequence from 1800-1847," *The Weekly Mirror*, 10/11 (March 15, 1940), 3.
- ⁴⁰ R. Earle Anderson, *Liberia, America's Friend*. Chapel Hill, 1952.
- ⁴¹ Susan S. Mitchell, Comp., *Liberian History Notes*. Monrovia 1952 (1961).
- ⁴² A. Doris Banks Henries, *The Liberian Nation: A Short History*. New York, 1954, p. 29.
- ⁴³ Richard and Doris Henries, *Liberia, the West African Republic*. New York, 1958, p. 31.
- ⁴⁴ Richard and Doris Henries, *Liberia, the West African Republic*. New York, 1958, p. 31.
- ⁴⁵ Galbraith Welch, *The Jet Lighthouse*. London, 1960, p. 199.
- ⁴⁶ Lawrence A. Marinelli, *The New Liberia: A Historical and Political Survey*. New York, 1964, p. 34.
- ⁴⁷ "Scholars Express Views at Symposium: Matilda Newport Day should be Abolished," *Liberian Star*, no. 1, 609 (August 13, 1975).

- ⁴⁸ Hannah Abeodu Bowen Jones, "The Struggle for Political and Cultural Unification in Liberia, 1847-1930." Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1962, 100.
- ⁴⁹ J. Gus Liebenow, *Liberia, the Evolution of Privilege*. Ithaca, 1969, p. 20.
- ⁵⁰ Edwin S. Munger, "Liberia's Economic and Human Progress," in Robert Theobald, editor. *The New Nations of West Africa*. New York, 1960, p. 96.
- ⁵¹ Hannah Abeodu Bowen Jones, "The Struggle for Political and Cultural Unification in Liberia, 1847-1930." Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1962, 101. Richard West, also points out that there is no evidence of Matilda Newport in Ashmun's account, *Back to Africa, A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia*. London, 1970, p. 123.
- ⁵² "Stop Glorifying Matilda Newport," *The Liberian Star*, (December 6, 1974), p. 8.
- ⁵³ Jane J. Martin, with assistance from Rodney Carlisle and Students of the Seminar in Historical Sources at the University of Liberia, "The Search for Matilda Newport." 1975.
- ⁵⁴ Roosevelt Gasolin Jayjay, "Matilda Newport Day," a paper presented at the University of Liberia, July 31, 1975.
- ⁵⁵ C. A. Cassell, "Attempt to Debunk Matilda Newport?," *Liberian Star*, (August 28, 1975), 5.