‘WE PRAY, WE WORK, WE PLAY’: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF A KENYAN HIGH SCHOOL IN ITEN, 1961-1976

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the early history of St. Patrick's High School, an all-boys Catholic secondary boarding school located in the west-Kenyan town of Iten. While an institutional history, this work is primarily concerned with people – the students, teachers, coaches, administrators, and staff who populated St. Patrick's during the 1960s and 1970s. This study traces the founding, construction, development, and ultimate flourishing of St. Patrick's from 1961 to 1976, a period which parallels the transition from colony to independent nation in Kenya and during which school members helped make St. Patrick's one of Kenya's most well-known educational institutions, especially in sports. I argue that by taking part in a range of activities – in classrooms, student organizations, sports competitions, and others – St. Patrick's community members made their school into a negotiated place of social meaning as they sought to respond to the challenges, contradictions, and possibilities of the late colonial and early independence eras in Kenya. Through their efforts, they forged an institutional identity defined by notions of discipline, unity, development, achievement, and prestige. At the same time, this process was not seamless. Conflict and struggle were defining characteristics of the period, at times leading to the marginalization of those who did not fit within the school's official identity. Yet, through their efforts of pray, work, and play, St. Patrick's became a place where members imagined and negotiated a place for themselves in the world. In addition to engaging with a broad range of literature on Kenyan schools, the central sources are oral histories, student writings, and national newspapers. As a bottom-up history of a school in western Kenya, this study joins scholarship seeking to understand schools as negotiated places of meaning.

This thesis is dedicated to all those students who aspire
to achieve their innermost dreams and aspirations.
To all of you, please remember that struggle, failures, and achievement
are not mutually exclusive. All three are necessary
for growth and development.

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For someone who has spent the better part of the last four years writing about men and boys, I owe a lot to women, three of whom stand out. The first is my wife, Joanne Quiogue, who agreed to uproot our life in New Orleans and move to Michigan, and then again to Kenya and back to New Orleans, for a chance to make this work possible. She has been with me from the beginning and her partnership and love provide me with support that I find nowhere else. There were many mornings in Iten when I awoke to her writing poetry describing the Kerio Valley or the beauty of a cup of *chai.* These are some of my most cherished memories and have sustained me often during difficult moments. The second is my mother, Judith McCall, who helped raise me with the willingness to ask questions and strike out in search of answers. She has lovingly stood behind my family and I with every type of aid and assistance imaginable. To her, I say, I love you and I hope I have made you and Dan proud. The third is my advisor, Laura Fair, to whom I will never be able to express the depth of my thankfulness. Not only has Laura been a committed advisor and intellectual mentor – reading my work, writing letters of recommendation, and helping to guide me to important questions and (hopefully) insightful answers – she has also become a dear and valuable friend to myself, my wife, and our three children. Laura, as much as anyone in my life, truly deserves the titles *Mwalimu* (Kiswahili for teacher) and *Rafiki* (Kiswahili for friend). To all three of these amazing women, I say thank you.

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their thoughtful and caring personas and their willingness to strike out into the world and lead adventurous lives. My brother Jonas, whose peripatetic spirit and loving soul I admire deeply, has inspired me with his travels and expressions of youthful exuberance. My two sisters in Australia, Vonnie-Che and Elly, both of whom produce wonderful creative works in photography and the written word, were never far from my mind. My stepmother Kate, with whom I shared many long conversations, ranging from metaphysics to post-colonialism, played an important role in shaping my worldviews and ideas about the human experience when I was younger. To my father Will, whose ideas shaped many of the methods and philosophies displayed in this work, and who sadly will never see these words, I wish I had been given the chance to discuss this wonderful history with you in person. I love you plural.

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INTRODUCTION:

'WE PRAY, WE WORK, WE PLAY': MAKING PLACE IN ITEN, KENYA

Lebo Serem first arrived at St. Patrick's, a newly established all-boys Catholic secondary school located in the small west-Kenyan town of Iten (See Figure I.1), after a three-hour, rain-soaked bicycle ride. Departing his home early one morning in late-1968, Serem had pedaled 35-kilometers through muddy roads and wet dirt paths because he was promised something important. He was the only student from Marura Primary School to receive an invitation for an admissions interview to St. Patrick's. Serem, who had listed the secondary school as his top choice when sitting for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), the country's national exit exam for primary school students, had been swayed to do so by the advice of his headmaster at Maruru. "At that particular time, in 1968, there were not that many secondary schools," Serem told me during an interview in 2020 over a cup of tea with milk and too much sugar in a bakery at Zion Mall in the city of Eldoret. "So, it was really the headmaster of the primary school who decided that I choose St. Patrick's."[1]

Serem was not exaggerating. In 1968, in a country with a population of just over 10.5 million people, there were 601 total secondary schools in Kenya.[2] In addition, access to secondary education was not distributed evenly. As a new nation-state recently emerged from decades of British colonial rule, the country's education system was characterized by deep

[1] Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[2] For the population of Kenya in 1968, see "Population by age group, Kenya," Our World in Data, accessed June 1, 2024, https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/population-by-age-group?tab=chart&country=~KEN. For the number of secondary schools in Kenya in 1968, see John Anderson, *The Struggle for the School: The interaction of Missionary, Colonial Government, and Nationalist enterprise in the development of formal education in Kenya* (Nairobi: Longman, 1970), 150.

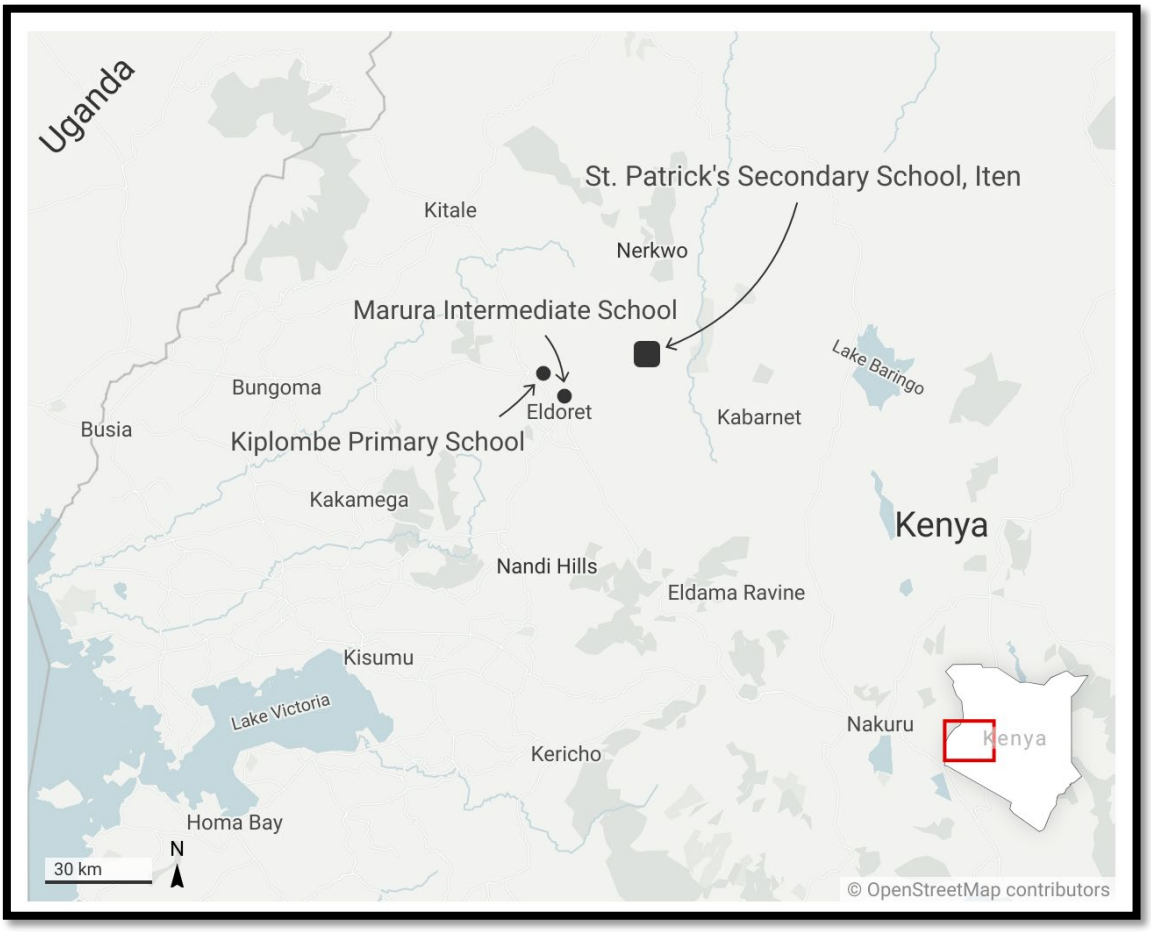

Figure I.1 – Lebo Serem went to Kiplombe Primary School, then to Marura Intermediate, and then to St. Patrick's Secondary School in Iten.

(Map created by Dawson McCall using Datawrapper)

inequalities running along lines of race, gender, class, geography, and ethnicity. In Rift Valley Province where Serem lived, for example, there were 79 total secondary schools in 1968, compared to 65 in and around the city of Nairobi alone. [3] In such a context, for a student like Serem, who came from an impoverished, rural background in Uasin-Gishu county, access to secondary education was seen as an opportunity to move up in the world, a ticket to a better life.

[3] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 150.

Like his rain-soaked bike trip, however, Serem's path to St. Patrick's was a difficult and uncertain one. Born in the small community of Kiplombe around 1950, like many aspiring students of his generation, it was more than a decade before Serem started school, enrolling at the primary level in his hometown in the early 1960s. However, as with many primary schools in Kenya during the late colonial era, Kiplombe Primary did not continue past Standard IV.[4] Continuing with his studies required Serem to transfer to nearby Marura Intermediate School, a move he made just after Kenya gained independence. At Marura, Serem performed well, passing the KCPE in 1968 and receiving a letter inviting him to an admissions interview at St. Patrick's. However, according to Serem, he almost never made it to Iten. "When the results came out, I got a letter from my school that I had been invited," Serem recalled. "But I was slightly late in going, because after we did our KCPE we were circumcised," he continued, referring to the Kalenjin rite of passage in which young people went through a process of education, circumcision, and seclusion, experiences intended to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood.[5] In addition to being a major milestone in his life, for Serem, the coinciding of his admissions appointment with this rite of passage almost cost him a spot at St. Patrick's. "We came out [from seclusion] about two weeks late," Serem recalled, describing how upon arriving at Maruru the school's headmaster informed him that his invitation letter had been lost. "I took my bicycle," Serem said. "I went to Iten, met with [the St. Patrick's headmaster] Brother Simeon Geraghty. He told me, 'Yes, your name is here. You are very late. Go get your things and come.' I went back, got my stuff. That's how I got to St. Patrick's."[6] (See Figure I.2)

[4] Standards in Kenyan education denote years (or grades in the US context). The structure of Kenyan education in the late-1950s looked like this: Primary School – Standards I-IV; Intermediate School – Standards V-VIII; Secondary School – Forms I-IV. Very few students matriculated all the way through this system during the late 1950s, with a small number of going on to trade schools and even fewer going on to university. For the structure of Kenyan education, see Anderson, *The Struggle for the School,* 168-169.
[5] Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[6] Ibid.

Stories such as this, in which young, aspiring students, endured and overcame a series of challenges and obstacles to find a place at St. Patrick's in the hopes that a school-based education would improve their lives, constitute the backbone of the experiences that make up the school's early history.[7] By bike, by foot, by lorry, and *matatu*, students like Lebo Serem came from Nerkwo, Nandi Hills, Nakuru, Nairobi, and beyond (see Figure I.1) to attend the small

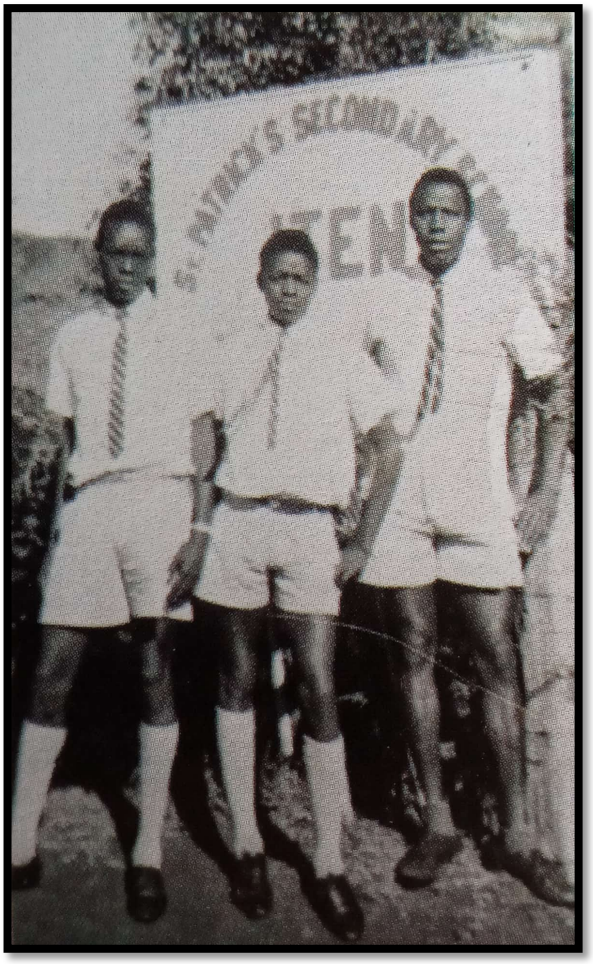

Figure I.2 – Lebo Serem (left), with schoolmates Hezekiah Sawe (center) and Daniel Tum (right) at St. Patrick's, ca 1970

(Image courtesy of Caleb Tum)

[7] Frances Vavrus has described this motivation as "the engine for action" that drives people to take on the challenges of educational achievement. See Frances Vavrus, *Desire and Decline: Schooling Amid Crisis in Tanzania* (New York: Peter Lang 2003), 168.

school in the rural town of Iten. They came with a range of motives. Aspirations for academic achievement were central for many. Some were driven by pre-existing religious connections to the missionaries that ran the school, while access to school sport provided an impetus in later years. Others came out of the vague belief that secondary school would improve their lives and provide opportunities for social mobility and advancement. In addition, the school's administration, faculty, and staff, many of them from transnational backgrounds, came with an equally diverse set of interests. For the Irish missionaries, first Kiltegan Priests and then Patrician Brothers, who founded and ran the school, shaping young minds and morals through a Catholic pedagogy was a key motive. Others, such as the school's cosmopolitan collection of African and expatriate faculty and staff, came for employment, adventure, or out of curiosity. All, however, came because they believed, with varying degrees of certainty, that linking themselves to the school would make their lives better and more meaningful, while allowing them to make a place for themselves in the world.

What they found was not always easy. The challenges of attending a new, relatively unknown school in the rural, upcountry town of Iten were real and manifest. Land and funding for the school had to be secured and maintained. Students and teachers had to be recruited and retained. Farmland and natural space had to be transformed into a school, complete with classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, sports fields, and other necessary campus infrastructure. A school culture had to be established and sustained. Grades had to be made and sports competitions had to be won. Through their efforts, however, the students, teachers, administrators, and staff of St. Patrick's turned their school into one of their country's most respected institutions of secondary education. Today, St. Patrick's, Iten is one of just over a hundred national schools in Kenya and is well-known nationally and internationally, especially

for its accolades in sports.[8] However, in a country where several of the most prestigious secondary institutions, such as Alliance High School, Mangu High School, Kapsabet High School, and Kenya High School, have roots deep in both the history and logic of Kenya's colonial past, St. Patrick's offers a different trajectory.[9]

Opening its doors in 1961, just before Kenyan independence, St. Patrick's was created through a joint effort of local African politicians and foreign European missionaries with the aim of expanding secondary school opportunities for male African students in the region. From a founding class of thirty students, most of them from humble, local backgrounds in their late-teens and early-twenties, by the mid-1970s St. Patrick's drew students and teachers from across Kenya and staff from around the world, creating a rare cosmopolitan environment in a rural outpost in western Kenya and establishing the school as one of the region's and nation's most well-known institutions. This rich history makes St. Patrick's a valuable window through which to understand changing patterns of local, national, and transnational educational practices during the late-colonial and early-independence period in Kenya.

Pulling from a range of written and oral sources, this dissertation provides a social history of the first fifteen years of the existence of St. Patrick's Secondary School in Iten.[10] Contextualizing the school's emergence within the expansion of school-based education in

[8] As of 2020, there were around 10,000 secondary schools in Kenya, among which national schools are the most prestigious and sought after. They are generally the destination for the top scorers on national primary school leavers exams. For Kenyan national schools as of 2020, see Faith Nyamai, "How national school slots were shared out," *Nation*, https://nation.africa/kenya/news/how-national-school-slots-were-shared-out-115322.

[9] Alliance is by far the most studied individual school in Kenya. See Benjamin E. Kipkorir, "The Alliance High School and the Origins of the Kenya African Elite 1926-1962," (PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1969); Lionel Bruce Greaves, *Carey Francis of Kenya* (London: Rex Collings, 1969); Stephen J. Smith, *The History of the Alliance High School* (Nairobi: Heinemann Education Books, 1973); Kana Dower, "Strong to Serve: The Alliance High School of Kikuyu, Kenya," (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2005). For a study of Mangu, see John Osogo, "The History of Kabaa-Mangu High School and the Contribution of the Holy Ghost Fathers upon Education in Kenya," (MA Thesis, University of East Africa, 1970).

[10] For a brief synopsis of social history, see Sarah Maza, *Thinking About History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 10-44.

Kenya, it traces the school's growth from its founding in 1961 until the departure of one of its most consequential early headmasters, Patrician Brother Simeon Geraghty, in 1976. During this period, the founders, students, faculty, and staff of St. Patrick's sought to develop their school and transform themselves through a process that many school members believed set them apart from their counterparts in other institutions. This process was not perfect. School members often disagreed, argued, and, at times, fought with each other over the school's practices and core values. Students organized campus protests, broke rules, and bullied those perceived as weak. School policies marginalized people, practices, and ideas deemed by school leaders as antithetical to their mission. And yet, the overall sense that one takes from the school's written and oral record from this period is that St. Patrick's was a place where community members felt happy, engaged, and productive. Indeed, as one anonymous student wrote of the student body in the school magazine in 1976, "We pray, we work, we play, we are sometimes angry, sometimes sad, sometimes bored but very much more often busy and happy."[11]

Through it all, St. Patrick's was transformed into a social place where members engaged in a range of activities – in classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, student organizations, and sports fields – through which they wrestled with and attempted to reconcile some of the most complex and vexing questions and challenges facing Kenyans during the period. I argue that this process of place making at St. Patrick's was a modern African response to the dislocations, contradictions, challenges, and hopes of Kenya's late colonial and early independence eras.[12] By taking part in, and at times arguing over, a range of educational, political, and physical practices,

[11] "1976: A Year of Great Progress, Much Joy, Some Sadness," *The Patrician*, St. Patrick's High School, Iten, October 29th, 1976, 19.

[12] For others who have explored similar processes of place making in African contexts, see Mark Deets, *A Country of Defiance: Mapping the Casamance of Senegal* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2023); Laura Fair, *Reel Pleasures: Cinema, Audiences, and Entrepreneurs in Twentieth-Century Urban Tanzania* (Ohio University Press, Athens: 2018); Katrin Bromber, "The Stadium and the City: Sports Infrastructure in Late Imperial Ethiopia and Beyond," *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* [Online], 32 | 2016, DOI : 10.4000/cea.2098.

members of the St. Patrick's community forged a school identity and social place defined by notions of struggle, discipline, unity, achievement, and prestige. As a result, they imbued both themselves and their school with a deep sense of purpose and meaning, values which many carried into their elder years and which live on in both the school's written and oral records.

Stories, Meanings, and the History of an African School from the Bottom Up

While this dissertation is a history of a school, it is primarily concerned with people – those who populated the hallways, classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, and sports fields at St. Patrick's, Iten. The central sources are their stories, their memories, and the meanings which they took from their time at the school, communicated through oral history interviews and student writings. While causation is here, my main concern is to elucidate what school meant to the students, teachers, administrators, and staff that populated the St. Patrick's campus from the early-1960s to the mid-1970s.[13] A second, and related, purpose of this study is to provide a deep historical context from which to understand the historical patterns that shaped and were shaped by these experiences, especially as they relate to the history of Kenyan schools. As such, my work joins a robust scholarship that has sought to understand the meanings embedded within the experience of school for Africans and their communities.

Those who study schools, their pasts, and their presents have deployed a series of competing, and at times overlapping, frameworks to better appreciate how processes of educational change and transformation have impacted schooling experiences. One broad set of approaches has sought to understand these patterns by engaging power and systems. World culture, world systems, neo-institutionalist, and neo-liberal theorists have demonstrated how 19th and 20th Century European colonialism, national bureaucracies, large transnational organizations,

[13] For a summary of the debate between causation and meaning among historians, see Maza, *Thinking About History*, 157-198.

and corporate interests have shaped the practices and assumptions underpinning schooling during the last several centuries.[14] Often assuming a static and hierarchical relationship between central and peripheral bodies of power, these scholars have deployed methodologies relying on quantitative analysis, deep archival research, and structural examinations of temporal change, and have helped us understand the fundamental role of hegemony, national and international policy-making, and global structures of power in processes of educational transformation.[15]

In Kenya, scholars such as John Anderson and Sorobea Bogonko have deployed systems approaches to better understand how the institution of the school was introduced, resisted, appropriated, and at times transformed by Africans in what is now Kenya from the beginning of the 20th Century. Especially instructive has been the emphasis on resistance and transformation, with Anderson providing one of the earliest explorations of the Gikuyu independent schools movement of the 1930s and 1940s, and Bogonko highlighting the role of student protest in shaping the curriculum and pedagogies at mission schools in places like Mumias and Maseno as early as the 1910s.[16] Others, such as Kilemi Mwiria and York W. Bradshaw have explored the limitations and policy implications of the post-colonial Harambee schools movement of the 1960s and 1970s, during which thousands of Kenyan *wananchi* (Kiswahili for citizens)

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[14] For an example of world culture theorists, see Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli, "The Political Construction of Mass Schooling: European Origins and Worldwide Institutionalization," *Sociology of Education* 60 (1987): 2–17. For a world systems approach, see Joel Samoff, "Institutionalizing International Influence," *Safundi: The Journal of South African and American Comparative Studies* 4, no. 1 (2003): 1-35. For a neo-institutionalist, see David Baker, *The Schooled Society: The Educational Transformation of Global Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2014). For a look at neo-liberalism, see Stephen Ball, Carolina Junemann, Diego Santori, *Edu.net: Globalisation and Education Policy Mobility* (Routledge: London and New York, 2017).

[15] John Boli and Francisco O. Ramirez, "Compulsory Schooling in the Western Cultural Context" in *Emergent Issues in Education: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. R.F. Arnove, et. al., (Albany: State University of New York, 1992), 25-38; J.W. Meyer, D. Kamens, and A. Benavot, *School Knowledge for the Masses: World Models and National Primary Curricular Categories of the 20th Century* (Washington, D.C.: Falmer, 1992).

[16] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 112-131; Sorobea Nyachieo Bogonko, "Africans and the Politics of Their Education in Kenya, 1910-1934," *Journal of Eastern African Research & Development* 14 (1984), 90. For another early look at the Gikuyu independent school movement, see J.B. Ndungu, "Gituamba and Kikuyu Independency in Church and School" in *Ngano,* ed. B.G. McIntosh (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969), 131-152.

contributed both sweat and coin to take part in the most intense period of school construction in the country's history, while at the same time making limited long-term headway in improving access to high quality schooling for most Kenyans.[17]

However, while such approaches have made important contributions to our understanding of how power relationships have shaped African experiences with school in Kenya, they have often shown an inability to account for instances of variation and often obscure the complex and contradictory ways that schools in Kenya have been experienced by students, teachers, administrators, and staff. With their focus on policy, structure, bureaucracy, and power, systems approaches have often proven to be unequipped to deal with the messiness, murkiness, and contradictions embedded in the way people live with schools. An alternate way forward, driven largely by scholars seeking to understand schools as negotiated places of social meaning, have been more sensitive to the role of variance and the contested processes by which school experiences are shaped.[18] Scholars searching for the meanings that people take from schooling have contributed to the understanding that, regardless of the global or national systemic forces acting upon them, schools are also products of the way individual people and communities change and transform them to deal with local and individual problems, needs, and desires.[19]

Such approaches have made valuable contributions to the history of Kenyan schools. Derek Peterson has shown how Gikuyu catechists in places like Thogoto and Tumutumu took ownership of colonial-era mission schooling to both engage with and resist the colonial state,

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[17] Kilemi Mwiria, "Kenya's Harambee Secondary School Movement: The Contradictions of Public Policy," *Comparative Education Review* 34, no. 3 (1990): 350-368; York W. Bradshaw, "State Limitations, Self-Help Secondary Schooling, and Development in Kenya," *Social Forces* 72, no. 2 (1993): 347-378.
[18] Amy Stambach, *Lessons from Mount Kilimanjaro: Schooling, Community, and Gender in East Africa* (Routledge: New York & London, 2000); Cati Coe, *Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools: Youth, Nationalism, and the Transformation of Knowledge* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 2005).
[19] Kathryn Anderson-Levitt, "A World Culture of Schooling?" in *Local Meanings, Global Schoolings: Anthropology and World Culture Theory*, ed. Kathryn Anderson-Levitt (Palgrave: New York, 2003), 1-26.

demonstrating the limits of colonial hegemony and the power of African agency in shaping the school experience in Central Kenya.[20] Muey Saeteurn and Kenda Mutongi have deployed oral histories to demonstrate how students, parents, and communities in local, rural schools in western Kenya have wrestled with the potential for schools to be vehicles of economic and social transformation, while at the same time acting as tools of power through which colonial and post-colonial states have sought to shape and control African aspirations and choices.[21] Others, such as Elizabeth Cooper, have documented how, during the 2010s, student disappointments in the unfulfilled promises of Kenyan schools manifested themselves in a series of violent attacks in which students set fire to school buildings to, as Cooper argues, call attention to and demand correction to a system that many see as unfair, punitive, rigged, and unresponsive.[22]

Taken from these perspectives, schools become what Amy Stambach has described as "pivotal social institutions," through which the structure, function, and purpose of society can be imagined, critiqued, contested, and, at times, transformed, albeit within very real limits.[23] While schools are shaped by the decisions of policymakers and power-brokers in international systems, national institutions, and administrative offices, they are also venues for the engagement of issues that extend beyond the confines of classroom and campus.[24] They provide a view into the complexities and contradictions of daily life for large swathes of people, while also allowing us

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[20] For "contracting with" and "contracting" colonialism, see Derek Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Heinemann, 2004), 139-162. Also, Derek Peterson, "Writing in Revolution: Independent Schooling and May Mau in Nyeri," in *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority, and Narration,* eds. E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 76-96.
[21] Muey Ching Saeteurn, "'A Beacon of Hope for the Community: The Role of Chavakali Secondary school in Late Colonial and Early Independent Kenya," *Journal of African History* 58, no. 2 (2017): 311-329; Kenda Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart: Widows, Family, and Community in Kenya* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2007).
[22] Elizabeth Cooper, *Burning Ambition: Education, Arson, and Learning Justice in Kenya* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022)
[23] Stambach, *Lessons from Mount Kilimanjaro*, 3.
[24] Ibid*,* 20.

to trace larger processes of historical change and transformation. As a bottom-up history of an African high school during the transition from colony to independent nation in Kenya, this dissertation demonstrates how St. Patrick's has operated as a negotiated place of social meaning, providing a window into several themes in Kenyan history that extend beyond the school's grounds. As a result, this study makes contributions to four important areas of scholarly literature in the historiographies of Kenya and Africa – colonial struggle, decolonization, nation-building, and sports.

St. Patrick's and African Historiographies of Struggle, Decolonization, Nation, and Sport

Schools are sites of struggle – political struggle, social struggle, academic struggle, athletic struggle.[25] At its inception, St. Patrick's represented two seemingly contradictory, yet intimately related historical patterns of struggle. One the one hand, it sat at the end of a long history of colonially imposed education practices that began with the introduction and gradual imposition of the school as the primary system of learning and teaching in Kenya, a process during which Africans, in various ways and with varying results, attempted to resist, adopt, and adapt the school for their own purposes and needs.[26] On the other hand, opening its doors in 1961 on the very cusp of Kenyan political independence, St. Patrick's also symbolized, in the minds of many of its members, a new age of African educational agency through which Kenyans

[25] J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2000); Vanessa Nobles, *A School of Struggle: Durban's Medical School and the Education of Black Doctors in South* (University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2013); Harry Gamble, *Contesting French West Africa: Battles Over Schools and the Colonial Order, 1900-1950* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska, 2017); Leigh Patel, *No Study Without Struggle: Confronting Settler Colonialism in Higher Education* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2021); Vusumuzi R. Kumalo, *South Africa's Struggle for Independent Education: The African Methodist Episcopal Church and the History of the Wilberforce Institute* (Cape Town: Human Social Sciences Research Council, 2022)

[26] Sorobea Bogonko, "Education as a tool of colonialism in Kenya, 1911-1935: The Case of the First Government African Schools," *Transafrican Journal of History* 12 (1983): 1-32; Bogonko, "Africans and the Politics of Their Education in Kenya, 1910-1934."

would be able to assert themselves and achieve a modicum of social and economic mobility by achieving and advancing in schools.

Emerging at such an important disjuncture in Kenyan history makes St. Patrick's a valuable site from which to explore how the school's founders, both its leaders and first generation of students, drew on a long tradition of African struggles with colonial institutions to found and build their school in the waning years of empire.[27] Chapter one of this study, which traces the introduction of mission schools in Kenya from the early 20th Century until the founding of St. Patrick's at the beginning of the 1960s, places the emergence of St. Patrick's within a deep historical context in which schools played key roles as sites of African contestation and change in colonial Kenya.[28] In doing so, this history contributes to understandings of how Africans and their communities in Kenya have struggled to resist, adopt, and adapt colonially derived institutions in attempts to transform their lives and those of their communities.

In addition, the fact that the history of St. Patrick's straddles both colonial and post-colonial eras in Kenya provides an opportunity to take a deep dive into how the school's members experienced the process of decolonization. In the years leading to Kenyan *uhuru* (Kiswahili for independence), schools were seen as important tools in the preparation for nation-building and the search for individual social mobility.[29] Despite a colonial school system

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[27] Historians who have conceptualized colonial rule as a state of struggle and adaptation include, Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review* 99, no 5 (1994): 1516-1545; Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Production, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Paul Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age: The Politics of Manhood in Kenya* (Athens: Ohio University, Press 2017).

[28] Tabitha Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya* (Ohio University Press, 2005), 197-238; Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart,* 97-106 & 128-138; Peter Otiato Ojiambo, *Kenyan Youth Education in Colonial and Post-Colonial Times: Joseph Kamiru Gikubu's Impact* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[29] Kenda Mutongi, "The 'Airlift' Generation, Economic Aspiration, and Secondary School Education in Kenya, 1940-1960," *History of Education Quarterly* 63 (2023): 378–398.

designed to limit education to all but a few, newspaper headlines, political speeches, and development projects regularly included references to the vital role that schools and school-educated individuals would play in the new nation-state.[30] For individuals, matriculating through the system was often scene as giving access to a better life; failure was understood as relegation to economic misery.[31]

And yet, as an institution introduced with the explicit colonial purpose of disciplining, controlling, and sorting Africans, the school was one of the many places where colonial continuities manifested themselves with great intensity.[32] While government changed hands, educational policies and pedagogies rooted in colonial logics and practices proliferated, making schools central spaces where Kenyans were faced with the contradictions between the promises of independence and the continuation of colonial realities.[33] As chapter two demonstrates, St. Patrick's was no different. Exploring the existence of these colonial continuities at St. Patrick's at the very moment of Kenyan independence allows for an understanding of how people wrestled with and tried to make sense of the contradictions of decolonization during the early 1960s,

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[30] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*; David P. Sandgren, *Mau Mau's Children: The Making of Kenya's Postcolonial Elite* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 40-78; Tom Shachtman, *Airlift to America: How Barack Obama, Sr., John F. Kennedy, Tom Mboya, and 800 East African Students Changed Their World and Ours* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009); Daniel Branch, "Political Traffic: Kenyan Students in Eastern and Central Europe, 1958-69," *Journal of Contemporary History* 53, no. 4 (2018): 811-831; Eric Burton, "Decolonization, the Cold War, and Africans' Routes to Higher Education Overseas, 1957-65," *Journal of Global History* 15, no. 1 (2020): 169-191.

[31] Sandgren, *Mau Mau's Children,* 65.

[32] For a few examples of places where colonial continuities manifested themselves in post-colonial Kenya, see Daniel Branch and Nicholas Cheeseman, "The Politics of Control in Kenya: Understanding the Bureaucratic-Executive State, 1952-78," *Review of African Political Economy* 33, no. 107, State, Class & Civil Society in Africa (2006): 11-31; Matthew Hilton, "Charity, Decolonization and Development: The Case of the Starehe Boys School, Nairobi," *Past and Present*, no. 233 (Nov 2016): 227-267; Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 226-246; Dawson Mcall, "'A hero who made this country proud': Boxing, Nation, and the Politics of Sport in Kenya, ca 1950-1980," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* (2023): [Online] DOI: 10.1080/09523367.2023.2267451; Kara Moskowitz, "From Multiracialism to Africanization? Race, Politics, and Sport in Decolonizing Kenya," *Journal of Contemporary History* 58, no 1, (2023): 115–35.

[33] Mwenda Natarangwi, "The Challenges of Education and Development in Post-Colonial Kenya," *Africa Development* 28, no. 3/4 (2003): 211-228.

helping to elucidate, as Frederick Cooper has written, "just what differences the end of empire meant" for Africans of the period.[34]

Following independence, Kenyan schools continued to act as symbols for the hopes and dreams of the citizens of the new nation-state, what Oginga Odinga in 1965 described as "the key to advancement in all fields."[35] During an era when topics of nation-building and development were regular points of conversation among both political elites and common people, schools such as St. Patrick's loomed large. In Kenya, the central nation-building slogan of the early post-colonial era was Harambee, a Kiswahili word meaning "let's pull together" meant to inspire newly independent Kenyans to unify and work hard in the effort to develop their nation.[36] Throughout the period, Harambee was consistently linked to the expansion of schools as important tools for achieving these outcomes, a discourse which manifested itself in the Harambee schools movement, during which parents, churches, teachers, civil societies, and local communities built thousands of schools across Kenya.[37]

Given this context, it is not surprising that Harambee rhetoric and practice found their way to St. Patrick's, where school members often conceptualized their educational efforts as contributing to Kenyan nation-building and development. At the same time, as in Kenyan society more broadly, members of the St. Patrick's community were never monolithically united behind

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[34] Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15.
[35] "Education the key to all advancement," *Daily Nation*, July 20, 1965, 8.
[36] Jomo Kenyatta, *Harambee!: The Prime Minister of Kenya's Speeches, 1963-1964* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1964), 21; John Mbithi and Rasmus Rasmusson, *Self-Reliance in Kenya: The Case of Harambee* (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1977).
[37] Edmond J. Keller, "Development Policy and the Evaluation of Community Self-Help: The Harambee School Movement in Kenya," *Studies in Comparative International Development* (1983): 53-75; Martin Hill, *The Harambee Movement in Kenya: Self-Help, Development and Education Among the Kamba of Kitui District* (London: Athlone Press, 1991); Bradshaw, "State Limitations, Self-Help Secondary Schooling, and Development in Kenya," 347-378.

the rhetoric or practice of Harambee nation-building and institutional development. While discourses and practices of institutional development and Harambee politics were common at St. Patrick's, students at Iten broke rules, bullied and fought with each other, and contested school policies that they saw as onerous or unproductive. Tracing the existence of these two conflicting trends on campus, a process explored in chapter three, demonstrates the limited, contested, and conflicted nature of institutional development and nation-building at St. Patrick's and in Kenya. As such, this work contributes to scholarship that has sought to deconstruct congratulatory notions of African nation-building while also shifting the focus of national development away from state-centric histories and towards the actions and ideas of common people.[38]

At the same time, as in other African contexts, nation-building and development were not the only things on the minds of St. Patrick's students in the decades following independence.[39] Individual honor, institutional prestige, transnational lifestyles, and more, were just as important in the imaginations of the school's community members. At St. Patrick's, the place where these concerns manifested themselves most forcefully was the in school's deep commitment to a

[38] For work that has sought to challenge overly celebratory accounts of Kenyan nation-building, see Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 226-246; Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope & Despair, 1963-2011* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2011), 25-65. For those who have sought to counter state-centric interpretations, see Monica Van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office du Niger, 1920–1960* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey; Cape Town: David Philip, 2002); Coe, *Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools*; Kristen E. Cheney, *Pillars of the Nation: Child Citizens and Ugandan National Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Fair, *Reel Pleasures*, 221-247; Kara Moskowitz, *Seeing Like A Citizen: Decolonization, Development, and the Making of Kenya, 1945-1980* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2019); Muey C. Saeteurn, *Cultivating Their Own: Agriculture in Western Kenya during the "Development" Era* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 56-75; Kenda Mutongi, *Matatu: A History of Popular Transportation in Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 48-68.

[39] For examples of scholars who have explored the ways Africans looked beyond the nation during the era include Frederick Cooper, "Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective," *Journal of African History* 49, no. 2 (July 2008): 167-96; Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); Ismay Milford, et. al., "Another world? East Africa, Decolonisation, and the Global History of the Mid-Twentieth Century," *The Journal of African History* 62, no. 3 (2021): 394-410; Pedro Monaville, *Students of the World: Global 1968 and Decolonization in the Congo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022); Kenda Mutongi, "The 'Airlift' Generation, Economic Aspiration, and Secondary School Education in Kenya, 1940-1960," *History of Education Quarterly* 63 (2023): 378–398.

culture of competitive sporting achievement. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, St. Patrick's became one of Kenya's most prominent and successful sporting institutions, achieving a level of success that imbued students, teachers, administrators, and staff with a sense of individual honor and institutional prestige that rivalled any other sports institution in the country. As such, at St. Patrick's, sport provided a prime avenue for students to achieve honor and prestige.

While schools are everywhere in African sports histories, there are few histories of African school sports.[40] Though historians have thoroughly established the relationship between school sports, Chrisitan religious practice, notions of "muscular Christianity," and colonial administration in many African contexts, few studies exist that explore how African students understood their activities in competitive sports outside of religious utility.[41] By tracing the rise of St. Patrick's as one of Kenya's most important sports institutions of the early independence

[40] For two examples of histories of African sports that have discussed the importance of schools, see Peter Alegi, *African Soccerscapes: How a Continent Changed the World Game* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 8-17, 114-119 and Michelle Sikes, *Kenya's Running Women: A History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2023), 58-65. Much of the literature of African sports histories follow a similar patten by mentioning schools regularly, without delving deeply into the inner workings on school sports in Africa.

[41] For examples of the role of sport in the minds of missionary, colonial, and military officials in Africa, see Michael Gennaro, "'The Cause is a Worthy One, So Come along with Your Sixpence and Enjoy Yourselves with One Hour of Lusty Sport': Sport in Lagos, Nigeria During WWII," *Journal of African Military History* 4, no. 1-2 (2020): 41-65; H.S. Ndee, "Western Influences on Sport in Tanzania: British Middle-Class Educationalists, Missionaries and the Diffusion of Adapted Athleticism," *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 27, no. 5 (April 2010): 905-936; Alegi, *African Soccerscapes,* 1-13; Markku Hokkanen, "'Christ and the Imperial Games Fields' in South-Central Africa – Sport and the Scottish Missionaries in Malawi, 1880-1914: Utilitarian Compromise," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, no. 4 (July 2005): 745-769; Anthony Clayton, "Sport and African Soldiers: The Military Diffusion of Western Sport Throughout Sub-Saharan African," in *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History,* ed. William J. Baker and James A. Mangan (New York: Africans Publishing Company, 1987), 114-137; Anthony Kirk-Greene, "Imperial Administration and the Athletic Imperative: The Case of the District Officer in Africa," in *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History,* ed. William J. Baker and James A. Mangan (New York: Africans Publishing Company, 1987), 81-113; James A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (New York: Viking, 1985), 101-121. For scholars who have explored how Africans responded to these sporting practices, see Sikes, *Kenya's Running Women*, 1-22; Tom Cunningham, "'These Our Games': Sport and the Church of Scotland Mission to Kenya, c. 1907–1937," *History in Africa* 43 (2016): 259-288; Matthew Carotenuto, "Grappling with the Past: Wrestling and Performative Identity in Kenya," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no 16 (2013): 1889-1902; Alegi, *African Soccerscapes*, 14-35; Shoko Yamada, "'Traditions' and cultural production: character training at the Achimota School in colonial Ghana," *History of Education* 38*,* no 1 (January 2009): 29-59; Emmanuel Akyeampong, "Bukom and the Social History of Boxing in Accra: Warfare and Citizenship in Precolonial Ga Society," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 1 (2002): 39-60; Laura Fair, "Kickin' It: Leisure, Politics, and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s-1950s," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 67, no. 2 (1997): 224-251.

era and highlighting the range of meanings that St. Patrick's students took from their sports experiences, chapter four of this dissertation expands the small path charted by those who have taken an interest in school sports in African contexts and calls attention to the place of sport in the lives of African students and the central role of school sports in the rise of national sporting cultures in Africa.[42] In addition, demonstrating the link between sports achievements, honor, and prestige at St. Patrick's provides a new window into how young Africans, especially boys and young men, achieved a level social honor historically defined by notions of martial heroism and social respectability often reserved for powerful elders and wealthy elites.[43]

Sources and Methods: Orality, Student Writing, Newspapers, and Memoirs

Oral history, an important methodological approach in East African and Kenyan historiographies, is at the center of this study.[44] The 76 interviews, with 66 different people, that

[42] Jessica M. Chapman, "Running to School: US-Kenyan Athletic Pipelines in the 1970s," *Diplomatic History* 48, no. 1 (2024): 20-47; Roderick Willis, "A Historical Narrative of High School Athletics Amongst 'Coloured' Communities in Cape Town, South Africa, with Special Reference to the Western Province Senior Schools Sports Union, 1956-1972," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 39, no. 2 (2022): 174-192; Roderick Willis, "Reconstructing a Socio-Political Narrative of High School Athletics in the Oppressed Communities of the Greater Cape Peninsular, South Africa, 1973-1994," *South African Historical Journal* 73, no. 4 (2021): 878-902.
[43] John Illife, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge University Press, 2005); Elisabeth McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa: From Honor to Respectability* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[44] For examples in East Africa broadly that have influenced my thinking on oral history, see Susan Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955-1965* (Heinemann, James Currey, EAEP, Mkuki Na Nyota, 1997); Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001); Derek R. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, c. 1935-1972* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Fair, *Reel Pleasures*. For formative oral history work in Kenya that has shaped my approach, see Margaret Strobel, *Muslim Women in Mombasa* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ Press, 1979); Charles Ambler, *Kenyan Communities in the Age of Imperialism: The Central Region in the Late Nineteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988); Luise White, *Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Univ of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1990); Claire Robertson, *Trouble Showed the Way: Women, Men, and Trade in the Nairobi Area, 1890-1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*; Mutongi, *Matatu*; Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*; Sikes, *Kenya's Running Women*. In addition, Peter Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa, from its Origins to 2016*, 2nd Ed (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004, 2010), Nwando Achebe, *Farmers, Traders, Warriors and Kings; Female Power and Authority in Northern Igboland, 1900 – 1960* (Portsmouth: Heinemann Publishers, 2005), and Luise White, Stephen Miescher, and Daivd William Cohen, eds. *African Worlds, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002) have influenced me as well.

provide the primary foundation for this work were carried out in western and central Kenya between June of 2019 and April of 2020. Mostly conducted in and around Iten, Eldoret, and Nairobi – though my travels regularly took me to communities in and around Butere, Kitale, Kakamega, and Kapsabet – these conversations took place under *mugumo* (fig) trees and in living rooms, dining rooms, coffee shops, restaurants, libraries, and museums, as well as on the campus of St. Patrick's. Usually traveling by *matatu* (mini-van taxis), with the occasional *boda-boda* ride (motorcycle taxis), sitting in people's homes and listening to their stories and experiences, almost always over several cups of *chai* (Kiswahili for tea), was the single most enjoyable and memorable part of this project for me, and is likely the reason I have developed a penchant for overly sweet tea with milk.

The interviewees cited in this dissertation have one thing in common – they either attended or worked at St. Patrick's at some point during the school's first two decades of existence. Other interviews were conducted with former St. Patrick's community members who attended or worked at the school in later years, as well as residents of the town of Iten and its surrounding communities. These perspectives provided important insights that have shaped my understanding of the shared histories of St. Patrick's and the town of Iten. Though not every interviewee is cited in this dissertation, each discussion was deeply important in shaping my understanding of the histories recounted here.

As an all-boys boarding school, mostly populated by male teachers and staff during the period under study, the large majority of these conversations were with elder men, many of whom were in their 60s or 70s at the time interviews were conducted. As a result, this dissertation is largely a study of, and informed by, men, male experiences, and male ideas about the world. While there is little analysis of masculinity and gender in the pages that follow, a

limitation that I hope to rectify in future iterations of this work, the sources make this dissertation largely a history of boys and men.

I had ample help from friends and my research assistant Carolyne Kosgei in contacting potential interviewees, however, interviews were always conducted by me, usually alone, usually in person, and usually in English, though some were done in Kiswahili and three were conducted via phone and email. Language choice was often a point of concern for me, as I spent several years prior to fieldwork practicing and developing my Kiswahili proficiency, with the expectation that I would use it often. Though knowing Kiswahili helped immensely in daily life, especially as my family and I tried to navigate living in the small, yet cosmopolitan town of Iten, time and time again, as my interviewees chose to converse in English, I wondered what their choice of language use said about their views of me and my work. Over time I came to two conclusions. First, many viewed me, correctly, as a *mzungu* (Kiswahili for white person, although sometimes it is also deployed to refer to non-African outsiders). As such, it was easier for them to engage in their very fine English than to have to navigate what was probably often subpar Kiswahili. Second, I believe that these choices also said as much about how my interlocutors viewed themselves as me. As highly educated, socially successful, and at times very powerful individuals, the elder men, and few women, that I conversed with saw themselves, rightly I believe, as cosmopolitan and influential people. Many, due to their successes in sports, were highly practiced in telling their stories. I believe that their language choices were often driven by their comfort in turning the power dynamic of the interviewer-interviewee relationship, in which the researcher is often assumed to be in charge, on its head. Though I began my research with the intention of letting interviewees tell the stories that they wanted to tell, looking back, I now understand that this would likely have been the case no matter what I did. As a

result, while my questions and interests surely shaped our conversations, I believe the oral histories that underpin this study largely reflect the priorities and values of my discussants, helping to make an important contribution to scholarly work that seeks to center African perspectives in accounts of the African past.[45]

While oral histories are the pillar of this research, student writings, primarily in the form of entries in the St. Patrick's school magazines, are central as well. Copies of these magazines from the late 1960s through the early 2000s, along with countless photos from the school's past, were provided through the St. Patrick's House of Memories, a small, well-run school museum, that is open to the public and located on the St. Patrick's campus under the care of the helpful and informative curator Mercy Sewa. Submissions to these magazines, which were screened by student editors and overseen by a faculty moderator, consisted of short stories, parables, folktales, jokes, academic essays, and reports on school activities. Authors explored a range of topics, including questions of morality, youth, sports, academics, social life, and the school's history. They provide a rich documentation of campus events, academic and sporting results, and the formation of key organizations on campus not documented anywhere else. In addition, as the only public expression of student ideas and thoughts from the period, these magazines were important ways for students to express themselves and entertain each other, providing historians with a view into the minds, thoughts, and feelings of the school's students as they navigated their campus lives. At the same time, in a manner similar to national and local newspapers, because articles published in school magazines were curated by both student leaders and faculty members, they also allow for insight into how the school's identity was constructed by powerful

[45] For an explanation of why this type of intervention is necessary see Nwando Achebe, *Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2020), 11-14.

decision makers within the school's hierarchy, factors which make them valuable sources for historians interested in relationships of power and the construction of discourses and identities on campus.[46] Out of my commitment to letting their voices take center stage, in quoting from these sources, I have remained true to the structure, grammar, and spelling used by the authors of these works, though when applicable I have noted when words were spelled incorrectly in the original text.

Kenyan national newspapers, primarily the *East African Standard* and *Daily Nation,* were also important, especially in my attempts to contextualize life on campus within the larger scope of national events taking place across Kenya during the 1960s and 1970s. These were primarily collected with the help of Ondingo Dickens from the bound stacks held at Nairobi's McMillan Library, as well as from the Standard Media Library with the aid of my friend Jesse Kamwaro. The utility of these national newspapers comes alive the most, along with local papers from the United States, in the study of the school's sports history, where I mined news reports for competition results that included St. Patrick's athletes, both in Kenya and abroad. This approach, which has been deployed effectively by Michell Sikes in her research on the history of Kenyan women runners, allowed me to place individual secondary school athletes, a group that has often been ignored by Africanist sports historians and historians of African schools, within larger patterns of national and transnational sporting histories.[47]

In addition to these sources focusing on St. Patrick's, chapter one utilizes a range of memoirs, autobiographies, and scholarly works to trace the history of schools in Kenya prior to

[46] For a look at African newspapers as sources, see *African Print Cultures: Newspaper and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Derek Peterson, Emma Hunter, and Stephanie Newell (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016).
[47] Michelle Sikes, "Print Media and the History of Women's Sport in Africa: The Kenyan Case of Barriers to International Achievement," *History in Africa* 43 (2016): 323–345.

the founding of St. Patrick's in the early 1960s. These works, which consist of several of my personal intellectual heroes, are central to my understanding of the role of the school in the lives and minds of Kenyans. It is my hope that this dissertation contributes to this collection of knowledge and accurately reflects how members of the St. Patrick's school community viewed themselves, their school, and their lives during the school's first fifteen years existence.

CHAPTER 1:

'THERE IS YOUR SITE': SCHOOLS AS SITES OF STRUGGLE AND THE FOUNDING OF ST. PATRICK'S, ITEN IN LATE-COLONIAL KENYA

In early-1960, two men, a local Keiyo politician named William Murgor and an Irish, Catholic priest named Fintan McDonald (See Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2) stood on a windswept hill on the outskirts of the small town of Iten in western Kenya. "There is your site," Murgor is said to have told the priest, as the two strolled through the area, navigating the numerous anthills dotting the landscape.[1] A small, rural community crisscrossed by a few dirt roads and populated by a handful of *dukas* (Kiswahili for shops), Iten had been chosen as the site for the construction of what was slated to be the region's first Catholic secondary boarding school for African boys.[2] Dubbed St. Patrick's, and coming less than three years before Kenya was to gain its independence from Britian, the would-be boarding school carried the aspirations and ambitions of a range of people and interest groups. For Murgor, as well as other local African leaders, the project was rooted in aspirations of expanding educational opportunities for members of the local Keiyo community.[3] For the missionaries, it was hoped that the school "would become famous" and provide a base for the expansion of their evangelization efforts in the area.[4] For residents of Iten and the outlying areas, the school promised to help counter the deep regional inequalities and limitations of the Kenyan education system that had resulted from decades of British

[1] Fintan McDonald, "Recollections on St. Patrick's H.S. – Foundation, 1961," June 1, 2000 (Many thanks to Brother Paul Brennan for providing me with a copy of this document.)
[2] Colm W. O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream* (Nairobi: Kalzmat Security Print Ltd, 2008), 20; Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya; December 17, 2019.
[3] Florence Murgor, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, January 18, 2020.
[4] Fintan McDonald, "How The School Began: Fr. Fintan MacDonald, First H/Master St, Patrick," *The Patrician Silver Jubilee – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, 1961-1986, 14.

Figure 1.1 – William Murgor, n.d.
(Image courtesy of Florence Murgor)

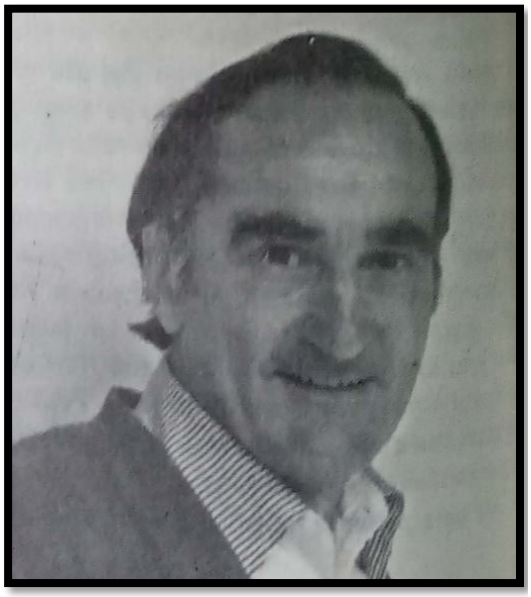

Figure 1.2 – Fintan McDonald, n.d.
(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

colonial rule.[5] For many would be students, St. Patrick's symbolized the potential for social mobility and individual development that formal education in late colonial Kenya was said to provide.[6]

The decision to build St. Patrick's in Iten did not happen by chance. Rather, it was the result of a series of negotiations, collaborations, and struggles that took place in the late 1950s between African politicians, community residents, and a group of Irish, Catholic missionaries from the St. Patrick's Missionary Society (SPS). Examples of collaboration between Africans interested in educational development and Christian missionaries interested in expanding their influence are not rare in Kenyan history. Throughout the first half of the 20th Century, as European missionaries, militaries, and colonial administrators expanded their influence across

[5] Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019; John Kiprono, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, December 13, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[6] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019; Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019; John Kiprono, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, December 13, 2019.

the region, they brought with them a range of ideas and practices, ranging from religion to sports to economy to notions of gender and age, that transformed African lives in intense ways.[7] One of the longest lasting of these transformations came in the area of education, with the introduction and proliferation of the institution of the school.[8] Though an extension of colonial hegemony, set up to shape and reform the consciousness, cultures, ideologies, and practices of its subject students, schools were, slowly and intermittently at first, taken up by Africans in Kenya as a means of asserting themselves in a deeply repressive colonial context. As a result, the system of schools that took hold in Kenya was as much the product of African responses to colonial education as it was an extension of colonial power.

Such assertions were not always straightforward. At times, African students, parents, and community leaders outrightly resisted the foreign ideas and practices pushed by early school leaders. Others took up the mantle of school-based education with an enthusiasm reflected in the fervor students and teachers applied to their studies, the sports and social practices they took part in, the relationships they developed on campus, and the symbolism with which they imbued schools as institutions through which they could achieve their dreams and desires. At other times, Africans actively sought to transform and adapt educational practices through protests and remonstrations that included strikes, walk-outs, destruction of school property, and the creation of their own African-led institutions. Whether resisting, adopting, or adapting these models and

[7] For religion, see Derek Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Heinemann, 2004); Kenda Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart: Widows, Family, and Community in Kenya* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). For economy, see Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905-1963* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1987). For age and gender, see Paul Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age: The Politics of Manhood in Kenya* (Athens: Ohio University, Press 2017). For sport, see John Bale and Jow Sang, *Kenyan Running: Movement Culture, Geography, and Global Change* (Frank Cass: London, 1996),

[8] J.E. Otiende, S.P. Wamahiu, A.M. Karugu, *Education and Development in Kenya: A Historical Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Sorobea Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya (1895-1991)* (Nairobi: Evans Brothers, 1992).

practices, throughout this history Africans rarely saw schools as benign, demonstrating their understanding for the power of schools to act as negotiated places of meaning making for themselves and their communities.

The founding of St. Patrick's in Iten in the late 1950s and early 1960s was thus the result of a confluence of long-standing historical patterns and struggles that included the introduction of colonial and missionary models of education, the needs and conditions of African communities, and a range of individual aspirations. Pulling from memoirs, oral history interviews, and documents produced by members of the St. Patrick's community, this chapter traces the history of educational practice in colonial Kenya from the introduction of mission schools in the early 1900s to the formation of St. Patrick's in 1960 and places the actions of the founders of St. Patrick's into larger historical patterns of African engagement with colonial practices of education in Kenya. I argue that demonstrating the history of schools in colonial Kenya as sites of struggle helps to contextualize how the founders of St. Patrick's drew on a long tradition of African engagement with colonial education as they set out to build their school in the waning years of empire in East Africa. Placing the emergence of St. Patrick's within this deep historical context contributes to understandings of how Africans and their communities in colonial Kenya resisted, adopted, and adapted colonial institutions during the first half of the 20th Century as they sought to transform colonial spaces into social places of meaning making.[9]

[9] Historians who have conceptualized colonial rule as a state of struggle and adaptation include, Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review* 99, no 5 (1994): 1516-1545; Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Production, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*.

'Traditional African Education' in Kenya*: Pim*, the *Menjo*, and Indigenous African Sports

For Africans like William Murgor and his local Keiyo constituents, faith in the tools of education as a means of passing information from one generation to another and achieving personal and community transformation was not new. Long before the founding of St. Patrick's, African communities in what is now Kenya took part in a range of Indigenous educational practices intended to aid in the incorporation of younger generations into their respective communities. Although referred to by some scholars as "traditional African education," as products of the complex and quickly transforming socio-cultural context brought on by European colonial expansion, such practices are correctly understood as representations of early interactions between European colonial agents and African societies in the region during the early 20th Century.[10] Although differing in form and content, traditional African education practices were intended to achieve clearly delineated pedagogical objectives, such as preserving important agricultural and artisanal information, developing mental and physical skills, and transmitting social and cultural knowledge through both formal and informal means.

Oral traditions were central to these pedagogical practices. Proverbs, folktales, songs, and stories, often passed down by trained specialists and community elders, communicated important information about the relationship between local communities and their surrounding environment.[11] Among Marakwet communities in the Cherang'any Hills of western Kenya, for example, female teachers known as *Chepkerichin* were charged with passing herbal and medicinal information from one generation to another.[12] In central regions, uncircumcised Meru

[10] For "traditional African education", see Otiende, et. al., *Education and Development in Kenya*, 7-9. For a discussion of how Indigenous Africa practices were the product of African-European interactions of the period, rather than pure African traditions, see Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age,* 38-41.
[11] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 2-3.
[12] B.E. Kipkorir, *The Marakwet of Kenya: A Preliminary Study* (East African Publishers, 1973), 14-18.

boys were placed in a formal institution known as *wathi*, where they were taught how to use curative plants and develop poisons for hunting wild animals.[13]

Corporeal practices played important roles as well. Games, competitive sports, and physical training taught intellectual skills, developed traits like toughness and discipline, and reproduced gender norms. Wrestling, popular among Luo, Luhya, Kipsigis, and Gikuyu communities, among others, provided a way for, mostly male, children to learn from their elders, mediate disputes, and garner personal accolades.[14] In their memoirs, Kenyan historians Mugo Gatheru and Bethwell Ogot recalled taking part in childhood wrestling and fighting games while grazing cattle, goats, and sheep, with Gatheru noting that boys from nearby Kipsigis families "were experts in wrestling."[15] According to Jomo Kenyatta, among Gikuyu communities, the best performers in running and wrestling activities were singled out for positions of leadership, demonstrating "in striking way the theory that play is anticipatory of adult life."[16] Likewise, historian Michelle Sikes has shown that Indigenous ideas related to the practice of running, often associated with martial and pastoralist traditions, were a distinctly male domain for many groups in western Kenya.[17]

Physical practices also sharpened hunting and fighting skills, developed physical facilities and strength, and contributed to pastoralist economies. In Nandi communities, a competitive game combining the skills of throwing and racing was common in which one

[13] Otiende, et.al., *Education and Development in Kenya,* 12.
[14] John Osogo, *Life in Kenya in the Olden Days: The Baluyia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 2; Mugo Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds* (New York: New American Library, 1964), 33-34; Matthew Carotenuto, "Grappling with the Past: Wrestling and Performative Identity in Kenya," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no 16 (2013): 1892.
[15] Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds,* 33-34; Bethwell Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time: An Autobiography with a New Postscript* (Kisumu: Anyange Press, 2011), 21.
[16] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya* (London: Mercury Books, 1938), 101.
[17] Michelle Sikes, "Enduring Legacies and Convergent Identities: The Male-Dominated Origins of the Kenyan Running Explosion," *Journal of Sport History* 46, no 2 (Summer 2019): 273-287.

participant would throw a club as far as possible, with others racing each other to retrieve and return it to the thrower.[18] Cattle raiding among pastoralist groups such as the Maasai, Nandi, Marakwet, Keiyo, Tugen, and Kipsigis necessitated travelling long distances in short periods of time, contributing to family and community economies, and teaching values such as physical toughness and group cohesiveness.[19] Gikuyu dances, according to Kenyatta, were a "means to providing healthy bodily exercise" for both boys and girls.[20]

Central among the aims of Indigenous educational practices in Kenyan communities was the reproduction of social and cultural information. Transmitting knowledge and social expectations of the family, clan, and ethnic group and inculcating a belief in collective responsibility were aims often done by elders in formal and informal settings. Mugo Gatheru, who grew up in central Kenya during the late 1920s and 1930s, recalled how larger boys would visit the homes of elder men after supper, where they heard "legends and stories of the Kikuyu, of riddles, and of men's affairs. That was where we learned to be men when we grew up."[21] In Marakwet, adolescents in their early teen years would meet with community elders in meetings known as *kok*, where discussions ranged from sexual education to hygiene to social taboos.[22]

Farther west, near Lake Victoria, Luo communities imparted social knowledge through a formal institution known as the *siwindhe*, in which a grandmotherly figure known as *pim* acted as teacher. According to David William Cohen, Luo children in the *siwindhe* "learned about the past from *pim*. They drew upon her wisdom. They learned about the people, the groups, and the

[18] John Bale and Joe Sang, *Kenyan Running: Movement Culture, Geography, and Global Change* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 57. Olympic steeplechase gold medalist Amos Biwott recalled playing this game while growing up in the early 1960s, see O. Okroth, "The Amos Biwott story," *Sunday Standard*, March 11, 1990, 29.
[19] David Anderson, "Stock Theft and Moral Economy in Colonial Kenya," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 56, no. 4, Crime and Colonialism in Africa (1986): 399.
[20] Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya*, 104.
[21] Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds,* 34.
[22] Kipkorir, *The Marakwet of Kenya*, 52.

settlements around them."[23] *Pim* taught young people about sexuality, childbirth, social obligations and taboos, health, sickness, misfortune, and the challenges of losing loved ones to death. As Cohen has put it, "As *pim* nurtured and instructed her charges…[she] gave the young the elements of an intimate understanding of a complex and physically remote social universe."[24]

In addition to orality, physicality, and formal systems, the most common method of passing on social and cultural knowledge came in the form of initiation rites marking the transition from childhood to adulthood. Often including physical initiation, feats of toughness, circumcision, dancing and racing competitions, and extended periods of instruction, such practices carried immense educational value. During their teenage years, young Gusii men were socialized in a kind of boarding school known as *ebisarate*, which were fenced and moated clan barracks where they slept as a group and took part in military training imparted by elders.[25] For groups which incorporated circumcision, such as Gikuyu, Meru, Kamba, Nandi, Keiyo, Marakwet, and Kipsigis, initiation was followed by a formalized period of seclusion held in a small house constructed specifically for the purpose. Known variously as *menjo* (Nandi, Kipsigis, Keiyo), *thingira* (Gikuyu), *gichee* (Meru), or *thomi* (Kamba), initiates could spend anywhere from three months to two years in these schools, and were given instruction, often by elders, in social norms, conduct, laws, combat, sexual relations, marital duties, and generational expectations.[26]

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[23] David William Cohen, "Doing Social History From *Pim's* Doorway" in *Reliving the Past: The Worlds of Social History*, ed. Olivier Zunz (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 192.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 7.
[26] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age,* 41-47; Kipkorir, *The Marakwet of Kenya,* 35-39; Susan Chebet and Ton Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff: A History of the Keiyo* (Eldoret: Moi University Press, 2000), 59-65; Tabitha Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya, 1900-1950* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 79; Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, 29-33.

Taken as a whole, such practices transmitted skills and technical information, developed character, improved physical aptitude, and communicated important cultural and social knowledge. In these broad goals and purposes, Indigenous African education was not much different from other systems of learning and teaching. Such practices demonstrate that African societies in the region that is now Kenya had a deep and varied interest in transmitting knowledge, skills, and social norms from one generation to another. During the early 20th Century, as Africans in the region were increasingly exposed to European practices, many of these traditional systems would be transformed, while others would be erased, by a new model of education – the school. However, African interests in the uses and utility of education, even in the new form of the school, would remain strong.

Replacing *Pim*, Erasing the *Menjo*: The Mission School in Early Colonial Kenya

Prior to the 1920s, European-style schooling in what is now Kenya was promoted almost exclusively by Christian missionaries. The first of these were established at Catholic and Protestant mission stations in places like Freretown, Mombasa, Unguja, Pemba, and Bagamoyo between the 1840s and 1880s.[27] Schools attached to these stations were primarily populated by formerly enslaved Africans captured by British forces patrolling the region, and were part of the larger strategy of Church Missionary Society (CMS), Holy Ghost, and other Christian missionaries of spreading the religion through slave evangelization.[28] Often established on

[27] Roland A. Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longman, 1966), 15-23; R.M. Githige, "The Issue of Slavery: Relations between the CMS and the State on the East African Coast prior to 1895," *Journal of Religion in Africa* XVI, no. 3 (1986): 209-225.
[28] Fred Morton, "Small Change: Children in the Nineteenth-Century East African Slave Trade," in *Children in Slavery through the Ages*, eds. Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, and Joseph C. Miller (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009), 66-67; Paul V. Kollman, *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005).

closed settlements, these early mission schools provided almost exclusively liturgical education and required students to take part in several hours of daily manual labor.[29]

With the tightening of the slave trade in the last decades of the 19th Century, the strategy of slave evangelization was replaced with conversion through the spread of mission schools. During this period, small groups of African converts were sent into the interior, accompanied by ordained priests, to establish settlements, build schools, and recruit students.[30] By the mid-1880s, a handful of such villages had been founded within a hundred miles from Bagamoyo, with the Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers established at Bura in southeastern Kenya in the early 1890s and Nairobi by 1899.[31] Other groups, such as the East African Scottish Mission, were actively expanding into the interior, where they erected an outpost in Ukambani in 1891.[32] Eventually relocated to Thogoto, it was later taken over by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland Mission (CSM), which had established itself at Kikuyu in 1898.[33]

The completion of the Uganda railway in 1901, which linked the coastal city of Mombasa to Kisumu on Lake Victoria, marked an increased missionary presence in Kenya's interior that set off a flurry of mission school expansion.[34] CMS stations were established in Kikuyu by 1901 and Maseno by 1906.[35] The American Gospel Missionary Society was in Kiambu by 1902, the same year that the Quaker Friends of Africa Mission settled in Kaimosi.[36] The CSM expanded to

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[29] Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, 22.
[30] Kollman, *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa*; Andreana Pritchard, *Sisters in Spirit: Christianity, Affect, and Community Building in East African, 1860-1970* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2017).
[31] Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, 23; Otiende, et. al., *Education and Development in Kenya,* 42.
[32] Peterson, *Creative Writing,* 39.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Robert H. Clemm, "The Uganda Railway and the Fabrication of Kenya," in *Technology, Violence, and War*, eds. Robert S. Ehlers, Jr., Sarah K. Douglas, and Daniel P.M. Curzon (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2019), 133-154; Richard T. Ogonda, "Transport and Communications in the Colonial Economy," in *An Economic History of Kenya*, eds. William Robert Ochieng' and Robert M. Maxon (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1992), 129-146.
[35] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 19; Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time,* 12.
[36] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 19; Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 23-30.

Tumutumu in 1908, and the British Mill Hill Fathers were in Yala by 1910.[37] By the end of the first decade of the 20th Century, three of the main centers of Kenya's population had been occupied by missionaries, while the mission presence in Muslim regions and the Rift Valley was sparse.[38]

The advance of European influence into the interior was not benign, nor was it peaceful. As in other parts of Africa, European missionaries in Kenya during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries were preceded by an unprecedented level of violence in the form of "pacification" campaigns, disruptive population displacements, land grabs, and the onset of exploitative colonial tax and labor regimes.[39] In western Kenya, for example, the first major encounter between Luyia communities and the British took place near Mumias in 1895, where African conscripted soldiers working for the British killed hundreds of people, kidnapped women and children, and stole 1,700 cattle, all because locals refused to disarm.[40] In 1896, a similar British expedition was carried out against Nandi communities to the northeast of Mumias, as reprisal for attacks on a mail convoy from the Uganda Mission.[41] In 1904, a British force in the central regions had attacked a trading center at Iria-ini near Tumutumu, killing approximately 1,500 Gikuyu people and burning villages in Tetu and Mathira.[42] A year later, in the culmination of Nandi resistance against British forces that began in 1896, the British officer Richard Meinertzhagen murdered the Nandi *orkoiyot* Koitalel arap Samoie.[43]

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[37] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in* Kenya, 19; Peterson, *Creative* Writing, 39-40.
[38] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 19.
[39] Dennis Laumann, *Colonial Africa, 1884-1994* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 1-25 & 49-70; For Kenya, see John Lonsdale, "The Conquest State: 1895-1904," in *A Modern History of Kenya,* ed. William Ochieng (Nairobi: Evans Brothers, 1989), 6-35.
[40] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 18.
[41] C.W. Hobley, *Kenya, from Chartered Company to Crown Colony: Thirty Years of Exploration and Administration in British East Africa*, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 88-89.
[42] Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 41.
[43] Hobley, *Kenya, from Chartered Company to Crown Colony,* 109-123; A.T. Matson, *Nandi resistance to British Rule, 1890-1906* (Nairobi, 1972); Richard Meinertzhagen, *Kenya Diary (1902-1906)* (London: Eland Books, 1984),

It was within this context of violent military expansion that the first mission schools were founded in central and western Kenya. Missionaries stationed in the region during the early 20th Century often found themselves operating amidst communities that Kenda Mutongi has described as "crippled by economic hardship and emotional loss."[44] As a result, many of the earliest African students to attend mission schools did so out of the need to seek practical solutions to the challenges of material poverty and social marginalization. The first students at the CMS mission school at Tumutumu, for example, were underemployed junior sons, illegitimate children, or from families of little material means.[45] In Nyanza, young Maragoli boys as old as ten or twelve, often sons of widows, attached themselves to Quaker missions to work in exchange for wages or food.[46]

The primary aim of mission teachers and administrators was to evangelize and initiate Africans into Christian civilization, an objective they sought to achieve by teaching moderate literacy, vocational training, and domestic skills.[47] African students at mission schools were given only the skills necessary to enable them to promote conversion within their own communities.[48] At the CMS school at Maseno, for example, boys were taught basic literacy while being trained in industrial skills and evangelization.[49] According to Bethwell Ogot, whose father attended one such school in Maseno during the late 1910s, students were responsible for a range of work at the station. They built gardens, constructed roads, tailored their own uniforms, built houses, and made furniture, all of which were practices intended to transform Africasn into

233; P.K. Arap Magut, "The Rise and Fall of the Nandi Orkoiyot c. 1850-1957," in *Ngano: Studies in traditional and modern East African history,* ed. B.G. McIntosh (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969), 102-104.
[44] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart,* 22.
[45] Peterson, *Creative Writing,* 54-55.
[46] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart,* 30.
[47] Ibid, 28; Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya,* 203; Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 42-43.
[48] Sorobea Bogonko, "Education as a tool of colonialism in Kenya, 1911-1935: The Case of the First Government African Schools," *Transafrican Journal of History* 12, (1983): 1-2.
[49] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time*, 12

good, industrious Christians.[50] As one missionary in western Kenyan wrote, "becoming a Christan does not mean merely learning to read and write and becoming a schoolteacher or a preacher, but it does mean to be a steady, industrious man or woman, living out in everyday life the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."[51]

Mission stations sought to introduce these values through organized regimes of labor and study meant to instill ethics of discipline and hard work.[52] In Quaker villages established in western Kenya, girls were expected to rise at 6:00 a.m., conduct household chores, prepare food, and carry out farmwork before leaving for school. Once arrived, students would assemble for prayer, after which they would attend two hours of instruction in basic reading and writing, often in the local vernacular.[53] Similarly, at CSM Tumutumu in Gikuyuland, the school day began with a bugle call at 9:00 a.m., followed by two and half hours of instruction in reading, writing, and basic maths, with the remainder dedicated to manual and domestic labor on the compound.[54] Such schedules and lessons emphasized the attainment of salvation through hard work, hygiene, timeliness, and discipline.

Mission schools also became centers for new social practices, especially in the form of sports. Aimed primarily at boys and young men, missionaries across East Africa saw pedagogical and evangelical value in the practice of European sports.[55] In Kenyan mission

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[50] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time*, 12-13.
[51] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 45.
[52] This pattern was like the use of timetables and works schedules in industrial Britain during the late 18th Century. See E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).
[53] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 61-64.
[54] Peterson, *Creative Writing,* 42-43.
[55] For Tanzania, see H.S. Ndee, "Western Influences on Sport in Tanzania: British Middle-Class Educationalists, Missionaries and the Diffusion of Adapted Athleticism," *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 27, no. 5 (April 2010): 905-936. For Malawi, see Markku Hokkanen, "'Christ and the Imperial Games Fields' in South-Central Africa – Sport and the Scottish Missionaries in Malawi, 1880-1914: Utilitarian Compromise," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, no. 4 (July 2005): 745-769. For Zanzibar, see Laura Fair, "Kickin' It: Leisure, Politics, and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s-1950s," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 67, no. 2 (1997): 224-251.

schools, competitive sports, especially soccer and athletics, were intended to develop a sense of selflessness and promote teamwork, while sports days, consisting of competitive events like tug of war and racing, were held on major holidays, like Empire Day and Christmas, to promote a sense of loyalty.[56] For mission teachers, such as CSM missionary John Arthur, the intention of such games was to deliver "a mighty channel through which God can work for the uplifting of this race" and provide a "substitution" for what he described as "evil" Indigenous dance and martial practices.[57]

All of this was designed to encourage aspiring African students to leave behind their Indigenous social and religious practices and transform their "social structures to fit in with European concepts of work and interpersonal relationships."[58] Although different missions had different approaches, with Catholics generally being less restrictive of African cultural activities, students were expected to abstain from Indigenous religion, rites of passage, traditional dances, the wearing of African clothes, and the taking of tribal markings.[59] Some mission stations even went so far as to carry out male circumcision on their own compounds.[60] In the eyes of missionaries, the spread of European sports such as soccer and athletics was intended to erase African wrestling and dance; the training of European and African mission teachers was intended to replace elder teachers such as *pim*; the erecting of mission schools was intended to erase Indigenous institutions of learning such as the *menjo* and *ebiserate*.

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[56] Tom Cunnigham, "These Our Games: Sport and the Church of Scotland Mission to Kenya, c. 1907-1937," *History in Africa* 43, (2016): 270-271. For an example of the link between sport and Empire Day in other British colonies in Africa, see Saheed Aderinto, "Empire Day in Africa: Patriotic Colonial Childhood, Imperial Spectacle and Nationalism in Nigeria, 1905-1960," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 46, no. 4 (2018): 731-757.
[57] Peter Alegi, *African Soccerscapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 12.
[58] Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (NY: David McKay Company, 1974), 16.
[59] Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya,* 204-208; Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart,* 46-49; Bogonko, "Education as a tool of colonialism in Kenya, 1911-1935," 3.
[60] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age,* 31-58.

'To realize my dreams of education': African Engagement with School in Colonial Kenya

Despite these efforts, and despite the limited nature of mission education, Africans frequently found meaning and utility, often times at odds with missionary intentions, in the newly introduced schools. African engagement with mission schools, though initially small, increased consistently during the first several decades of the 20th Century. Although enrollment and attendance fluctuated, by the end of the 1910s, there were 82 mission schools serving over 11,000 African students in the part of the East African Protectorate that would later become Kenya.[61] In addition, over 400 smaller village schools, known as out-schools and often run by African Christian converts, had more than 18,000 students enrolled.[62]

African teachers and converts played major roles in these schools. According to Mugo Gatheru, it was an African teacher named Kamau who taught students, and introduced soccer, at the CSM school in the Rift Valley village of Stoton where he was a child during the 1930s.[63] In Nyanza, graduates of the CMS school in Maseno were responsible for founding a number of village schools in surrounding locales such as Gem, Ambira, Ramba, Sakwa, and Kagonya.[64] At Ng'iya mission near Kisumu, while Reverand A.E. Pleydell was officially in charge, the work of teaching was carried out by an African man named Ezekiel Apindi.[65] At the nearby Luanda school, African teachers such as Zablon Sangoro, Simeon Odera, Eliazaro Wanyera, and Daniel Omolo developed a reputation for "dedicated and excellent" work.[66] Further east in Kapsowar, where the first African Inland Mission school in Marakwet was opened in the early 1930s,

[61] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 22. The borders of the East Africa Protectorate, established in 1895, differed from what is now the state of Kenya, with the Rift Valley remaining part of the Uganda Protectorate until 1902 and part of the northeast included in Italian Somaliland in 1925.
[62] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 22.
[63] Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds*, 48-49.
[64] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time,* 21.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid, 23.

students were taught by an African man known as Daudi 'Koikoi.'[67] As Bethwell Ogot, who himself attended the mission school in Luanda as a child, it was these African converts and teachers who were responsible for "laying the foundation of the new educational system in the country."[68]

African students turned the training and skills developed at these schools into new avenues and opportunities. Musa Ndirangu, for example, who went to the Gospel Missionary Society School at Kiambu during the early 1910s, leveraged his reading and writing skills to become a successful trader in central Kenya, later becoming a local leader in education.[69] Charles Muhoro, who worked as a translator and trained as a teacher at CSM schools in Tumutumu, later took a job working for the Department of Education in Nairobi, where he earned between 60 to 70 shillings per month.[70] Harry Thuku, who founded the East African Association in 1921 and became a vocal critic of the oppressive treatment of Africans by Kenya's settler community, earned employment as a clerk after attending a Methodist missionary school in Kambui.[71] Similarly, after attending school at the CSM mission in Thogoto, Jomo Kenyatta found work as a clerk in Nairobi.[72] Other mission school graduates developed enough wealth to invest in clearing land and planting new crops in central Kenya during the 1920s and by the 1950s had developed vast cattle holdings in places like Nyeri.[73]

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[67] B.E. Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills: Memoirs of a Reluctant Academic* (Nairobi: MacMillan, 2009), 58.
[68] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time,* 21.
[69] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Dreams in a Time of War: A Childhood Memoir* (New York: Anchor Book, 2010), 112-113.
[70] Charles Muhoro Kareri, *The Life of Charles Muhoro Kareri,* ed. Derek Peterson (Madison: University of Wisconsin African Studies Center, 2003), 40.
[71] David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: Norton, 2005), 15-16.
[72] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 238.
[73] Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 71 & 191.

At the same time, it was not uncommon for students and their families to resist the imposition of mission schooling. At Kapcherop in western Kenya, pressure to enroll children in missionary schools resulted in the migration of the Sengwer people to nearby Kapterit.[74] In central Kenya, elders often expressed concern that girls who went away to mission schools would become prostitutes and take part in marriages that would erase historical traditions of beer exchange and bride wealth, a development that would weaken their generational power.[75] In the mid-1920s, community members near Nyeri registered their frustration with the changes introduced by missions by uprooting crops of wattle trees, potatoes, peas, and other vegetables planted on school grounds, as well as refusing to attend classes, in a series of events that Derek Peterson has described as the "school garden crisis."[76] Among missionaries, Kamba, Kipsigis, and Nandi communities were well-known for generally resisting attendance at mission schools during the first several decades of the 20th Century.[77]

Others sought to take part in African practices while also attending schools, often to the consternation of both European missionaries and African community elders. Boys and girls attending mission schools in central Kenya often took part in traditional African ceremonies and practices at home while attending classes.[78] Throughout the first half of the 1900s, school leaders and missionaries in central and western Kenya regularly complained about students leaving school to participate in rites of passage and initiation ceremonies.[79] As late as the early 1940s,

[74] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, 68.
[75] Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya*, 204-211; Peterson, *Creative Writing,* 56-57.
[76] Peterson, *Creative Writing,* 91-92 & 99-103; Kenneth King, "The Politics of Agricultural Education for Africans in Kenya" in *Hadith 3*, ed. Bethwell Ogot (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1971), 142-156; Robert Tignor, *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya: The Kamba, Kikuyu, and Masai from 1900-1939* (Princeton University Press, 1976), 255-256.
[77] Sorobea Bogonko, "Africans and the Politics of Their Education in Kenya, 1910-1934," *Journal of Eastern African Research and Development* 14, (1984): 20.
[78] Cunningham, "These Our Games," 277; Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya,* 75-78 & 212-213.
[79] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age,* 31 & 53.

Mugo Gatheru recalled taking part in initiation ceremonies, becoming a "fully fledged Kikuyu," before proceeding with his primary school education.[80] A similar process took place in Maragoli communities, where converts and students, according to Kenda Mutongi, "took up practices they felt useful from their old culture and the new culture of the missionaries and blended them in a circumspect way that allowed them to meet their spiritual and everyday needs."[81]

Others sought to transform schools, their purposes, and practices into tools for the expression of African agency and power. In 1910 and 1912, students at mission schools in the west-Kenyan towns Maseno and Mumias went on strike, demanding more academically and literary focused education.[82] In 1920, mission-educated Harry Thuku wrote to the Tuskegee Institute of America asking for support to build "a Tuskegee in the African world for the bold mission of uplifting and emancipating" Africans from the "grinding oppression of the white settlers of the colony of Kenya."[83] In the 1910s and early 1920s, responding to discontent over the poor level of academic training at the mission stations, educated Africans such as John Owalo, Musa Ndirangu, and Daudi Maina Kiragu established independent schools in Nyanza, Kiambu, and Gituamba that were led and funded by Africans.[84] In 1929, Jomo Kenyatta, then the secretary of the Kikuyu Central Association, requested the colonial administration to establish free primary and secondary, along with higher education opportunities, for Africans.[85] Others shaped newly introduced school sports to their own needs by breaking rules, introducing

[80] Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds,* 70-77. Gatheru's reference to becoming a "fully fledged Kikuyu" in on page 78.
[81] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 68.
[82] Bogonko, "Africans and the Politics of Their Education in Kenya," 23; Kenda Mutongi, "The Airlift "Generation", Economic Aspiration, and Secondary School Education in Kenya, 1940-1960," *History of Education Quarterly* 63, (2023): 385.
[83] John Anderson, *The Struggle for the School: The interaction of Missionary, Colonial Government, and Nationalist enterprise in the development of formal education in Kenya* (Nairobi: Longman, 1970), 133.
[84] Ibid, 114; Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 22; J.B. Ndungu, "Gituamba and Kikuyu Independency in Church and School" in *Ngano,* ed. B.G. McIntosh (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969), 132; Ngũgĩ, *Dreams in a Time of War,* 112.
[85] Oliver Furley and Thomas Watson*, A History of Education in East Africa* (New York: NOK, 1978), 303.

their own playing styles and strategies, and initiating games and races outside the purview of Europeans.[86]

Probably the most well-known example of African attempts to shape the utility of the school to their own needs resulted from the female circumcision crisis of the late 1920s. In 1928 and 1929, in what historian Paul Ocobock has described as "one of the most spectacular examples of [how] colonial officials and chiefs pushed to tamper with African cultural life in the name of moral uplift," Protestant missionaries and their African intermediaries in central Kenya called for an end to female circumcision and demanded a rejection of the practice among their members.[87] Furious over the proposed ban, many Gikuyu congregants and students abandoned the most outspoken mission stations, joined political organizations such as the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), and established a series of African-led independent churches and schools.[88]

While the colonial administration worked to reverse these trends by suppressing and discouraging talk of a circumcision ban, Gikuyu leaders took advantage of the discontent to enlarge their reach and expand African-led schools. By the end of the 1930s, a network of 63 independent schools serving just under 13,000 students existed in central Kenya.[89] A teachers training college, known as the Kenya Teachers College, was erected at Githunguri in 1939.[90] Schools were funded by association members, tuition payments, and school sports competitions.[91] Intended for the promotion of *waithi,* or "self-mastery," independent schools

[86] Cunningham, "These Our Games," 274-278.
[87] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age,* 50.
[88] Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 103-112; Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya,* 73-103; Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 18–20.
[89] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 118-122; A.S. Adebola, "The London Connection: A Factor in the Survival of the Kikuyu Independent Schools' Movement, 1929-1939," *Journal of African Studies* 10, no. 1 (1983): 14.
[90] The founding of the Kenya Teachers College is described in detail by Mbiyu Koinange in *The People of Kenya Speak for Themselves* (Detroit: Kenya Publication Fund, 1955), 25-37.
[91] Ndungu, "Gituamba and Kikuyu Independency in Church and School,"138-139.

taught English, trained students to write constitutions, and kept detailed record books.[92] While some historians, such as Derek Peterson, have argued that such approaches to education were intended to help Africans learn how to engage with and limit the power of the colonial state, for students such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, who went to an independent school, the goal was simply to "to realize my dreams of education."[93]

Independent schools engendered a strong sense of community aspiration and togetherness. Mugo Gatheru, who attended several independent schools as a child, described how people in his community were so "determined that their children should learn the mysteries that come in books" that they organized themselves to pay one shilling per adult and fifty cents per child to fund night classes at a local home.[94] Community-wide sports festivals, which included physical drills, three legged races, and track and field events also promoted connectivity and unity.[95] As Ngũgĩ has written, such events "forged a togetherness" between different independent schools, while at the same time "tightening the bond between the schools and the community."[96] In these ways, independent schools produced a common set of experiences and reflected hopes for both individual and collective liberation through schools.

Though the independent school movement was primarily a Gikuyu phenomenon, the trend of Africans participating in and transforming school-based education for their own needs and purposes was not specific to Gikuyu communities. Despite examples of resistance, during the first half of the 20th Century, Africans in central and western Kenya founded schools, became

[92] Peterson, *Creative Writing,* 139-143.
[93] Derek Peterson, "Writing in Revolution: Independent Schooling and May Mau in Nyeri" in *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority, and Narration,* eds. E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 77; For "contracting with" and "contracting" colonialism, see Peterson, *Creative Writing,* 139-162. For "to realize my dreams of education," see Ngũgĩ, *Dreams in a Time of War,* 114.
[94] Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds*, 50.
[95] Ngũgĩ, *Dreams in a Time of War*, 119.
[96] Ibid, 119-120.

teachers, demanded more rigorous academic training, created their own institutions, and sought to adopt and adapt the knowledge, skills, and practices promoted by mission schools for their own interests, needs, and desires. In essence, they were seeking to turn the spaces provided by mission schools into pivotal social places that reflected their own purposes and desires. Such efforts would be replicated and intensified in later decades.

'To educate the black man to be what we think he ought to be': Enter the Colonial State

In addition to the expansion of mission education and the growth of independent schools, a third major force in the advance of the school in Kenya came between the early 1910s and the late 1930s with the expanding influence of the colonial state. With the population of Europeans in Kenya growing from roughly 1,800 in 1906 to just over 12,500 by 1926, the entrance of the colonial state into Kenyan schooling was driven by the extension of the colonial administration into the interior and the rise in influence of white settler communities in central and western Kenya, both of which took place within the context of the violent alienation of Africans from their land through military and legal means.[97] In contrast to missionaries, many of whom saw their job as transforming African societies, many colonial officials and white settlers argued that the British role was to shield African cultures from the influence of Western society, retain a clear separation between European and African communities, and train Africans to be productive laborers in the colonial economy.[98] As Norman Leys wrote in the mid-1920s, many settlers

[97] For the number of Europeans in Kenya from 1906-1926, see Brett L. Shadle, *The Souls of White Folk: White settlers in Kenya, 1900s-1920s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 14. For descriptions of the violent alienation of Kenyans from their land, see Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa, Books One and Two* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), 13-71; Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 83-84.

[98] Otiende, et. al., *Education and Development in Kenya,* 44; Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age,* 49; John C. Ssekamwa and S.M.E. Lugumba, *A History of Education in East Africa* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2001), 28; George E. Urch, "Education & Colonialism in Kenya," *History of Education Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (Autumn, 1971): 249-250.

believed that Africans "should be kept separate from European society and should be encouraged to follow a separate plan."[99]

That separate plan meant government support for African education would be carried out through segregated institutions that provided exclusively male students with training in industrial and vocational skills, along with lessons emphasizing character formation, basic academic skills, domestic training, hygiene, and European recreation. These priorities were given a strong endorsement in a series of studies, most notably the Frazer Report (1909), the report of the East Africa Protectorate Education Commission (1918), and the report of the Phelps-Stokes Commission (1925), carried out at the behest of the colonial government in the first several decades of the 20th Century.[100] All of these reports called for the creation of a racially segregated system of schools and a curriculum that would train Africans as laborers for the colonial economy. As Michael Mwenda Kithinji has written, this "hierarchical racial order in colonial education policy placed Europeans at the top of the social ladder, followed by Asians, while indigenous Africans were at the bottom."[101]

To implement this agenda, during the 1920s and 1930s the colonial government carried out a series of reforms in the colony's schools. The first of these was the creation of several government schools for African students, known collectively as Government African Schools (GAS), all of which emphasized industrial, vocational, and agricultural training for African

[99] Norman Leys, *Kenya* (London: Hogarth Press, 1925), 237.
[100] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School,* 36-37; Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 26; Otiende, et. al., *Education and Development in Kenya,* 44-47; Urch, "Education & Colonialism in Kenya," 253-260. For the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, see Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in East Africa: a study of East, Central and South Africa by the Second African education commission under the auspices of the Phelps-Stokes fund, in cooperation with the International education board* (London: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1925), 7-8.
[101] Michael Kithinji, "History of Higher Education in Kenya," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*, April 1919, 2023, accessed February 12, 2024, https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-1272

students.[102] Between 1918 and 1925, GAS were created in Machakos, Kericho, Narok, Kajiado, Kapsabet, Kapenguria, and Tambach, emphasizing low-level industrial skills, ghee and dairy production, bee hiving, and shopkeeping.[103] Small, government-sponsored village schools were also established, with 37 being built by 1938.[104] According to E.E. Biss, the colony's Acting Director of Education, the objective was to create students who were "efficient for the demands of modern civilization, and able to carry out technical work on farms and estates."[105]

Despite their official status as government schools designed to prepare Africans for colonial labor regimes, GAS were created largely through the actions and contributions of Africans, many of whom saw other uses for their schooling experiences.[106] Throughout the 1920s, African organizations such as the Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association, the Native Catholic Union, and the Kikuyu Central Association regularly petitioned the colonial government for more African schools.[107] Local communities levied taxes, donated land, provided labor, and pooled funds for students to pay tuition and cover boarding costs.[108] GAS Tambach and Kapenguria were both founded after African members of Local Native Councils voted money for the projects.[109] Tambach GAS was created, according to one colonial observer, in response to the "pertinacity of certain small boys of Elgeyo…who pestered their elders and betters that the latter appealed to the [District Commissioner] to start a school locally."[110] GAS in Narok and Kajiado relied on funds from the Maasai Native Trust Fund, while Local Native Councils in Nyanza raised money and petitioned district commissioners for better academic

[102] Bogonko, "Education as a tool of colonialism in Kenya," 1-32.
[103] Ibid, 5-19.
[104] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 38.
[105] Bogonko, "Education as a tool of colonialism in Kenya," 14.
[106] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 38.
[107] Bogonko, "Africans and the Politics of Their Education in Kenya," 29-34.
[108] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School,* 108-111.
[109] Bogonko, "Education as a tool of colonialism in Kenya," 8.
[110] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, 94.

standards, resulting in the opening of government schools in Kakamega, Kagumo, and Kisii in the early 1930s.[111] Many GAS would later be promoted to full secondary schools at the demand of Africans.[112]

Another important reform of the 1920s saw the colonial government begin providing grants in aid for mission schools, a change that led directly to the creation of the colony's first secondary schools for African students.[113] In 1926, with this financial support, four of the colony's most prominent Protestant missions – the Church Missionary Society, the African Inland Mission, the Church of Scotland Mission, and the Gospel Missionary Society – formed a coalition and founded Alliance High School near Nairobi, the colony's first secondary school for Africans.[114] Designed as a boarding school, the purpose of which was to remove African students from what was believed to be their "primitive" upbringing, Alliance would become an important reference point for Kenyan secondary education in future decades. In 1928, Alliance began preparing students for the Cambridge School Certificate, the same university entrance examinations taken by top students in Britain.[115] The founding of Alliance was quickly followed by the creation of another secondary program under the direction of the Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers at Kabaa, which later moved to Mangu.[116] Between the late 1920s and late 1930s, Kabaa-Mangu, the CMS school at Maseno, and St. Mary's School at Yala would all join

[111] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 12 & 49.
[112] Ibid, 71.
[113] Ibid, 26, 33-35.
[114] Benjamin E. Kipkorir, "The Alliance High School and the Origins of the Kenya African Elite 1926-1962," (PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1969); Stephen J. Smith, *The History of the Alliance High School* (Nairobi: Heinemann Education Books, 1973); 19-27; Kana Dower, "Strong to Serve: The Alliance High School of Kikuyu, Kenya," (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2005), 3; Anderson, *The Struggle for the School,* 22. Although Alliance is regularly referred to as Kenya's first secondary school for African students, such a status is not without debate. As Kana Dower has pointed out, the majority African Nairobi School, which was founded in 1902 as the white-only Prince of Wales School, predates Alliance. Also, the CMS Maseno School was founded in 1906, but did not add a secondary school program until the late 1930s. See Dower, "Strong to Serve," 3, footnote 7.
[115] Mutongi, "The Airlift "Generation," 386.
[116] John Osogo, "The History of Kabaa-Mangu High School and the Contribution of the Holy Ghost Fathers upon Education in Kenya," (MA Thesis, University of East Africa, 1970).

Alliance in offering Junior Secondary School courses, with Mangu and Maseno adding the Cambridge School Certificate in 1940.[117] As the colony's sole secondary programs for African students until the 1940s, these schools attracted graduates from mission schools, GAS, and independent schools, as well as students from neighboring Tanganyika, Uganda, and Ethiopia.[118]

Between the late 1930s and 1950s, the colonial government also began incrementally expanding girls' education. State funds were provided for the Quaker-run Girls Boarding School (GBS) in Kaimosi, where a kitchen was built in 1938, with dorms and a dining hall added in 1942.[119] By the mid-1940s, GBS was admitting around sixty students per year and training them until standard eight, the highest level of academic training for girls in the colony.[120] A small number of girls travelled to Uganda for seminary or to train as nurses, while a few studied at Alliance in the 1940s and early 1950s.[121] In 1950, the first secondary school for African girls, named the African Girls' High School (later renamed Alliance Girls High School), was established in Kikuyu with only eight students.[122] The following year, another secondary school for girls, Loreto-Limuru, was opened in the town of Limuru by the Catholic Loreto convent.[123]

In addition to these modest expansions, the 1920s saw the colonial government create the first dedicated teacher training center for African teachers at Kabete, with similar programs later added at GAS Machakos.[124] The Kabete school, opened in 1925 and named the Jeanes School, was modelled on the training of Black teachers in the U.S. South.[125] The school's mission was

[117] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time*, 37; Mutongi, "The Airlift "Generation," 386.
[118] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 23-29.
[119] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 128.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya,* 218; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *In the House of the Interpreter: A Memoir* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 64.
[122] Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya*, 232-233.
[123] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 65.
[124] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 20; Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 38 & 69.
[125] Kenneth King, *Pan-Africanism and Education: A Study of Race Philanthropy and Education in the Southern States of America and East Africa* (Clarendon Press, 1971); Mary Ciambaka Mwiandi, "The Jeanes School in

stated explicitly in a handbook created by Jeanes teachers and edited by one of the secretaries of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, J.W.C. Dougall, in 1931. "Our work in school means not only training in health and the knowledge which we can get from books, but it means the forming of habits of good and honest work," the guidebook said.[126] "[I]f we think carefully about how people learn to live well," another section argued, "we see that it is much more a matter of habit and action than of knowledge."[127] Forming "habits of good and honest work" were also to be accomplished through the use of physical drills and sports, which were seen as ways to "teach discipline and immediate obedience, and develop the team spirit."[128]

Such ideas fit well with those of colonial administrators, such as the Provincial Commissioner in Nyanza, who stated flatly that the goal of government education for African students was "to educate the black man to be what we think he ought to be."[129] However, despite these intentions, during the last several decades of colonial rule, Africans in Kenya would continue to pursue formal education, while seeking to use schools as vehicles for individual transformation, social mobility, and personal and community liberation.

'A guaranteed ticket out': The Utility of Schooling in Late Colonial Kenya

For those who found their way to colonial Kenya's growing number of school campuses, the schooling experience could make concrete contributions to their lives and provided experiences that could transform their worldviews and understanding of themselves. Because of this, as Wangari Maathai wrote in her memoire *Unbowed* years later, many Africans in late

Kenya: The Role of the Jeanes Teachers and Their Wives in "Social Transformation" of Rural Colonial Kenya, 1925-1961," (PhD Dissertation, Michigan State University, 2006)

[126] *The Village Teachers Guide: A Book of Guidance for African Teachers*, ed. J.W.C. Dougall (London: Sheldon Press, 1931), 5.

[127] Ibid, 17.

[128] Ibid, 12-13.

[129] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 100.

colonial Kenya came to see school-based education "as a guaranteed ticket out of the perceived drudgery of subsistence farming or the cultivation of cash crops for little return."[130]

As a result of this belief in the power of education, families, friends, and local communities often took on financial responsibilities and hardships to support aspiring students. For Wangari Maathai, it was her brother, Nderitu, who took odd jobs to help support her attendance at St. Cecelia's Intermediate Primary School in Nyeri during the early 1950s.[131] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's mother raised tuition for his pre-primary school by selling produce in a local market, while his secondary school tuition at Alliance High School was paid through a scholarship awarded to him by the Kiambu Native African Location Council.[132] Kenda Mutongi has documented how, during the 1940s and 1950s, widowed mothers in Nyanza took extra work, such as selling livestock and cultivating cash crops, to pay their sons' school fees, all in the hopes that their children would become "progressive" and successful men able to support them in their elder years.[133]

Once on campus, students invested huge amounts of effort to achieve high marks on tests and examinations which reflected the imperial nature of knowledge transmission in colonial schools. Following the syllabi laid out by colonial and international education standards, lessons and exams often centered European knowledge.[134] Aware that any dreams of educational advancement depended on scoring well, hard work and deep study was the norm. While at Alliance during the mid-1950s, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o joined his fellow classmates as they "crammed" the European-inspired "notes, facts, [and] viewpoints" because, according to him,

[130] Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 71.
[131] Ibid, 57.
[132] Ngũgĩ, *Dreams in a Time of War*, 60; Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 81.
[133] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 102-106.
[134] Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 66.

"we understood that the correct answers to the often-biased questions determined the future."[135] While in secondary school at Maseno during the late 1940s, Bethwell Ogot recalled how he and a friend would take long walks on Sundays, during which they would quiz each other on the week's lessons.[136] At St. Cecelia's Intermediate Primary School in Nyeri, Wangari Maathai and her fellow classmates woke at dawn, followed a daily schedule that included chores, study, and physical education, and finished the night studying under the supervision of nuns until ten o'clock.[137] In the mid-1950s, while attending GAS Tambach, Benjamin Kipkorir stayed in the dormitories during school holidays in order to better prepare for examinations, paying his way by doing odd jobs on campus.[138]

For the best performing students, such hard work could pay off. Although the total number of African students who sat for the Cambridge School Certificate examinations was small, those who did take the test performed very well. During the late 1940s and 1950s, the percentage of African students to pass the exam regularly topped 90%, results that consistently outpaced their Asian and European counterparts in Kenyan schools.[139] By 1959, the number of Cambridge School Certificate passes for African students had reached 654, many of whom went on to university.[140] Between 1926 and 1953, for example, Alliance High School sent 222 graduates to Makerere College in neighboring Uganda, while Kabaa-Mangu and Maseno sent 57 and 26.[141] Some, such as Bethwell Ogot, Mbiyu Koinange, Eliud Mathu, and Mugo Gatheru, attended universities in the US, Scotland, England, India, and South Africa.[142] During the late

[135] Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 67.
[136] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time*, 42.
[137] Maathai, *Unbowed*, 56.
[138] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, 111.
[139] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 66 &71.
[140] Otiende, et. al., *Education and Development in Kenya*, 56.
[141] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time*, 60.
[142] Dower, "Strong to Serve," 101; Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time,* 75-98; Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds,* 130-159.

1950s and early 1960s, in the lead-up to independence, hundreds of graduates from Kenyan secondary schools, including Wangari Maathai and Stephen Machooka (the first Kenyan runner to compete inter-collegiately in the US), attended universities in the US and Europe.[143]

The training that African students earned through academic achievement, albeit limited to a small section of society, was not benign. It made real differences in people's lives. Naftali Mutwa attended school in his village of Koyo and then went to Kapsabet GAS in the 1940s before matriculating to an industrial school in Thika in 1949. While in Thika, Mutwa competed in track and field for the Kenyan national team, travelling to Uganda, Tanganyika, and Madagascar and breaking colony-wide records in the hurdles.[144] Following competitive athletics, Mutwa turned his experience into a teaching and coaching career that lasted three and a half decades and helped him put his own children through school.[145] Another talented student, Grace Nyanduga (later Ogot), parlayed her primary and intermediate schooling in Nyanza during the 1940s into an appointment to study nursing in Uganda, after which she received a scholarship to continue her studies in Britian. While there, Nyanduga graduated as a certified midwife and earned a Diploma in Methods of Teaching at St. Thomas Hospital in England, before returning to Kenya to work at Maseno Hospital during the late 1950s.[146] Later, Nyanduga, known popularly as Grace Ogot, would become one of East Africa's pioneering female writers.

In addition to the material and career benefits that schools could provide, both missionary and government schools acted as connective spaces, where students were exposed to people and

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[143] Tom Shachtman, *Airlift to America: How Barack Obama, Sr., John F. Kennedy, Tom Mboya, and 800 East African Students Changed Their World and Ours* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009); Daniel Branch, "Political Traffic: Kenyan Students in Eastern and Central Europe, 1958-69," *Journal of Contemporary History* 53, no. 4 (2018): 811-31. For Maathai, see Maathai, *Unbowed*, 73-97. For Machooka, see J. Kirk Sale, "Everyone Runs," *Cornell Alumni News*, July 1962, 36-37.

[144] In Madagascar, Mutwa and the Kenyan team competed in the Indian Ocean Games. In Uganda and Tanganyika, they took part in the Triangular Competitions, which later became the East African Championships.

[145] Naftali Mutwa, interview with author, Koyo, Kenya, August 4, 2019.

[146] Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya*, 198-202.

ideas that shaped them in important ways. Some developed important and long-lasting friendships. Mugo Gatheru, who attended Kambui Primary School near Nairobi during the early 1940s, recalled that upon his arrival on campus, the student body included pupils "from all over Kikuyu Country, Embu, Meru, Ukamba, and three or four from the Rift Valley Province, and I made several friends among them."[147] While in primary school, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o developed a close intellectual relationship with a classmate named Kenneth Mbugua, a friendship which continued in later years in the form of letters, where they discussed the finer points of writing and literature.[148] Similarly, Bethwell Ogot recalled the "friendship that was to blossom and to endure all kinds of circumstances" that he developed with Thomas Odhiambo while they were secondary school students at Maseno during the late 1940s.[149]

Others developed long-lasting connections to intellectual endeavors that would shape their future interests. It was during his time as a student Alliance that Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o saw his first full length play, a student production titled *Maisha ni Nini?* (Kiswahili for *What is Life?*).[150] As he would later write, it was this play that provided Ngũgĩ with "the foundation for my lifelong respect for students' efforts and for my own interest in theater." [151] Wangari Maathai, who became East Africa's first female doctoral degree holder and a university science professor, said her exposure to chemistry, biology, and lab work at Loreto-Limuru high school "aroused and encouraged" her "lifelong interest in science."[152] Similarly, Benjamin Kipkorir, who would become a historian at University of Nairobi, has written about how his interest in history as an academic discipline was piqued by African teachers such as John Koitie while at GAS

[147] Gatheru, *Child of Two Worlds*, 80.
[148] Ngũgĩ, *Dreams in a Time of War*, 173-180; Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter,* 24-25.
[149] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time*, 42.
[150] Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 34.
[151] Ibid, 34.
[152] Maathai, *Unbowed*, 69.

Tambach.[153] Later, while attending Alliance High School, Kipkorir described how his "dignity as an African, not just a 'native' of a British Colony, was nurtured through excellent teaching, character development, and political awareness."[154]

Social and cultural practices on campus also shaped students in ways that molded their ideas about personal character. Graduates of the Girls Boarding School in Kaimosi, such as Mary Jendeka and Stella Mbecha, saw the training that they received in house decorations and gardening as forming them into catalysts of *ustaarabu* (Kiswahili for civilization) in their local communities.[155] In contrast, Benjamin Kipkorir has written that it was at Alliance, where he first saw African songs and dances, including music from Kamba, Giriama, and Taita artists.[156] Also at Alliance, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o was deeply impacted by his participation in cross-country and track and field, sports which he described as the "crown jewel of body education" at the school.[157] For Ngũgĩ, competitive long-distance running, which at the school took the form of an annual compulsory cross-country race of approximately six kilometers, symbolized "a wrestling match between the determined spirits of the will and the persuasive devil of surrender."[158] Faced with overcoming the "inner whispers" of "demons" tempting him to slow down in the face of his physical limits, Ngũgĩ recalled, "It was this effort that made me understand why the metaphor of running the good race was so central to the Franciscan Christian ideal. Years later running would become an important symbol in my books."[159]

Commentary such as this demonstrates the deeply formative nature of both missionary and government education for African students in late colonial Kenya. Whether providing a

[153] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, 101.
[154] Ibid, 128.
[155] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 129
[156] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, 123-124.
[157] Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 140.
[158] Ibid; Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, 130.
[159] Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 141.

ticket out of poverty, acting as connective spaces for the development of deep friendships, exposing students to ideas and knowledge that piqued long-lasting interests, or providing students access to new social and cultural practices that shaped their worldviews and future lives, such examples highlight the ways Africans students struggled to make meaning and agency out of their schooling experiences, even while faced with the challenges of colonial education.

'The price of my education was beyond my father's reach': The Limits of the School in Colonial Kenya

Despite the reforms of the 1930s and 1940s, and at the same time as some African students were making meaning and exercising their agency on school campuses across the colony, accessing school in colonial Kenya was extremely difficult for the vast majority of Africans. High tuition costs, coupled with the colonially imposed impoverishment of many Africans, put school out of reach for many. Institutions were few and infrastructure was underdeveloped. Conditions within schools were difficult and at times violent. Deep regional inequalities in the availability of formal education persisted and severe gender imbalances were the norm. Large swaths of the colony's African population, especially in the Rift Valley and the Northeastern regions, had few opportunities for schooling, and many who did attend received subpar training or had to leave because of lack of money.

The most common factor limiting African access to schools in the late colonial period was cost. During the mid-1940s, school fees for most government schools were as high as 30 to 40 shillings per term, more than half the monthly salary for the highest paying jobs of the period.[160] Such high costs severely restricted aspiring students' access to school and could inspire deep resentment towards the colonial state. In his autobiography *War in the Forest*, Kiboi

[160] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 103. By the early 1960s, average yearly school fees for primary school were about 60 shillings. See Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 148.

Muriithi recalled how his father struggled to earn money to pay his school fees, enduring harsh labor conditions and physical abuse on a European-owned farm while attempting to eke out a living from their family's tiny two-acres of land. "My school fees were only fifty cents a term," Muriithi recalled. "To earn those fifty cents my father had to work on a European's farm near Kiganjo for a whole day."[161] As he advanced through school, the cost of attendance rose to five, then fifteen, then twenty-five shillings per year, causing Muriithi to drop out because, as he wrote, the "price of my education was beyond my father's reach."[162] His hopes for school dashed, Muriithi returned to his family's land, where he worked and "worried about the future."[163]

Similarly, during the mid-1940s a bright and talented student named Dedan Kimathi saw his efforts to achieve formal education squashed because of cost. As a teenager during the early 1940s, Kimathi worked a series of odd jobs, including running a night school where he taught basic literacy in exchange for bartered goods, in order to raise money to pay for school at Wandumi and Karunaini Primary Schools.[164] Although noted for his speaking and writing skills, within a few years Kimathi dropped out due to a lack of funds.[165] After a brief stint with the King's African Rifles (KAR), Kimathi re-enrolled at the CSM primary school at Tumutumu, but left in early 1944 because of limited tuition funding and disciplinary reasons.[166] Unable to find consistent work, Kimathi returned to Karunaini Primary as an untrained teacher, where he was

[161] Kiboi Muriithi with Peter N. Ndoria, *War in the Forest: The Personal Story of J. Kiboi Muriithi* (Trafford Publishing, 2011), 9.
[162] Ibid, 9-10
[163] Ibid, 10.
[164] S.M. Shamsul Alam, *Rethinking the Mau Mau in Colonial Kenya* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 49.
[165] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged,* 287; Julie MacArthur, "Introduction: The Trial of Dedan Kimathi," in *Dedan Kimathi on Trial: Colonial Justice and Popular Memory in Kenya's Mau Mau Rebellion*, ed. Julie Macarthur (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017), 9.
[166] The reasons for Kimathi leaving school at Tumutumu are debated. S.M. Shamsul Alam cites a lack of access to school fees, while David Anderson cites disciplinary reasons. Julie MacArthur says Kimathi was expelled from Tumutumu for unclear reasons Alam, *Rethinking the Mau Mau*, 49; MacArthur, "Introduction: The Trial of Dedan Kimathi," 10; Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 287.

remembered as a tough, dedicated, and strict instructor.[167] Later, both Muriithi and Kimathi would join the anti-colonial Mau Mau revolution of the 1950s, where they fought to ameliorate such oppressive colonial institutions, with Kimathi becoming one of the movement's most famous and eulogized leaders.[168]

In addition to the often-insurmountable costs, government investment in education for African students remained limited and deeply unequal. In 1938, for example, out of 1,802 elementary schools for African students, only 404 received financial support from the colonial government.[169] By 1945, there were a total four government-aided secondary schools for African students available in all of Kenya, a number that would only increase to seventeen by 1955.[170] Out of the 165 students who held government scholarships or bursaries in 1949, fourteen were Africans, with the remainder held primarily by Asian and European students.[171] In the mid-1950s, the colonial government allocated about half of all its education spending for African students.[172] All of this in a colony where Africans made up 96% of a population of roughly 6 million people in 1950.[173]

School infrastructure was also underdeveloped, especially at the lower levels where school buildings were often poor and shoddy. In Marakwet, for example, where mission schools were not introduced until the mid-1930s and government schools were limited, educational infrastructure remained underfunded well into the 1940s. Benjamin Kipkorir, who began attending an AIM mission school there in the late 1940s, described his first school building as

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[167] MacArthur, "Introduction: The Trial of Dedan Kimathi," 10.
[168] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Mĩcere Gĩthae Mũgo, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 1976, 2014).
[169] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 138.
[170] Ibid, 46.
[171] Ibid, 140.
[172] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 68-70.
[173] "Population by age group, Kenya," Our World in Data, accessed June 1, 2024, https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/population-by-age-group?tab=chart&country=~KEN.

consisting of "a long and narrow (perhaps 30X12 metres) grass-thatched wood and mud structure," built so that one side was left half-open to allow for light.[174] "There were no partitions," Kipkorir continued, "pupils in one class were instructed while facing the wall at one end and those in the second class faced the other end. Beginners sat outside…One had to have a strong desire to learn in such a rudimentary and unpretentious setting."[175]

Within boarding schools, the norm for secondary and many intermediate schools, living conditions were often difficult. Students contended with a setting without frills or embellishments. They washed their own clothes, cleaned dormitories, scrubbed lavatories, carried out manual labor, and worked in school gardens.[176] Washing and bathing, often done in the chilly early morning hours of the day, was done with icy water.[177] Meals were simple, consisting of the staple food known as *ugali* (a dense, stiff porridge made from maizemeal), as well as beans, boiled cabbage, or *githeri* (a mixture of beans and maize). Meat and fresh milk were rare.[178] Lacking refrigeration, it was not uncommon for students to be served partially spoiled vegetables or beans and maize infested with weevils. According to Wangari Maathai, she and her classmates "learned to navigate around" the weevils as they ate, while Benjamin Kipkorir recalled "learning to eat the creatures because 'they held more protein,' or so we were constantly reminded."[179]

Discipline was strict and, at times, violent. Chores, manual labor, and the taking away of food were common consequences for infractions and were often enforced by student leaders known as prefects who were appointed by school leadership and placed in charge of specific

[174] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, 59.
[175] Ibid, 59.
[176] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time,* 61; Maathai, *Unbowed*, 56 & 60-61.
[177] Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir,* 57.
[178] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills,* 100; Maathai, *Unbowed*, 56.
[179] Ibid.

aspects of school life.[180] Corporal punishment, the use of physical pain as a means of punishment, was commonplace. Found in the colonial military, courts, European farms, and in the colony's penal institutions, such beatings were prominent in Kenya's schools.[181] According to historian Paul Ocobock, the school was one of the first places that young African men encountered physical punishment outside of the home.[182] The *kiboko* (Kiswahili for hippopotamus), a term for whips originally made from the hides of hippos that came to refer to any implement used for corporal punishment, was ubiquitous in the colony's approved schools in Kabete and Dagoretti, where juvenile offenders were sent.[183] Even at elite secondary schools, such as Alliance, caning and expulsions were common when students fell out of line.[184]

Another disciplinary measure, known as a "disk" or "monitor," was implemented in some schools to discourage students from speaking vernacular African languages on campus. Most common during the last two decades of the colonial period, students who were found using a language other than English were required to wear a button or wooden disk, at times suspended on a string or rope around their neck. At the end of each school day, anyone who had worn the button or disk would receive a consequence, usually in the form of physical labor.[185] At some schools, the button was inscribed with English phrases, such as "I am stupid, I was caught speaking my mother tongue."[186] For Wangari Maathai, who experienced such a system at St.

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[180] For punishments, see Maathai, *Unbowed*, 58-60. For a description of the prefect system in Kenyan secondary schools, see Osogo, "The History of Kabaa-Mangu High School," 85-86 and Dower, "Strong to Serve," 220-256.
[181] Paul Ocobock, "Spare the Rod, Spoil the Colony: Corporal Punishment, Colonial Violent, and Generational Authority in Kenya, 1897-1952," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 45, no. 1, Toward a History of Violence in Colonial Kenya (2012): 29-56.
[182] Ibid, 52.
[183] Ibid, 36, footnote 34.
[184] Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 44
[185] The use of the disk punishment is not uncommon in contemporary Kenyan primary schools, see Kari Iren Spernes and Rose Ruto-Korirr, "Medium of instruction in school: The indigenous language, the national language or the official language? A case study from multilingual deep rural Kenya," *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 39, No 1 (2018): 51-52; Fouzia Sheikh, Michael Rich, Washington Galvão, "Language of Instruction and Education Policies in Kenya," *Reconsidering Development* 7, no 1 (2023): 6.
[186] Maathai, *Unbowed*, 59.

Cecelia's Intermediate School in Nyeri, "While the monitor approach helped us learn English, it also instilled in us a sense that our local languages were inferior and insignificant."[187]

In addition to the violence of corporal punishment and shaming of vernacular languages, students in colonial schools were regularly subjected to a system of bullying and student-imposed discipline referred to as 'monolization' or the 'fag system.' At Maseno and Alliance, newcomers, often referred to as 'monos,' were teased, made to carry out chores, or forced to give away food rations during mealtime.[188] At times, when students resisted these demands, they could be physically accosted and forced to sleep outside at night.[189] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o underwent monolization during his first year at Alliance in 1955, describing it as a "brutal, humiliating" experience.[190] Likewise, Bethwell Ogot described the fag system during his time at CMS Maseno School in the mid-to-late 1940s, in which "prefects picked from the new boys…to serve them: wash and iron their clothes, wash their plates, make their beds, clean their rooms and make tea for them."[191] Experiences with bullying could be deeply worrying and scary. After arriving at GAS Tambach, Benjamin Kipkorir recalled running away to escape such treatment.[192]

For aspiring female students, the small number of schools and high costs were exacerbated by social stigmas limiting the attendance of girls and young women. Institutionally, education for girls was almost exclusively limited to mission schooling, where curriculum was designed to prepare them as suitable wives for African Christian men.[193] At home, many girls suffered from severe social stigmas against schooling, with parents and elder community members believing that school conflicted with girls' responsibilities to become productive

[187] Maathai, *Unbowed*, 60.
[188] Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 27-30; Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time,* 37-38.
[189] Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter,* 27-30.
[190] Ibid, 27.
[191] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time,* 37-38.
[192] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills,* 98.
[193] Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart*, 134-138.

mothers and wives. According to historian Tabitha Kanogo, one aspiring girl student named Serah Mukabi was told by her mother that her father would kill her if she went to school.[194] Other fathers banned daughters who chose to attend schools from returning to their homesteads.[195] Given such stigmas, it is not surprising that the number of girls advancing through the school system in Kenya remained low throughout the colonial period. In 1945, for example, out of over 1,000 candidates who sat for Kenya's Primary School Examinations, only 65 were girls.[196]

Given such intense challenges and limitations, it is not surprising that student drop-out rates were high in colonial Kenya. By the mid-1940s, over half of Kenyan students who enrolled in school dropped out after their first year, with another half leaving after their second.[197] By 1951, only one-third of students completed primary school, and of those only about twenty percent went on to the intermediate level.[198] In addition, with teacher shortages and student overcrowding common, for the majority of Africans in Kenya, advancing through the system was extremely difficult.[199] By 1945, only 1,107 African students in all of Kenya sat for Primary School Examinations.[200] Limits were even greater at higher levels. In 1948, a miniscule thirty-nine African students in the entire colony sat for the Cambridge School Certificate examinations.[201]

As these examples demonstrate, despite moderate reforms and efforts of expansion, and despite uplifting stories of educational success and social mobility through schools, African

[194] Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya*, 203.
[195] Ibid, 210.
[196] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 60.
[197] Ibid, 64.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills,* 59-60.
[200] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 60.
[201] Ibid, 65 & 71.

access to schools in colonial Kenya remained limited and poorly supported during the last decades of British rule. Discipline was draconian and meals were spartan. Racial segregation, regional inequalities, and severe gender imbalances meant that hundreds of thousands of aspiring African students were shut out of formal school-based education. Such a reality highlighted the deep struggles of many Kenyan Africans to access quality schooling under the colonial regime.

'Havens for many': African Grievances, Schools, and Sanctuary in Late Colonial Kenya

Given these limitations, it is not surprising that in the years leading up to the anti-colonial Mau Mau war of the 1950s, in which Kenya experienced one of the most radical and violent conflicts of the late colonial era, schools acted as spaces where Africans expressed deep grievances against the colonial state. At the same time, during the war, some schools and teachers provided protection and sanctuary for students, while others were targeted by both Mau Mau and colonial forces. After the war's high point, as the push for *uhuru* (Kiswahili for independence) gained strength in the late 1950s, school-educated Africans played key roles in the drive for increased African representation in the colonial administration, while schools took on a new meaning as many in Kenya looked to them as vehicles for realizing the promises and possibilities of coming independence.

Following World War Two, schools provided places where African students found space to express anti-colonial ideas and actions. For example, in 1949, the colonial state established the Beecher Education Committee to study and report on the efficacy and organization of African education in the colony. Among a range of recommendations, the committee's report called for limiting children over the age of eleven from attending primary school, restricting the instruction of English language until Standard Five (Intermediate School), and increasing the use of

European teachers in African schools.[202] Deeply unpopular among African students, thousands registered their discontent with Beecher's recommendation by boycotting schools and refusing to attend classes.[203]

In the early 1950s, when Kikuyu, Meru, and Embu revolutionaries formed the Kenya Land and Freedom Army and revolted against the British colonial state and its African intermediaries in a movement popularly known as Mau Mau, schools were some of the first places where the revolution's leaders performed the famous oathing ceremonies, in which participants were required to pledge their commitment to the movement.[204] In 1952, responding to the revolution's expansion, the British declared a state of emergency and employed a series large-scale arrests, internments, population removals, tortures, and executions aimed at squashing the rebellion.[205] In addition, believing that African-led schools functioned as sources of subversive activity, the British closed dozens of independent schools, confiscated school land, fired teachers, and expelled over 7,000 students.[206] In Githunguri, where the Kenya Teachers College had been erected, buildings were destroyed, while colonial administrators gave the school's books, typewriters, and blackboards to government-friendly schools.[207] As Derek Peterson has pointed out, "The British fought Mau Mau by destroying independent schools."[208]

During the war, schoolteachers at missionary and government institutions that remained open often provided protection for students, sometimes at great cost to themselves. For example, in late 1952, when Mau Mau soldiers arrived at Ngorano mission school in Mathira in search of a student that they believed had information about their clandestine base, the school's headmaster,

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[202] Otiende, et. al., *Education and Development in Kenya,* 53-55; Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 193-194.
[203] Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 193-194.
[204] Peterson, "Writing in Revolution," 89; Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 195-198.
[205] Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (NY: Henry Holt, 2005).
[206] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 71-72; Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 69.
[207] Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 213
[208] Ibid.

Jotham Muturi, came to the student's defense by promising the fighters that he would not report their location. Once the soldiers left, Muturi ordered students and teachers not to discuss the incident and waited three days to report it to colonial officials, allowing time for the Mau Mau to vacate the area. For his efforts, Muturi was arrested and jailed by the British.[209]

For other students, the safe confines of the school compound provided feelings of security and safety. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Wangari Maathai, both of whom were in school during the war, recalled how being on campus insulated them from some of the hardships of having their families relocated to the "emergency villages" that served as internment camps where British forces monitored and harassed Africans suspected of supporting the revolution.[210] For Ngũgĩ, whose family home was razed and whose brother joined Mau Mau to fight the British, entering Alliance at the height of the war in 1955 was like arriving at a "sanctuary" from the "constant fear of falling victim to the gun-toting British forces that were everywhere, hunting down anticolonial Mau Mau guerillas, real or imagined."[211] In a similar fashion, Maathai recounted how her family felt a "sense of relief" that she was "protected from the violence of the insurgency and the efforts to suppress it" while at St. Cecelia's.[212] As Benjamin Kipkorir has written, "boarding schools such as Alliance, Kagumo and Mang'u became havens for many Kikuyu school boys and girls during the Mau Mau Emergency."[213]

Yet not all schools and students were protected from the war's destruction. Mission schools, teachers, and pupils were targeted at times by Mau Mau forces. As extensions of the colonial presence, both mission and government schools were sometimes seen as tools for

[209] Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 211.
[210] Maathai, *Unbowed*, 67; Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 36-40.
[211] Ngũgĩ, *In the House of the Interpreter*, 8.
[212] Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir*, 63.
[213] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills,* 144.

colonial hegemony. According to Bethwell Ogot, who taught at Kagumo Government School in Nyeri in 1953, teachers and staff at the school, caught between the requirement to follow government directives and the possibility of being perceived as colonial collaborators, operated in an environment of "violence, hatred, fear and intolerance" and often worried of reprisals.[214] At Alliance, students were required to store machetes under their beds at night out of fear from Mau Mau attacks.[215]Although no such attack occurred at Alliance, such worries were not unfounded. In nearby Mathira, Catholic and government schools were burned by Mau Mau forces in 1953, while at least 35 schoolteachers were killed in the war's first two years.[216]

'Going through the process of becoming a citizen': Schools and Anticipating Independence

After the worst of the war, and during the waning years of the emergency, as Kenya's nationalist movement gained steam, school-educated Africans played major roles in pushing the movement for independence forward, as well as defining the terms under which the transition from colony to post-colony would take place. Schools also played a role as important instruments in addressing the challenges of a society traumatized by war. As the 1950s closed, and as independence across colonial Africa became more likely, school construction in Kenya intensified and school-based education increasingly came to be seen as an important tool for both local and national development in the drive to ready the colony for independence.

Politically, the winners of the anti-colonial struggles of the 1950s were not the rebels and revolutionaries, but rather school-educated moderates and loyalists, many of whom gained power and took up key positions within the late-colonial state. As Daniel Branch has written, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, "the colonial government turned to the alumni of Alliance High

[214] Ogot, *My Footprints on the Sands of Time*, 58.
[215] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, 140.
[216] Peterson, *Creative Writing*, 209-210; Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 69.

School, Makerere, Fort Hare and Oxford," increasing the political space afforded to loyalist Africans and moderate African political parties.[217] During the most intense periods of the war, a small number of these well-connected and highly educated men, primarily from Central Province, were appointed to bureaucratic positions within the colonial provincial administration.[218] In 1957, eight seats were opened for African representatives in the colony's legislature, known as the Legislative Council (LegCo). In an election purposefully set up to favor the small handful of African elites, the winners were all school-educated, upper class men.[219] It was these men, a group which included former school teachers, Alliance and Mangu graduates, and university degree holders such as Daniel arap Moi, Bernard Mate, Oginda Odinga, Masinde Muliro, and Ronald Ngala, who pressed the colonial state for an end to the Emergency, called for increased political freedoms for Africans, and navigated Kenya towards independence.[220] At the same time, these same men would install a politically repressive "ideology of order" as the central organizing principle of the coming post-colonial state.[221]

In addition, in the context of the upheaval resulting from the Mau Mau war and the colonial government's repressive response, colonial teachers and youth workers saw the colony's

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[217] Daniel Branch, "The Enemy within: Loyalists and the War against Mau Mau in Kenya," *The Journal of African History* 48, no. 2 (2007): 314-315. See also, B.A. Ogot, "The Decisive Years, 1956-1963" in *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-1993*, eds. B.A. Ogot and W.R. Ochieng (London, Nairobi, Athens: James Currey, EAEP, Ohio University Press, 1995), 52-53.

[218] Daniel Branch and Nicholas Cheeseman, "The Politics of Control in Kenya: Understanding the Bureaucratic-Executive State, 1952-78," *Review of African Political Economy* 33, no. 107, State, Class & Civil Society in Africa (March 2006): 20.

[219] David Anderson, "Majimboism: The Troubled History of an Idea" in *Our Turn to Eat: Politics in Kenya Since 1950,* eds. Daniel Branch, Nic Cheeseman, Leigh Gardner (Berlin: LIT, 2010): 26; Daniel Branch, "Loyalists, Mau Mau, and Elections in Kenya: The First Triumph of the System, 1957- 1958," *Africa Today* 53, no. 2, Creating the Kenya Post-Colony (Winter, 2006): 27-50; Branch and Cheeseman, "The Politics of Control in Kenya," 19; Ogot, "The Decisive Years, 1956-1963," 54-60.

[220] W.R. Ochieng and E.S. Atieno-Odhiambo, "On Decolonization" in *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-1993* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), eds. B.A. Ogot and W.R. Ochieng, xi-xviii. For the education status of the winning candidates, see Ogot, "The Decisive Years, 1956-1963," 54-59.

[221] E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, "Democracy and the Ideology of Order in Kenya" in Michael G. Schatzburg (ed.), *The Political Economy of Kenya* (New York: Praeger, 1987); Branch and Cheeseman, "The Politics of Control in Kenya," 20-21.

schools as a means for rehabilitating former revolutionaries and shaping youth into good future citizens.[222] In 1959, former British soldier Geoffrey Griffin, who had overseen a detention camp for suspected Mau Mau youth and worked as a youth organizer during the 1950s, founded a club known as the Starehe Boys Centre for homeless youth near the Eastlands district of Nairobi.[223] Aided by Kenyan African educators such as Joseph Kamiru Gikubu and Geoffrey Geturo Gatama, Starehe aimed to provide comfort, discipline, and educational support to its members and would later be promoted as an official school.[224]

African leaders and communities took initiatives as well, organizing community led projects and developing links with transnational organizations to aid in funding new schools. In places like Nanyuki, parent groups and Local Native Councils promoted the construction of schools through self-help projects, funded by local communities and wealthy individuals.[225] In the LegCo, Assistant Minister for Agriculture Taaitta Towett called on fellow members to "go all over the world for money to build more intermediate schools."[226] Urged on by African demands, the colonial administration built teacher training institutes in Kagumo and Siriba in 1957 and 1959.[227] Between 1955 and 1960, the number of government-aided secondary schools serving African students almost doubled, increasing from 17 to 33.[228]

Such growth was driven largely by African demands for education. In North Maragoli, for example, locational chief Matthew Mwenesis worked with Quaker missionaries to open a

[222] Paul Ocobock, "Joy Rides for Juveniles: Vagrant Youth and Colonial Control in Nairobi, Kenya, 1901–52," *Social History* 31 (2006): 39–59.
[223] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 191–225.
[224] Matthew Hilton, "Charity, Decolonization and Development: The Case of the Starehe Boys School, Nairobi," *Past and Present*, no. 233 (Nov 2016): 227-252.
[225] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 136-139.
[226] "More must teach and all must work hard," *East African Standard*, May 21, 1960, 3.
[227] Otiende, et. al., *Education and Development in Kenya*, 58.
[228] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 46 & 150.

secondary day school that would serve his community.[229] The school, known as Chavakali secondary school, opened its doors in 1959 with a founding class of 36 students and emphasized training in farming and agricultural science.[230] Initially funded through a self-imposed tax paid by local residents, Chavakali later received funding from the US government and would be administered by officials from Earlham College in Indiana.[231] In Kericho, a new secondary school was opened in 1958 with 30 pupils and a block of classrooms built by students from the Nyanza Trade and Technical School at Sigalagala.[232] By 1960, the school's enrollment had almost doubled to 58 and the campus boasted four classrooms, a dining hall, two dormitories, two staff houses, and an office wing, while construction was being done on a playing field that included space for soccer, field hockey, and rugby.[233]

By the end of the 1950s, Africans in colonial Kenya were emerging from a half century of engagement and struggle with colonial models and practices of education and schooling. Although a product of colonial rule, the system of school-based education that took hold in Kenya during the first half of the 20th Century was as much about African agency and initiative as it was a legacy of colonial hegemony. Amidst a racially segregated system that limited access to most, African students and teachers, gradually at first, but with greater intensity as time progressed, had struggled to engage, adopt, adapt, and transform colonial schools. Throughout this process, Africans taught in and founded mission schools. They demanded more academically focused education and greater government investment in school infrastructure. They founded their own independent institutions and imbued them with intimate links to community

[229] Muey Ching Saeteurn, "'A Beacon of Hope for the Community': The Role of Chavakali Secondary School in Late Colonial and Early Independent Kenya," *Journal of African History* 58, no. 2 (2017): 311-316.
[230] Ibid, 311-312.
[231] Ibid, 317-324.
[232] "Kericho school's official opening day nears," *East African Standard*, May 25, 1960, 5.
[233] Ibid.

togetherness and notions of individual improvement. They took part, with great enthusiasm, in the social, cultural, and academic activities offered on campus. They continued to seek education amidst one of the continent's most violent and disruptive anti-colonial wars. In the process, they transformed their schools and themselves through experiences that shaped their personal relationships, their career endeavors, and their worldviews. By the end of the 1950s, many in Kenya had come to see schools as pivotal institutions that not only provided academic training, but also provided opportunities for the realization of their hopes and dreams for the future.

'To be at par with the rest of Kenya': William Murgor and the Founding of St. Patrick's

It was within this deep historical context, between 1958 and 1960, that the plans to create St. Patrick's in the small western Kenyan town of Iten emerged. As the school's founders embarked upon the project of securing and preparing to build and open their new school, they knowingly pulled from and hoped to contribute to the long historical tradition of struggle that had defined African engagement with the school in 20th Century Kenya.

They had their work cut out for them. As with much of western and central Kenya, throughout the colonial period, British officials and settlers in the regions surrounding Iten viewed the area as a reservoir for African labor and taxation. Government investment was small and school construction was minimal. For example, between 1922 and 1945, the colonial state spent less than 500,000 Kenyan shillings in all of Elgeyo-Marakwet, while the district generated close to three million shillings and thousands of Keiyo and Marakwet men, women, and children worked as laborers on white-owned plantations.[234] Although Elgeyo-Marakwet experienced a diversification of its agricultural productivity and an expansion of primary education in the 1950s, with around fifty primary schools being built by the early 1960s, secondary schools in the

[234] Chebet and Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff,* 144-147.

district were few.[235] In the entire region from Naivasha to Lokitaung there were only two secondary boarding schools for African boys, in Kapsabet and Chewoyet, and no Catholic secondary boarding schools.[236] (See Figure 1.3)

The most consequential local leader in the founding of St. Patrick's was politician William Murgor, who by the late 1950s had been appointed as an area chief for the region surrounding Iten, and would later serve as a member of the Legislative Council.[237] Perhaps most well-known for his role in the *Majimboism* debates as a member of KADU during the early 1960s and a staunch critic of Kikuyu land acquisition in the Rift Valley during the transition to independence, Murgor was one of the most influential local Kalenjin politicians of the period.[238] According to both institutional and oral histories of the school, it was Murgor who was responsible for bringing the school to Iten and organizing the land that St. Patrick's would be constructed on. Described by family members and former St. Patrick's school leaders as a "man of vision" and "one hell of a curious person" who "knew the value of education," Murgor's support for the establishment of St. Patrick's in Iten stemmed from his interest in developing local institutions that could provide educational support for local Keiyo residents.[239] In this way, Murgor was like other local African political leaders and educators of the colonial era who played central roles in the founding of schools for African students.

[235] Chebet and Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff*, 163.
[236] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 1 & 16.
[237] Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills*, 108, see footnote 23.
[238] Anderson, "Majimboism," 29; Apollo Njonjo, "The Africanisation of the 'white Highlands': A Study in Agrarian Class Struggles in Kenya, 1950-1974," (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1978), 409.
[239] Florence Murgor, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, January 18, 2020; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 17.

Educated at GAS Tambach, and having travelled to southern England for a two-year course in administration, Murgor was illustrative of the small, but deeply influential group of school-educated Africans who had gained power and influence by engaging and struggling with colonial schooling in Kenya.[240] According to his daughter, Florence Murgor, who discussed her father's history with me during an interview at Eldoret Sports Club in early 2020, William Murgor was deeply aware of the limited secondary school options and the regionally-unequal school system that existed in Kenya at end of colonial rule. Murgor's goal, according to his

Figure 1.3 – In 1960, there were two secondary boarding schools for African boys, and no Catholic boarding schools, in the entire region from Naivasha to Lokitaung.

(Map created by Dawson McCall using Datawrapper)

[240] Florence Murgor, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, January 18, 2020.

daughter, was to help the local Keiyo community "to be at par with the rest of Kenya" and to help his people, "To be able, when independence came, to have a footing, where they [could] make decisions."[241] Chief among these future decisions were Murgor's aspiration that local communities be able to "take part of the resources" within their own country.[242] Such sentiments speak to the deep local connections and motivations that underpinned the founding of St. Patrick's and they highlight the role of many local African leaders of the time who initiated community projects for the promotion of education.

By 1959, the area represented by Murgor was part of the Diocese of Eldoret, a vast expanse of territory running from Central Kenya to the Kenya-Ethiopia border, in which Catholic education was the responsibility of the Roman Catholic Mission headed by Bishop Joseph Houlihan of the St. Patrick's Missionary Society (SPS) from Kiltegan, Ireland.[243] Having spent several previous decades in Nigeria, Houlihan was part of a small contingent of Kiltegan priests who had been sent to Kenya during the early 1950s to expand the order's evangelization efforts. Other Kiltegans working in the Eldoret Diocese during the late 1950s included the Diocesan Education Secretary Father Paddy Cullen, Father Fintan McDonald, who taught in the town of Nerkwo, and Father Aiden Surlis, who was a teacher at Iten intermediate School.[244] By the time St. Patrick's was founded, all three had been stationed in Kenya for several years and would play central roles in the school's creation.

Out of the three, Houlihan was the most consequential missionary leader in the school's establishment. Described by contemporaries as "austere, authoritarian, and dedicated to his

[241] Florence Murgor, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, January 18, 2020.
[242] Ibid.
[243] *By the Narrow Gate: A Bicentenary History: Patrician Bicentenary, 1808-2008* (Newbridge: Patrician General Secretariat, 2008), 165.
[244] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 2-19.

apostolic mission," Houlihan was a believer in the need for the Catholic Church to provide a "visible and physical presence" in its evangelization efforts.[245] For Houlihan, as had been the tradition among missionary leaders in Kenya throughout the first half of the 20th Century, the expansion of Catholic schools was seen as aiding proselytization. Indeed, as one Kiltegan priest from the period observed, the limited educational infrastructure in the region "was a factor that affected and indeed directed missionary work in the 1950s and 1960s."[246] With this in mind, Houlihan travelled to the United States in 1955, where he spent two years fund-raising in cities like Boston, Chicago, and New York.[247] Upon his return to Kenya, he invited several Catholic religious groups to the Eldoret Diocese to aid in the expansion of schools in the region. Such groups included the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Africa, the Xaverian Brothers, the Holy Rosary Sisters, the Ursuline Sisters, and the Patrician Brothers.[248] According to Brother Colm O'Connell, who has written a history of the Patrician Brothers in Kenya, the strategy "seems to have been that, once a new parish was opened, a school or hospital would soon follow with a religious congregation being invited to take over from where a Kiltegan Priest had begun."[249]

The Patrician Brothers, an Irish group whose vocation was the religious and literary education of youth, was one of the earliest groups to answer Houlihan's call. Based out of Tullow, Ireland, the Patricians had a long-standing relationship with the Kiltegans and an already established educational presence in several countries, including Ireland, India, Pakistan, Australia, and the United States.[250] By September 1958, the Patricians had agreed to come to the

[245] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 4 & 16.
[246] Denis Newman SPS, *One Hundred Years A Growing* (2007), cited in O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 7.
[247] Patrick Ongus, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, September 11, 2019.
[248] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 4-6.
[249] Ibid, 10.
[250] S. Aitken, "The Patrician Brothers in Australia," *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* 6, no. 3 (1980): 1-5; Berchmans Athakkad, *A History of the Patrician Brothers in India and Pakistan, 1875-2008* (Calameo,

aid of the Diocese by committing at least two members to help run and staff a new all-boys Catholic secondary school.[251] While the Kiltegans organized the school's founding and opening, the Patricians were expected to take over administrative responsibilities and bring their organizational knowledge and pedagogical training to bear in the school's early stages.

With this commitment from the Patrician Brothers, the process of choosing where to construct the new school was paramount. While Houlihan and Murgor were important in bringing the school to Iten, it was local religious and political circumstances that played the most significant role. Florence Murgor recalled how Iten was suggested after Houlihan was rejected in Kituro in nearby Tugen Hills because the locals were primarily Protestants.[252] Similarly, former St. Patrick's headmaster Brother Colm O'Connell cited resistance from local elders in another location in South Keiyo as one of the reasons Iten was chosen.[253] In addition, the establishment of a convent of Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary in the nearby town of Sing'ore and the presence of Kiltegan Father Aiden Surlis at the local intermediate school made Iten an attractive locus of Catholic education in the late 1950s.[254] Lastly, support from other influential local residents in Iten played a role. In addition to William Murgor and the Kiltegans, from its inception the school's Board of Governors included local Iten community leaders Lazaro Ayabei, William Chirchir, Dominico Rotich, and John Ndiritu, in addition to colonial administrators such as District Commissioner J.A. Gardner and Provincial Education Officer G.C. Knight.[255] With this confluence of local forces, individual influences, and community interests, by late 1959, the choice had been made to build St. Patrick's in the town of Iten.

2009); *By the Narrow Gate: A Bicentenary History: Patrician Bicentenary, 1808-2008* (Newbridge: Patrician General Secretariat, 2008)

[251] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 1-2.

[252] Florence Murgor, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya; January 18, 2020.

[253] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 16-17.

[254] Ibid, 16-17.

[255] KME, SS-131, St. Patrick's Secondary School (Iten) Board of Governors, General, 1961

Conclusion

As the Kiltegans, Murgor, and the school's other local African supporters agreed on Iten as the site for the news school, a new set of needs and challenges emerged. Land had to be secured, construction efforts needed funding, building materials had to be located, laborers had to be hired, students needed to be recruited, and once on campus, convinced to stay and attend classes. Over the course of the early 1960s, these needs would manifest themselves in a range of struggles that almost led to the school never materializing. However, as the emerging campus was populated by the school's founding generation of students, faculty, and staff, the goal of creating a school that reflected the aspirations, desires, and needs of its aspiring community members would prove a powerfully cohesive force.

CHAPTER 2:

'WE WERE VERY DISCIPLINED STUDENTS': MAKING THE SCHOOL AND WRESTLING WITH THE CONTRADICTIONS OF DECOLONIZATION AT ST. PATRICK'S SECONDARY SCHOOL, ITEN

It was February 1962 and students were striking.[1] One year after opening its doors as the first Catholic boarding school for African boys in the region, school leaders of the fledgling St. Patrick's High School in the small town of Iten faced a major dilemma.[2] The sixty or so students that made up the school's Form One and Form Two classes were refusing to eat and had boycotted their coursework.[3] The Irish Patrician Brothers who ran the school, all of whom had recently arrived in Kenya with no African language skills and limited knowledge of local conditions, believed the strike was rooted in discontent with the school's administration and the daily breakfast of *uji* (millet porridge).[4] Armed with this faulty knowledge, the newly appointed principal of the school, a Brother named Paschal Magee, met with student leaders, scolding them for their boycott and arguing that as "men of Africa" they should have taken their breakfast without complaint.[5]

Yet, the root of student discontent lay elsewhere. According to those who took part in the strike, students were unhappy with the poor quality of academic training, especially the school's limited science curriculum and lack of a laboratory. With a keen eye to their future academic careers, students saw the strike as a way of communicating their discontent and frustration with the school's limited facilities. "The cause of the strike was the infrastructure was not enough, particularly for the sciences. There was no laboratory," recalled Andrew Chemweno, a member

[1] Fintan McDonald, "Recollections on St. Patrick's H.S. – Foundation, 1961," June 1, 2000 (Many thanks to Brother Paul Brennan for providing me with a copy of this document.)
[2] Colm W. O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream* (Nairobi: Kalzmat Security Print Ltd, 2008), 20.
[3] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya; September 21, 2019.
[4] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 23-24.
[5] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.

of the school's founding class who described his memories of the strike years later during an interview at a coffee shop in the city of Eldoret.[6] "We were being taught science theoretically, and we knew we were going to sit for an exam…We refused to go to class because we had been promised that a lab would be built for us and we were not seeing it coming."[7]

Joseph Cheserem, a classmate of Chemweno's who also served as a school prefect during the early 1960s, related a similar account. "The school was offering general science at that time and the students were comparing our school with the other secondary schools which were offering full science courses," he told me during an interview in Iten. "So, out of this curiosity, the students demanded to be given…better curriculum than what the school was offering. So, we went on strike in 1962." According to Cheserem, after students refused their morning *uji,* "the first Brother Principal came in. He was still new to the African approach, so he didn't understand exactly…He thought we were refusing the porridge because it was watery, but we had other issues. And our main issue was we wanted the science facilities to be improved."[8]

In addition to their interests in improving the school's curricular offerings and physical infrastructure, students taking part in the strike made sure to conduct themselves in ways that accentuated the respectable nature of their demands. Perhaps aware of the common perception in Kenya of student strikes as chaotic and disorganized events, both Chemweno and Cheserem emphasized the peaceful, orderly, and unified nature of the students' action, making clear that the genesis of the strike lay in their disciplined concern for academic development. "We didn't do any harm – no, no, no," Chemweno insisted. "I think there was unity among the students because each one of us saw the importance of having a lab...We were very disciplined

[6] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.

students."[9] For students like Andrew Chemweno, the message was clear, it was their disciplined commitment to academic development, one of the central reasons the school existed in the first place, that drove their willingness to break school rules and strike.

At the same time, the strike caused deep uncertainty and confusion for the school's leaders, who responded by closing campus and sending the student body home as they decided how to move forward.[10] Although official records are unclear about what happened in the intervening period, the students' efforts and arguments must have been convincing. After several weeks, administrators re-opened the school and welcomed students back to campus.[11] In addition, the strike was successful in communicating the serious nature of student educational aspirations. "After that, the science facilities were improved," Cheserem recalled. "We got what we wanted…I think the Brothers saw sense in changing some of those facilities."[12] In November 1963, roughly a year and a half after the strike, school inspectors recorded the existence of a "well-equipped" science block on campus, with a second one under construction.[13] As Chemweno remembered, "We got what we wanted. And we didn't destroy anything in school, but we got what we wanted."[14] Though successful, the strike was not without its casualties. As punishment for their role in the strike, two of the school's best students were expelled, a loss lamented by administrators years later, and a reminder that taking part in school protests in late colonial Kenya could come at great cost.[15]

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[9] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[10] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya; September 21, 2019.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya; September 21, 2019.[13] KME, SS/134, St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports 1963-1965, 3/1.
[13] KME, SS/134, St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports 1963-1965, 3/1.
[14] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[15] McDonald, "Recollections on St. Patrick's H.S."

In the context of the rising expectations of coming independence, events such as the St. Patrick's student strike of 1962 exemplified what Kenyan labor leader Tom Mboya had described only a year earlier as the new "African dynamism" that was "laying the foundations of the future institutions of Africa."[16] As symbols of development and power, for many people schools represented key institutions in the push for African decolonization.[17] Yet, as products of the struggle between British colonial hegemony and African attempts to transform them, schools in Kenya also represented the contradictions between the promises of coming *uhuru* and the continuities of colonial practices and institutions that defined the transition to independence during the first half of the 1960s. Opened on the cusp of that transition, St. Patrick's provides an example of the ways Kenyans and the school's expat leaders wrestled with the contradictions of decolonization as they build and opened their school in the waning years of empire.

Within this context, the founding students, administrators, faculty, and staff of St. Patrick's grappled with and navigated these contradictions in a range of ways. Even amid campus conflict, they built infrastructure, embraced the school's Catholic religious mission, took part in day-to-day operations, studied hard, and contested what they saw as dubious educational practices. Above all, they deployed an identity and rhetoric of discipline that they viewed as emerging from their experiences and personal histories. As a result, St. Patrick's became a connective place of social meaning where individual and collective African aspirations for agency and self-determination came into direct contact with educational practices rooted in colonial legacies.

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[16] For "new African dynamism," see Tom Mboya, "Tensions in African Development," New College Oxford, 1961 in *The Challenge of Nationhood: A Collection of Speeches and Writings* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1970), p 26.
[17] Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "African Studies and Universities since Independence," *Transition*, no. 101, Looking Ahead (2009): 110-135.

Tracing the history of St. Patrick's from the school's construction in 1960 through the first half-decade of its existence, this chapter demonstrates how members of the founding generation of St. Patrick's not only made a place in the final years of empire but also deployed a culture and identity rooted in discipline and hard work to grapple with the contradictions of decolonization. Placing the founding of St. Patrick's within this historical context allows for an understanding of how Kenyans experienced, understood, responded to, and wrestled with the end of empire during the early 1960s.[18]

'Foreign citadels amid us' or 'Eradicating colonial psychology'?: Schools and the Contradictions of Decolonization in Kenya

Members of the St. Patrick's founding generation were not the only ones in Kenya wrestling with the contradictions between coming independence and the continuities of colonial practices and systems in the years leading up to and immediately following Kenyan independence. As colonial subjects became citizens seeking to negotiate both the moment and process of decolonization, such contradictions presented Kenyans with a range of choices and challenges that shaped the emerging country's future in important ways. Within this context, some things changed, but much remained the same.

While the most obvious change during this process was the legitimization of African political power, a striking continuity came in the form of governance that took shape during the early 1960s. Largely the result of the rise of a class of elite, school-educated African leaders in the final decade of colonial rule, it was these political moderates who navigated Kenya through a series of independence talks with British officials at London's Lancaster House between 1960

[18] Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15. For some of the recent literature that has explored how Africans dealt with and responded to the end of empire during the 1950s and 1960s, see Ismay Milford, *African Activists in a Decolonising World: The Making of an Anticolonial Culture, 1952-1966* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Trenton: Princeton University Press, 2019); Frederick Cooper, "Decolonization in Tropical Africa," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire,* eds. Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 317-333.

and 1963.[19] At Lancaster, members of the newly formed Kenya African National Union (KANU) and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) negotiated a constitution that created a government with a Prime Minister, a regionally elected upper house, regional assemblies, and an independent judiciary.[20] However, with the ascension of KANU as the dominant political party and Jomo Kenyatta's installation as Prime Minister in the elections of May 1963, Kenyatta and his supporters sought to consolidate control by resurrecting the colony's provincial administration, a governance scheme established by the British in which a constellation of appointed district and provincial officers administered Kenya's courts, taxes, elections, and legal systems.[21] Following the establishment of a republic in December 1964, the KANU government abolished the regional system established at Lancaster, replaced the Prime Minister position with that of President, and placed the provincial administration, along with the power to appoint provincial and district commissioners, under the direct control of President Kenyatta.[22] For Kenyatta and KANU, it was through this "bureaucratic-executive state," a continuation of the colonially derived provincial administration, that they would rule independent Kenya.[23]

Other continuities with colonial systems and practices existed. A range of colonial officials, in ministries and offices working in agriculture, sport, policing, military, and youth development, remained in their positions or were newly appointed as civil servants after

[19] B.A. Ogot, "The Decisive Years, 1956-1963," in *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-1993*, eds. B.A. Ogot and W.R. Ochieng (London, Nairobi, Athens: James Currey, EAEP, Ohio University Press, 1995), 48-79.
[20] Ogot, "The Decisive Years, 1956-1963," 48-79.
[21] David Anderson, "Majimboism: The Troubled History of an Idea" in *Our Turn to Eat: Politics in Kenya Since 1950,* eds. Daniel Branch, Nic Cheeseman, Leigh Gardner (Berlin: LIT, 2010), 24-34; Daniel Branch and Nicholas Cheeseman, "The Politics of Control in Kenya: Understanding the Bureaucratic-Executive State, 1952-78," *Review of African Political Economy* 33, no. 107, State, Class & Civil Society in Africa (2006): 11-31.
[22] Branch and Cheeseman, "The Politics of Control in Kenya, 22-23.
[23] Ibid, 11-31; Paul Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age: The Politics of Manhood in Kenya* (Athens: Ohio University, Press 2017), 241; Anderson, "Majimboism," 31.

independence.[24] Others became advisors and officers for development organizations such as the World Bank and Oxfam, groups which shaped economic and social policy in post-colonial Kenya and many other African countries.[25] Programs such as the National Youth Service (NYS), developed from British models and funded through aid from Britain and the United States, were deployed to appease the grievances of Kenya's younger generation.[26] Economic programs forged through negotiations between the British, Kenya's settler communities, and Kenyatta's government, such as the Million Acre Scheme, failed to address the challenges of limited land access faced by large numbers of African families.[27] As Daniel Branch and Nicholas Cheeseman have written, in social, political, and economic circles, "the process of decolonization grafted an African political and administrative elite onto existing European and Asian economic elites."[28]

However, the place where the contradictions between the hopes and dreams of coming independence and the continuities of the colonial system were most prevalent were in Kenya's schools. While many Kenyans had come to see schools as synonymous with the promises of post-colonial development, the limitations of the educational system bequeathed by the British were manifest.[29] One of the most pressing of these challenges was the limited number of schools available for African students, a problem that many Kenyans were deeply aware of. In late-1960, for example, one contributor to the *East African Standard's* op-ed section called on the

[24] Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 39-40; Kara Moskowitz, "From Multiracialism to Africanization? Race, Politics, and Sport in Decolonizing Kenya," *Journal of Contemporary History* 58, no. 1, (2023): 115-135; Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 226-246.
[25] Joseph M. Hodge, "British Colonial Expertise, Post-Colonial Careering and the Early History of International Development," *Journal of Modern European History* 8, no. 1, Modernizing Missions: Approaches to Developing the Non-Western World after 1945 (2010), 24-46; Matthew Hilton, "Charity, Decolonization and Development: The Case of the Starehe Boys School, Nairobi," *Past and Present*, no. 233 (2016): 227-267.
[26] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, 226-230.
[27] Kara Moskowitz, *Seeing Like a Citizen: Decolonization, Development, and the Making of Kenya, 1945-1980* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2019), 36-115.
[28] Branch and Cheeseman, "The Politics of Control in Kenya," 21.
[29] John Anderson, *The Struggle for the School: The interaction of Missionary, Colonial Government, and Nationalist enterprise in the development of formal education in Kenya* (Nairobi: Longman, 1970), 145-167.

government to "open more and more schools."[30] A year and a half later, another argued that the aspiration for increased schooling reached across ethnic lines, writing "the need for education and the passionate desire for it lie at the very heart of practically every single tribe in Kenya."[31] Newspaper headlines trumpeted slogans such as "Education Vital to Independence," while LegCo members such as former schoolteacher Daniel arap Moi told listeners that the "development of Kenya's educational programme was one of the principal factors affecting the success or failure of her move towards independence."[32]

For others, just building more schools was not enough. Kenyan schools needed to be reformed to help redirect the goals of African education. Noting the debilitating impact of colonial pedagogies and curriculum on African students, Tom Mboya told his fellow LegCo members that the "new system must aim at eradicating colonial psychology and replacing it with a truly independent psychology."[33] Such a system, Mboya hoped, "would instil (*sic*) in boys and girls the knowledge that Africans had a purpose in life and that the country had a contribution to make to Africa and the world in general."[34] Samuel Ayani, the President of the newly founded Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), told members of his organization that the primary purpose of Kenyan schools needed to be the creation of "citizens" charged with safeguarding, strengthening, and improving "a democratic way of life."[35] Bethwell Ogot, head of the History Department at University of Nairobi, argued that many Kenyan secondary schools were "foreign

[30] "Exodus of students for higher education," *East African Standard*, August 24, 1960.
[31] Nathan Odhiambo, "Kenya tribes unanimous on need for education," *East African Standard*, December 18, 1961, 4.
[32] "Education vital to independence," *East African Standard*, June 2, 1961, 7.
[33] "Education revolution needed in Kenya," *East African Standard,* July 22, 1961, 3.
[34] Ibid.
[35] "Unified education vital – Archbishop," *East African Standard*, August 26, 1960, 17.

citadels amid us" and called for reforms in both the structure and practice of schooling that would inculcate "Kenyan-born values, inspired from the native soil" in the nation's students.[36]

Such sentiments for reform were not simply rhetoric. Changes, albeit small, did occur. The years immediately leading to independence saw a substantial increase in school construction and student enrollments compared to previous periods. Between 1960 and 1964, the number of secondary schools available to African students increased from 41 (33 aided by the national government) to 154 (64 aided by the national government).[37] Although many positions within the Ministry of Education remained in the hands of expats, some were filled by Africans. In 1961, for example, eight African assistant education officers were promoted to full-time positions and placed in charge of inspecting, administering, and teaching in African primary and intermediate schools in places such as Baringo, Kisumu, Elgeyo-Marakwet, and Kakamega.[38]

Despite such changes, the patterns and practices of colonial education proved difficult to leave behind. Increased school construction notwithstanding, the proportion of school-aged African students enrolled across Kenya was still small. By the coming of independence in 1963, there were approximately 10,500 African secondary students, a number representing less than 2% of all secondary-school aged Africans in Kenya.[39] In many places, the number of new seats created was outpaced by demand, with schools often having more applications than spots available. In Kakamega, for example, where a secondary school opened 60 new seats in 1961, over 300 students applied. To solve the admissions bottleneck, school administrators in Kakamega drew names out of a hat.[40] According to the Colony's Minister of Education, the

[36] B. Ogot, "'Foreign Citadels' of Learning," *Daily Nation*, July 21, 1965, 5.
[37] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School*, 150.
[38] "Eight more to run schools," *East African Standard*, May 3, 1961, 6.
[39] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School,* 150; J.E. Otiende, S.P. Wamahiu, A.M. Karugu, *Education and Development in Kenya: A Historical Perspective* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 76.
[40] "Education revolution needed in Kenya," 3.

government's plans for educational development during the early-1960s found it "a struggle to keep pace with new admissions."[41]

Likewise, the integration of African students into European and Asian schools was limited. While some schools, such as Hospital Hill School in Nairobi and the Outward Bound School in Loitokitok, began to integrate in the late-1950s, political representatives for settler communities in central and western Kenya consistently balked at the idea of desegregation. Arguing that compulsory racial integration was "immoral and wrong," they called for the right of "any parent…to ensure that his children were educated in the manner and up to the general standards…he wished."[42] All-white schools like Duke of York and Prince of Wales in Nairobi did not begin admitting African students until the eve of independence, while some inter-scholastic sporting events, such as boxing, remained racially segregated right up to *uhuru*.[43]

Colonial continuities also existed in curriculum choices for African students. Echoing colonial education models, some schools and policymakers continued to emphasize vocational and agricultural training for Africans. In 1960, settler A.B. Goord told his fellow LegCo members that African schools in settler areas should continue to emphasize agricultural education.[44] That same year, the Jeanes School, founded in the 1920s as a hub for the vocational and agricultural training of Africans, reported that over 1,000 students had recently completed courses in farming, trading, shopkeeping, and homecraft.[45] At Chavakali Secondary School in North Maragoli, school administrators adopted a curriculum centered around farming entitled

[41] "Official aid for non-racial school," *East African Standard,* May 21, 1960, 5.
[42] Sorobea Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya (1895-1991)* (Nairobi: Evans Brothers, 1992), 70-71; "School integration 'immoral and wrong'," *East African Standard,* May 20, 1960, 4; "More must teach and all must work hard," *East African Standard,* May 21, 1960, 3.
[43] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 70-71; Dawson McCall, "'A Hero Who Made This Country Proud': Boxing, Nation, and the Politics of Sport in Kenya, ca 1950–1980," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* (2023): [Online] DOI: 10.1080/09523367.2023.2267451.
[44] "School integration 'immoral and wrong'," *East African Standard,* May 20, 1960, 4.
[45] David Saxby, "Jeanes School shows the way to a trade and citizenship," *East African Standard*, June 3, 1960, 9.

"Agricultural Principles and Practice," which trained students in soil sampling and simple accounting.[46]

Policies tied to language instruction and discipline remained harsh and draconian. In December 1964, the same month that Kenya became a republic, the Ministry of Education issued the Kenyan Education Commission Report, calling for the use of English as the nation's primary language of secondary school instruction, while policies punishing students for speaking African languages on campus continued.[47] Officials in the Ministry of Education such as K.S.N. Matiba emphasized the importance of "order" in Kenyan schools, promising "a firm hand" in instances of "truancy and indiscipline."[48] At schools such as Starehe Boys, where the headmaster Geoffrey Griffin "meted out punishments himself with a militant efficiency," consequences for rule-breaking included solitary confinement, manual labor, and caning, policies that remained the norm right through, and long after, independence in many Kenyan schools.[49]

Foreign teachers and administrators, in the form of missionaries and expatriate volunteers, remained central to Kenyan schools and continued to be placed in positions of authority. African political leaders regularly called for foreign educational aid, while the Kenyan state partnered with the American International Cooperation Administration (later renamed the United States Agency for International Development, or USAID) to bring teachers and school administrators from the United States to work in Kenyan schools.[50] Foreign teachers and

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[46] Muey Ching Saeteurn, "'A Beacon of Hope for the Community': The Role of Chavakali Secondary School in Late Colonial and Early Independent Kenya," *Journal of African History* 58, no. 2 (2017): 312-324.
[47] *Kenya Education Commission Report, Part I* (Nairobi, December 12, 1964), 83
[48] For the centrality of "order" in post-colonial Kenyan politics, see E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, "Democracy and the Ideology of Order in Kenya" in *The Political Economy of Kenya,* ed. Michael G. Schatzburg (New York, 1987) and "Introduction: Our Turn to Eat," in *Our Turn to Eat: Politics in Kenya since 1950* , eds. Daniel Branch, Nic Cheeseman and Leigh Gardner (Berlin, 2010). For Matiba's comments of discipline and order in Kenyan schools, see "Striking students" *Times Educational Supplement,* September 18, 1964, 397.
[49] Hilton, "Charity, Decolonization and Development," 253-254.
[50] "Education vital to independence," *East African Standard* June 2, 1961, 7; "104 US teachers for E. African schools soon," *East African Standard*, July 8, 1961, 3; Saeteurn, "'A Beacon of Hope for the Community'," 323-324.

administrators were in charge of youth leadership courses, girls' domestic education, sports instruction, and citizenship courses from Meru to Nairobi to Kimilili.[51] As the headmaster of a Quaker missionary school in western Kenya noted in 1964, reliance on foreign teachers and administrators, especially at missionary schools, was widespread and created major challenges, as expats rarely stayed for more than a year or two, driving up rates of teacher turnover and suppressing student confidence in the quality of instruction.[52]

As in previous periods, students responded to these challenges and problems with demands for better curriculum, treatment, and support. At Chavakali, students and parents resisted administrators' attempts to limit curriculum to agricultural training by calling for a more academically focused education.[53] Although not widespread, student strikes during the period were common enough to be a point of conversation among school administrators, foreign observers, and Kenyan state officials. While one writer for the *Times Educational Supplement* described striking students as "like a fractious child who throws his toys around when he is kept indoors because of the rain," others noted that a reliance on foreign teachers, high faculty turnover rates, school shortages, and inadequate facilities created deep anxieties for African students who saw educational success as vital to their individual and community development.[54] Such realities were clear manifestations of the contradictions between the hopes and dreams of coming independence and the deep colonial legacies which shaped Kenyan schooling experiences of the period.

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[51] "Athens Academy choice is Meru school games master," *East African Standard*, May 1, 1961, 3; David Saxby, "Jeanes School shows the way to a trade and citizenship," *East African Standard*, June 3, 1960, 9-11.
[52] "Striking students," *The Times Educational Supplement*, September 11, 1964, 352.
[53] Saeteurn, "'A Beacon of Hope for the Community'," 324-329.
[54] For criticisms of student strikes, see "Student strikes in Kenya," *Times Educational Supplement*, August 21, 1964, 253. For a description of the causes for student strikes, see "Striking students," *Times Educational Supplement*, September 11, 1964, 352 and "Striking students" *Times Educational Supplement,* September 18, 1964, 397.

It was within this context that the founding generation at St. Patrick's began the process of building and making their school. The challenges of securing land and constructing schools, the limits of inadequate facilities, the reliance on expatriate teachers and administrators, the instability brought on by high rates of faculty turnover, and disagreements over educational practices, all of which were defining characteristics of the schooling experience during the last years of colonialism, would manifest themselves at St. Patrick's during the school's early years. Much like their contemporaries in other Kenyan schools, most members of the first generation of students, administrators, faculty, and staff at St. Patrick's arrived at their would-be school mindful of these challenges. However, through processes of both contestation and reconciliation, and by creating and taking part in a range of school activities, the St. Patrick's founders forged a shared commitment to the values of discipline and hard work that would begin the process of transforming their new campus space into a place of social meaning.

'I was walking around coming to Iten…then I saw people building': The Construction of St. Patrick's, Iten

Although served by a local intermediate school staffed by Kiltegan priests, within the region surrounding Iten, the only secondary schools available for aspiring African male students in 1960 were government schools in Kapsabet and Chewoyet. Iten itself was, at the time, a small, rural trade junction intersected by a few dirt roads and a handful of small stores. Described in 1956 by the *East African Standard* as "a tidy little African village," according to Peter Mwangi, who arrived in the area in 1960 and worked on the school's construction efforts, Iten "wasn't a town…It was just a few shops."[55] Yusuf Kaitany, who grew up in Iten in the late 1950s and later attended St. Patrick's, described it as a market with four or five shops, while Ernest Kaitany,

[55] James Lyall, "Elgeyo Escarpment Is Spectacular And Thrilling," *East African Standard*, November 23, 1956, 10; Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020.

from nearby Sergoit, recalled that "the whole place was tiny, very tiny."[56] Despite its small size, St. Patrick's students, faculty, and staff would regularly praise the town and its environs for its lush and green surroundings and the majestic view of the nearby Kerio escarpment. At an elevation of over 7,000 feet, visitors arriving in later years would note the "green maize *shambas* scattered hither and thither" and the "lovely picture of nature" presented by the valley.[57] Although home to a sparse population, the "environmentally friendly" fertile land surrounding Iten was regularly used by residents for farming, forestry, and livestock grazing.[58]

In early-1960, the primary challenge facing the school's would-be founders was securing a piece of land for the construction of school buildings and student dormitories. The site chosen for construction, described as a "windswept" patch of "scorched brown murram landscape" that was home to three local families, was located about 500 meters from the center of Iten and dotted by "thousands of little rounded anthills."[59] The central force behind organizing the transfer of land from local residents to St. Patrick's administrators was local politician William Murgor, who had been one of the main influences behind bringing the school to Iten.[60] According to accounts from Iten residents of the period, the three families who lived on the plot were offered land in nearby Sergoit in return for handing over the property to the new school. John Kiprono, who grew up in Iten in the late 1950s and later attended St. Patrick's, was around six or seven years old when the transfer took place. Recounting the circumstances of the handover, Kiprono recalled that his father was one of the people who agreed to trade land in Iten for a replacement

[56] Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[57] Joel Rutto Arap Maiyo, "What A Grand View," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 34.
[58] Bernard Rotich, "Iten losing its pull factor in the face of environmental degradation," *Sunday Nation*, December 17, 2023, 30-31.
[59] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 19 & 70; Ambrose Hannon, "The Early Years by Bro. Ambrose J. Hannon," August 26, 2021 (unpublished manuscript transcribed by Bro. Colm O'Connell; Many thanks to Patrick Ongus for providing access to this document).
[60] John Kiprono, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, December 13, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.

plot elsewhere. "My father was…part of the people who were starting that part of St. Patrick's," Kiprono told me during an interview in Iten. "I just remember that the land was given to St. Patrick's, then [the original inhabitants] were supposed to be given [land] in some other area…This was through the influence of the late William Murgor."[61]

While the transfer of land is remembered by some as leaving the remunerated families satisfied, others recalled disappointment and frustration. According to Ernest Kaitany, who grew up in Sergoit where the relocated families were moved, the new land was "fertile" and "people were happy, because they were given double what they had in Iten."[62] In contrast, John Kiprono remembered the transfer as leaving some families with frustrations and complaints because "the value of land which they were given outside was not the same as the one which had been in Iten."[63] Given the central role of land access for Kenya's pastoralist and farming communities, accounts of disillusionment and frustration over unsatisfactory land transfers are unsurprising. Although a local event involving only a handful of families, such grievances presaged the rise of broad dissatisfaction over government-organized land transfer programs centered in the Rift Valley, such as the Million Acre Scheme, that would emerge a few years later during the transition to independence.[64]

Despite these tensions, once the handover was complete, Murgor officially gave control of the land to the Kiltegan priest, Father Fintan McDonald, who had been charged with overseeing the school's construction and opening. School leaders began construction on the new school buildings and campus infrastructure in earnest. Father Paddy Cullen, the Education Secretary for the Diocese, negotiated an agreement with a Sikh contractor from Eldoret, with

[61] John Kiprono, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, December 13, 2019.
[62] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[63] John Kiprono, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, December 13, 2019.
[64] Moskowitz, *Seeing Like a Citizen*, 36-115.

building beginning in April 1960.[65] In addition, Bishop Houlihan organized the construction of a student dormitory and a two-story, red brick building with a tiled roof that would later serve as the primary campus residence for the Patrician Brothers.[66] Locally mined foundation stones were organized by Fintan McDonald and supplied by a local man known as Arap McDona, while some construction materials came from as far away as Kampala in neighboring Uganda.[67]

Although some workers came from central and western Kenya, much of the labor was carried out by locals hired for a daily wage. Peter Mwangi, who arrived in Iten from Murang'a in 1960 in search of work, came on as a day laborer and recalled the make-up of the work force. "I was walking around coming to Iten. Then I saw people building," Mwangi recalled during an interview at his home in Huruma in 2020. "We were handicraftsmen [and] I was not alone. We were doing manual labor…By then we were earning daily money…The locals were the ones who were saying they would work...I was the only one who was a foreigner and the rest were locals… But later someone…came later…from Western Kenya."[68]

Construction was hard, an obstacle made more challenging by the fact that the start of building corresponded with the onset of the rainy season. According to Mwangi, workers struggled with the rain and cold climate, both of which made for a difficult worksite. "The cold and rain were heavy…When it rained we were covered," he recalled. Yet, workers understood that the timely opening of the school, scheduled for the early 1961, depended on their efforts. "The major concern was job completion," Mwangi continued, "the completion of the house[s] or the completion of the dormitory, so that they could bring the students."[69] Despite the challenges, by the beginning of 1961, Mwangi, the Kiltegans, and the workers had completed a basic campus

[65] McDonald, "Recollections on St. Patrick's H.S."; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 19.
[66] McDonald, "Recollections on St. Patrick's H.S."
[67] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 70.
[68] Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020.
[69] Ibid.

Figure 2.1 – By early 1961, the St. Patrick's campus consisted of three buildings, including four classrooms, an office, dining hall, student dorm, and Brothers' residence.

(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

infrastructure, consisting of three buildings, including four classrooms, administrative office, dining hall, student dormitory, and a spartan Brothers' residence.[70] (See Figure 2.1)

'It was a special mixture': Catholic Networks, Academic Aspiration, and the Founders

As the struggle to secure and build the new school ended, attention switched to student recruitment. With few other leadership options available, Father Fintan McDonald was informed that, despite having no experience in educational administration, he would have to step in as the school's first principal. His first assignment – recruit a founding class of students. During the final months of 1960, McDonald embarked on a recruiting effort that would bring in a class of thirty students, many of them in their late teens and early twenties, from a range of Rift Valley communities. Students brought with them clear expectations and aspirations, such as their

[70] McDonald, "Recollections on St. Patrick's H.S."; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 19.

understanding of the school as a Catholic institution and their commitment to pursuing academic goals. At the same time, students met new faces, an experience that they would later remember as signaling the exceptional nature of their new school and important moments in their life.

When it opened in February 1961, the St. Patrick's administration and faculty consisted of Kiltegan priests Fintan McDonald and Aiden Surlis.[71] In addition, Peter Mwangi was hired as the school's first staff member for "just a little money" and given access to a small house on campus in return for serving as the school's cook.[72] McDonald took over as the school's principal with a monthly salary of 860 shillings per month (around $120 US dollars in 1961).[73] Approaching his position with what he described as "not a small amount of trepidation and trust in God and St. Patrick," McDonald threw himself into the new vocation, setting up tours of two of Kenya's well-known secondary schools, the government-run Kapsabet Boys High School and the Catholic-run Mangu High School, in order to gain some exposure to Kenyan secondary education.[74] In an effort to convince students to attend his new school, during the months leading to the school's opening, McDonald also took recruiting trips to twenty Catholic-sponsored and government-run intermediate schools in the region between Nakuru and Pokot, an expanse of territory covering a large swathe of southwestern Kenya's Rift Valley region.[75]

With a tiny staff and few materials resources, McDonald quickly found that student recruitment was not easy. Recalling his experiences in the school magazine years later, he recounted how some potential recruits found it difficult to take him seriously without the requisite resources normally associated with European-run secondary schools. "I remember

[71] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 22.
[72] Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020.
[73] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 20; For currency conversion, see "Treasury Reporting Rates of Exchange 1956-1969," Treasury Department, Financial Management Service, December 31, 1969, accessed June 14, 2021. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/GOVPUB-T63_100-037ecb92058805a0e9d132ac54191604.
[74] Fintan McDonald, "How The School Began: Fr. Fintan MacDonald, First H/Master St, Patrick," *The Patrician Silver Jubilee – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, 1961-1986, 14.
[75] McDonald, "Recollections on St. Patrick's H.S."

walking into one school in Nakuru," McDonald wrote, "and being asked the surprising question: 'How do you expect us to sign up for your school when the Headmaster hasn't even got a car?'"[76] As this anecdote suggests, at a time when secondary school education was seen as an important avenue of social and economic mobility, many aspiring Kenyan students expected a reputable level of material support and resources for emerging schools to be considered trustworthy.

In addition to questions about the school's material resources, convincing students from surrounding regions to take up residence in a place like Iten was a daunting task. Perched on the edge of the Uasin Gishu plateau at the junction between Eldoret, Kaptagat, and Kapsowar, Iten's high altitude of approximately 8,000 feet and location on the escarpment of the Kerio Valley makes for an often chilly, muddy, and rainy environment. Despite the town's lush surroundings, those who attended the school in its early years regularly described Iten as "bushy" and "muddy," adding that the climate was "cold" and "all the time raining."[77] One student, writing in the school magazine years later, commented on the challenges of such an environment, writing that the "road is dusty during the dry season but muddy during the rainy season."[78] Such a rainy, muddy, and cold climate inspired students from other regions of Kenya to dub Iten the "Land of the Frigid Atmosphere."[79] Indeed, according to one teacher, in later years, a pair of students from Turkana left the school in the middle of the night because of the cold.[80]

Despite recruiting challenges, McDonald looked for those with already demonstrated track records of achievement and character development, what one school administrator later

[76] McDonald, "How The School Began," 14.
[77] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019; Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya, February 25, 2020.
[78] Maiyo, "What A Grand View," 34.
[79] Joseph Chepkiyeng Arap Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 5.
[80] Mike Singoei, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, January 16, 2020.

described as "outstanding character, leadership, artistic and athletic ability."[81] The school's recruiters also focused on attracting local students who had a "reasonably hopeful" potential of paying the yearly school fees of 400 shillings, and those with already established connections with Catholic schools.[82] Although the school would later attract Protestant, and to a lesser extent Muslim and Hindu, students from across the country, during the early years, the emphasis was on developing connections with other Catholic schools and recruiting locals who had been baptized and were of "good character."[83]

For many students, their relationship with Catholic schools in the region were central factors in their decisions to attend. Andrew Chemweno, who came to Iten at the age of 20 from a Catholic intermediate school in Nerkwo, recalled attending St. Patrick's "because of the Catholic influence."[84] According to Chemweno, "the priests who were teaching us in Nerkwo…recommended us to go [to Iten]. Because there were other secondary schools – like Kapsabet, Chewoyet – but they were far away. And because the Priests had started their own school in Iten, they wanted us to join."[85] Founding student Joseph Cheserem, who also came from Nerkwo, emphasized how the Catholic educational networks helped St. Patrick's overcome some of the challenges of recruiting. "You know, at that time, the school had not made a name. It was not known. So, the school, of course, was Catholic, and was picking students from various Catholic institutions."[86] Likewise, Philip Tunoi, a member of the founding class who would later

[81] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 20-21.
[82] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 20-21 & 35.
[83] Ibid, 20-21.
[84] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.

become a lawyer and a Kenyan Supreme Court justice, came to St. Patrick's from Iten Intermediate School, where Kiltegan Priest Aiden Surlis had been one of his teachers.[87]

As one of only a few secondary schools for African boys in the Rift Valley region, the opening of a new school provided highly sought-after opportunities for aspiring male students interested in pursuing secondary education. Hopes for academic achievement and a high level of intellectual activity were also important reasons for choosing to attend St. Patrick's. According to Chemweno, in addition to the Catholic connection, early recruits were encouraged by their former teachers to attend St. Patrick's "because of the grades we got," with many arriving with the expectation that they were there to pursue high academic standards.[88] Joseph Cheserem emphasized how students arrived on campus with a clear-eyed understanding that they would need access to up-to-date facilities and resources in order to prepare for the Cambridge School Certificate (CSC) examination at the end of their time at St. Patrick's.[89]

In addition to the importance of Catholic school networks and an interest in high academic standards, early students regularly emphasized how members of the school's first recruitment class came from a range of ethnic backgrounds. While early school leaders prioritized the recruitment of locals, the inaugural class of thirty students came from a range of Gikuyu, Nandi, Bukusu, Marakwet, and Keiyo communities from across the Rift Valley and western Kenya.[90] "The students were from different parts of Kenya," recalled Andrew Chemweno. "We were five from Marakwet…And then there were some from Tambach. And then there were five Keiyo's…You know we have quite a number of tribes in Kenya, but we met there…We had not had such an experience before, of getting to know different tribes in

[87] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 46; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[88] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[89] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[90] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 22.

Kenya."[91] Likewise, Joseph Cheserem described how the school's first class hailed from communities throughout the Rift Valley. "The first Form I intake, you know, we were picked from various schools," he said. "Not only from the district…There were only nine fellows who were picked from the district. All the others were picked from around the Rift Valley. Some came from as far as Nakuru. That's how we got our students. We had Luhyas. We had Gikuyus. So, it was a special mixture."[92]

'He wanted to crush his head': Tensions and Contested Notions of Educational Practice

While notions of the school's shared Catholic identity and positive memories of the school's ethnic and cultural diversity loomed large in the recollections of early students and staff, there were very real pressures and challenges. Political disputes, lingering tensions from the Mau Mau war, disagreements over the school's teaching practices, and campus language policies created contested terrain and challenged both students and teachers alike. Although ideas of a shared community identity and pride in the school's diversity would remain important throughout the school's history, such notions did not arise seamlessly.

St. Patrick's appeared at a time when Kenya had just emerged from one of Africa' most violent and contested periods of anti-colonial rebellion and civil conflict. During the 1950s, the Mau Mau revolution had pitted the largely Gikuyu, Meru, and Embu Land and Freedom Army against British colonial forces and their Gikuyu supporters, resulting in tens of thousands of African deaths and the detainment of hundreds of thousands of Africans in British internment camps.[93] Although the Land and Freedom Army played a key role in speeding Kenya's independence, feelings of bitterness and tensions stemming from the war remained for decades.[94]

[91] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[92] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[93] David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 330-344.
[94] Ibid.

At the same time, long-standing African grievances linked to colonial land policies, in which the colony's white settler population and African elite had confiscated the best farmlands and relegated the large majority of black Africans to less productive "reserves," manifested themselves in competing demands over who would benefit from coming independence.[95]

For a school such as St. Patrick's, which pulled its early students largely from communities in the Rift Valley, tensions stemming from land issues and questions of who would benefit from the coming transfer of political power were present from the beginning. Especially prescient were debates between Gikuyu students and those from other groups in the school's surrounding communities, such as Keiyo, Marakwet, and Nandi, with many Gikuyu arguing that the central role they played in the Mau Mau revolution entitled them to claims on shaping the new country. As Andrew Chemweno, who was from Marakwet, recalled, "we met strange faces...especially the Gikuyus, because when we met them, that was about the time we got our independence. So, they were threatening us, saying 'you will have to learn our language.' And one of them was taking [a handful of] soil and saying, 'This is our soil, we fought for it.'"[96] In the context of coming independence, tensions such as these resonated throughout Kenyan communities, especially in the Rift Valley, where issues related to land and power often found expression along ethnic and class lines.[97]

In addition, conflicts emerged in these early years between students and the white, Irish Kiltegan priests charged with running the school and teaching the first classes. One such incident, involving a fight between a student and one of the school's priests, occurred in the months just after the school's opening. According to those who were present at the time, the episode grew out of a lack of instructional training on the part of the priest. "We were being

[95] Moskowitz, *Seeing Like A Citizen*, 36-60; Ogot "The Decisive Years, 1956-1963," 63-68.
[96] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[97] Moskowitz, *Seeing Like A Citizen*, 36-142.

taught maths," recalled Andrew Chemweno, "and the problem was that the priest who was teaching maths was not a trained teacher, so he would not follow a professional way of teaching. He would go to the board, and the book was in front of him, without even introducing the maths topic first."[98] According to students of the period, one day the priest called on a student named Francis Lotodo, who was from West Pokot, and told him to go to the board and show how to correctly solve the problem. Not knowing the proper procedure, Lotodo was unable to provide the solution.[99]

According to Chemweno, what followed was a tense interaction that would have lasting consequences for Lotodo's relationship with the school's white teachers and his attendance at the school:

> The priest was a bit annoyed, so he kind of said, '*Wewe ni mjinga tu*,' (Kiswahili for 'You are a fool') and dismissed him with a waved hand…So, Francis was moving between the desks…and Francis turned around and moved toward the priest…and then he boxed the priest, hit him, on the face. Then he held the priest – you know, Francis was a huge man – he wanted to crush his head. He picked him up, and then we talked the language – you know our languages are similar between Marakwet and Pokot – we said, 'Don't do that.' So, he turned and put him down.[100]

Having drawn blood from the priest's lip, Lotodo was sent to speak with the school principal, but was not punished and returned to class later that day.[101] However, after several months, Lotodo left the school, telling a friend that he would not return so long as those *wazuungu* (Kiswahili for white men) were there.[102]

Other challenges and obstacles extended from turnover in the school's leadership and faculty, a common occurrence among expat teachers and administrators in Kenyan schools of the

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[98] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[99] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[100] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[101] Ibid; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[102] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.

period. In late-1961, eight months after the school's opening, the Kiltegan fathers handed over administration to the Irish Patrician Bothers. Although the Brothers would run St. Patrick's for the next three and a half decades, hopes for an easy transition and a well-trained and experienced group of Brothers did not materialize. The first Patrician Brothers to arrive – Bernadine O'Sullivan, Jarlath Cory, and Paschal Magee – came to Iten in September of 1961 and were given control of the school the following month.[103] While two of the three Brothers came to Kenya with teaching experience, they were all young and none had any missionary experience. Even more troubling, none had training or knowledge of any African languages spoken in western Kenya. Jarlath Corry, the oldest at 28 years, was a trained primary school teacher with four years of primary teaching experience in Ireland.[104] Bernadine O'Sullivan, a temporary professed with no teaching experience, served as the school's "handyman."[105] Paschal Magee, who was appointed the community's Superior, was in his mid-20s and came to Kenya with a university degree in science and three years of secondary teaching experience in Ireland.[106] Magee, who took over the school's headmaster position, was described by one of his colleagues as being "completely unfit for the job and the country," his main problem being that "he could not go in, take a class and teach."[107] Problems stemming from this lack of pedagogical training, minimal teaching experience, and absence of African language training and knowledge of local conditions resulted in the student strike described at the outset of this chapter.

As a result of the strike, within six months of taking over as the school's principal, Magee was replaced as the school's headmaster and called back to Ireland.[108] In his place, Brother

[103] McDonald, "Recollections on St. Patrick's H.S."
[104] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 23.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] McDonald, "Recollections on St. Patrick's H.S."
[108] Ibid.

Jarlath Corry took over, remaining in the position for less than three months.[109] In response to the tenuous leadership situation, the Patricians sent a young Brother named Ambrose Hannon to take over the school's administration. Arriving in late-July 1962 on a flight chartered through the Raptim Humanitarian Travel company, Hannon was the school's third principal in its first eighteen months of existence.[110] Although he would become one of the most consequential administrators in the school's history, remaining as the school's headmaster until 1968, Hannon took over at a challenging time for the fledgling school.

Despite the leadership transition and administrative changes, tensions remained. One of these stemmed from the question of language use on campus. Although some of the African staff and most of the students knew some English, none of the early Patrician Brothers new African languages, a gap in knowledge that sometimes necessitated the use of hand gestures to communicate with staff members whose English was limited.[111] In addition, according to Peter Mwangi, the thick, Irish accents of some of the Patricians was a point of confusion. "Even the Bothers had to struggle," Mwangi recalled. "[I]t was necessary for [them] to slow down their speech in order for one to understand well."[112] At other times, these differences inspired instances of exchange and curiosity, such as Brother Ambrose Hannon's first encounter with the school's students in 1962, during which he recounted learning to count to ten in Kiswahili in exchange for teaching students some Gaelic vocabulary.[113]

Another issue revolved around the use of African languages in class and on campus. While students took Kiswahili classes, as in other Kenyan secondary schools of the period, all

[109] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 24.
[110] Ibid, 25; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020; Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019.
[111] Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Brother Ambrose Hannon, "The Early Years," *The Patrician Silver Jubilee – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, 1961-1986, 14.

other coursework was done in English. In addition, the use of vernacular languages was forbidden on campus, a policy enforced using an implement known as the "disk," a holdover from colonial education practice.[114] With deep roots in colonial educational pedagogy, a "disk" was a piece of wood hanging from a rope necklace. When a teacher heard or was informed of a student using vernacular language, the disk would be hung around the student's neck. The student would then give the disk to the next person to be caught using a banned language, and so on. At the end of the school day, those students who had breached the ban would be given a punishment, such as manual labor or cleaning duties.[115] According to Ernest Kaitany, students "couldn't speak [their] language because…there was punishment…[We] were allowed to practice English and Kiswahili. The use of vernacular was discouraged."[116] Despite such practices, St. Patrick's students from the period recalled using vernaculars during social time and in the dormitories, a sign of the limited efficacy of the policy, as well as the contested nature of language use in Kenyan schools during the late colonial and early post-colonial period.[117]

Other challenges and obstacles revolved around the infrastructural limits of the school's early campus. Ambrose Hannon recalled the school's limited physical plant, writing years later that by mid-1962, much of the school's campus was still dominated by anthills, lacked a perimeter fence, and was without an electric grid.[118] In addition, one of the most persistent challenges was the lack of water storage tanks and running water on campus. Regularly

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[114] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[115] Wangari Maathai described a similar practice at St. Cecilia's Intermediate Primary School in Nyeri during the early 1950s, see Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 59-60. The use of the disk punishment is not uncommon in contemporary Kenyan primary schools, see Kari Iren Spernes and Rose Ruto-Korirr, "Medium of instruction in school: The indigenous language, the national language or the official language? A case study from multilingual deep rural Kenya," *Journal of African Languages and Linguistics* 39, no. 1 (2018): 51-52.
[116] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[117] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, , October 8, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019; Hezekiah Sawe, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020.
[118] Hannon, "The Early Years," 14-15.

referenced in school correspondence and government inspection reports, the lack of a dependable water source necessitated school members to regularly travel to the town's public pump or to borrow water from neighboring schools.[119] Students and staff were at times charged with travelling to Sing'ore lake to fill barrels for campus use.[120] In addition, prior to the purchase of an electrical generator in 1964, students were charged with preparing, distributing, and repairing kerosene lanterns and pressure lamps for use during study time each evening.[121] Adding to these daily challenges, the roof of the dormitory collapsed in 1963 and the foundation of the Brothers' residence cracked the next year.[122]

The obstacles that defined the school's first years highlight the challenging and contested nature of institution building and place making in late colonial Kenya. Disputes between students over who would lead Kenyan society, clashes between white missionary teachers and their African students, a student strike, shaky and unreliable leadership, and the infrastructural limitations of a new campus amounted to an inauspicious start, demonstrating how the social pressures, racial tensions, and institutional limitations born from decades of colonial rule manifested themselves in the school's early history. Ultimately, they show how institution building and place making during the period of transition to independence was a project in which individual aspirations and group goals did not always align seamlessly, but were rather the product of contestation and conflict, highlighting the role of St. Patrick's as a negotiated social place in late-colonial Kenya.

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[119] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 30-31; KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[120] Hannon, "The Early Years," 14-15.
[121] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 29.
[122] Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 19 & 70.

'Do your work with all your heart and mind': Notions of Discipline and Work at St. Patrick's

At the same time, the experience of building a new school community inspired reconciliation and togetherness, as well as constructive creativity. Despite social tensions, language barriers, and limited resources, students and staff from the period regularly recalled the early 1960s with an air of satisfaction, pride, and purpose in having prevailed over such challenges. Such efforts, they understood, helped to lay the foundation for the future direction of the school. For many, the key to these successes came through a shared notion that hard work and discipline were the ties that bound them together. Time and time again, in interviews with former students and staff, as well as in student writings from the period, those present during these early years described large and small efforts invested in instituting these values.

Key among those who came to represent the ideals of hard work and discipline in the school's founding years were the non-teaching staff. People like Pierre Didon, a Seychellois man who came to St. Patrick's as a *fundi* (Kiswahili for maintenance man) during the early 1960s, played a central role in building the school's physical infrastructure and culture of hard work. Cited by one student in the school magazine as "the grand old man of the compound," Didon worked at St. Patrick's until his death in 1981 and was buried on campus, a symbol of the central role he played in keeping the school maintained and running efficiently for more than two decades.[123] Others, such as school cook Peter Mwangi (See Figure 2.2), who arrived as a construction worker in 1960 and stayed until 2000, often described the centrality of hard work and discipline in both the school's institutional identity and his own worldview. "St. Patrick's motto was work all the time if necessary," Mwangi told me over a cup of tea during an interview at his home in Huruma on the outskirts of Eldoret. "But work is not your only advantage," he

[123] "In Memoriam," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, 1981, 32.

continued, "You will help other people who are there…And when you work hard, remember even those you do it with…You must work together."[124] For Mwangi, the centrality of hard work and the importance of a job well done were values which defined his purpose for coming to Iten in the first place, as well as his worldview well into his elder years. "I was not a local person…I came here for work, nothing else," he told me, leaning in to make sure I was paying attention. "I am serious with my work…I am committed to my work…My happiness is when I hear people are happy with my work…Do your work with all your heart and mind!"[125]

In addition to early staff members such as Didon and Mwangi, the arrival of a series of new teachers in 1963 and 1964 contributed to emerging ethics of discipline and work. At the same time, these new teachers were the first African teachers at the school, changing the demographic make-up of the school. In November of 1963, Nicholas Kiptalan was listed in school inspection reports as the only non-Irish member of the teaching staff.[126] Teaching biology and Kiswahili, as well as coaching field hockey, Kiptalan is the earliest recorded Kenyan teacher and coach at St. Patrick's.[127] By the middle of the following year, three of the eight teachers on staff were Kenyan Africans, with Erastus Kiaritha, Richard Kalaya, and Samuel Koske charged with teaching courses in science, math, history, and Kiswahili.[128] Koske came to St. Patrick's after completing two years of a science degree at Makerere University in Uganda, while Kiaritha had trained as a primary school teacher and Kalaya was a secondary school graduate.[129] Although Kiaritha, Kalaya, and Koske would all leave the school by the beginning of the following school year, their presence on the school's faculty signaled the beginning of the school's heavy reliance on African teachers.

[124] Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020.
[125] Ibid.
[126] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 1/1.
[127] Ibid.
[128] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[129] Ibid.

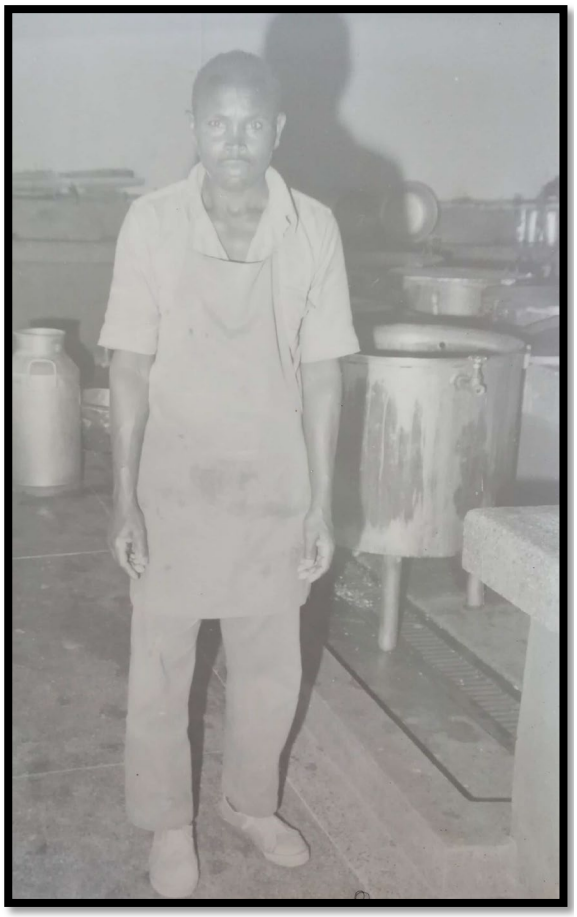

Figure 2.2 – Peter Mwangi worked on the school's construction in 1960 and then served as cook from 1961 to 2000, making him the longest serving employee in school history.

(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

At the same time, Irish Patrician Brothers made up the largest share of the school's growing faculty and staff during these early years. Brother Ambrose Hannon, having arrived as headmaster in mid-1962, taught geography, Latin, and history, and would become instrumental in organizing the school's first athletics teams and music programs.[130] Brother Edward McCarthy, a trained science teacher, arrived in mid-1963 to teach math and science, and was

[130] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 26.

noted for carrying science equipment across campus for experiments in the time before the lab was completed.[131] Kiltegan Father Tom Randles also came in 1963 to teach religion, English literature, and Latin.[132] Brother Venantius White, an English and math teacher, and Brother Pius Oleary, known for beginning the practice of planting trees on campus (a tradition still followed today), joined the next year.[133] By mid-1964, the school's teaching staff was described by government inspectors as being of "a high level of both qualification and experience," and were making measurable contributions to the school's infrastructure and academic offerings.[134]

In addition to the efforts of the school's growing faculty and staff, students exerted major energies in supporting the school's day-to-day activities and needs. According to Joseph Cheserem, in those days "students used to take a lot of responsibilities. Somebody in charge of the kitchen. Somebody in charge of the stores. [We students] were taking care of things very efficiently. Also, washing our clothes and whatnot…Students used to hold the key."[135] Others from the period corroborated this, describing how students cleaned dormitories, scrubbed bathrooms, organized food stocks, served meals, washed clothes, and cut grass, among other duties and responsibilities.[136]

Students also took part in major infrastructural projects around the compound, work which contributed to the transformation of the school grounds from a largely natural space to an organized school campus. Throughout the early years, school records demonstrate an obsession among the school's leaders with ordering the land for their needs. One such project involving

[131] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 27.
[132] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[133] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 31.
[134] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[135] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[136] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.

student workers was described in detail by Ambrose Hannon in the school's magazine years later. "During the last term of 1962…a perimeter railing was put in place…with cedar posts from Marakwet and bamboos from Mokwo. This railing was an important step as it kept out the cattle, sheep and goats which did so much damage to the newly planted shrubs." Hannon wrote. Indeed, not even the anthills were safe, obstacles so detrimental to the school's expansion that military slogans were deployed to describe their destruction. "War was also declared on the anthills," Ambrose continued, "and evening after evening their number diminished before the prodding *pangas* (Kiswahili for machetes) and swinging *jembes* (Kiswahili for long handled hoes)."[137]

Perhaps the most important student responsibilities were the administrative roles taken on by prefects. As in the rest of Kenya, the prefect system at St. Patrick's was a direct holdover from colonial era British educational practices.[138] At St. Patrick's, prefects were selected by school leaders to run each dormitory and were managed by a head prefect, or school captain, from the highest class.[139] The first head prefect at St. Patrick's was John Kariuki, who held the position for four years until his graduation in 1964, making him the longest serving captain in the school's history.[140] As in most schools, at St. Patrick's, the primary charge of prefects was to assist school administrators in daily school functions, especially as it pertained to promoting discipline. As disciplinarians, prefects were given the power to mete out consequences for rule infractions and violations. Punishments often consisted of physical labor, such as digging holes

[137] Hannon, "The Early Years," 15.
[138] For examples of the prefect system in Kenyan school's during the colonial era, see John Nikola Bwire Osogo, "The History of Kabaa-Mangu High School and the Constribution of the Holy Ghost Fathers Upon Education in Kenya," (M.A. Dissertation, University of East Africa, 1970), 85-86; Kana Dower, "Strong to Serve: The Alliance High School of Kikuyu, Kenya," (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2005), 220-256.
[139] Lebeo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[140] Moses Mwendwa, "Prefects in St. Patrick's Iten," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 4.

for the planting of flowers and trees, carrying materials for construction projects, or leveling ground for the building of sports facilities.[141]

Prefects were also in charge of important daily routines, like making sure the dining hall ran smoothly and coordinating with cafeteria staff for food preparation. Such jobs carried both authority and accountability. Joseph Cheserem, who served as dining hall prefect in the early 1960s, recalled how he was charged with recording what students were served during mealtimes and making sure students had fresh milk. "I was in charge of the dining hall," he recalled. "At times the milk would go bad, and I had to answer [for it]…We were sharing food, recording whatever the students [took], and then from there we go to class. The cooks [would] continue doing the kitchen work. This was [all] done through prefects."[142]

In addition to making sure students followed rules and carried out campus tasks, prefects were charged with making sure students followed a strict, regimented, and grueling daily schedule of coursework and activities. Students would rise at 6:30 a.m., wash with cold water, and dress themselves.[143] Twenty minutes later, a bell would signal the beginning of morning parade, during which students would line up in neat rows to be inspected and briefed on the activities of the day.[144] This was followed by morning prayers and Mass and then a 20 minute period of manual labor, during which time students would cut grass, clear brush, plant trees and flowers, maintain hedges, build and repair fences, level more of the dreaded anthills, and carry

[141] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019; Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[142] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[143] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[144] Ibid.

out basic maintenance of the school grounds.[145] A breakfast of *uji* (a millet-based porridge mixed with sugar) in the dining hall would follow at 8:10 a.m.[146]

The school day, consisting of eight classes of 40 minutes each, would begin at 8:30 a.m, and included courses in English literature, mathematics, science (after the 1962 strike, students could choose between Physics, Chemistry, or Biology), history, geography, and Christian Religious Education (CRE), in addition to language instruction in English, Kiswahili, and Latin, though Latin was phased out after 1964.[147] Students would receive two short morning recesses and a one-hour lunch break, during which cooking staff and prefects usually prepared and served *githeri* (a mixture of beans and maize), a common fare in Kenyan schools.[148] Lunch would be followed by a 15-minute session for "light reading," then afternoon classes until 3:35 p.m.[149]

After classes, students would break for *chai* (tea with milk and sugar) and then meet for a compulsory games (sports) period, during which they could choose between volleyball, football (soccer), field hockey, or athletics.[150] Following afternoon sports and a bit of time for washing up, students would attend an hour-and-a-half long study period, then dinner of *ugali* (a stiff maize-meal porridge) and *mboga* (greens) or *maharagwe* (beans), supplemented at times with

[145] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; Ambrose Hannon, "The Early Years by Bro. Ambrose J. Hannon," August 26, 2021 (unpublished manuscript transcribed by Bro. Colm O'Connell; Many thanks to Patrick Ongus for providing access to this document).
[146] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[147] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[148] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[149] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[150] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 1/1.

nyama (meat, usually beef or goat) or *maziwa* (fresh milk).[151] The day's last meal was followed by a fifteen minute prayer session dedicated to Rosary recitation and a two hour late-night study session, often carried out in "dim lantern light" with students having to contend with "the strong smell of kerosene and fumes," before lights out at 10:00 p.m.[152]

Such efforts of scholarship, physical labor, and study did not go unnoticed. St. Patrick's students developed a reputation for discipline and hard work. In 1963, during a visit by Brother Livinus Bellow, the assistant to the Superior General of the Patrician Brothers, Bellow noted the high "level of discipline" and "willingness to learn" exhibited by the St. Patrick's student body.[153] Highlighting the "properly organized and supervised" study periods, school inspection reports from 1964 noted that students at St. Patrick's spent more than twice the amount of time in study periods than most schools of the period.[154] Inspectors also commented on the "neat and attractive appearance" of the school's compound, emphasizing the "consistent hard work" of both faculty and students in building the school's infrastructure and culture of discipline.[155]

Former students from the period also regularly commented on ethics of discipline and work at the school, adding that these ideals stemmed from the fact that many arrived on campus as responsible adults. "The discipline was good," recalled Joseph Cheserem. "At that time, unlike these days, most of the responsibilities were taken by students…So, people were quite responsible…You know, when I got to St. Patrick's, we were big boys. We were adults…We were disciplined."[156] Andrew Chemweno, recalling his upbringing in his home village of

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[151] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[152] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 29.
[153] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 26.
[154] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.

Cheptonge, corroborated how students arrived on campus with an already developed sense of self-control and responsibility taught to them by community elders. "We respected our elders just the way we respected our teachers," Chemweno said. "You know, in our background, we would be disciplined by anybody, not just our parents," he continued. "And we learned that self-discipline is much more important, because you don't do something because someone is looking at you, you do it because you know it's the right thing to do."[157]

Such a grueling schedule of study and work, along with deeply embedded notions of discipline and responsibility among the student body, resulted in tangible achievements. In 1964, the first year St. Patrick's students sat for the Cambridge School Certificate (CSC), the school's examinees scored 88% passes.[158] As Joseph Chepkiyeng Arap Kew, who arrived in 1964, later noted in the school's magazine, the stellar performance of the first graduating class put St. Patrick's on the path "to climb the ladder of fame in the district."[159]

Campus infrastructure improved as well. By mid-1964, the St. Patrick's compound included a block with five classrooms and two administrative offices, two science labs, six dormitories, a kitchen and dining hall, three senior staff houses, a sanitation block, a Brothers' residence, and a generator house that was to be completed by the end of the year.[160] The library included approximately 500 books, as well as access to a tape recorder, a film strip, a slide projector, and a record player, all powered by batteries.[161] In addition, the school's 26-acre campus included two soccer pitches, two basketball courts, and two volleyball courts.[162] All of this served 185 students, with double streams in both Forms I and II.[163] Although there were still

[157] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[158] Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," 5.
[159] Ibid.
[160] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.

some limitations, such as the use of pit latrines and a lack of consistent water, school inspectors from the period described the campus as "in all respects satisfactory, being modern, spacious, well-designed, and well-maintained…and the compound presents a neat and attractive appearance…Excellent progress has been made which speaks well for the enthusiasm of the staff and the willing cooperation of the pupils."[164]

Though grueling and challenging, students from the period often remembered their work with a sense of pride and purpose. Highlighting the sense of accomplishment and appreciation that could be gained from such efforts, Joseph Cheserem laughingly recounted how his status as the school's best Latin student allowed him to become "so popular [that] I was named Caesar…Most of my classmates still refer to me as Caesar. That was my nickname."[165] Similarly, Andrew Chemweno described the deeply formative nature of his experiences in shaping his belief in the value of discipline, hard work, and togetherness. "[T]he most important thing I learned there was discipline," he recalled. "We were very disciplined," he continued, "and we carried on with that until we were grown up."[166]

Sentiments such as these demonstrate the deeply resonant meanings behind the value of hard work and discipline in the school's early years. Despite the challenges and tensions of building a new school in a context beset with the contradictions of decolonization, the efforts of the school's earliest students, faculty, and staff helped to create a social place in which they cultivated a deep sense of shared values that lasted well into their elder years. In addition, such ideals were not only central to the worldviews and self-images of school members, but they came to underpin the school's institutional identity and character in key ways.

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[164] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 31; KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[165] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[166] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.

'When I wore the long trouser…I was proud of it': Christianity, Joy, and Reaching Beyond Campus

While the community members developed a distinct ethic of discipline and hard work during the founding years, students also developed important social links with the local Iten community, highlighting how their school experience was not limited by the walls of classroom or campus. Central to these links were campus religious activities and off campus social practices, many of which took place on the weekends. Although expected to take part in a limited schedule of weekend academic activities, such as study halls and compulsory letter-writing periods, Saturdays and Sundays were primarily reserved for social excursions to visit family and friends, as well as religious practices, such as Catholic Mass.[167] Both sets of practices linked the school with the local residents in Iten and surrounding communities, while imbuing students with a sense of pride in representing St. Patrick's.

As the only Catholic school for boys in the region, Mass was one of the central ways that St. Patrick's developed links with local community members. From its inception the school was a hub of Catholic activity and connectivity, with Catholic-school networks playing key roles in early recruitment efforts. Once at school, both students and school leaders stressed the importance of Catholic religious instruction in both the classroom and daily activities. In addition to attending daily classes in Christian Religious Education (CRE), between 1961 and 1963, students took part in daily liturgy and morning prayers, which were held in the school's dining hall until the construction of the Sacred Heart Church across the street from St. Patrick's in 1964.[168] While daily liturgies were curtailed in late-1963 in favor of a more relaxed schedule of Sunday Mass, the school often hosted local community members for these services.[169]

[167] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[168] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream,* 26.
[169] Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020.

For students of the period, demonstrating mastery of Catholic religious knowledge, whether in CRE or during liturgical services, was a serious undertaking and was an experience that could produce feelings of achievement and importance. For example, Andrew Chemweno, having arrived as a practicing Catholic and trained in Latin during his first two years at St. Patrick's, was proud of the instructive role he played in helping prepare celebrants for liturgy services. "We had CRE. We would go to Mass every day. It was something that was stressed by the Fathers and Brothers," he recalled. "At the Brothers house, one of the priests used to call me…to teach him how to sing the hymns in Latin for mass. He was so happy that he gave me the first long trouser…One of the Sundays, when I wore the long trouser, all the students were surprised because there was not a single [other] student with long trousers. So, I was proud of it."

Other students took their religious formation so seriously that they considered taking on Catholic religious vocations. Although the Brothers made a conscious decision in the early years not to actively recruit students to the Patrician order, some students expressed interest in joining Catholic religious groups. For example, George Maikweki, who later became the school's head prefect, discussed the possibility of joining the Patrician Brothers with Ambrose Hannon as early as 1963.[170] Another student, who left St. Patrick's in 1964 because of a lack of school fees, later applied to join the Xaverian Brothers.[171]

While the school's active Catholic religious life was central to student experiences on campus, campus liturgy services also fostered connections with local community members. Peter Mwangi recalled payer services and liturgies being held in the school's dining hall and dormitories for both students and local residents during the early 1960s.[172] Other staff members from the period recalled the "active participation in the celebration of the Eucharist" displayed

[170] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 55.
[171] Ibid, 57.
[172] Peter Mwangi, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 28, 2020.

by local *watu* (Kiswahili for people).[173] In addition, photos from the period show groups of local residents gathered with school community members outside of the dining hall for Catholic religious services, while residents in places like Sing'ore and Sergoit recalled attending services in Iten in the early-1960s.[174]

Such community relationships could blossom into young attendees later choosing to join the school as students. Ernest Kaitany, who grew up in nearby Sergoit and entered St. Patrick's as a student in 1966, recalled developing a connection to the school while attending liturgy services and serving as an altar boy.[175] "Yes, I was very familiar [with St. Patrick's]," he told me during an interview in Kapteren. "Because I was baptized in 1962 in Iten, and by then I used to serve Mass when I was in primary. Every Sunday I became an altar boy. I was very familiar with the students…We were all praying at the dining hall with St. Patrick's students…I knew most of them."[176]

In addition to taking part in an active and hospitable religious life on campus, weekends were also a time when students could leave the school's grounds for social visits to local family and friends. Students from the period recalled paying visits to nearby communities like Sergoit, Kessup, and Bugar, where they enjoyed home cooked meals and sometimes partook in a bit of locally brewed beer.[177] "We had what you call excursions," Joseph Cheserem recalled, "We used to walk to the escarpment and extend down to the valley."[178] According to Andrew Chemweno, he and his classmates "would be received by the villagers as very special students" during these

[173] Ambrose Hannon, "The Early Years by Bro. Ambrose J. Hannon."
[174] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[175] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[178] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.

trips.[179] "They would prepare a very good lunch for us and they would also prepare some *pombe* (beer) in a pot – local homebrews…[from] maize and millet," he described. "They would bring a small pot, and I remember we were very disciplined. We would not get drunk. We would only take one or two cups and that was enough…just to feel good."[180]

Being out and about in the local community, dressed in their school uniforms of short khaki trousers, white button-down shirts, blue blazers, and ties, and welcomed by local families and friends, such experiences imbued students with deep feelings of pride that instilled in them a strong sense of their social standing. "People were proud of the uniforms. It was unique dress. It was rare dress. You stood out in the community," remembered Joseph Cheserem happily.[181] "We looked very smart," recalled Andrew Chemweno with an air of satisfaction.[182] "We were highly respected," he continued, "because we were the first secondary school in the area and we would wear our uniforms."[183] For Yusuf Kaitany, it was during these early years that local residents developed "a very high esteem" for the school and its students.[184]

Sentiments such as these provide insight into the role played by Catholic religious practices and social activities in linking St. Patrick's with residents in Iten and other surrounding communities, an important part of how the school reached beyond its focus on education to become a social institution that extended beyond the schoolgrounds. Such experiences were deeply important to students from the period, fostering intensely emotional connections with each other and valuable memories of their role in the local community. In conjunction with the school's budding identity as a place of hard work and discipline, students found joy, meaning,

[179] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[182] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019.

and friendship in the religious and social practices of these early years, while also coming to see themselves as important members of a growing local institution.

Conclusion

During the early 1960s, as Kenya moved from colony to independent nation, the St. Patrick's founding generation built their school. Much like their Kenyan contemporaries, they grappled with the contradictions embedded within a process that led to the end of colonialism while at the same time leaving in place many of the systems, practices, ideologies, and institutions that underpinned colonial hegemony. From such contradictions were born conflict and moments of intense contestation. As these tensions manifested themselves on campus, the early students, administrators, faculty, and staff of St. Patrick's sought to fashion a common sense of meaning and purpose rooted in a shared commitment to values such as hard work and discipline. Even in moments of rule breaking, such as during the student protests, discipline was central to student understandings of their schooling experience. At times, their efforts bore fruit, creating memorable and meaningful changes, relationships, experiences, and achievements that school members carried with them for the rest of their lives. At other times, these tensions led to failures, with some students being banished from campus and some administrators being recalled and replaced. However, by taking part in, contesting, and attempting to reconcile these contradictions, the founding generation of St. Patrick's took part in a transformative process of place making, both for themselves and their school at a pivotal moment in Kenyan history.

CHAPTER 3:

'TO SUPPORT THE SPIRIT OF HARAMBEE': CONSTRUCTING UNITY, DEVELOPMENT, NATION, AND PLACE AT ST. PATRICK'S HIGH SCHOOL, ITEN

In late-1967, students and faculty at St. Patrick's published their third issue of *The Paten*. As the school's only student magazine, *The Paten* (the name of which would later be changed to *The Patrician*) (See Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2), was designed, according to one of its student editors, to "give a full picture" of how the school had fared throughout each academic year.[1] Student submissions, which were screened and sorted by a student-led editorial board and faculty moderator, consisted of a range of entries, including short stories, parables, folktales, jokes, academic essays, and reports on school activities.[2] Authors explored a broad range of topics, such as questions of morality and identity, the challenges of youth, the growth of the school's student organizations, academic and social life on campus, and snippets of the school's short history. As the only publicly facing repository of student intellectual productivity from the period, during the 1960s and 1970s *The Paten* and *The Patrician* acted as important venues for St. Patrick's students to express themselves and entertain each other. Curated by both student leaders and the magazine's faculty moderators, such sources provide insight into the ways in which important ideas and popular rhetoric were constructed and disseminated by powerful decision makers within the school's hierarchy.

Among an eclectic collection of submissions, the 1967 edition included an article by Form IV student Harris Mungai Kamau. In it, Kamau constructed a list of the achievements and

[1] George Macharia, "Editorial," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 2.
[2] During the 1960s and 1970s, faculty moderators for *The Paten* and *The Patrician* included both lay and religious faculty, such as Bob Bloodsworth, Aidan Williams, Brother Francisco Murphy, and Brother, Paul Brennan.

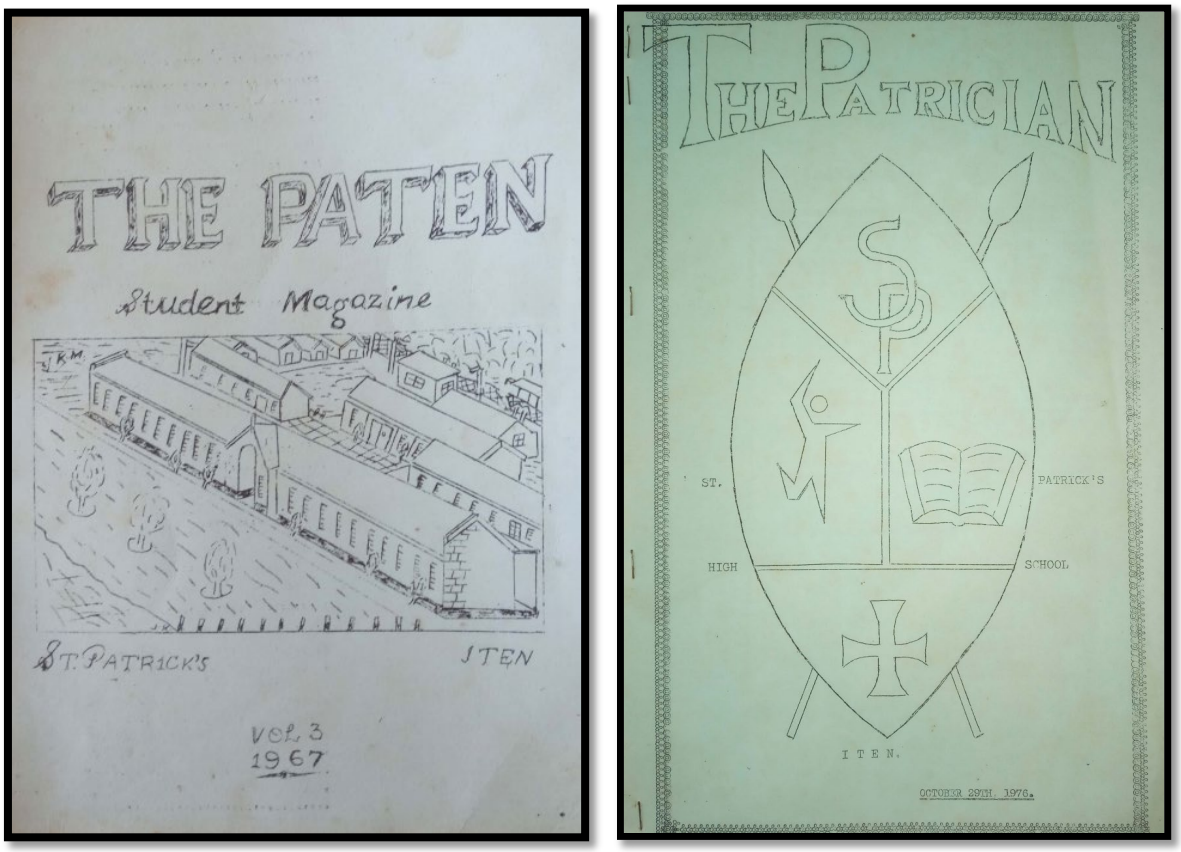

Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 – Covers of the 1967 edition of *The Paten* and the 1976 edition of *The Patrician,* the St. Patrick's student magazines during the 1960s and 1970s.

(Copies of the magazines provided through the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

developments that St. Patrick's and its student body had accomplished during the previous six years. An orchestra "with almost 120 boys" which had been awarded "many certificates."[3] A well-known dance band that "not only plays at schools, but on occasion has played at public dances."[4] A campus that boasted the "biggest Catholic Secondary School for boys in the whole Rift Valley."[5] Kamau ticked them off, a list of thirteen points that symbolized the school's development and achievements, through which Kamau sought to inspire his fellow students.

[3] Harris Mungai Kamau, "Did you know?," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 36.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.

While Kamua clearly intended the article to highlight the shining moments in the school's recent past, the author closed with a call to the future, writing of his hope that the "future generations" would enjoy the school's "fruitful academic and social education" in support of what he termed "the Spirit of Harambee."[6]

While the case of a student celebrating their school's accomplishments in a student publication may not seem noteworthy, what stands out in this case is Kamau's effort to link such achievements with "the Spirit of Harambee." A Kiswahili word meaning "let's pull together," Harambee was popularized by Kenya's political and social elite during the transition to independence as a slogan to promote development and nation-building. Intended by Kenya's leaders to represent a sharp break from the colonial past, by the time Kamau sat down to write his article in 1967, Harambee had become a popular symbol of unity meant to inspire independent Kenyans to come together and work hard to develop their newly independent nation.[7] As a result, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, calls for Harambee were repeatedly linked in Kenya to values of unity, development, and nation.[8] By connecting the school's development and achievements to the very spirt of Kenyan nation-building, Kamau's article provides a striking example of the ways in which students at St. Patrick's sought to construct and link ideas of nation, development, and unity to their lives on campus.

Although small and seemingly innocuous, instances such as this, in which members of the St. Patrick's school community linked their activities, experiences, and achievements with notions of Harambee and its associated values of unity and development, were common during

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[6] Kamau, "Did you know?," 36.
[7] Jomo Kenyatta, *Harambee!: The Prime Minister of Kenya's Speeches, 1963-1964* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1964), 21; Paul Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age: The Politics of Manhood in Kenya* (Ohio University Press, 2017), 227.
[8] John Mbithi and Rasmus Rasmusson, *Self-Reliance in Kenya: The Case of Harambee* (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1977); Martin Hill, *The Harambee Movement in Kenya: Self-Help, Development and Education Among the Kamba of Kitui District* (London: Athlone Press, 1991).

this period. Whether attending classes, building campus infrastructure, creating student organizations, or participating in political work on campus, following Kenyan independence, St. Patrick's community members actively imbued many of the school's practices with a set of ideals and values linked to explicit and implicit calls for Harambee development. As a result, between the mid-1960s and 1970s, St. Patrick's became a place where members of the school's community constructed their own interpretations of nation, development, and unity and imagined themselves as contributing to the growth of both their school and the newly emergent nation-state of Kenya.

While the school's written record, especially student writings from *The Paten* and *The Patrician*, provides clear evidence of the ubiquity of Harambee ideas and rhetoric at St. Patrick's during this period, the memories and experiences articulated in the school's magazine tell only part of the story. As in all schools, life at St. Patrick's consisted of more than student achievements, institutional development, and feelings of national pride and unity. Conflict, discord, and discontent were common, and although they are rarely documented in the school's official publications, they come to light largely through the oral histories of former students, teachers, and staff who lived through the period. While images of St. Patrick's as a unified institution dedicated to the development of its students, its community, and its nation are common in *The Paten* and *The Patrician*, the school's oral histories provide insight into the contested and, at times, contradictory nature of how such ideas were experienced and interpreted by members of the St. Patrick's community. Putting these two sets of sources into conversation demonstrates the limited, contested, and conflicted nature of development and nation-building at St. Patrick's during the school's founding decade.[9]

[9] For those who have sought to counter state-centric theories, see Monica Van Beusekom, *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office du Niger, 1920–1960* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann; Oxford:

In addition, these sources collectively provide rousing examples of the rich social and academic life constructed on campus during the mid-1960s and 1970s, as well as the joy and purpose which many of the school's community members gained from their experiences, an aspect of life at the school that one headmaster from the period described as "the verve and life that surges through St. Patrick's."[10] Whether working together through Harambee effort or arguing with each other over a range of issues, during this period the St. Patrick's community sought to transition from building to developing their school during a key moment in post-colonial Kenyan history. While highlighting these fissures contributes to scholarly work that has sought to deconstruct singularly celebratory notions of Kenyan nation-building, recognizing the ways everyday students and teachers interpreted and took ownership of notions of nation, development, and unity in the early years of Kenyan independence shifts the focus of post-colonial development away from elite "nation-makers" and centers the ideas, actions, and experiences of common people.[11] While the efforts of the Kenyan state were indeed central to defining the rhetoric of development, unity, and nation in the years after independence, the history of St. Patrick's during this period offers an important example of the ways everyday

James Currey; Cape Town: David Philip, 2002); Cati Coe, *Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools: Youth, Nationalism, and the Transformation of Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Kristen E. Cheney, *Pillars of the Nation: Child Citizens and Ugandan National Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Laura Fair, *Reel Pleasures: Cinema, Audiences, and Entrepreneurs in Twentieth-Century Urban Tanzania* (Ohio University Press, Athens: 2018), 221-247.

[10] Brother Marcellus Broderick, "A Word From The Headmaster," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 5.

[11] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age,* 226-246; Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope & Despair, 1963-2011* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2011), 25-65; "Nation-makers" is a reference to a television documentary series celebrating Kenya's founding social and political elite. See Hilary Ng'weno and Lorna Dias, *Makers of a nation: The men and women in Kenya's history,* NTV (Television station: Nairobi, Kenya), Nation Media Group Limited and Kenya History & Biographies Co. Ltd. (2010). For those who have explored the role of the state, see Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Frederick Cooper, *African since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Zed Books, 2008).

people interpreted, applied, and argued over such practices and processes in the school's, and the country's, founding decades.[12]

'The key to advancement in all fields': Harambee, Unity, and Development in Kenyan Schools

Harambee became a national political slogan on June 1, 1963, the day Kenya attained internal self-governance.[13] On that day, after more than a decade of intense anti-colonial struggle, newly elected Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta gave one of Kenya's most well-known political speeches, calling Kenyans to come together and remember that political autonomy was just one step on the road to true liberation. "[A]s we celebrate, let us remember that constitutional advance is not the greatest end in itself," Kenyatta said. "We must work harder to fight our enemies - ignorance, sickness, and poverty. I therefore give you the call: Harambee! Let us all work hard together for our country, Kenya."[14] Kenyatta returned to the Harambee theme six months later, expanding the theme of unity to include development. Speaking to over 200,000 Kenyan *wananchi* (Kiswahili for citizens) on Uhuru Day, he warned against complacency, arguing that to address the ills of "ignorance, sickness, and poverty," Kenyans had to "work together to develop [the] country…in the spirit that I am going to ask you to echo…HARAMBEE!"[15]

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[12] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983); Edward Miguel, "Tribe of Nation? Nation Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania" *World Politics* 56, no. 3 (2005): 327-362; M. Victoria Gorham, "Displaying the Nation: Museums and Nation-Building in Tanzania & Kenya," *African Studies Review* 63, no. 3 (2020): 487-517. For an examples of this trend in Kenyan historiography, see Kara Moskowitz, *Seeing Like A Citizen: Decolonization, Development, and the Making of Kenya, 1945-1980* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2019); Muey C. Saeteurn, *Cultivating Their Own: Agriculture in Western Kenya during the "Development" Era* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 56-75; Kenda Mutongi, *Matatu: A History of Popular Transportation in Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 48-68.
[13] "Joy was in the air on Kenya's first Madaraka Day," *The Standard*, June 1, 2016, 3.
[14] Kenyatta, *Harambee!,* 7.
[15] Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), p 19; Kenyatta, *Harambee!,* 20.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the term Harambee, and its associated values of unity and development, became the mantra by which national leaders sought to define Kenya's national character. Many Kenyans responded, taking up the call by seeking to make the promises of independence tangible for themselves and their communities. These sentiments took many forms, from grass-roots movements of entrepreneurship and the implementation of development schemes known as "Harambee projects," to the promotion of elite athletic achievement and the organization of transnational scholarship programs for talented young Kenyans.[16] As Kenyan Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai, whose early environmental activism would include the founding of the Save the Land Harambee in the late-1970s, noted in her memoir years later, she and her fellow citizens "felt a deep sense of pride at being a Kenyan" during this time and were ready to join in the building of their new nation.[17]

At the same time, embedded within the ideology of Harambee were splits and tensions that demonstrate not only the limits of nation-building rhetoric in many post-colonial African contexts, but the contradictions implicit in attempts to unify diverse groups of people into one national identity. From the outset of independence, Kenya was enmeshed in several social, political, and economic conflicts that reflected deep disagreements about the direction of the new nation. One of these conflicts, known as the *shifta* war, was a "low intensity" fight between the new Kenyan state and a coalition of Somali, Boran, Gabra, and Rendille separatists in the

[16] For entrepreneurship, see Mutongi, *Matatu,* 27-70. For development, see Moskowitz, *Seeing Like A Citizen* and Saeteurn, *Cultivating Their Own*. For sport, see John Bale and Joe Sang, *Kenyan Running: Movement Culture, Geography, and Global Change* (London: Frank Cass, 1996); Roy Gachuhi, *Kickoff: The Game, the Glory, and the Greats of Kenyan Football* (Nairobi: Kenya Yearbook Editorial Board, 2018) and Michelle Sikes, "Sprinting Past the End of Empire: Seraphino Antao and the Promise of Sports in Kenya, 1960-1964" in *Sports in Africa: Past and Present*, eds. Todd Cleveland, Tarminder Kaur, Gerard Akindes (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2020), 219-230. For transnational scholarship programs, see Tom Schachtman, *Airlift to America: How Barack Obama, Sr., John F. Kennedy, Tom Mboya, & 800 East African Students Changed Their World and Ours* (St Martin's: New York, 2009) and Daniel Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope & Despair, 1963-2011* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2011), 41.
[17] Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), pp 99-100.

northern region that lasted until 1967 and resulted in the forced resettlement of local Somali communities, government violence against civilians, and the deaths of at least 2,000 rebels.[18] In the capital city of Nairobi, protests by unemployed workers in the streets included the chanting of slogans such as "*uhuru na taabu*" (Kiswahili for freedom and suffering), while soldiers at the Lanet barracks mutinied because of low pay.[19] Discontent over land resettlement schemes in places like Nyandarua and Uasin Gishu was widespread, with St. Patrick's supported William Murgor threatening to blow the "war whistle" against the new government if Kalenjin complaints over land and political representation were not recognized.[20] High-profile assassinations of nationalist leaders such as Pio Gama Pinto, Tom Mboya, and James Kariuki further demonstrated the profound tensions that lay beneath Harambee nation-building during the 1960s and 1970s, reminders that building national unity was a deeply contested and, at times, violent and exclusionary process.[21]

Despite these limitations, many Kenyans of the period saw the notion of Harambee as an articulation of developmentalist values linked with historically resonant traditions of communal unity, disciplined hard work, and cooperative self-help through which everyday people could improve their lives.[22] As promoters of Harambee often pointed out, the word itself is thought to have originated along the East African coast, where it was carried inland by traders and porters

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[18] Hannah Whittaker, "The Socioeconomic Dynamics of the Shifta Conflict in Kenya, ca. 1963-8," *The Journal of African History* 53, no. 3 (2012), 391-408; Hannah Whittaker, "Forced Villagization during the Shifta Conflict in Kenya, ca 1963-1968," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 45, no. 3 (2012): 343-364.
[19] Timothy Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Makin of Modern East Africa* (Westport and London: Prager, 2003), 117-125; Timothy Parsons, "The Lanet Incident, 2023 January 1964: Military Unrest and National Amnesia in Kenya," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 40, no. 1 (2007): 51-70.
[20] For a discussion of land disputes, see Moskovitz, *Seeing Like A Citizen*, 36-115; For Murgor, see "'Spears and arrows' warning," *Daily Nation*, January 15, 1962, 1.
[21]Branch, *Kenya*, 45 & 79, 89-120.
[22] J. Owino-Ombudo, *Harambee: Its Origin and Use, 2nd Ed* (Nairobi: Academic Publishers, 1972); Mbithi and Rasmusson, *Self-Reliance in Kenya*; Njuguna Ng'ethe, "Politics, Ideology and the Underprivileged: The Origins and Nature of the Harambee Phenomenon in Kenya," *Journal of Eastern African Research and Development*, 13, The Underprivileged in Society: Studies on Kenya (1983), 150-170; Hill, *The Harambee Movement in Kenya*.

from Mombasa, Malindi, and Lamu and used to signify coordinated efforts to accomplish difficult tasks.[23] Terms with meanings similar to the collective aid connotations of Harambee can be found in a number of Kenyan languages, such as *Konyir Kende* (Luo), *Obwasio* (Luhya), *Ngwatio* (Kikuyu), *Ematonyok* (Masai), and *Ngwatano* (Kamba).[24] In addition to these linguistic commonalities, Harambee supporters often pointed to the existence of indigenous traditions of reciprocal and cooperative work, such as Marakwet *sikom* practices or self-help traditions among the Kamba, that called upon community members to voluntarily take part in projects to aid their neighbors.[25] For Harambee enthusiasts, the ubiquity of linguistic traditions denoting conceptualizations of communal unity and cooperative self-help were evidence that the central philosophical ideas underpinning Harambee had broad roots in indigenous African practices.

At the same time, the actual shape of Harambee development projects in post-colonial Kenya mirrored schemes implemented by the British during the last decades of colonial rule. In the years following World War Two, the British instituted a series of policies, emphasizing large-scale development projects like the construction of cattle dips, terracing, latrine digging, road construction, and land reform, much of which was accomplished through the use of forced African labor.[26] Defining development as big, socially-oriented projects designed to bring about social and economic transformation would carry over into independence, as many post-colonial Harambee projects took similar forms.[27] Such similarities between colonial development and the

[23] Owino-Ombudo, *Harambee,* 31; Mbithi and Rasmusson, *Self-Reliance in Kenya,* 13; Ng'ethe, "Politics, Ideology and the Underprivileged," 151; Hill, *The Harambee Movement in Kenya,* 39.
[24] Mbithi and Rasmussen, *Self-Reliance in Kenya*, 13; Hill, *The Harambee Movement in Kenya*, 39.
[25] B.E. Kipkorir, *The Marakwet of Kenya: A Preliminary Study* (East African Publishers, 1973), 21; Hill, *The Harambee Movement in Kenya*, 133-162.
[26] Hill, *The Harambee Movement in Kenya*, 13-38; Ng'ethe, "Politics, Ideology, and the Underprivileged," 154-161.
[27] Ng'ethe, "Politics, Ideology and the Underprivileged," 162; Mbithi and Rasmussen, *Self-Reliance in Kenya*, 13-28; Moskowitz, *Seeing Like A Citizen*, 169-196.

practice of post-colonial Harambee point to deep continuities between the colonial and post-colonial periods in Kenya.

The unity component of post-colonial Harambee, perhaps the terms most consistent underlying concept, also has its roots in the late colonial period, when it emerged as an anti-colonial call for African unity. According to Joseph Owino Ombudo and Oginga Odinga, the Harambee term was first utilized as a call to African political unity not by elite leaders such as Jomo Kenyatta, but by a local Nyanza-based organizer named Omolo Ongiro during the 1950s.[28] Often referred to by his nickname "Omolo Harambee," Ongiro was known for beginning anti-colonial rallies with a call to Harambee and leading protestors in songs expressing African objections to colonial land policies and the imprisonment of African political leaders.[29] As Njuguna Ng'ethe reminds us, the genesis of the Harambee slogan in the actions of local organizers and activists such as Omolo Ongiro means that, in addition to having roots in both indigenous and colonial practices, Harambee rhetoric was "born in the context of oppositional politics mounted by the oppressed" in late-colonial Kenya, marking the term as a grass-roots expression of African unity.[30]

In the post-colonial period, therefore, Harambee drew from and combined these three distinct traditions: indigenous African concepts of communal self-help, colonial definitions of development as large-scale social projects, and calls for African unity. In the years following independence, post-colonial political leaders combined and expanded upon these three historical threads, turning localized concepts of self-help into a nationally resonant development practice, and shifting the call to Harambee from one of resistance to state-defined loyalty. In this way, the

[28] Owino-Ombudo, *Harambee,* 7; Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru: The Autobiography of Oginga Odinga* (University Press of Kansas, 1967), 238.
[29] Owino-Ombudo, *Harambee,* 35-39.
[30] Ng'ethe, "Politics, Ideology, and the Underprivileged," 161.

history of Harambee rhetoric and practice shows how African leaders turned some of the "assertions of colonizing powers" into mobilizing ideologies, while at the same time drawing from local, national, and transnational sources in the practice of post-colonial development.[31]

Aside from political rhetoric, the most common way that many Kenyans directly experienced Harambee in the years following independence was through the expansion of a series of economic development schemes known as Harambee projects. These projects, largely financed through fund-raising drives known as "harambees," often involved the collection of funds from community members, prominent individuals, and important political leaders. During the 1960s and 1970s, Kenyans contributed tens of millions of shillings to such projects.[32] As a result, many conceptualized the "spirit of Harambee" as a bottom-up effort of "self-help" that represented the determination of everyday Kenyans to contribute to nation-building through their own efforts. As one resident from the western town of Saboti told researchers in the early 1970s, the power of the "spirit of Harambee" was so great that "even lazy people become hardworking when doing Harambee work."[33]

Nowhere was this on display more than in Kenya's rapid expansion of school construction from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. While politicians from across the spectrum argued, as opposition leader Oginga Odinga expressed in 1965, that education was the "*jembe* (hoe or shovel), the arrow, the shield, and in fact the key to advancement in all fields," the national government demonstrated a limited ability to financially support school expansion.[34] As a result, the burden of educational development fell to local communities. Kenyan citizens responded through the creation of what came to be known as "Harambee schools," organized and

[31] Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The past of the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15.
[32] Ng'ethe, "Politics, Ideology, and the Underprivileged," 162.
[33] Mbithi and Rasmussen, *Self-Reliance in Kenya*, 130.
[34] "Education the key to all advancement," *Daily Nation*, July 20, 1965, 8.

funded by parents, churches, teachers, civil societies, and local communities.[35] Between 1963 and 1968, while the number of government-aided secondary schools available to Africans increased roughly three-fold, from 82 to 232, the numbers of Harambee secondary schools during the same period increased by thirty-fold, from 13 to 369.[36] As a result, the number of enrolled secondary students increased exponentially during the country's first decade after independence, from approximately 10,500 in 1963 to over 160,000 by 1972.[37]

While Harambee schools offered key benefits for Kenyan students, demonstrating the existence of an active and motivated civil society, they were not a panacea. Harambee schools had higher tuition and school fees compared to government-funded institutions, and the quality of education, as measured by qualified teachers, class sizes, resources, and test scores, was generally worse in Harambee schools.[38] In addition, although enrollment skyrocketed, gender disparities actually increased during the 1960s, with the proportion of girls enrolled in secondary schools dropping from 35% to 28% between 1960 and 1969.[39] Likewise, while the expansion of Harambee schools improved the potential for upward mobility, it also promoted faith in the notion of competitive achievement as central to Kenyan education, an ideal which privileged students from elite backgrounds.[40] All of these serve as stark reminders that in the immediate post-independence years, schools were deeply divided along lines of region, class, and gender.

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[35] York W. Bradshaw, "State Limitations, Self-Help Secondary Schooling, and Development in Kenya," *Social* Forces 72, no. 2 (1993): 347-378; Moskowitz, *Seeing Like A Citizen*, 174.
[36] John Anderson, *The Struggle for the School: The interaction of Missionary, Colonial Government, and Nationalist enterprise in the development of formal education in Kenya* (Nairobi: Longman, 1970), 150.
[37] Anderson, *The Struggle for the School,* 150; J.E. Otiende, S.P. Wamahiu, A.M. Karugu, *Education and Development in Kenya: A Historical Perspective* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 76; Sorobea Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya (1895-1991)* (Nairobi: Evans Brothers, 1992), 125-131; Hornsby, *Kenya,* 139.
[38] Bradshaw, "State Limitations, Self-Help Secondary Schooling, and Development in Kenya," 353-355; Hornsby, *Kenya*, 140-141; Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya*, 128-132; Mwiria, "Kenya's Harambee Secondary School Movement," 363-366
[39] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 125.
[40] Mwiria, "Kenya's Harambee Secondary School Movement," 363-366

These challenges notwithstanding, the rapid rise in student enrollment in early post-colonial Kenya highlights how the values associated with Harambee development were intimately linked to a faith in the power of schools as agents of social change. Through the efforts of local communities and individuals, schools became tangible symbols of development and progress for many Kenyans. In addition to providing one of the clearest examples of how the hopes of independence manifested themselves in the actions of everyday Kenyans, the strong links drawn between notions of Harambee and schools in the early independence era demonstrate how practices of development were shaped by individual and community interpretations of the concepts underlying Harambee rhetoric.

Although founded before independence and the onset of the national Harambee movement, the ideals associated with the spirit of Harambee – unity, development, and nation – resonated tremendously at a school like St. Patrick's. As a result, from the mid-1960s through the 1970s, students and staff actively linked these values with their school's emerging identity and culture. Despite contending with, and at times contributing to, institutional and interpersonal conflicts and tensions, students, administrators, faculty, and staff of St. Patrick's helped make their school a place in which members were able to imagine themselves as important contributors to the development of their community and the emerging Kenyan nation-state.

'Unity…is strength': Notions of Diversity and the Construction of Unity at St. Patrick's

In late-1964, just before Kenya was set to become a Republic, two teachers, John and Sabina Namwamba, arrived at St. Patrick's. Posted to Iten by the recently elected government of Jomo Kenyatta, the husband and wife pair were both teachers, John having trained at Makerere University in neighboring Uganda and Sabina at Kenyatta College in Nairobi.[41] Originally from

[41] Fulbert Namwamba, interview with author, Kapkangani, Kenya, January 9, 2020.

the town of Bukani in western Kenya, John Namwamba arrived as the school's first degree holding African teacher and with several years of experience teaching biology and chemistry.[42] Sabina Namwamba, fresh out of her training program, was hired to teach English and Kiswahili, and made her mark as the first woman teacher in St. Patrick's history.[43] Speaking of the Namwambas years later at his home in Kapkangani, one of the couple's sons, Fulbert Namwamba, described his parents as having come to St. Patrick's to help "start the new country."[44]

During a time when rhetoric linking schools with notions of development and nation were common in Kenya, such commentary reflects an important theme of the era. A number of the teachers, students, administrators, and staff who came to St. Patrick's during the period were indeed motivated by ideas of nation-building and development. And yet, these were not the only motivating factors for why people decided to come to the school. As in previous years, the teachers, students, and religious staff that descended on Iten after independence came for a range of reasons. In addition, those who arrived at St. Patrick's during this period came from a much larger range of ethnic and national backgrounds than in the school's founding years, creating a diverse and unique school environment that many members saw as one of the school's overarching strengths and a defining character of its identity. As a result, the culture that developed at St. Patrick's during this period was one that often constructed and centered messages of unity and togetherness, ideas which meshed well with Harambee discourse. Indeed, Moses Mwendwa, one of the school's head prefects during the late 1960s, summed up this theme

[42] Fulbert Namwamba, interview with author, Kapkangani, Kenya, January 9, 2020.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

well when he wrote in *The Paten*, "Unity…is strength. When all…work together hand in hand the school runs smoothly and everyone in it is happy."[45]

The second half of the 1960s and 1970s saw the student body grow in both size and diversity, with pupils coming from Kalenjin (primarily Nandi and Keiyo, but also some Kipsigis, Sabaot, Tugen, Marakwet, and Pokot), Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Maasai, Kamba, Meru, Kisii, Turkana, and Indian communities.[46] During the 1970s, students even arrived at St. Patrick's from neighboring countries such as Uganda and Sudan.[47] This multiethnic dimension of the school's student body mirrored patterns in the Rift Valley during the period, where people from a range of ethnic groups settled in the years following independence in the hopes of gaining access to land previously held by the region's European settlers.[48]

Adding to this, during the same period, a new wave of highly trained African teachers from across central and western Kenya came to campus. (See Figure 3.3) In addition to John and Sabina Namwamba, James Tirop, who would later go on to become Kenya's Sports Commissioner, joined the staff in 1965 and served as the school's first games master.[49] Teachers such as Charles Tomno, Mike Singoei, and Robert Chanzu, graduates of University of Nairobi and University of Dar es Salaam University, taught physics and biology, while Isaiah Langat, Peter Wangusi, Ellam Mudolla, and John Wamakonjio instructed a range of subjects in science,

[45] Moses Mwendwa, "Prefects in St. Patrick's Iten," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 4.
[46] Since available school records did not list students by ethnic identity, this assessment is based on a rough estimate of the school's ethnic make-up based on the last names of students who graduated between 1965 and 1972. Graduates' names for this period were obtained from "Candidates who have gone through SPHS," *The Patrician – Golden Jubilee Souvenir Edition*, 2011, 39-40. Although this approach has its limits, I believe it provides a rough barometer of the school's changing ethnic make-up during the mid-to-late 1960s and early 1970s.
[47] Mike Singoei, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, January 16, 2020; Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[48] Branch, *Kenya,* 86.
[49] Joseph Chepkiyeng Arap Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 5.

math, history, geography, and Kiswahili.[50] St. Patrick's graduates such as Joseph Cheserem and Joseph arap Bain, both graduates of University of Nairobi, returned to teach math, science, and geography.[51] Some oral histories have also reported that Michael Kijana Wamalwa, who would later briefly serve as Kenya's Vice President, spent a short time at the school as an untrained teacher in 1967.[52] In addition, following in the footsteps of Sabina Namwamba, a small group of women, such as Sarah Hearn, math teacher Agnes Wamakonjio, English teacher Charity Kinyua, and geography teacher Linet Kabiru arrived between the late-1960s and mid-1970s.[53]

Figure 3.3 – The St. Patrick's faculty in 1967, a period which saw the arrival of a number of highly trained African and expatriate teachers (*Front, Left to Right* – Jospeh Cheserem, N/A, Francis Kigen, Paul Robinson, Sarah Hearn, James Tirop, Michael Wamalwa, John Namwamba, Brother Simeon Geraghty)

(Image and names courtesy of Patrick Ongus)

[50] "Our Staff," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 11-12; Edwin Wycliff, "The Electronics Club," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 28.
[51] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019; "Our Staff," 11-12.
[52] Fulbert Namwamba, interview with author, Kapkangani, Kenya, January 9, 2020; Christ Kiptoo, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, November 26, 2019.
[53] "Teaching Staff," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, 1979, 6-7.

This period also saw school leaders hire several important non-religious expatriate teachers and coaches. British couples Roger and Angela Gibson and Desmond and Pauline Healy were listed, along with an American named Edward Nichols, in the 1967 *Paten*.[54] In addition, though it is unclear what year he arrived, US Peace Corps volunteer Ian Donner was in Iten by 1966, and was remembered for being the only person in Iten with a *pikipiki* (Kiswahili for motorcycle) in the late 1960s.[55] The following year, an Englishman named Bob Bloodsworth, who would teach and work as faculty sponsor for *The Paten*, was hired.[56] In the early 1970s, other expats arrived, such as chemistry and geography teachers Geoffrey Hearn and Peter Foster, both from England, as well as Irishman Aidan Williams, who taught English and history.[57] In the same period, a trio of foreign lay teachers – Norman Thomson (biology), John Williams (chemistry and biology), and Peter Mullin (geography) – came to St. Patrick's through programs such as the US Peace Corps, Teachers for East Africa, and the British Overseas Development Administration.[58]

In addition to their teaching responsibilities, African and expat faculty contributed to the school in a range of ways. James Tirop founded the school's field hockey team in the mid-1960s.[59] Charles Tomno acted as the Deputy Headmaster in the mid-1970s, while Mike Singoei coached the field hockey team, ran the Electronics Club, created a Mechanics class, and helped to found a national maths competition which came to be known as the Iten Maths Contest.[60]

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[54] "The School's Staff," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 1.
[55] Fulbert Namwamba, interview with author, Kapkangani, Kenya, January 9, 2020.
[56] "Editorial," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 1.
[57] "Our Staff," 11-12.
[58] The presence of US Peace Corps volunteers in Kenyan schools during the 1970s was common. See Jessica M. Chapman, "Running to School: US-Kenyan Athletic Pipelines in the 1970s," *Diplomatic History*, Volume 48, Issue 1, January 2024, Pages 20–47. Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020; John Williams, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 25, 2019.
[59] Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," 5.
[60] "Our Staff," 11; Mike Singoei, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, January 16, 2020.

Agnes Wamakonjio, herself a graduate of Kenyatta University's teacher training program, provided regular math tutoring sessions in the evenings.[61] Expatriate teachers such as Norman Thomson served as basketball coach and ran the school's biology lab, while also aiding Peter Mullin in coaching athletics.[62] In addition to being fondly remembered by students and colleagues, by expanding the school's curricular offerings, supporting students outside of class, and founding new extracurricular organizations, these teachers played central roles in the school's expanding academic and social life during the 1960s and 1970s.

All of this was underpinned by an increased presence and leadership of the Patrician Brothers, whom former teacher and coach Peter Mullin later described as "the powerhouse" of the school.[63] Brother Vianney Tom Grogan, who later went on run a Harambee school in nearby Eldoret, and Brother Pius O'Leary both came to Iten as trained teachers in 1964.[64] In 1966, Brother Simeon Geraghty arrived in Iten to teach science and math, a position he filled for two years before replacing Brother Ambrose Hannon as the school's principal in 1968.[65] As principal, Geraghty would teach a full load of classes and coach athletics, soccer, and tennis, becoming one of the most consequential administrators in the school's history.[66] Two other Brothers, Barnabas Murphy, a handyman charged with managing the day to day functions of the campus support staff, and Marcellus Broderick, who taught math and coached the volleyball team, arrived in 1968 after spending time teaching in Los Angeles (Brother Marcellus arrived in

[61] Agnes Wamakonjio, interview with author, Butere, Kenya, January 13, 2020.
[62] All information for Norman Thomson taken from a pamphlet created for a memorial service held at St. Patrick's after his death. The document, "Dr. Norman Thomson: Remembering and Honoring his Life at St. Patrick's," Memorial Pamphlet, July 12, 2014, was provided to me by Patrician Brother Paul Brennan; Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020.
[63] Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020.
[64] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 30-31.
[65] Simeon Geraghty, phone interview with author, March 3, 2020; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 33.
[66] "Headmasters Address on Jubilee Day," *The Patrician Silver Jubilee – St. Patrick's High School Iten Kenya, 1961-1986,* 1986, 12.

Kenya in 1967, but came to St. Patrick's in early 1968).[67] In 1976, Brother William Lynch and Colm O'Connell arrived to teach science and geography, respectively.[68] Broderick, Lynch, and O'Connell would all serve as headmaster, in addition to coaching a number of sports teams, in future years.

As might be expected for such a diverse group of students and faculty, people came to St. Patrick's for a range of reasons. As in previous years, for many students, religion and aspiring academic achievement were central. Elias Komen, who arrived as a Form I student in 1970, told of how he chose St. Patrick's because it "had good Catholic values" and because the school could expect "good results in the future."[69] Others, such as Joseph Kiplagat, were motivated after hearing stories from St. Patrick's students about the school's welcoming, intellectually challenging, and disciplined atmosphere.[70] Many came seeking social mobility and an education that would help them get a job. Mike Boit, who had pursued teacher training in Uganda and attended a Harambee school in Kilibwoni before coming to Iten, found his way to St. Patrick's after several years of trying to secure stable employment.[71] Hezekiah Sawe, who attended St. Patrick's from 1969 to 1972, recalled similar motives. "Most of us," Sawe told me during an interview at his home in Waitaluk, "were seeing education as a way of making a living. You had to go, get a job and then you earn a living. So, most of us, that is why…we wanted a good school. You pass, you get a job, you come and build your economy. Because we were from a difficult background."[72]

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[67] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 32; "Headmaster's Address on Jubilee Day," 12; John Wamakonjio, "In Appreciation of Brother Marcellus J. Broderick," *The Patrician Silver Jubilee – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, 1961-1986, 28.
[68] Marcellus Broderick, "A Word From The Headmaster," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 5.
[69] Elias Komen, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, October 3, 2019.
[70] Joseph Kiplagat, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, November 6, 2019.
[71] Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, October 16, 2019.
[72] Hezekiah Sawe, interview with author, Waitaluk, February 20, 2020.

Foreign teachers had equally diverse reasons for coming to Iten. Peter Mullin, who taught at Nyakasura Secondary School in Uganda for four years before transferring to Iten after Idi Amin came to power, recalled how his background taking African studies courses as an undergraduate at University of Durham in England was a major motivation.[73] John Williams, who had spent several years teaching in Liverpool before heading for Iten, described during an interview how he was motivated by feelings of disillusionment in his job in England and wanted to go "to a place where my services might be valued."[74]

Despite these diverse backgrounds and motives, students attending St. Patrick's during the period consistently remarked on the unity and friendliness of the school's community. Joseph Chepkiyeng Arap Kew, writing in *The Paten* in 1967, described St. Patrick's as a school composed of boys who "work cooperatively regardless of tribal divisions," whose staff was a "multiracial one," and whose "moral principles are concrete and homogenous."[75] Writing in the same magazine, James Nganga wrote similarly that the school cultivated "an atmosphere of friendliness never found even in a single tribe and still less in a family."[76] Likewise, David Ameyo Aywah Aziz, in an essay for *The Patrician* several years later, described the school's students as a group who "have lived as brothers" despite "the tribal differences that might have separated us."[77] Speaking years later about his experience as a student at St. Patrick's, Hezekiah Sawe recalled similar feelings, musing, "In those days, you knew that this one was Gikuyu, this one was Luhya, this one was whatnot, but you knew we were one."[78]

[73] Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020.
[74] John Williams, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 25, 2019.
[75] Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," 6.
[76] James Kamenja Nganga, "Form Four East," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 10.
[77] David Ameyo Ayweh Azizi, "Form VI," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 20.
[78] Hezekiah Sawe, interview with author, Waitaluk, February 20, 2020.

For many of the school's community members, such a broad array of backgrounds and motives marked the school as unique. In interviews, graduates regularly described the school's diverse character as a strength that was exceptional for its time. Lebo Serem, who started as a Form I student in 1969, remembered his arrival St. Patrick's as a seminal moment because it was the first time he was able "to interact one-on-one with Europeans."[79] Elias Komen, who attended St. Patrick's in the early 1970s and later went on to serve as the school's first African headmaster, described the school as a fusion. "We can say it was a hybrid of all these cultures together," Komen recalled. "The Patrician Brothers made sure that the culture was Kenyan friendly…So, it was a hybrid."[80] Another student, who attended St. Patrick's during the 1970s, told me during an interview, "At no time did we see, Brother Marcellus, for example, as an Irish, or Bloodsworth as a UK. We simply saw ourselves as fortunate to be taught English by first speakers and [people] with experiences from other countries."[81]

'What am I to contribute to my country's success?': *Harambee* and the Politics of Nation-Building at St. Patrick's, Iten

While students, administrators, faculty, and staff at St. Patrick's worked to construct an identity that centered togetherness and celebrated the school's diversity as a sign of strength, other events took place that linked such notions of unity with the symbols and rhetoric of Harambee. The primary catalyst for this was the visit of several prominent Kenyan political leaders to St. Patrick's and Iten during the mid-1960s and early 1970s. These events resulted in a series of gatherings that shaped the school as a place where some students joined with political elites in practicing and promoting the politics of Harambee nation-building.

[79] Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[80] Elias Komen, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, October 3, 2019.
[81] Joseph Kiplagat, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, November 6, 2019.

The first of these occurred in October of 1966 when Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta came to Iten for a political rally. As a small, rural outpost in western Kenya, the President's visit piqued the interest of many in Iten, including several students at St. Patrick's. Writing in *The Paten* the following year, Form III student Julius Macharia, who had attended the rally, reported on what he described as a "grand visit…which almost twisted the history of Iten into another shape."[82] As such commentary suggests, Macharia was deeply taken by the pomp and circumstance of the visit. After describing the President's lunch at the local social hall, during which Kenyatta listened to a performance from the St. Patrick's school orchestra, Macharia gave a summary of his speech.[83] "It is by your effort that this Nation of Kenya will prosper," Macharia reported the President as telling onlookers, which included several St. Patrick's students. "Everyone must work cooperatively with a *Harambee* spirit, as was done when we were fighting the colonists for our Independence."[84] According to Macharia, Kenyatta's words "penetrated into the depths of many peoples' hearts" that day.[85] As he closed his report, Macharia beseeched his fellow students to heed the President's words and consider, "What am I to contribute to my country's success?"[86]

Julius Macharia's essay was not an outlier at St. Patrick's during this period. Just as Kenya's political sphere was awash with calls for everyday Kenyans to come together in the "spirit of Harambee" to develop their new nation, during the mid-1960s and early-1970s St. Patrick's was a place where Harambee politics proliferated. Some of this was no doubt the product of increased government influence over the school itself. Although founded as a

[82] Julius Macharia, "The President's Visit," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 28.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.

Catholic-sponsored school and largely staffed by foreign teachers in its early years, following independence, national and local administrations expanded their control over the school's funding, governance, and policies.[87] In 1965, the school's first Board of Governors (BOG) was established with Alex Oloo, the first African mayor of Eldoret, elected as Chairman.[88] Other early members of the school's BOG included local politicians and influential community leaders, such as William Murgor, Jonathan Sumbeiywa, Peter Kuremei, and Lazaro Chumo, as well Diocesan Education Secretary Father Paddy Cullen and the school's Principal Brother Ambrose Hannon.[89] Although Patrician Brothers would remain as the school's administrators until the mid-1990s, by the early 1970s, the Kenyan state was St. Patrick's principal financial backer and fully dictated the school's curriculum, teacher appointments, student admissions criteria, inspections, and class sizes.[90]

While local and national governments expanded their footprints at St. Patrick's, government officials paid regular visits to campus. The year after Kenyatta came to Iten, St. Patrick's student Ronald Cheruiyot reported on a visit to the school's campus by Kenyan Minister of Education Jeremiah Nyagah. Writing in the *Paten*, Cheruiyot recalled how the visit, accompanied by a rendition of the Kenyan National Anthem played by the school's band, roused a deep sense of admiration and respect for the minister and the work of the government. "The rumbling of engines heralded his approach," Cheruiyot wrote.[91] "It took me some time to grasp that this man dressed in a safari jacket, dark trousers and brown shoes was really the Minister of Education...It struck me that whereas some men need lots of show to draw peoples (sic) attention

[87] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 21-22.
[88] Ibid, 34.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid, 34-35.
[91] Ronald Cheruiyot, "Minister's Visit," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 29.

to them, this man by reason of his personality was succeeding tremendously in doing just that."[92] According to Cheruiyot, Nyagha told the students and faculty that he "had our interests at heart and would see to it that we would get some land for a school farm and that our water supply would be looked after." [93] For Cheruiyot, such displays elicited a strong nationalist sentiment, inspiring him to conclude, "we here in St. Patrick's have complete confidence in a Government constituted of such men."[94]

While the visits of Kenyatta and Nyagha were accompanied by messages of unity and support, at other times political messages delivered on campus communicated that many government leaders equated Harambee with obedience.[95] In July 1972, Vice President Daniel arap Moi, who hailed from the neighboring region of Baringo and had worked as a schoolteacher in the nearby town of Tambach during the 1950s, attended a meeting of the Wareng Municipal Council held on the St. Patrick's campus.[96] According to the *East African Standard*, the meeting included the passage of a unanimous resolution stating that "nobody should tamper with the executive power vested in President Kenyatta."[97] Afterwards, Moi re-emphasized the message of political obedience in a speech citing the importance of a "spirit of unity" and warning against those who would resort to "politically bankrupt" and "hoodwinking tactics" meant to undermine the government.[98] As was often the case with political meetings held on school campuses during this period, the event included a Harambee fund-raiser, during which 5,000 Kenyan shillings were raised for the construction of a new classroom block on the St. Patrick's campus. Although

[92] Ronald Cheruiyot, "Minister's Visit," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 29.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair*, 1963-2011, 11.
[96] Andrew Morton, *Moi: The Making of an African Statesman* (London: Michael O'Mara Books, 1998).
[97] "Fund-raising nets 5,000 for school," *East African Standard*, July 9, 1972, 11.
[98] Ibid.

records are unclear, it is likely that Moi himself contributed, as he was reportedly one of the top Harambee donors in Kenya during the late 1960s and early 1970s.[99] Following the meeting, Moi placed the foundation stone for a classroom in a ceremony celebrating the school's successes.[100]

Moi's presence at St. Patrick's for the 1972 Harambee fund-raiser was not an isolated event. According to Brother Simeon Geraghty, who served as the St. Patrick's headmaster from 1968 to 1976, Moi's personal ties with the local community made the Vice President "a neighbor" of St. Patrick's who would often come by for "tea and talk" with the Patrician Brothers and regularly supported the needs of the school.[101] (See Figure 3.4) Former St. Patrick's student Yusuf Kaitany recounted that "Moi liked St. Patrick's, and came to do fundraising many times."[102] In 1972, the *East African Standard*, describing St. Patrick's as "an ideal school atmosphere where staff and students work together in a friendly, cooperative spirit," advertised that Moi would be launching a "massive fund-raising campaign" on campus so that the school could "provide even better facilities for more and more students." (See Figure 3.5) In the early 1970s, in a replay of the school's founding years, the Vice President organized the relocation of people living on nearby land to facilitate the school's expansion.[103] Moi also helped the school's administration deal with the bureaucracy of getting foreign teachers assigned to St. Patrick's.[104] According to Geraghty, "If there was one person in Kenya who did massive work for the school, it was Daniel Moi."[105] As a measure of his long-lasting presence at St. Patrick's, portraits of Moi and memorials celebrating his campus visits still stand in Iten today. (See Figure 3.6)

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[99] *Report of the Task Force on Public Collections or 'Harambees'* (Nairobi: Government Press, 2003).
[100] "Fund-raising nets 5,000 for school," *East African Standard*, July 9, 1972, 11.
[101] Simeon Geraghty, phone interview with author, March 3, 2020.
[102] Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019.
[103] Simeon Geraghty, phone interview with author, March 3, 2020.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.

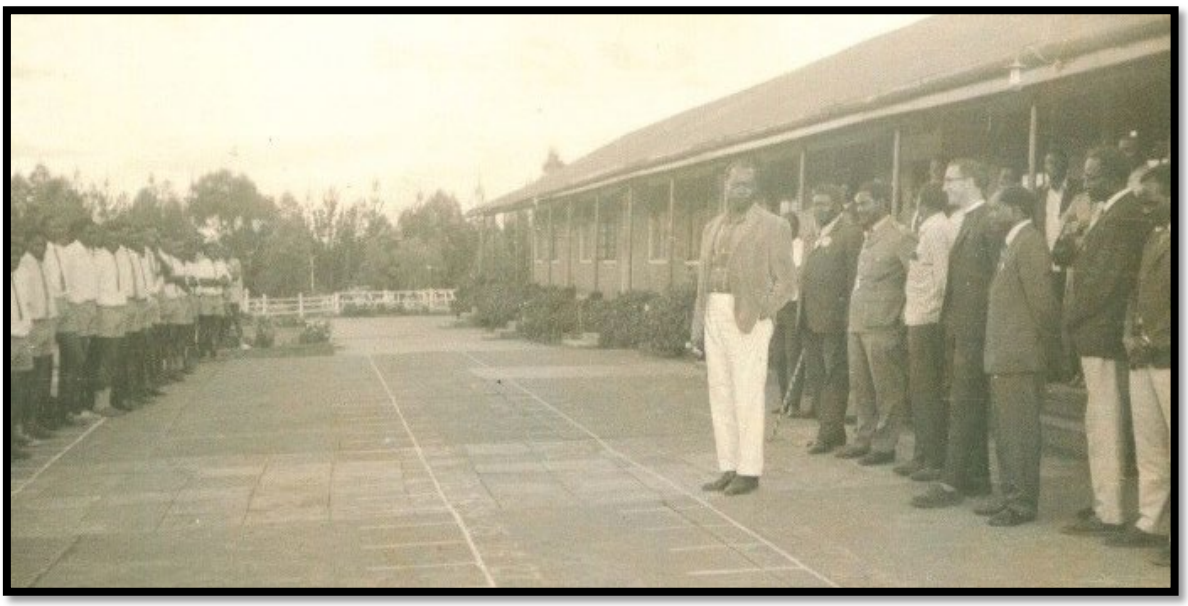
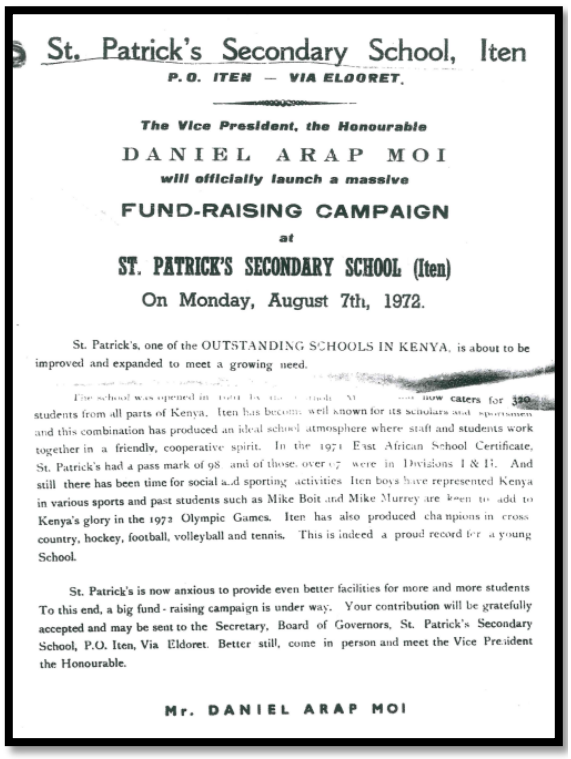


Figure 3.4 – Vice President Daniel arap Moi, who was a teacher in nearby Tambach during the 1950s, prepares to address the students and faculty of St. Patrick's in the early 1970s.

(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

The strong relationship between Moi and St. Patrick's, as well as the visits to campus by political elites such as Jomo Kenyatta and Jeremiah Nyagah, are especially instructive as they provide insight into both the importance of Harambee politics in the institutional development of St. Patrick's and the role that educational patronage played in the consolidation of political legitimacy for national politic elites in early post-colonial Kenya. For Moi, as Gabrielle Lynch has pointed out, curating relationships with important local institutions such as St. Patrick's enabled him to "build and develop local linkages, and fostered an image of purposeful development consciousness."[106] For St. Patrick's, such close ties created opportunities for the school to expand, gain access to financial resources, and develop connections with international teaching networks.

[106] Gabrielle Lynch, "Moi: The Making of an African 'Big-Man'," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 1 (2008): 33.



St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten

P. O. ITEN — VIA ELDORET.

The Vice President, the Honourable

DANIEL ARAP MOI

will officially launch a massive

FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN

at

ST. PATRICK'S SECONDARY SCHOOL (Iten)

On Monday, August 7th, 1972.

St. Patrick's, one of the OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS IN KENYA, is about to be improved and expanded to meet a growing need.

The school was opened in 1961 by the [illegible] Now caters for 320 students from all parts of Kenya. Iten has become well known for its scholars and sportsmen and this combination has produced an ideal school atmosphere where staff and students work together in a friendly, cooperative spirit. In the 1971 East African School Certificate, St. Patrick's had a pass mark of 98 and of those over 97 were in Divisions I & II. And still there has been time for social and sporting activities. Iten boys have represented Kenya in various sports and past students such as Mike Boit and Mike Murrey are keen to add to Kenya's glory in the 1972 Olympic Games. Iten has also produced champions in cross country, hockey, football, volleyball and tennis. This is indeed a proud record for a young School.

St. Patrick's is now anxious to provide even better facilities for more and more students To this end, a big fund-raising campaign is under way. Your contribution will be gratefully accepted and may be sent to the Secretary, Board of Governors, St. Patrick's Secondary School, P.O. Iten, Via Eldoret. Better still, come in person and meet the Vice President the Honourable.

Mr. DANIEL ARAP MOI

Figure 3.5 – Advertisement for a 1972 fund-raiser featuring Moi at St. Patrick's.

(Image from *East African Standard*)

Figure 3.6 – Plaque commemorating Moi's visit to St. Patrick's to celebrate the school's 25th anniversary in 1986.

(Photo taken by Dawson McCall)

Such practices of Harambee politics were central to the school's views on development during the period. While many students used discourses of Harambee at St. Patrick's to encourage their fellow students to consider the role played by their school in nation-building efforts, such political work also provided valuable material support in an important period of the school's institutional growth. At the same time, the strong relationships developed between St. Patrick's and elite politicians like Moi demonstrate how schools such as St. Patrick's were used in political work that consolidated power and legitimacy for Kenyan political leaders.

'The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School': Institutional Development, Progress, and Transformation at St. Patrick's

In addition to highlighting the practice of nation-building politics on campus, the relationship between Moi and St. Patrick's provides insight into patterns of institutional and

academic development at the school. The 1972 fund-raiser attended by Moi was part of a larger initiative to expand both the campus' physical and academic infrastructure. According to Lebo Serem, who was head prefect in Iten between 1971 and 1974, the Moi Harambee was the result of a petition issued by the students to Kenyan Minister of Education Taaita Towet to add Forms V and VI, what at the time was known in Kenya as Advanced ('A') Level.[107] As one of the many colonial continuities in post-colonial Kenyan education, advancement to an 'A' Level program was a prerequisite for students interested in going on to university.[108] For students at St. Patrick's, the addition of an 'A' Level program to the school's course offerings would make it easier to matriculate through a system that had been designed since the colonial era to benefit a small segment of Kenyan society.

However, the addition of the 'A' Level was neither easy nor straightforward. According to Serem, following their petition, the Kenyan Ministry of Education, citing limited resources, denied the school's funding request. To finance the classroom blocks and science laboratories necessary for an effective 'A' Level program, student and school leaders approached Moi with a request for help. "Moi was very fast in acting," Serem told me. "He said, what we will do is we will hold a fundraiser, we shall build the school," Serem continued, "So, we did various things…We raised the funds. We held a dance…We raised some money…[Moi] came to Iten. We held a big Harambee. We raised more than 100,000 shillings. That was a lot of money then. Forms V and VI were built."[109] Once enough funds had been raised, the school's grounds crew set about constructing the necessary buildings.[110]

[107] Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[108] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 122-136.
[109] Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[110] Ibid.

During the construction of the 'A' Level infrastructure, school leaders set out an ambitious student recruitment plan that was designed to work around the challenge of competing with more established programs.[111] Two expatriate teachers, Peter Mullin and Bob Bloodsworth – both of whom came to St. Patrick's as part of the Teachers for East Africa program – were sent out to other secondary schools in western Kenya.[112] According to Mullin, the goal was to recruit high achieving students from other 'O' Level programs to populate the school's new 'A' Level classes. "The schools were informed that we wished to interview the top three candidates," Mullin told me during an email exchange in 2020. "For a week Bob and I went our separate ways and interviewed these potential candidates," Mullin recalled. "We were seeking potential but had a good offer to make."[113] Successful candidates were given an unconditional place in the school's new Form V.[114] Twelve students accepted.[115] "It was a very attractive offer," Mullin recalled. "Most students accepted…and we got a great batch."[116]

Though a seminal event in the school's history, the addition of the 'A' Level program was part of a longer pattern of expansion that defined the history of St. Patrick's from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. The growth of the school's infrastructure during this period was notable. During the mid-1960s, under the leadership of Brother Ambrose Hannon, the school's grounds crew constructed staff houses and storage rooms, while local contractors were employed to add classrooms to the main school block.[117] In 1964, administrators added a gas-powered generator to provide campus-wide electricity for up to three hours a night, while a wireless, battery-

[111] Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[112] Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.
[116] Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020.
[117] Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," 5-7; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 29-30.

powered radio was purchased from a local farmer.[118] Brother Simeon Geraghty initiated the construction of the school's playing fields, tennis courts, and basketball courts in the late 1960s.[119] Brother Pius Oleary led both students and staff in the planting of trees and flower beds, which students protected from pests, in the words of student J.H.W. Irungu, with "a heart of Harambee."[120]

Through a combination of government support and overseas grants, school staff and grounds crew erected a school library, a new kitchen, and more student dormitories, of which there were nine by 1976.[121] The biology lab (See Figure 3.7), run by teachers such as Norman Thomson and Robert Chanzu and supported by student lab assistants Vincent Cheserem and Jospeh Yator, included specimens collected from the nearby Kerio Velley by members of the Wildlife Club.[122] The school library, run by Raphael Kubende, included "a good number of books and other reading materials" and was described by student John Kipkemoi Kiplagat as a place to pursue the "development of ideas."[123]

Student writers in the school's magazines regularly reported, documented, and celebrated this infrastructural expansion, linking it with ideas of progress and development. For example, in 1967 Form IV student Joseph Chepkiyeng Arap Kew published an article in *The Paten* entitled "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten." In it, Kew told the story of how the "Iten pioneers" turned a "local place…covered here and there by clumps of

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[118] O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 25-30.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid, 31; J.H.W. Irungu, "Night Snake," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 19.
[121] Joel Kipkorir Tirmet, "Iten: Improvements and Progress," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 22; William Chirchir, "Constructing the New School Kitchen," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 34.
[122] Paul Kipkorir Rono, "The Biology Laboratory," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 30; Norman Thomson, "Our Lab Assistants," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 31.
[123] John Kipkemoi Kiplagat, "The Library," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 22; Joseph Kiplagat, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, November 6, 2019.

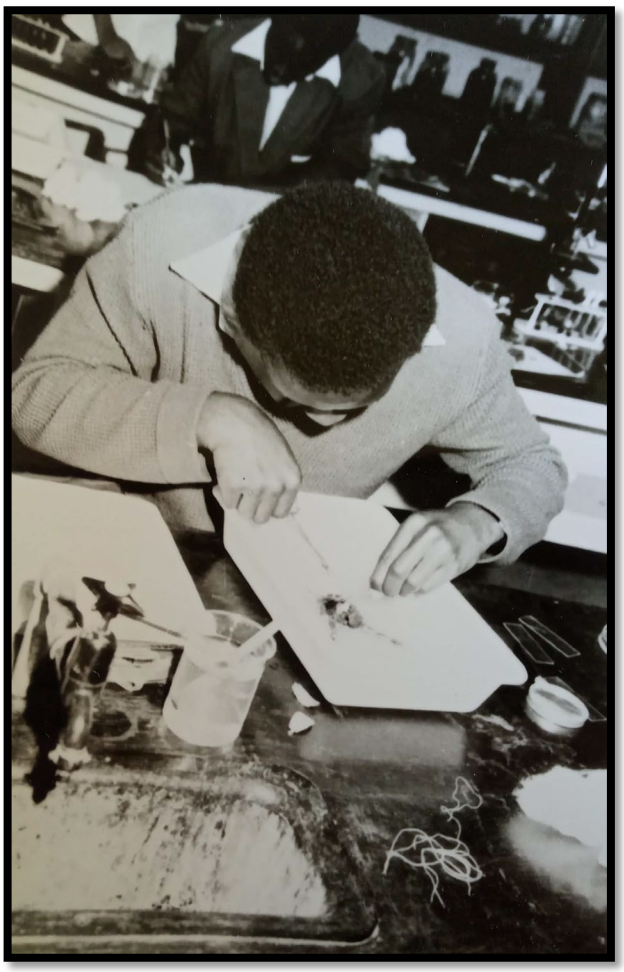

Figure 3.7 – St. Patrick's student taking part in a dissection in the school's biology lab, ca. 1970.

(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

thicket," into a thriving secondary school.[124] As Kew wrote, such efforts had contributed to the emergence of a school compound that resembled "a small well-designed town," with twenty-nine red roofed buildings and "brightly illuminated electric lamps" that could be seen from afar "glittering at night like a mass of freshly mined diamonds."[125] These developments, according to

[124] Kew, "The transformation development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," 5.
[125] Ibid, 6.

Kew, marked St. Patrick's as "one of the well-known and recognised schools in the Republic of Kenya."[126]

Characterizations like Kew's were common. Students throughout the period linked the school's expanding infrastructure with notions of development and progress. For Form V student John Kipkemoi Kiplagat, writing in *The Patrician*, the new additions "greatly boosted the attractions of the St. Patrick's compound," while Form III student Joel Kipkorir Tirmet saw the additions as symbols of the school's "improvement and progress."[127] Mike Waganjo, a St. Patrick's student who arrived on campus in 1972 and finished his Form IV studies in 1976, wrote in *The Patrician* the year before he graduated from 'O' Level that the changes he witnessed during this time there – which included the addition of the school's 'A' Level program, the construction of new science labs and school library, expanded sports facilities, and more – signified "great acts of development" on the St. Patrick's campus, marking the period as an "age of progress" for the school and its students.[128]

'An army of knowledge-hungry students': Academic Achievement and Notions of Individual Development

While the school's expanding physical infrastructure was often positioned as symbolizing institutional development and progress, academic achievement was equally important in the minds of both students and staff. From the beginning of the school's participation in Kenyan national school examinations, St. Patrick's students posted high scores. The class of 1964, the first to take the national exam – at the time known as the Cambridge School Certificate (CSC) – scored 88% passes.[129] In the next two years, St. Patrick's students sitting for the newly

[126] Ibid.
[127] Kiplagat, "The Library," 22; Tirmet, "Iten: Improvement and Progress," 22.
[128] Mike Waganjo, "The Great Party: Brother Simeon's Farewell," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 6.
[129] Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," 5.

established East African Certificate of Education (EACE) raised this number to 90% and 96% respectively.[130] In 1971, students achieved a pass mark of 98%.[131] These scores put St. Patrick's among the country's best performing academic institutions of the period, as the national average for EACE passes during the mid-to-late 1960s ranged between 54-69%.[132]

Such achievements were not an accident. As had been the case in high-performing Kenyan schools from the colonial era (and still today), students expended enormous efforts at study, struggling to attain and sustain good marks. In 1967, Form IV student James Nganga described his classmates as "an army of knowledge-hungry students" who came from every corner of Kenya and were "united by a common purpose – the pursuit of learning."[133] In addition to a rigorous daily schedule of coursework and study halls, students who attended during the period recalled staying up late into the night to study. In 1967, David Giathi jokingly wrote in *The Paten* of classmates falling asleep with their spectacles on or "becoming thinner and thinner…because of the hard work" of exam preparation.[134] Similarly, Elias Komen, who attended during the early-1970s, recalled in an interview how, in an effort to steal a little study time in the early morning and late-night hours, students "used to put blankets on the sides of the double-decker [bunkbeds] and light some kerosene lanterns in between."[135]

In addition to their own work, students often remembered the efforts of teachers and administrators as engendering a commitment to academic achievement. Former student Yusuf Kaitany recalled that he had "never seen any group more devoted than the Brothers, because they

[130] Ibid, 6.
[131] "St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," *Daily Nation*, August, 1972.
[132] Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya,* 128-132.
[133] Nganga, "Form Four East," 10.
[134] David Giathi, "Form III East," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 13.
[135] Elias Komen, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, October 3, 2019.

would come with their extra time. They were committed."[136] Writing in *The Patrician* in 1976, school captain Aggrey Massawa described this commitment in the following way:

> …call in any day or night, even Saturday or Sunday, and you will find the Biology Lab occupied, under the supervision of Mr. Chanzu or Mr. Thomson. If you call in after Games you will find Mr. Thomson, Mr. Singoei or Father Crowley still in the Physics Lab. Go down to the lecture rooms and you will find Mr. Arap Bain with additional Maths students, Mr. Williams with Literature or History students. In the next class you will find Mr. Wangusi, in another Mr. Mudolla, also giving extra classes in History and Kiswahili. In the Chemistry Lab, Mr. Hearn and Mr. Langat stand in front of keen students.[137]

Other teachers from the period, such as John and Sabina Namwamba and Father Tom Randles, were remembered as "top notch" instructors who "played an important role in the early educational development of the school."[138]

Such efforts did not go unnoticed or unappreciated by students. For Andrew Chemweno, who later became a teacher and school administrator, the devotion of the school's faculty and the stringent emphasis on academic success had a deep impact on his worldview. "[T]hat background gave us a lot of love for our people," Chemweno recalled when interviewed. "When I finished, I wanted to be a teacher…Because of that love and commitment of the Brothers and the Fathers who started teaching us, we said now we must give this back to our own people." Lebo Serem and Joseph Kiplagat, both of whom became engineers, cited their time at St. Patrick's as being the defining characteristic in their ability to go on to university.[139] Richard Kaitany argued that the culture of study at St. Patrick's shaped students long into their future lives. "I believe the St. Patrick's environment…made a big difference and probably determined

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[136] Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019.
[137] Aggrey Massawa, "Report from the School Captain," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 9.
[138] Simeon Geraghty, phone interview with author, March 3, 2020; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 27.
[139] Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020; Joseph Kiplagat, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, November 6, 2019.

most of the future of the students who were there," Kaitany told me. "What the students took from that was that culture of studying so hard."

Nor was the work of the mind relegated solely to the classroom. Students often took time outside of class to read or engage in intellectual activity (See Figure 3.8) Student clubs and organizations played important roles in the school's intellectual culture. A prime example can be seen in one of the school's first student organizations, the Debating Club. Founded in late-1962 by a group of Form II students, members were charged with coordinating school-wide Saturday night debates and inter-school debating competitions.[140] According to George Marcharia and William Shivoga, both of whom wrote articles about the club in the school magazine, students taking part in debates discussed topics which included the quality of the country's political leadership, questions of gender, and issues of national development. For example, at one inter school debate at Kitale Teacher's Training College in 1967, members debated whether or not "a country benefits more from scientists than from politicians."[141] That same year, a team from Kapkenda Girls Secondary School visited St. Patrick's for a debate on the topic of bride-price in modern Kenya.[142] Students on a trip to Loreto Convent in Matunda in 1976 argued "whether agriculture or industry contributed more to the development of Kenya."[143]

Other groups sought to blend academic and intellectual interests with some of the school's overarching goals of unity, nation, and development. The Scouting Association, founded on campus in 1967 by the school chaplain Father Thomas Leahy, provided training in camping, hygiene, first aid, and map reading, while simultaneously emphasizing values such as

[140] Paul Wafula, "Our Debating Club in 1968," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 21; George M. Macharia, "The Debating Club," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 46 & 53.
[141] Macharia, "The Debating Club," 46 & 53.
[142] Ibid.
[143] William Shivoga, "The Debating Club," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 23.

Figure 3.8 – St. Patrick's students taking some time to read outside of class.
(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

civic mindedness, loyalty, and patriotism.[144] According to troop leader Ernest Ingosi, who explained the goal of the group in *The Paten* in 1968, the purpose of scouting was to train the "mental and physical alertness, character, and public spirit" of its student members and to teach values such as "remaining loyal to one's country…regardless of colour, language, and tribe."[145]

[144] Ernest Ismail Ingosi, "Scouting Association," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 45. Although new to St. Patrick's in the late-1960s, scouting has a deep history in colonial Kenyan history. See Timothy Parsons, "No More English than the Postal System: The Kenya Boy Scout Movement and the Transfer of Power," *Africa Today* 51, no. 3, Youth and Citizenship in East Africa (2005): 61-80.
[145] Ingosi, "Scouting Association," 45.

In a similar vein, the Young Farmers Club promoted the values of "Discipline, and Duty with Responsibility," according to its faculty sponsor Robert Chanzu.[146] Founded at St. Patrick's in 1968 by the then-outgoing headmaster, Brother Ambrose Hannon, Young Farmers Clubs were common in Kenyan secondary schools of the period. Working in coordination with government ministries as part of Jomo Kenyatta's "Back to Land" movement, such clubs urged Kenyans to view the country's economic and social development as directly tied to agricultural expansion.[147] At St. Patrick's, members of the Young Farmers Club attended lectures delivered by agricultural officers, were instructed in farming techniques, and competed in agricultural competitions.[148] According to Form IV student Peterson Njarrambah, who headed the group and reported on its activities in *The Patrician* in 1968, the club's goal was to create "reliable and inspiring leaders…for agricultural development in Kenya" while working to instill a "genuine spirit of Harambee, by which the members and the whole students of Iten will make it a success."[149]

'We used to fight like students…It was part of life down there': Monolization, Ethnic Tensions, and the Contradictions of Unity and Harambee at St. Patrick's

Despite consistent efforts to construct an identity of unity, promote development, practice Harambee politics, and create a culture of academic achievement, life at St. Patrick's was not perfect, nor was it always peaceful. As in previous years, discord and conflict between students was a regular occurrence, although the causes were often different. In both the school's written record and oral histories, bullying was common. In addition, ethnic tensions, driven by grievances over admissions policies as well as national political crises, sometimes split students

[146] Robert Chanzu, "The Road to the Big Show 1976," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 15.
[147] Saeteurn, *Cultivating Their Own*, 26-40; *Kenya Education Commission Report, Part I* (Nairobi, December 12, 1964), 84.
[148] Peterson M.M. Njarrambah, "The Young Farmers Club," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 50.
[149] Ibid.

into opposing factions. Other school policies excluded and marginalized non-Christian students. As a result, feelings of discontent, frustration, and alienation were not uncommon and were manifested in a range of ways. As former student Ernest Kaitany recalled, "You know we used to fight like students…It was part of life down there."[150]

Perhaps the practice that most clearly demonstrates the contradictions inherent within the school's culture of unity and togetherness was a custom known as "monolization." A student-led tradition common in other Kenyan secondary schools, monolization was a hazing ritual in which newly arrived Form I students, referred to as "monos," would be teased, harassed, bullied, and forced to take part in humiliating and degrading tasks by older students, usually from the Form II class. Early students cited the emergence of monolization at St. Patrick's sometime in 1963 or 1964.[151] At St. Patrick's, monolization included harassment during mealtime or cases in which students were forced to do pointless errands. Others recalled monolization taking the form of entertaining games, such as Joseph Kiplagat, who described being given a grasshopper by a group of Form II students and being told ensure the insect did not die.[152] In its most insidious form, monolization could veer into violence, with one former student recalling students being attacked while sleeping.[153] Richard Kaitany, who came to the school in 1974, described a case in which "one boy was hit on the head with a piece of board, and he was bleeding heavily."[154]

Monolization was often remembered as humiliating and alienating. Paul Amolo, who came to Iten as a From I student in 1964, later wrote in *The Paten* about being monolized on his first day at St. Patrick's:

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[150] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[151] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 8, 2019; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[152] Joseph Kiplagat, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, November 6, 2019.
[153] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019; Hezekiah Sawe, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020.
[154] Richard Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 7, 2019.

> The bell tinkled and almost immediately students appeared from nowhere. On seeing me, they all charged shouting, "Mono! Mono!" They reached me in record time…"What do you call yourself?" roared the one I hated most. "Answer or I'll skin you alive," he added. "I…Paul Amolo. I am Paul Amolo." Despite my effort I sounded shaky. My courage and pride had melted as a lump of kimbo does when heated. "A Luo," he snapped. "A Luhya," I corrected. "Shut your gob," he roared biting his lower thick lip. "You are dressed in white like a Luo!...Give me that pen knife on your belt you murderer…" The pen-knife hanging on my scout-belt disappeared, where it went I can't tell. There was a whole pack of them like rapacious wolves each struggling to have its share.[155]

In addition, Amolo described being ordered to recite the definition of a "mono" – "a domesticated gibbon, suffering from inferiority complex, being uncultivated and uncouth" – and having his hair pulled while older students took his food during supper.[156]

Such experiences could elicit strong feelings of anxiety and dejection. According to Amolo, a fellow new arrival named Matthew Omboga, who would later become one of the school's top soccer players, lay in bed unable to sleep during his first night on campus out of fear of threats from older students.[157] Another newly arrived student, a friends of Omboga's, left the school for good after being monolized.[158] Samuel Langat, who entered St. Patrick's in 1968, recounted in *The Paten* how having his food taken during supper produced feelings of despondency. "I was the only Mono – as I was called – among the people at one table," Langat recalled. "After mixing [my rice] with soup, cabbage and a piece of meat I started to eat. But before I had a chance, a brute of a man…took the only piece of meat I had with his fork and showed me how to eat it."[159] According to Langat, the incident "tortured my heart but I still kept quiet."[160]

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[155] Paul Amolo, "When I First Came To Iten," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 17.
[156] Amolo, "When I First Came To Iten," 17.
[157] Ibid, 18; Patrick Kimunyu, "Four West Class – 1967," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 8.
[158] Amolo, "When I First Came To Iten," 18.
[159] Samuel Langat, "My First Lunch In St. Patrick's School," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 19
[160] Ibid.

Not all students remembered monolization in such negative and disparaging ways. For some, such as Ernest Kaitany, the ability to resist monolization symbolized his own strength and manhood. "When we were playing some of them would [try to] monolize us," he told me during an interview. "But I was strong," he continued, "the ones in Form II knew that I was a man. Those little boys, they [would] say, 'I will beat you.' With me, they couldn't, and then I'd say, 'Why are you trying to play with me.'"[161] For others, such as Yusuf Kaitany, monolization was seen in hindsight as an initiation process that "molded somebody from the village to a disciplined person," inducting new arrivals into the culture of the school.[162] Likewise, Elias Komen, during an interview years later in Iten, described the practice as a process "of getting initiated into the school doctrines…I feel now, it was something good to make you be part of that system…And having gone through, you look back and say, yes I think it was something good."[163]

Despite such interpretations, the ubiquity of monolization at St. Patrick's demonstrates the contradictions of togetherness and unity in the school's culture. While some students, through their oral histories, recalled monolization as a necessary part of entering the school's community and student hierarchy, the written record provides insight into the grief, embarrassment, and frustration that was often associated with such experiences. Indeed, as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o noted while describing monolization at Alliance during the 1950s, the very fact that it was Form II students, the tradition's most recent victims, who carried out the practice demonstrates how monolization divided classes into opposing parties, creating feelings of sadness and dejection that at times stayed with students throughout their lives.[164]

[161] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[162] Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019.
[163] Elias Komen, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, October 3, 2019.
[164] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *In the House of the Interpreter: A Memoir* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 30.

Monolization was not the only example of disunity at St. Patrick's. Conflict and discontent surfaced in other ways. Charges of ethnic discrimination were a common point of contention. At times, such tensions were driven by rumors of ethnic favoritism in the school's admissions policies. Ernest Kaitany, who entered St. Patrick's as a student in 1966, recalled how both pupils and local community members expressed frustration when rumors that Kikuyu students from another region had been admitted over equally qualified local Kalenjin applicants.[165] "We were saying, why are they (Kikuyus) coming here and we [are] leaving ours (Kalenjin) hanging," Kaitany recalled. "[T]here was tension between Kalenjin and Kikuyus."[166] Brother Ambrose Hannon, the headmaster during most of the 1960s, recalled how such complaints even stirred local parents, armed with sticks and spears, to threaten to occupy the school until more local students were admitted.[167] The crisis was only averted when local politicians William Murgor and Lazaro Chumo agreed to hold a *baraza* (Kiswahili for council) to try and convince protesters that students had been admitted based on test scores only.[168]

Such rumors were no doubt fanned by instances of discrimination among the student body. In 1968, for example, according to Paul Cherop and Earnest Kaitany, both of whom attended St. Patrick's during the late 1960s, a group of Kalenjin students were denied participation in the events and trips organized by the school's Dancing Club.[169] According to Kaitany, "there was…tension because they themselves didn't want us Kalenjins to join dancing…They [said] these Kalenjins don't know how to dance."[170] Such exclusionary practices

[165] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Hannon, "The Early Years by Bro. Ambrose Hannon."
[168] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019; Hannon, "The Early Years by Bro. Ambrose Hannon."
[169] Paul Cherop, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 15, 2019; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[170] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.

created resentment and bitterness. "We were a little bit jealous," Kaitany recalled, "asking 'why are they travelling and they leave us as if we don't know how to dance'?"[171]

In addition, national political crises could exacerbate ethnic tensions between students. Such was the case after the assassination of Tom Mboya in 1969, the reverberations of which were felt in the form of riots and government violence against protestors across central and western Kenya in the months following his murder.[172] At St. Patrick's, these tensions were reflected in conflicts between the school's large Kikuyu and Kalenjin student populations. According to Ernest Kaitany, in the wake of Mboya's murder, Kalenjin students "sided with the Luo's…[and] wanted to chase the Kikuyu" from the school. "I remember I was having sports in Kamariny [Stadium]" when Mboya's murder was announced, Kaitany recalled. "When we reached [campus], the students were wild."[173]

At other times, school policies created clear instances of exclusion, marking certain students as separate and different. One example was the lack of support provided for the school's small population of non-Christian students. Yusuf Kaitany, who along with his brother came to St. Patrick's from a local Muslim family, recounted how the two of them were required to take part in Catholic Mass despite their Islamic background. "When I came to St. Patrick's," he recalled during an interview, "I was forced to follow the rules…The whole school, we used to go to Mass, and I attended all the Mass for four years…as according to Roman Catholic tradition."[174] Though Kaitany recalled how participating in Catholic services did not bother him, the situation was different for his brother. "My brother…was stubborn," he told me. "He had a lot of problems. Because he was going to pray in the bush…because he was so concerned [about

[171] Ibid.
[172] Branch, *Kenya,* 84-88.
[173] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[174] Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019.

his religious observances]."[175] Another student from the period recalled that the school's few Islamic students likely suspended their religious practices out of fear. When asked whether Muslim students were able to practice their beliefs on campus, he responded simply, "They didn't. If they were there they didn't. They didn't because they were afraid."[176]

Other non-Catholic students from the period experienced religious tension with their schoolmates. Samuel Langat, writing in *The Paten*, recorded his first experience eating lunch on campus and the ridicule that he received for not joining the pre-meal Catholic prayer. "Inside the dining hall," Langat wrote, "I admired large tables arranged in two rows and also pictures placed along the walls…When all of us were seated the leader said grace, but I kept quiet for I did not know what was going on. One man asked me why I did not pray and my answer was that I did not know how to pray because I was a non-Catholic."[177] According to Langat, the student reacted threateningly. "Why do you respond like that to a respected man like me? You will see," he said, a reply which caught Langat off guard and left him silent.[178]

Contrasted with the strong efforts to construct a culture of unity, development, and academic achievement that existed at St. Patrick's during the period, practices such as monolization, charges of ethnic discrimination, and policies that marginalized non-Christian students demonstrate the limits of such rhetoric. For students deemed antithetical to the school's mission, such practices were reminders that building institutional unity could be defined as much by who was ignored and omitted from the school's mainstream culture as it was about instilling an identity of togetherness. Such experiences demonstrate how the creation of a social place of meaning could be deeply exclusionary.

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[175] Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 24, 2019.
[176] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[177] Langat, "My First Lunch In St. Patrick's School," 19.
[178] Ibid.

'It was very exciting': Students Clubs, Mandazi Highway, and Joy at St. Patrick's

Despite such examples of discord and conflict, life at St. Patrick's could be joyous and happy. In addition to the expansion of the school's campus infrastructure, during the mid-to-late 1960s, students and faculty founded and took part in a range of student clubs and societies that catered to a broad array of interests, organizations which students often wrote about and recalled with a deep sense of joy and excitement. As a result, students from the period often recalled being active, engaged, and involved. Indeed, as one former student recalled during an interview years later, "you couldn't find anyone idling" at St. Patrick's.[179]

One of the most fondly remembered of these was the student Dancing Club, created in 1964 with thirty members.[180] The club, founded and run exclusively by students, organized intra-school dances on campus, as well as concerts with nearby all-girls schools, such as St. Brigid's, Sing'ore, St. Joseph's, and Moi's Bridge Matunda.[181] As the Dancing Club became more popular and successful, a Dance Band was formed in 1965 by a group of four students who played a variety of instruments, including a rhythm guitar, lead guitar, bass guitar, banjo mandolin, and a set of drums.[182] Students danced to a range of popular domestic and international selections, from popular Kenyan musicians such as Daudi Kabaka, famous American singers like Elvis Presley and Chubby Checker, as well as renditions of Cuban *Pachanga*.[183]

Other groups that revolved around music and dance practices were important. The school choir and orchestra, established by Brother Ambrose Hannon shortly after his arrival in 1962, held yearly recitals in the school's dining hall. By 1967, the orchestra included over 120 student

[179] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, December 17, 2019.
[180] Machuria, "Dancing Club," 15.
[181] Stephen Karuru, "Dancing Club," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 26; Machuria, "Dancing Club," 15.
[182] Karuru, "Dancing Club," 26; Michael P. Mbugua Kibunja, "The Dance Band – The Big Four," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 16.
[183] Machuria, "Dancing Club," 15.

members and concerts were often attended by visitors that included parents, local dignitaries, and national politicians.[184] Such concerts included musical performances from students groups with names like Harmonica Duet and Bukusu Singers, as well as the playing of the National Anthem.[185] For one student, such performances made the campus look and sound "as if a great political rally was in session on our compound."[186]

For members of these clubs, music and dance were enjoyable experiences that allowed them to develop important connections with other students and schools, as well as mark themselves as worldly, hip youngsters. Frederick Machuria, the Dancing Club's President in 1968, noted how dances between St. Patrick's and other schools helped to "create a very warm friendship" between students. For Simon Warui, the Dancing Clubs' President in 1976, the club provided "social education through observation and association," teaching members how to be "cats," which he defined as those who were able to keep up with "the latest fashions."[187] Others saw the act of taking part in dances with music from around the world as a way of displaying their worldly cosmopolitanism. Stephen Karuru described the role of the Dancing Club as "essential for one to learn how to dance so as not to look out of place in the world of dancing."[188] Likewise, another student argued that "anyone who makes dancing one of his or her favourite hobbies will always feel at home wherever he/she goes in this new world of music."[189]

Others recalled, wistfully at times, how dances provided them opportunities to meet and socialize with girls. During an interview in Iten in 2019, Richard Kaitany described with a sense

[184] Kamau, "Did You Know," 36; Johnson K. Mwangi, "Our Annual Concert," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 39.
[185] Mwangi, "Our Annual Concert," 39.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Simon N. Warui, "Dancing Club – 1976," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 31-32.
[188] Karuru, "Dancing Club," 26.
[189] Machuria, "Dancing Club," 15.

of joy and happiness, "the young, beautiful girls" that came to the dances.[190] Francis Memia wrote in *The Paten* of how a dance with students from nearby Kapkenda Girls High School in 1967 was "the happiest [time] many people had had for a long time."[191] Elias Komen recalled the experience of going to dances with girls from other schools as "very exciting," telling me how "boys and girls used to enjoy themselves…and eventually some of the boys ended up marrying girls from those schools. So it was a good social gathering."

Another prized social event was the weekly movie night, events which students looked forward to as if it were "a good supper after a hungry day."[192] For Joseph Kiplagat, the day leading up to movie night was "a day of anticipation" as students waited for the "dining hall [to be] suddenly turned into a make-shift movie hall."[193] Selections included James Bond films, *The Sound of Music*, John Wayne films such as *Cahill* and *Big Jake*, Charlton Heston's *The Omega Man,* and the 1951 rendition of *Cry, the Beloved Country* starring Sydney Poitier.[194] Others recalled enjoying comedies staring Gene Wilder and watching the TV-series *Kung Fu*.[195] As one student reminisced, "St. Patrick's students regard films as their main entertainment and a weekend without one seems rather empty."[196]

Joy was found in other, less official, ways as well. As in all school, students broke rules and violated regulations that they saw as onerous or overly restrictive. One of the most fondly remembered of these transgressions was the frequent use of what students referred to as "Mandazi Highway," a pathway at the far end of the school compound used by students to sneak

[190] Richard Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 7, 2019.
[191] Francis K. Memia, "My Most Unforgettable Day in Iten," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 37.
[192] "Patriscope: Films (At Iten)," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 26.
[193] Joseph Kiplagat, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, November 6, 2019.
[194] "Patriscope: Films (At Iten)," 26.
[195] Joseph Kiplagat, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, November 6, 2019.
[196] "Patriscope: Films (At Iten)," 26.

off campus to purchase snacks in town.[197] Writing in *The Paten* in 1968, Kiptoo Kipsutgo recalled an amusing story of how he and a fellow student, referred to only as "Professor Isotopes," left campus in search of *mandazi* (a fried semi-sweet bread popular in Kenya) after an unfulfilling supper meal:

> …we raced down to the market to see if we could get any food in the hotel. Abdallah, the hotel-keeper, greeted used with the news that there were no "Mandazi" and that tea was not ready yet. Greatly disappointed, we left there to try our luck in the next hotel…[T]here was nothing except dry scones and we had to take these as we had no alternative…On approaching the main entrance to the school compound the air around us smelt of an imminent danger…All of a sudden, a torch flashed in front of us and this needed no explanation. We turned and showed two clean pairs of heels simultaneously as the unknown man followed us in full pursuit…Isotopes fell head long to the ground and the scones he had came flying and grazed my right ear. I, taking the lead turned to the left road towards the Chief's office and Isotopes, despite his falling thrice, was close behind me. Our pursuer took the straight road to the Post Office. To be found outside the school compound at the wrong time like that meant an automatic expulsion from school. Turning to my companion I grinned between my teeth, "Stop following me like a dog please; don't you know we will be caught together." He, taking my advice, went his way…I managed to get back to the compound via "Mandazi Highway."[198]

As if to demonstrate the playfulness of publishing such a story in the school magazine, Kipsutgo ended his essay with a plea for readers to "say nothing about this incident lest it should come to the attention of the Principal."[199]

Others found both entertainment and relaxation by taking part in forbidden substances both on and off campus. Founding student Joseph Cheserem, who returned to teach at St. Patrick's in the late 1960s and early 1970s, recalled how students in his geography class took advantage of a school trip to the mountainous Cherangany Hills in 1971 to partake in a round of *busaa*, a homebrew beer common in the region. "We went to the mountain and on our way back…we stopped at Cheptongei, [which] at that time had a *busaa* club," Cheserem recalled. "So

[197] Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020; Joseph Kiplagat, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, November 6, 2019.
[198] Kiptoo Kipsutgo, "The Bell Goes For Supper," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 55.
[199] Ibid.

the students ended up going into the club… And each one of them took one or two full cups…After thirty minutes they all came back…When they got back to school, they were so drunk they did not take any supper. They went straight to sleep…hahaha."[200] Another student, Joseph Munano, wrote in *The Paten* of how he was caught smoking a cigarette on campus, after which he was given a day's worth of manual labor in the school *shamba* (Kiswahili for farm), a consequence which he took advantage of to smoke more cigarettes![201]

Conclusion

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, members of the St. Patrick's community attempted to construct and fashion an image of their school as a social place where notions of unity, development, and academic achievement fused seamlessly with the practice of Harambee. However, the full story if more complex and contested. The ubiquity of hazing practices, ethnic tensions, and the silences of exclusion felt by those who did not fit into either the official school image or student-led initiation traditions serve as reminders that, as with nation-building, visions of a united and cosmopolitanism school community in early independent Kenya could be defined as much by marginalization and violence as by ideas of diversity and togetherness. In addition, examples of joyous activities, such as clubs, dances, and even rule-breaking, demonstrate the ways that Kenyans of the period gave their lives meaning that had nothing to do with the work of Harambee or development.

[200] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 21, 2019.
[201] Joseph Karanjah Munano, "Caught in the Act," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 23.

CHAPTER 4:

'THE HEART OF THE SCHOOL': ACHIEVING HONOR AND PRESTIGE THROUGH SPORT AT ST. PATRICK'S

In mid-May 1967, a group of 460 high school runners gathered at Alliance High School, one of Kenya's most well-known secondary schools, to compete in the Kenya National Boys' Secondary Schools' Cross-Country Championships.[1] The competition, which has since featured dozens of top Kenyan school-aged athletes, many of whom have gone on to represent Kenya in international competitions, was the culmination of a school cross-country season that sports observers often referred to as the "backbone of Kenya's track successes."[2] As one of thirty-three schools in attendance that day, St. Patrick's Secondary School, a small, newly founded school from the rural town of Iten, was relatively unknown.[3] Indeed, writing about the meet in the school magazine several months later, one anonymous team member recounted how "schoolboys from the big Nairobi schools" teased the St. Patrick's team by asking them "where exactly is Iten?"[4] Despite such taunts, team members were confident that a victory would put their team and their school "clearly and distinctly on the map" in the world of Kenyan high school sports.[5]

St. Patrick's, known by their nickname "the Saints," did not disappoint. They dominated the event, with Form II student Paul Cherop, running barefoot, winning the five-mile senior race in a time of 25 minutes and 25 seconds, a superb time on what was described as a tough course filled with "marshy and swampy" terrain.[6] (See Figure 4.1) Other team members – Joseph

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[1] "416 will line up for schools' races," *Daily Nation*, May 18, 1967, 23; "Iten school wins race," *Sunday Nation*, May 21, 1967, 32.
[2] Mohamid Amin and Peter Moll, *Kenya's World-Beating Athletes: A Photohistory by Mohamid Amin* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972), 50.
[3] "Iten school wins race," *Sunday Nation*, May 21, 1967, 32.
[4] "Around The Track – And Over The Stick," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 43.
[5] Ibid.
[6] "Cherop clocks fast time," *Daily Nation*, May 22, 1967, 19; Henry Kiprop Bundotich, "Cross Country," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 41.

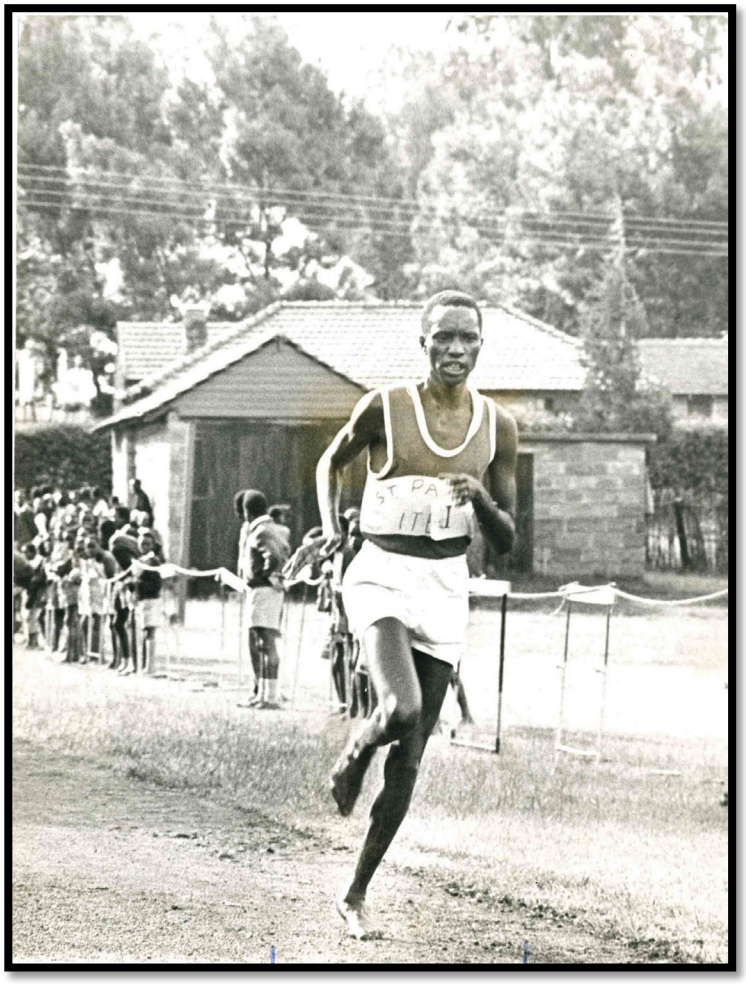

Figure 4.1 – St. Patrick's runner Paul Cherop winning the 1967 national boys' secondary schools' cross-country championships, held at Alliance High School
(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

Kamau, Alfred Chepkoiyo , James Kiplagat, Limo Chelal, Kimutai Boit, Jacob Rutto, and Luka Chebiego – were not far behind, running strong to help win the team championship.[7] Solidifying the school's stellar performance, the junior team notched a third-place finish, making St. Patrick's the only school to place in the top three of both the junior and senior divisions.[8] Following the meet, the Saints were presented with the team trophy, known as the Pfizer Cup, as

[7] "Around The Track – And Over The Stick," 43.
[8] "Ibid, 44; Bundotich, "Cross Country," 42.

well as awards recognizing their individual performances, which they loaded onto the team lorry and brought back to Iten.[9]

Back at St. Patrick's, students responded by imbuing the performances of Cherop and his teammates with several related but distinct meanings that provide insight into the different ways students understood such successes. Writing in *The Paten* at the end of the academic year, one student highlighted the personal honor that such an achievement imbued on Cherop, describing his victory as making him the "brightest star" of the school year.[10] Another student, emphasizing the institutional prestige embedded within the performance, wrote that the team's victory earned the school "greater fame than ever."[11] A third, Harris Mungai Kamau, expressed the hope that such acts presaged the development of transnational connections for the school and its athletes, voicing his belief that St. Patrick's was home to "boys who may very well qualify for the Olympic Games in 1968," a reference to the upcoming Mexico City Olympics to be held in October of the following year.[12]

As these examples suggest, and as St. Patrick's students and graduates communicated time and time again through both the school's written record and oral histories, sports were an important avenue by which St. Patrick's students sought to express their faith in the utility of achievement. More precisely, sports were the central avenue by which many St. Patrick's students of the period sought to achieve both individual honor and institutional prestige. Through their efforts, St. Patrick's became one of Kenya's premiere sporting institutions of the period. As

[9] "Iten School wins race," 32; Bundotich, "Cross Country," 42.
[10] "Around The Track – And Over The Stick," 43-44.
[11] Joseph Chepkiyeng Arap Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 6.
[12] Harris Mungai Kamau, "Did you know?," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 36.

a result, sports and games became, as former St. Patrick's volleyball player Hezekiah Sawe told me during an interview in 2019, "the heart of the school."

Within this intense culture of competitive achievement, sports were actualized by students and faculty at St. Patrick's in four distinct ways.[13] First, they were seen as a teaching tool, allowing for the creation of an embodied pedagogy that prioritized values such as discipline, strength, toughness, and competitiveness, all of which were positioned as the path to achievement and student formation. Second, sporting achievement acted as a vehicle for the attainment of individual social honor and institutional prestige, giving St. Patrick's students – at times quite literally – a pedestal from which to gain social standing that many saw as setting themselves apart from their generational peers in competing schools. Third, sports were an instrument by which students created transnational connections and lives, allowing them to imagine a place for themselves in the world on a global scale. Fourth, sporting achievements provided avenues for St. Patrick's students to question social stereotypes related to notions of ethnicity, race, and class, in the process reshaping the landscape of competitive school sport and carving out new avenues for the attainment of institutional prestige and individual honors.

Yet, sports were not a panacea. Taking part in both intraschool and interschool competitions provided St. Patrick's students with a way to exercise their agency, but it also exposed them to coercive and controlling practices by coaches and administrators. It gave them a platform to develop reputations for individual and institutional prestige and social honor, while at the same time bringing them face to face with the realities of failure, defeat, and disappointment. It allowed them ways to imagine and live transnational lives but created distance between

[13] Though students at St. Patrick's used both "football" and "soccer," I have chosen to use "football" because it was the common term used by students and is the most common term in Kenya today.

themselves and their loved ones. Through it all, sport became a defining component of life for St. Patrick's students, both during their school careers and into their elder years.

Combining a range of sources that include oral histories, student magazines, national Kenyan newspapers, and local newspapers from the United States, this chapter makes two important interventions in the historiography of post-colonial Kenya. First, by demonstrating the emergence of St. Patrick's as one of Kenya's premiere sports institutions of the period, this chapter establishes the central role of schools, St. Patrick's chief among them, in the rise of Kenya as one of Africa's most dominant sporting nations.[14] Africanist sports historians have long recognized the importance of schools, especially those founded by missionaries, in shaping African sporting cultures and practices. Indeed, the role of school sport in religious formation, colonial administration, and youth development in Africa has been documented by several historians.[15] Yet, few scholars have sought to explore the other ways that African students have utilized sport in their lives.[16] This chapter expands this work by demonstrating the place of sport in "the historical texture of everyday life" at St. Patrick's, while also showing how schools underpinned the rise of Kenyan sporting success in the decades after independence.[17]

Second, highlighting the crucial link between sporting achievement, honor, and prestige at St. Patrick's adds the study of African school sport to scholarly conversations of how ideas of

[14] For a brief synopsis of the rise of Kenya as one of Africa's most important sports nations, see John Bale and Joe Sang, *Kenyan Running: Movement Culture, Geography, and Global Change* (Frank Cass: London, 1996), 17-47.
[15] In Kenya see Tom Cunningham, "'These Our Games': Sport and the Church of Scotland Mission to Kenya, c. 1907–1937," *History in Africa* 43 (2016): 259-288; Matthew Carotenuto, "Grappling with the Past: Wrestling and Performative Identity in Kenya," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30, no 16 (2013): 1889-1902; Michelle Sikes, *Kenya's Running Women: A History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2023), 1-22
[16] Jessica M. Chapman, "Running to School: US-Kenyan Athletic Pipelines in the 1970s," *Diplomatic History* 48, no. 1 (2024): 20-47; Roderick Willis, "A Historical Narrative of High School Athletics Amongst 'Coloured' Communities in Cape Town, South Africa, with Special Reference to the Western Province Senior Schools Sports Union, 1956-1972," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 39, no. 2 (2022): 174-192; Roderick Willis, "Reconstructing a Socio-Political Narrative of High School Athletics in the Oppressed Communities of the Greater Cape Peninsular, South Africa, 1973-1994," *South African Historical Journal* 73, no. 4 (2021): 878-902.
[17] Emmanuel Akyeampong and Charles Ambler, "Leisure in African History: An Introduction," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 1, Special Issue: Leisure in African History (2002): 1.

honor and prestige have shaped African worldviews during the 20th Century. While historians have demonstrated the central role of notions of heroism and respectability in African understandings of honor, much of this scholarship has focused on pre-colonial and colonial African societies.[18] Moving the geographic and temporal window to post-colonial western Kenya calls attention to how African students were able to achieve notable levels of what Peter Alegi has described as "social honor through individual sporting skills."[19]

'I like to run': Sport and its Uses in Post-Colonial Kenya

The 1960s were an important decade for sports in Kenya, as it was a time when achievement in sports had become an effective way for newly independent Africans to project positive and prestigious images of themselves and their communities on national and international stages.[20] It was during the 1960s and early 1970s that Kenyan athletes such as Seraphino Antao, Wilson Kiprugut, Kipchoge Keino, Benjamin Kogo, Naftali Temu, and others burst onto the international stage with a series of "world-beating" performances at elite, international competitions such as the Olympics and All-Africa Games, establishing Kenyans and East Africans as synonymous with competitive running achievement.[21]

Kenyans had success in other sports as well, with boxing providing an important case. Introduced to Kenya during the early colonial era as a predominantly white sport intended for

[18] John Illife, *Honour in African History* (Cambrdige: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Elisabeth McMahon, *Slavery and Emancipation in Islamic East Africa: From Honor to Respectability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
[19] Alegi, *African Soccerscapes*, 16.
[20] Hikabwa D. Chipande and Davies Banda, "Sports and Politics in Postcolonial Africa," in Shanguhyia M., Falola T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1263-1283; Paul Darby, "'Let us rally around the flag': Football, Nation-Building, and Pan-Africanism in Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana," *The Journal of African History* 54, no. 2 (2013): 221-246; Peter Alegi, *African Soccerscapes: How a Continent Changes the World's Game* (Athens: Ohio Univ Press, 2010), 54-77; William J. Baker, "Political Games: The Meaning of International Sport for Independent Africa," in *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History*, ed. William J. Baker and James A. Mangan (New York: Africana, 1987), 272-294
[21] Amin and Moll, *Kenya's World-Beating Athletes:* 50; *The African Running Revolution*, ed Dave Prokop (World Publications: Mountain View, CA, 1975), 65; John Bale and Joe Sang, *Kenyan Running,* 8-15.

members of the British military and the sons of settlers, during the 1950s boxing was seen by colonial administrators and British youth workers as a tool for disciplining the colony's growing urban population and ameliorating the tensions sparked by the Mau Mau revolution. In response to increased opportunities for participation, African interest in the sport skyrocketed, with Black fighters effectively Africanizing the sport and emerging as Kenya's best fighters by the late-colonial era.[22] Following independence, and often buoyed by the belief in competitive boxing success as a tool for social mobility, top African fighters invested huge amounts of time and energy in the sport, with pugilists like Philip Waruinge and Stephen Muchoki regularly taking home international honors.[23] While many Kenyan fighters failed to garner substantial material wealth or social mobility from their achievements, their efforts made Kenya the most decorated African country in amateur boxing from the 1960s to the 1980s.[24] Inspired by these successes, sports observers even developed a catchy nickname for the country's pugilists, dubbing them the "Hit Squad."

High-level sporting achievements in these sports were often appropriated by state leaders and promoted as manifestations of Harambee nation-building, buttressing a national culture that placed immense faith in the value of sports achievements. As President Jomo Kenyatta said in a speech at Nairobi's Uhuru Park in preparation for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, such efforts were intended to "show that our model of Harambee" would demonstrate "that people of all creeds and colours can pull together" and that Kenya could be "an example to the rest of the world."[25] Two years later, in the weeks leading up to the Jamaica Commonwealth Games, where Kenya

[22] Dawson McCall, "'A Hero Who Made This Country Proud': Boxing, Nation, and the Politics of Sport in Kenya, ca 1950–1980," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* (October 2023): DOI: 10.1080/09523367.2023.2267451.
[23] Ibid, 2-3.
[24] McCall, "'A Hero Who Made This Country Proud'," 2-3.
[25] "Prime Minister Presents Kenya Olympic Colours," *East African Standard*, October 1, 1964, 12; Francis Noronha, *Kipchoge of Kenya* (Nairobi: Elimu Publishers, 1970), 47.

would net eight medals in athletics and boxing, Kenyatta reiterated this message. "[A]s a young, strong country which has now gained a world-wide reputation in amateur sports," the Kenyan President wrote in the *East African Standard*, "my government is aware of the important part sport is playing in building our nation and I shall see to it that all Kenyans are encouraged to take greater interest in all sports and physical culture."[26]

Similar rhetoric was applied to school sports, where national school sporting events were often positioned as having the potential to contribute to nation-building efforts, nurture up and coming athletes, and buttress the prestige of Kenya. Indeed, less than a week after Paul Cherop and the Saints cross-country team won the 1967 national secondary schools' cross-country title, Kenya's Director of Community Development, J.G. Njenga, reminded a group of youth coaches and sports officers gathered at the Kabete-based Kenya Institute of Administration that "the Government attaches great importance to sport," and urged them to practice "good coaching" and unite in "a collective effort" to insure "Kenya can keep her name among the top African countries."[27] Others, such as Vice President Daniel arap Moi, expressed the belief that sports added "prestige to a nation," while at the same time "cementing national unity."[28]

Yet, not everyone saw sport strictly through the eyes of Harambee and nation-building. Experiences with sport in early post-colonial Kenya represented a broad array of objectives. Athletes often used sport for individual motivations, such as establishing their own personal prestige or achieving a modicum of social mobility, even if it meant leaving Kenya to do so. Sabina Chebichi, who won a bronze medal at the 1974 Commonwealth Games at the age of fourteen, expressed how her achievements were valuable because they inferred upon her a

[26] "Message from President', *East African Standard*, July 21, 1966, 1.
[27] "Sports officers' course at K.I.A.," *East African Standard*, May 23, 1967.
[28] "Sports described as 'unifying force'," *East African Standard*, July 19, 1972, 5.

special social status.[29] "I like to run," she told a reporter from the *East African Standard*. "It's a good feeling to be better than the rest. I like people to point at me…and talk about me because of my running."[30] Others, such as boxer John Olulu, who won a gold medal at the All-Africa Games in Brazzaville in 1965, saw his efforts as a means of moving up the ranks as a professional fighter, telling Cyprian Fernandes of the *Daily Nation,* "I have come this far by practicing hard. I am determined to make a success of my professional career."[31] For others, success in sport was often a way of developing transnational connections to gain access to education networks in other countries. According to scholar Jepkorir Rose Chepyator-Thomson, who was Kenya's top school-girl runner of the mid-1970s and later became one of the first Kenyan female runners to earn an athletics scholarship to a university in the United States, where she competed at University of Wisconsin, Kenyan runners like her who migrated for scholarship opportunities for "educational purposes," which they later used "to attain socio-economic mobility upon their return to Kenya."[32]

Such a diverse array of views regarding the utility of sport in early post-colonial Kenya demonstrate that, in addition to the political uses of sport, many Kenyan sportswomen and men saw their experiences, and the achievements gained through them, as a way of shaping their lives and realizing their dreams and aspirations. In the process, they gave rise to one of Africa's most well-known sports cultures. These experiences are reminders that, as Kenda Mutongi has written,

[29] "Coast hopes to see 'wonder girl,'" *East African Standard,* July 6, 1973, 16; "Glory and gold for Kenyans," *East African Standard*, January 30, 1974, 1.
[30] Ralph Hawkins, "Kenya's Petticoat Princess," *East African Standard – Weekend Standard*, February 8, 1974, 10.
[31] "Olulo Beats Ghana Ace," *Daily Nation*, July 24, 1965, 15; "Waruinge and Olulu Pip Tunisians for Titles," *Daily Nation*, July 26, 1965, 15; Cyprian Fernandes, "Olulu to Join Moore," *Daily Nation*, October 18, 1965, 15.
[32] J.R. Chepyator-Thomson, "Kenyan Scholar-Runners in the United States: Their Thirst for Education and Intercollegiate Experiences," *AVANTE* 9, no. 3 (2003): 32.

despite the ubiquitous Harambee rhetoric of the period, Kenyans in the years after independence had "interests that transcended issues of decolonization and the nation-state."[33]

'An important part of education': Sport, Embodied Pedagogy, and Teaching Competitive Achievement at St. Patrick's, Iten

Such athletic cultures, in which sporting practices were seen as valuable tools for the realization of important individual, social, and political goals, resonated intensely at St. Patrick's. One of the most common ways that sport manifested itself on campus was through its use as a teaching tool, where it was seen as a way for students to physically embody the school's most important values and ideals. This embodied pedagogy, which education scholars have described as "learning that joins body and mind in a physical and mental act of knowledge construction," operated in a similar way as the teaching approach known as learner centered pedagogy (LCP) that would become popular in global education circles in later decades.[34] The embodied pedagogy of sport was a consistent approach to student formation at St. Patrick's during this period. Values such as discipline, strength, toughness, and competitiveness, all of which were intended to manifest themselves in a will to win – a combination of values euphemistically referred to as "character" – were positioned as core lessons to be learned and expressed through sport. As one anonymous St. Patrick's student wrote in *The Patrician* in the mid-1970s, "games"

[33] Kenda Mutongi, "The "Airlift" Generation, Economic Aspiration, and Secondary School Education in Kenya, 1940-1960," *History of Education Quarterly* 63 (2023): 381.
[34] David J. Nguyen and Jay B. Larson, "Don't Forget About the Body: Exploring the Curricular Possibilities of Embodied Pedagogy," *Innovative Higher Education* 40 (2015): 332. For LCP, see Frances Vavrus and Lesley Bartlett, *Teaching in tension: International pedagogies, national policies, and teachers' practices in Tanzania*, (Boston: Sense Publishers, 2013), 5. Vavrus and Bartlett describe LCP as emerging from the belief that knowledge is produced "through interactions and experiences among learners and through reflection on one's own ideas." According to this approach, "knowledge is not external to the learner," but is created by interacting with both prior knowledge and learner experiences. According to Vavrus and Bartlett, "From this perspective, knowledge must be engaged rather than 'delivered' or 'transmitted.'"

were "an important part of education. What a boy learned in the football field…was [as] important as what he learned in the classroom."[35]

According to members of the school's founding generation, sports existed on campus from the school's inception, with students required to participate in daily games periods in which they trained and competed in a small selection of sports.[36] Early students took a deep interest and demonstrated an avid enthusiasm for sports. Recounting his arrival in Iten in July of 1962, Brother Ambrose Hannon recalled the eagerness and skill of students in being able to strike a "sliotar," a ball used in the Irish game of hurling, during demonstrations on campus.[37] Founding student Andrew Chemweno noted how students "were determined" to participate and excel in volleyball, football, and athletics during his time there between 1961 and 1964.[38] By mid-1964, according to a national school inspector who visited in July of that year, students were taking part in "a vigorous sporting and athletic life" constituting both intra-school and inter-school competitions in at least four sports – football, volleyball, field hockey, and athletics.[39]

While early students showed great interest in sport, the influence of the Patrician Brothers was equally important in the rapid expansion of the school's sports culture.[40] Especially important was the triumvirate of Ambrose Hannon, Simeon Geraghty, and Marcellus Broderick, all of whom arrived in Iten between 1962 and 1968, and all of whom organized and coached a

[35] "Farewell to Brother Simeon," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 36.
[36] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, October 8, 2019, Eldoret, Kenya; Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, September 21, 2019, Iten, Kenya.
[37] Ambrose Hannon, "The Early Years by Bro. Ambrose J. Hannon," August 26, 2021 (unpublished manuscript transcribed by Bro. Colm O'Connell; Many thanks to Patrick Ongus for providing access to this document).
[38] Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, October 8, 2019, Eldoret, Kenya.
[39] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[40] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, September 21, 2019; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, October 8, 2019, Eldoret, Kenya; Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, September 24, 2019, Iten, Kenya; Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, October 16, 2019; Hezekiah Sawe, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020. Dominic Yator, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020. The Patrician Brothers are cited in numerous articles in the school magazines as being the driving force behind the school's sports culture.

number of the school's teams, Geraghty making a mark in tennis and athletics and Broderick nurturing the school's volleyball program.[41] Later years would see the arrival of Brother William Lynch, who coached tennis, and Brother Colm O'Connell, who started his coaching career in football, but would come to be known by the 1980s and 1990s as one of Kenya's most successful athletics coaches. In addition to seeking out students with good academic standing, in order to grow the school's sports capacity, the Brothers actively recruited students with athletic talent.[42] In addition, government officials encouraged the school to "look for talented boys in various fields of sports who could be encouraged to form clubs to train others."[43]

Kenyan teachers and secular foreign staff also played key roles in developing and expanding the school's sports offerings and culture. James Tirop, one of the school's first influential Kenyan coaches, served as the school's games master for two years and founded the school's first competitive interschool field hockey team.[44] According to Ernest Katainy, the captain of the field hockey team in the late 1960s, Tirop was "the one who popularized hockey [at St. Patrick's]." Other secular teaching staff, such as Pauline Healy and Desmond Healy, Edward Nichols, and by the early-1970s Norman Thomson, Mike Singoei, and Peter Mullin, coached and aided in the construction of playing fields, courts, and other training facilities.

Daily sports were organized in a hierarchical way and designed to ensure that all students took part, while also funneling the most promising athletes to the school's competitive interscholastic teams. For some, such as the long-distance runners, the sports day started at dawn,

[41] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, September 21, 2019; Andrew Chemweno, interview with author, October 8, 2019, Eldoret, Kenya; Yusuf Kaitany, interview with author, September 24, 2019, Iten, Kenya.
[42] Paul Cherop, interview with author, February 15, 2019; Mike Murei, interview with author, February 25, 2020, Kapsaga, Kenya; Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, October 16, 2019; Dominic Yator, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020.
[43] KME, SS/134 St. Patrick's Secondary School-Iten Inspection Reports, 1963-1965, 3/1.
[44] Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," 1967, p 6; Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, December 17, 2019, Kapteren, Kenya

with athletes rising at the chilly hour of 6:00 am to take part in training sessions that would see them logging dozens of miles per week on Iten's muddy roads and red-dirt paths, their training routes taking them from the school's campus to the nearby Sing'ore forest and then to the local Kamariny Stadium.[45] By the early-1970s, according to then-headmaster Brother Simeon Geraghty, there were "around 50 boys doing a cross-country run at seven in the morning."[46] Other sports teams, such as basketball, football, field hockey, volleyball, and tennis all took part in morning training sessions of their own.[47] In addition, following the school day, all students were required to take part in ninety minute games sessions, which began around 4 p.m. and included technical training, aerobic and strength sessions, and intersquad scrimmages for specific sports.[48]

While students generally chose which sport they wanted to take part in, the school's coaches and administrators often directed those who they thought had potential to join certain teams, with the top performers making up the school's competitive squads and the lower teams acting as training grounds, what are often referred to as farm teams, for younger athletes who would later move up to the top teams. The leading teams in each sport would compete in interschool matches against other schools.[49] Describing the system in the mid-1970s, one St. Patrick's coach explained the purpose of this system as the identification of capable and talented athletes. "We take games seriously at St. Patrick's," Brother Colm O'Connell told sports reporter Benson Oduke of the *Sunday Nation* newspaper. "The moment a student joins our school we

[45] Paul Cherop, interview with author, February 15, 2019; Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, October 16, 2019.
[46] Bruce Tulloh, "'She's run 4 min. 20 sec. for 1,500 metres – and when she takes that 100 lb. sack of maize off her back, there's no knowing what she'll do," *The Guardian*, May 16, 1972, 26.
[47] Ibid; David Ameyo Aywah, "Basketball," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 29.
[48] Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020; Aywah, "Basketball," 29.
[49] Hezekiah Sawe, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020; Dominic Yator, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020.

establish which game he is talented in and henceforth he gets coaching. So we have constant flow of talent from the lower forms when students in the Fourth Form depart."[50]

Whether on the school's first teams or in the farm system, students experienced highly organized and energetic practices. Aggrey Massawa, who served as the school captain and played basketball and soccer in the mid-1970s, described the afternoon games period in *The Patrician*:

> If it is games time, over at the basketball court, running up and down and demonstrating what to do is Mr. Thomson. At the football pitch is either Mr. Foster or Brother Colm. At the volleyball court is the coach of our nationally successful team, [Brother Marcellus Broderick]. Visit the hockey pitch and you will find Mr. Singoei. Come back to the lawn tennis court and you will find Brother William.[51]

Others, such as the track and field team captain Mike Boit, described his team's practice time as highly organized and serious affairs. "The top sprinters, Njoroge, Wanjohi, and Sang could be seen dashing across the field," Boit wrote in *The Paten* in 1968. "On the middle of the field Chemweno and Limo could be seen thrusting their javelin into the air as if they meant to pierce the clouds. Outside the track one could not fail to see Kaitany, Rop, and Mwangi swinging and dancing with a discus…All this athletic practice ran smoothly under the sponsorship of Brother Simeon [Geraghty] whose conviction inspired all the athletes."[52]

Despite such rhetoric lionizing the conviction, commitment, and hard work on display during these sessions, competitive games were not for everyone. Describing the central role that competitive sporting achievement, along with academic achievement, played in the school's culture during the period, Peter Mullin, who taught geography and coached the athletics team from 1973 to 1976, lamented how the emphasis on sports at times ignored the interests of non-athletes. "At Iten," he wrote to me in an email exchange in January of 2020, "if you were not

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[50] Benson Oduke, "End of another successful year," *Sunday Nation*, October 23, 1977, 35.
[51] Aggrey Massawa, "Report from the school captain," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 9.
[52] Mike Boit, "Athletics," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 6.

bright or sporty, there was little for you."[53] Indeed, some students broke rules and skipped sports periods to find time for other interests. Writing in *The Paten* in 1967, Mark Lawrence Kanyingi recalled how he ditched games time and lied to the school's headmaster for a chance to read D.H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, a book that had previously been banned in several countries due to its explicitly sexual content.[54] In the early 1970s, Hezekiah Sawe recalled how, after trying to avoid the difficult training of the first-string volleyball team, he and a fellow teammate were ordered, by Brother Marcellus Broderick, to run eight laps around the school's sports fields in order to teach them that skipping practice would not be tolerated.[55]

While some students sought refuge from the school's compulsory games, for many, compulsory sport was a way to instill important educational values. According to Mike Singoei, who coached the field hockey team in the 1970s, the purpose of sport at St. Patrick's was to promote discipline, responsibility, and competitiveness, while above all providing students a platform for achievement.[56] Former coach Peter Mullin expressed a similar understanding of the purpose of sport on campus, recalling that "the school concentrated its efforts on sports as a means of character building and enforcing discipline through training."[57] Writing in the school magazine at the end of the 1968 school year, Joseph Gitau and John Kinuthia, members of the basketball team, wrote of how the sport taught them "stamina, dexterity, and patience," values which they said would help them to ensure that "victory will be ours."[58]

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[53] Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020.
[54] Mark Lawrence Kanyingi, "'Lies Do Not Pay'…Is It True?," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 15. As an aside, as in many countries, discussions of banning sexually explicit art is ongoing in Kenya, see Abigail Arunga, "AUNGA: It's time to quit policing Sauti Sol's colourful 'Melanin'," *Nation¸* November 27, 2017, https://nation.africa/kenya/life-and-style/showbiz/arunga-it-s-time-to-quit-policing-sauti-sol-s-colourful-melanin--481340#google_vignette.
[55] Hezekiah Sawe, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020.
[56] Mike Singoei, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, January 16, 2020.
[57] Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020.
[58] Joseph Gitau and John P. Kinuthia, "Basketball at St. Patrick's, Iten," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 11.

One representative example of how this played out in the lives of students can be seen in one of the school's most important intraschool sporting activities, an annual distance race held for incoming students at the beginning of each school year. A compulsory event for the school's new arrivals, the competition consisted of a race around the school's campus that coaches and administrators used to identify potentially talented incoming runners. In addition, the race functioned as a place for new students to demonstrate values such as discipline, strength, toughness, and a commitment to winning.

Patrick Kimunyu, writing in *The Paten* several years after taking part in one such race, described the event as a rousing and challenging affair. "Runners ran round the first lap enthusiastically…Second lap was comparatively slow and before its completion a few runners had fallen off," he wrote. Highlighting the values that all sportsmen should embody, Kimunyu continued, "The third lap showed the five principles of a sportsman…aptitude, stamina, strength, temperament and physique." According to Kimunyu, the event was just as important for onlookers. "The spectators were soon to know who the real athlete was, and in our case, a real determined student," he described. "They, the spectators, rose up…to get a clear sight of the panting runners; and they could see very vividly beads of sweat forming on their black brows, jaws and ribs protruding with no flesh to cover them but mere skin. Every step forward meant a day towards their glory or doom in life."[59]

While Kimunyu's description emphasizes the potential that such races held for students to demonstrate their toughness and strength as they competed for the "glory" of victory, others remembered these events differently. For Richard Kaitany, who came to St. Patrick's in 1974, the race was more survival than celebration. "When freshmen arrived…all freshmen [were] put to

[59] Patrick Kimunyu, "Four West Class – 1967," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 8.

run," Kaitany recalled during an interview in Iten in 2019. "And to make sure that we run, they would put the sophomores along the back… They would hit you. They had whips. This was so people…show their talents. Not to hide. So, if you are running good, nobody would hit you…So, because I didn't want anyone to hit me, I took to the front."[60] According to Kaitany, after winning the race, he was told to report to cross-country practice the next day. "I saw that…this is serious business," Kaitany continued. "I didn't know what will happen if I don't go…I decided to show up."[61]

Though they differ in key ways, when taken together, the accounts of Kimunyu and Kaitany are instructive and provide important insight into the nature of the school's system of compulsory sport. While such events clearly provided an opportunity for students to demonstrate their athletic abilities and competitiveness, they were also key venues for both school leaders and student observers to identify, create, and celebrate a specific set of ideas by which they sought to define themselves and their school. This act of knowledge construction, expressed through the embodied practice of sport, gave pride of place to values like discipline, strength, toughness, and competitiveness. Students were not only encouraged to celebrate these ideals, but transformed themselves, through sport, into active participants in the process of creating this knowledge.

At the same time, the compulsory, and according to Kaitany, threatening nature of some of these events, demonstrates the physically disciplining and coercive nature of some of the school's daily sporting practices. Though the school's written record and oral histories are largely silent on important questions, such as how badly the slowest runners were whipped during these races or how the competition's losers were treated by their fellow students, the deeply coercive nature of the way sports were used by school leaders to impose some of the

[60] Richard Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 7, 2019.
[61] Ibid.

school's embodied pedagogies highlight how, at certain moments on campus, students' bodies were not entirely their own. Above all, however, such events demonstrate the central role of sport as a place where students were encouraged and required, both by their coaches and fellow students, to strive for and express a commitment to competitive achievement.

'To rise above everyone else': Athletics Achievement, Individual Honor, and Institutional Prestige at St. Patrick's

If compulsory sport was where students sought to embody competitiveness, it was in interschool sport that competitiveness was transformed into achievement, honor, and prestige. The sport where this process was most thoroughly realized was in athletics.[62] Time and time again, members of the St. Patrick's community expressed a deep faith in the idea that running faster, jumping higher, or throwing farther than their opposition conferred upon them and their school a high degree of individual social honor and institutional prestige. Indeed, as Mike Boit, one of the school's standout runners from the late-1960s, told me during an interview at Kenyatta University in 2019, "To be a student from St. Patrick's always meant you rise above everyone else…Athletics offered an opportunity to demonstrate this."[63]

St. Patrick's athletes lived up to these expectations in droves. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, St. Patrick's became the most successful institution in school athletics in the country, garnering numerous local, provincial, and national accolades in the emerging landscape of Kenyan secondary school athletics. Throughout this process, athletes from the school played major roles in several seminal events in the history of athletics in early post-colonial Kenya.

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[62] The term athletics is generally used to describe a group of competitive running, jumping, throwing, and walking sports that include cross-country, road racing, track and field, and racewalking. However, in Kenya, as in much of the world, athletics is often used colloquially to refer to track and field. Because of this, throughout this chapter, I will use the term athletics to refer track and field. In addition, while track and field is often broken up into the indoor and outdoor seasons, there was no indoor track and field in Kenyan school sports during the 1960s and 1970s, therefore, athletics will only be used to refer to the outdoor version of the sport.

[63] Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, October 16, 2019.

Saints were central players in the first iteration of provincial and national schools' championships in both cross-country and track and field. They were part of the first group of Kenyan athletes to have consistent international success in regional, continental, and global running events during the 1960s and early-1970s. They were among the first generation of Kenyan runners to receive athletics scholarships to US colleges and universities during the early-to-mid 1970s. For a nation like Kenya, famous for its success in cross-country and athletics, the central role of St. Patrick's in the emergence of the country's athletics culture demonstrates the power of local institutions in processes of national, regional, and global historical change.

In cross-country, a sport in which individuals take part in long-distance races over courses consisting of trails, fields, and natural obstacles (such as rivers, mud, and logs), the school's team took part in a highly competitive schedule of competitions during the first term of the school year. While early St. Patrick's teams only participated in the Rift Valley Provincial and Kenya National Secondary Schools' Cross-Country Championships, most years consisted of the Saints competing in several invitational meetings in the months leading up to the championships.[64] At invitational meets, which were hosted by opposing schools or sports organizations, St. Patrick's competed against secondary schools, colleges, and a selection of amateur, military, and parastatal teams often comprised of elite school and internationally competitive runners.[65]

[64] For example, in 1967, the Saints only ran in the National Cross-Country Championships, while in 1968, they only participated in the Rift Valley Provincial Championship and the National Championships. By 1976, early season cross-country competitions consisted of meets at places like Egerton College and Iten's Location Field. See, "Around The Track – And Over The Stick," 43 and James Kiplagat and Paul Cherop, "The Cross-Country," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 7; "Cross-Country Report," *The Patrician*, St. Patrick's High School, Iten, October 29th, 1976, 19.

[65] Many of Kenya's first generation of elite international runners, such as Kipchoge Keino, Wilson Kiprugut, and Naftali Temu, competed for amateur teams that were sponsored by government agencies, such as Kenya Prisons, Kenya Army, Kenya Police, and other. See Bale and Sang, *Kenya Running*.

Invitational cross-country meets provided an opportunity for St. Patrick's athletes to compete against some of Kenya's top distance runners, putting the school runners in the conversation as among the country's most prestigious young athletes. Writing in *The Guardian*, former 5,000 metres European Champion Bruce Tulloh, who was in Kenya as a teacher and coach during the early 1970s, described one such race hosted by St. Patrick's in Iten in early-1972. Attended by over 600 people, the meet included school teams from as far away as Kabianga, one of Kenya's top cross-country programs of the period. "They start off with a rush, raising a cloud of red dust as they go," Tulloh wrote. "The going is hard, with steep drops into hot gullies and climbs that would be bad enough at sea level, let alone eight thousand feet higher. The boys from Kabianga…can place no one in the first ten, but a rather undersized Iten boy called [Rafael] Kigen runs the five miles in 25 min, 18 sec…With another four years at St. Patrick's he might be a gold medallist (sic) in 1976."[66]

Such performances by St. Patrick's cross-country runners were common during the period, even when competing against seasoned international competition in meets often comprising dozens of teams. For example, at one meet organized by the Nairobi Amateur Athletic Association in early-1971, St. Patrick's finished third to the teams from Kenya Prisons and the General Service Unit.[67] According to the *East African Standard*, William Koskei, the Saints top runner, who placed third overall, was beaten only by Paul Mose and Ben Jipcho, both of whom had run for Kenya three years earlier at the Mexico City Olympics.[68] Two years later, in February of 1973, Saints Rafael Kigen and Joseph Kemei placed third and fourth individually at the Egerton College Open Cross-Country Meet, helping St. Patrick's to a first place finish out

[66] The comment referring to 1976 is a reference to the Montreal Olympics, which Kenya, and much of Africa, ended up boycotting. See Tulloh, "'She's run 4 min. 20 sec. for 1,500 metres," 26.
[67] "Victory again for Mose," *East African Standard*, February 15, 1971, 12.
[68] Ibid.

of 17 teams in a "grueling" six-and-a-half-mile race held in Njoro.[69] Later that same season, while running at Kenyatta University, St. Patrick's finished third out of a field of 40 teams, including a Kenya Prisons group that consisted of elite international runners such as Evans Mogaka, who competed for Kenya in the 5,000 metres run at the 1972 Olympics.[70]

In addition to providing high-level experience racing against some of Kenya's most talented athletes, competing and excelling in these public events, where hundreds of people could see their performances, often stirred striking emotional responses and provided a venue for Saints athletes to honor both themselves and their schools in a highly public forum. Writing in *The Paten,* St. Patrick's runner James Kiplagat described running in a race held in 1968 in Iten, during which he experienced a range of emotions, from excitement to nervousness to self-fulfillment and pride:

> A whistle was blown and at once there was a rush like a stampede of wild rhinos. I could feel a thudding of my heart which made me feel as if I were too heavy. We ran through some thorny thickets in which I was injured, but because I had no time to take out the thorn, I just persevered. Halfway we came to a river-crossing which was the worst part of the course. Many tried to jump right over to the other bank but failed. They dropped in the water like calves being dipped…After a while we were climbing the hill. Some village boys would join us and compare their speed with ours. In fact, they were faster because of their freshness. Meanwhile we were in the homeward journey and had half a mile to go. A few minutes had passed when I saw some of the runners on the finishing point. Now I was filled with strength and I ran as fast as my legs could carry me and at last I finished, being almost breathless.[71]

Other St Patrick's runners wrote of how satisfying it was to take part in races in which "the *wanainchi* (sic) (Kiswahili for citizens) lined the course for the runners," while the "exciting race and close finish was enjoyed by all who watched."[72] (See Figure 4.2) Such commentary

[69] "Sirma wins at Njoro," *East African Standard*, February 19, 1973, 9.
[70] "Kiingi surprises Mose in cross-country," *East African Standard*, March 19, 1973, 10.
[71] Kiplagat and Cherop, "The Cross-Country," 7.
[72] Moses Kamar and Jacob Sum, "Cross-Country Report," *The Patrician*, St. Patrick's High School, Iten, October 29th, 1976, 19.

highlights how, in addition to being a venue for competitive achievement, excelling in front of large crowds of fans and everyday people could instill a sense of excitement, pride, and prestige in participating athletes.

Following the invitational portion of each season, St. Patrick's, along with school cross-country teams across the country, would embark on a series of District and Provincial Championships, in which they competed for both individual and team honors against other secondary schools. From there, top runners from each Provincial Championship would qualify to compete on an inter-provincial level for their respective province in the National Secondary

Figure 4.2 – Kenyan *wananchi* lining the course as runners near the finish of a cross-country race held in Iten, ca 1970.
(Image courtesy of Brother Paul Brennan)

Schools' Cross-Country Championships.[73] Among Kenya's seven provinces, Rift Valley has been recognized by sports observes from the beginning of Kenyan independence as home to the country's top running talent. According to Charles Disney, the sports editor for the *East African Standard* in the early 1960s, performances from the Rift Valley were "decidedly better, in the main, than those put up in other parts of Kenya."[74] By the early-1970s, so many athletes from the Rift Valley had achieved international success that Kenyan sports observers had dubbed the region "the granary" of Kenyan running talent.[75] Even today, scholars and writers of Kenyan running, such as historian Michele Sikes, regularly describe the Rift Valley highlands as Kenya's "renowned hub of distance running."[76] (See Figure 4.3)

Competing in Rift Valley Province, therefore, meant that, as with their invitational schedule, St. Patrick's cross-country runners regularly competed against some of the most talented young athletes in Kenya. The inaugural Rift Valley Secondary Schools' Cross-Country Championships, hosted by St. Patrick's in 1968, provides a representative example. Running in Iten against a field that included athletes such as Amos Biwott and Michael Chumo from nearby Lelmokwo, the Saints won both the junior and senior races, with Paul Cherop taking first in the senior race and schoolmate Kiptanui Sirma doing the same in the junior division.[77] As a measure of the top level athletes competing in Rift Valley school cross-country of the period, less than six months later, Lelmokwo's Biwott, who finished a close second to Cherop, claimed a gold medal

[73] In 1967 and 1968, the winning school team from each Provincial Championship represented their Province in the National Championships. In 1969, the format was changed to a system in which the top individual runners from each Provincial Championship would be chosen to form a team to represent their Province in the National Championships.
[74] Charles Disney, "No New Stars," *East African Standard*, August 14, 1962, 8.
[75] Hezekiah Wepukhulu, "Ambitious tour by Rift Valley 'hopefuls'," *East African Standard*, August 9, 1973, 9.
[76] Sikes, *Kenya's Running Women*, xxi.
[77] "15 schools in Central meeting," *East African Standard*, May 14, 1968, 10; Kiplagat and Cherop, "The Cross-Country," 7.

in the 3,000 metres steeplechase at the Mexico City Olympics.[78] Victories over such stout competition demonstrated that runners from St. Patrick's were as good as anyone in the world at the time.

Powered by such high-level performances, St. Patrick's quickly established itself as the province's top cross-country program of the late-1960s and early-1970s. Between 1968 and 1973, the Saints won four of the first six Rift Valley Provincial Schools' Cross-Country Championships, with their only defeats coming at the hands of Kaplong, another prominent school cross-country program of the early 1970s.[79] As one sports reporter for the *East African Standard* wrote, by the early 1970s, St. Patrick's was known as the "perennial schools champions" and regular "favourites" in Rift Valley schools' cross-country championships.[80]

With consistent top finishes in provincials, runners from St. Patrick's were regular qualifiers to compete in the National Secondary Schools' Cross-Country Championships at the end of each season. As the top province in athletics, runners from Rift Valley were the dominant force in national schools' cross-country championships of the period, winning eight of the first ten individual national schools' cross-country titles for boys, and all of the first five for girls.[81]

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[78] For Biwott at the 1968 Olympics, see "Gold and silver for Kenya," *East African Standard,* October 17, 1968, 1.
[79] "Fifteen schools in central meeting," *East African Standard*, May 14th, 1968, 10; "Ng'eno wins RV cross-country," *East African Standard*, March 22, 1971, 12; "St. Patrick's to host CC," *Daily Nation*, January 28, 1972, 34; "Ben Jipcho Wins KIA Cross-Country Run," *Daily Nation*, March 13, 1972, 20; "Local Sport…in Brief," *Daily Nation*, April 5, 1973, 26. The Kaplong team was coached by US Peace Corps volunteer John Manners, who would go on to become a prominent sportswriter in the running world and a co-founder, along with St. Patrick's graduate Mike Boit, of Kenya Scholar Access Program (KENSAP), a scholarship program for Kenyan students seeking to attend colleges and universities in the United States.
[80] "Iten favourites," *East African Standard*, March 1, 1971, 12.
[81] "Cherop clocks fast time," *Daily Nation*, May 22, 1967, 19; "Iten school wins race," *Sunday Nation*, May 21, 1967, 32; "Ndoo schools' cross-country champion," *East African Standard*, July 11, 1968, 10; "24 teams in cross-country," *East African Standard*, July 10, 1968, 16; "Biwott cuts toe in cross-country," *East African Standard*, May 27, 1969, 10; "Track record at Machakos," *East African Standard*, May 25, 1970, 9; "Keino wins, and slices 44 seconds off record," *East African Standard*, March 29, 1971, 11; "Cross-Country Double by Rift Schools' Teams at St Patrick's," *Daily Nation*, March 27, 1972, 22; "Have no fear, Joshua Kimeto is still here!," *Daily Nation*, April 16, 1973, 26; "Basketball title for Aquinas High," *East African Standard*, April 16, 1973, 9; "Eastern Province first at Kwale," *East African Standard*, April 8, 1974, 7; "Another Ben is Star in the Making," *East African Standard*, April 12, 1974, 7; "Rift take x-country honours," *Daily Nation*, March 25, 1975, 22 (my dearest thanks to Chepchirchir Tirop for providing me a copy of this article); "Kaitany and Rose Tata are schools' champs," *Daily Nation*, April 17,

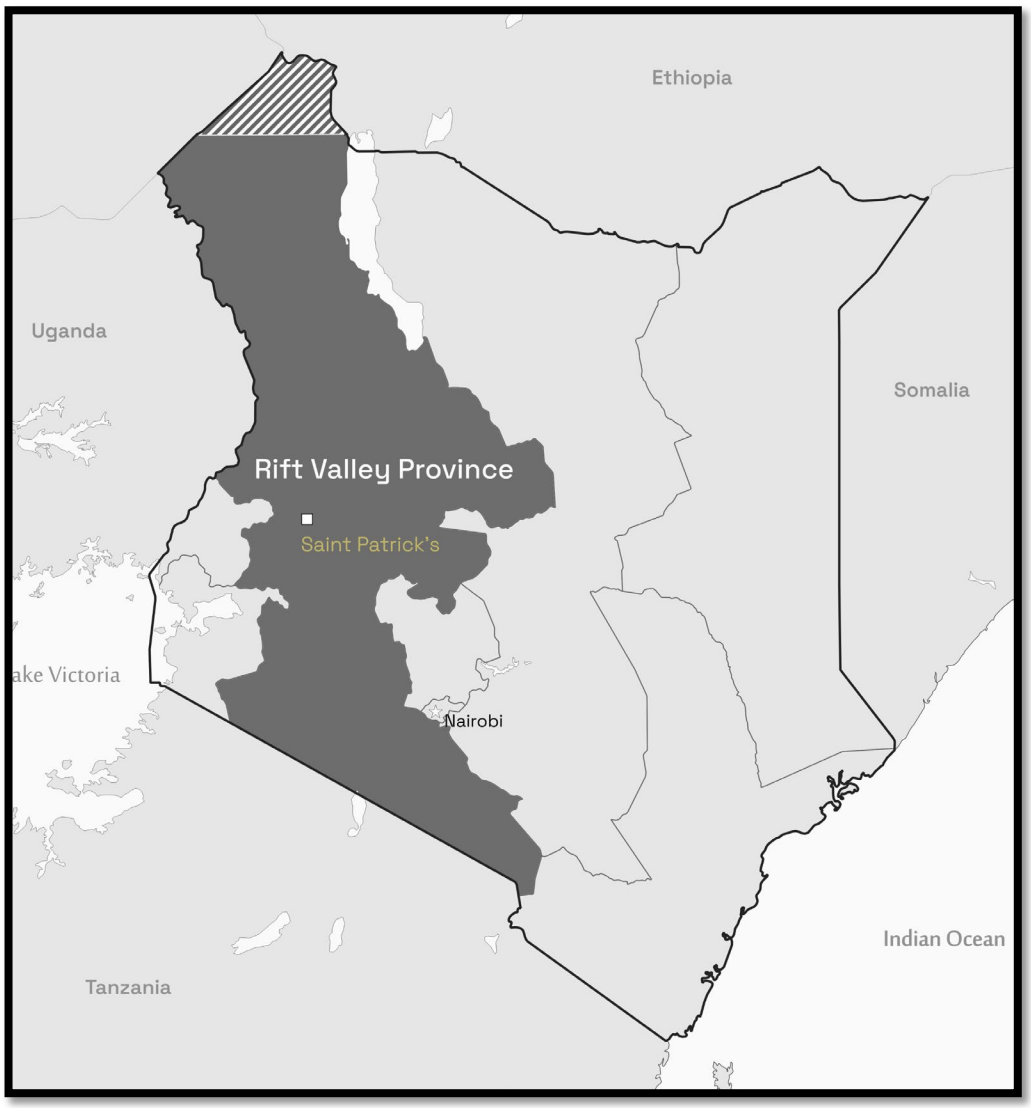

Figure 4.3 – The Rift Valley Province in Kenya has long been known as the home to the country's largest concentration of running talent.

(Map created by Orion Wilcox using Datawrapper)

As in provincial championships, individual Saints led the way at national meets on a regular basis, often pacing the provincial team. From 1967 to 1976, St. Patrick's athletes finished in the top three individual runners five different times, with four of them winning individual national championships. (See Figure 4.4)

1976, 26 (my dearest thanks to Chepchirchir Tirop for providing me a copy of this article); Kamar and Sum, "Cross-Country Report," 19; "Richard Kaitany stars again," *Daily Nation*, July 29, 1976, 19; "Iten keeps athletics title," *East African Standard*, June 26, 1976, 10.

Among these, some impressive individual performances were put on display by the Saints. In 1969, after taking the individual title in 1967, Paul Cherop came back to win it again, becoming the first runner in Kenyan secondary school history to win two national schools' cross-country championships.[82] The following year, Kiptanui Sirma, who had won the national junior title in 1968 and finished fourth in the senior championship in 1969, took Cherop's place as the overall winner, setting a course record at Machakos in the process.[83] In the 1976 championships at Mukumu Boys' Secondary School in Kakamega, Richard Kaitany was knocked down at the start, trampled, and in last place by the race's first quarter mile, and yet came back to win in a course record of 32 minutes, 56 seconds over the 10-kilometer course.[84]

For both students and athletes at St. Patrick's, such high-level performances on the cross-country course conferred on them a deep sense of both institutional prestige and individual social honor. Some, such as cross-country team member Henry Kiprop Bundotich, writing in *The Paten* in 1967, expressed his belief that "cross-country…has put Iten among the leading schools in athletics in the country."[85] Paul Cherop, perhaps the most decorated St. Patrick's runner of the period, recalled how such victories imbued him with a sense of pride and honorability that he carried deep into his elder years. "Up to this time, [people] still congratulate us," Cherop told me during an interview at his home in the village of Kapteren in 2019. "We brought the school up. The name was there because of us, the first generation…Yeah, I am proud, very proud…So, that's why I am enjoying my history."[86]

[82] "Biwott cuts toe in cross-country," 10.
[83] "Ndoo schools' cross-country champion," 10; "Biwott cuts toe in cross-country," 10; "Track record at Machakos," 9.
[84] "Kaitany and Rose Tata are schools' champs," 26.
[85] Bundotich, "Cross Country," 41.
[86] Paul Cherop, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, February 15, 2019.

Figure 4.4 - Top Finishers in Nat. Boys' Sec. Schools' Cross-Country Champs. (1967-1976)

Year	*Event (Venue)*	*Top Three Individuals (Province, School)*	*Top Three Teams (scores)*
1967	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (Alliance High School, Kikuyu)	1st Place – Paul Cherop (RV, St. Patrick's) 2nd Place – J. Mwongela (Eastern, Machakos) 3rd Place – N/A	1st – St. Patrick's Sec Sch (RV) (N/A) 2nd – Machakos Boys' Sec Sch (Eastern) (N/A) 3rd – Thika HS (Central) (N/A)
1968	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (Kenyatta College, Nairobi)	1st Place – Philip Ndoo (Central, Kenyatta) 2nd Place – Francis Kathengi (Eastern, Mumbuni) 3rd Place – Masai (Western, Kamusinga)	1st – Mumbuni Sec Sch (Eastern) (70) 2nd – St. Patrick's Sec Sch (RV) (115) 3rd – Kenyatta HS (Nairobi) (N/A)
1969	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (Njoro School, Njoro)	1st Place – Paul Cherop (RV, St. Patrick's) 2nd Place – Chemweno (RV, Marakwet) 3rd Place – Michael Chumo (RV, Lelmowko)	1st – RV (28)* 2nd – Nyanza (65) 3rd – Eastern (116)
1970	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (Machakos Boys' Sec School, Machakos)	1st Place – Kiptanuia Sirma (RV, St. Patrick's) 2nd Place – Samuel Maratim (RV, N/A) 3rd Place – Julius Chepkonga (RV, N/A)	1st – RV (42) 2nd – Eastern (76) 3rd – Nyanza (136)
1971	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (Bishop Otunga High School, Mosocho)	1st Place – John Ng'eno (RV, Kabianga) 2nd Place – K. Kimeto (RV, N/A) 3rd Place – Samuel Maritim (RV, N/A)	1st – RV (22) 2nd – Eastern (110) 3rd – Nyanza (111)
1972	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (St. Patrick's High School, Iten)	1st Place – John Ng'eno (RV, Kabianga) 2nd Place – Cosmas Silei Koskei (RV, N/A) 3rd Place – Thomas Maweu (Eastern, N/A)	1st – RV (33) 2nd – Eastern (59) 3rd – Nyanza (97)
1973	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (Siriba College, Maseno)	1st Place – Joshua Kimeto (RV, Njoro) 2nd Place – Hillary Tuwei (RV, Lelmokwo) 3rd Place – Patrick Kiingi (Eastern, Mumbuni)	1st – RV Province (42) 2nd – Eastern (59) 3rd – Nyanza (109)
1974	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (Kwale Secondary School, Kwale)	1st Place – Ben Kimombwa (RV, Kapenguria) 2nd Place – Thomas Maweu (Eastern, N/A) 3rd Place – Rafael Kigen (RV, St. Patrick's)	1st – Eastern (59) 2nd – Nyanza (120) 3rd – Central Province (133)
1975	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (Nyeri High School, Nyeri)	1st Place – Alfred Nyasani (Nyanza, N/A) 2nd Place – Thomas Maweu (Eastern, N/A) 3rd Place – Solomon Chebai (RV, N/A)	1st – RV (50) 2nd – Nyanza (81) 3rd – Eastern (91)
1976	Nat. Boys' Sec. Sch. CC Champs (Mukumu Boys' School, Kakamega)	1st Place – Richard Kaitany (RV, St. Patrick's) 2nd Place – Michael Ruto (RV, N/A) 3rd Place – N/A	1st – RV (29) 2nd – Nyanza (70) 3rd – Western (114)

RV = Rift Valley

* In 1967 and 1968, the winning school team from each Provincial Championship represented their Province in the National Championships. In 1969, the format was changed to a system in which the top individual runners from each Provincial Championship would be chosen to form a team to represent their Province in the National Championships.

Note: Data not available from national sports reports or school records are denoted with N/A. Also, as first names were not always reported in national media reports, some are not listed here.

Sources: "Cherop clocks fast time," *Daily Nation*, May 22, 1967, 19; "Iten school wins race," *Sunday Nation*, May 21, 1967, 32; "Ndoo schools' cross-country champion," *East African Standard*, July 11, 1968, 10; "24 teams in cross-country," *East African Standard*, July 10, 1968, 16; "Biwott cuts toe in cross-country," *East African Standard*, May 27, 1969, 10; "Track record at Machakos," *East African Standard*, May 25, 1970, 9; "Keino wins, and slices 44 seconds off record," *East African Standard*, March 29, 1971, 11; "Cross-Country Double by Rift Schools' Teams at St Patrick's," *Daily Nation*, March 27, 1972, 22; "Have no fear, Joshua Kimeto is still here!," *Daily Nation*, April 16, 1973, 26; "Basketball title for Aquinas High," *East African Standard*, April 16, 1973, 9; "Eastern Province first at Kwale," *East African Standard*, April 8, 1974, 7; "Another Ben is Star in the Making," *East African Standard*, April 12, 1974, 7; "Rift take x-country honours," *Daily Nation*, March 25, 1975, 22; "Kaitany and Rose Tata are schools' champs," *Daily Nation*, April 17, 1976, 26; Moses Kamar and Jacob Sum, "Cross-Country report," *The Patrician*, St. Patrick's High School, Iten, October 29th, 1976, 19; "Richard Kaitany stars again," *Daily Nation*, July 29, 1976, 19; "Iten keeps athletics title," *East African Standard*, June 26, 1976, 10.

Following each season's cross-country schedule, team members would join the school's sprinters, jumpers, and throwers in preparation for the track and field season, the first events of which were the Provincial and National Schools' Decathlon and Pentathlon Championships.[87] Although not as often as in cross-country, St. Patrick's decathletes registered remarkable and memorable achievements during the late-1960s and early-1970s. Between 1969 and 1972, for example, Mike Murie and Daniel Tum, won the individual national schools' decathlon title a combined three times, with Murei taking it in 1969 and Tum winning it twice, in 1970 and 1972.[88] For St. Patrick's decathletes Dominic Yator, who finished second to Tum at the 1972 Rift Valley Provincials and competed at the National Championships, being a good enough all-round athlete to take part in and excel at decathlon was a memorable achievement that marked an important and prestigious moment in his life. "In athletics, I was able to do the decathlon, the ten events," Yator told me with a proud smile during an interview in Waitaluk in 2020. "I think I did so well…There is a picture, I think if you go to the dining room of St. Patrick's, there are three guys there – Daniel Tum, somebody called [Kiyeng] Kibiego, and me…I made it to the national level twice, 1972 and 1973."[89] (See Figure 4.5)

From decathlon, the school's athletes would turn their attention to interschool track and field meets. St. Patrick's competed in these meetings from the school's earliest years, with

[87] Track and field is a sport that takes place on a 400 metres oval running track, along with grass, gravel, or dirt sections of the surrounding field or sports complex. It consists of a series of contests meant to measure the running, throwing, and jumping abilities of competitors. The 400 metres distance is specific to outdoor track and field. For indoor track and field, which was not contested in Kenyan schools during this period, the standard track is 200 metres long. The decathlon, which at this time in Kenyan history was only contested by boys, consists of 100 metres run, long jump, shot put, high jump, 400 metres run, 110 metres hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin, and 1500 metres run. The pentathlon, which was contested by girls, consists of only five events, with these generally being 60 metres hurdles, high jump, long jump, shot put, and 800 metres run.

[88] Philip Ndoo, "Munich means medals for these Kenya schoolboys," Sunday Nation, August 9, 1970, 37; "St. Patrick's (Iten) challenge Ugandans," *East African Standard*, June 24, 1970, 15; "Tum wins, but slips a bit," *East African Standard*, May 30, 1972, 12.

[89] "Koskei chases elusive record," *East African Standard*, May 26, 1972, 10; Dominic Yator, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020.

founding student Joseph Cheserem recalling how "the school was already known" in local and provincial competitions by the coming of Kenyan independence.[90] As early as 1964, St. Patrick's quarter-mile sprinter James Omonei, who later became a schoolteacher, won the school's first championship trophy in any sport and at any level by taking the Rift Valley Provincial title in the 440 yards run.[91] For a school whose identity was coming to be defined heavily by competitive sporting achievement and was central to Kenyan school athletics of the period, as the first significant sporting victory at St. Patrick's, Omonei's achievement marked an important milestone in both the history of the school and the history of school athletics in Kenya.

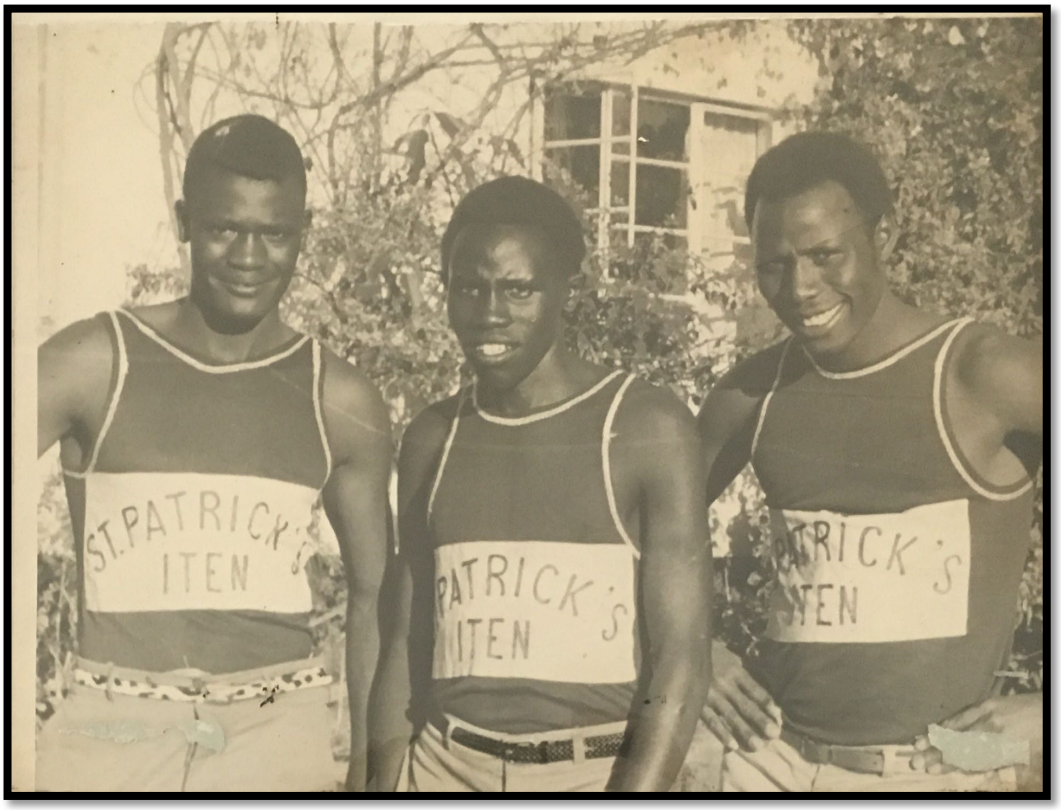

Figure 4.5 – Kiyeng Kibiego, Dominic Yator, and Daniel Tum (left to right) were top decathletes at St. Patrick's during the early 1970s.
(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

[90] Joseph Cheserem, interview with author, September 21, 2019, Iten, Kenya.
[91] Colm O'Connell, "A Brief Look at St. Patrick's High School, Iten as a Sports Institution," *The Patrician – Golden Jubilee Souvenir Edition*, 2011, 12.

In the years that followed, St. Patrick's athletes built on Omonei's success in a range of competitions. Some of the most important of these were three-school meets known as triangulars. During these meets, St. Patrick's regularly competed with some of Kenya's most established secondary school sports programs, including Alliance High School, Kapsabet Boys, Kenyatta College (later Kenyatta University), Kaplong Secondary School, Mosoriot Teachers Training College, Tambach High School, and Cardinal Otunga High School of Mosocho.[92] Followed by the national media, these triangulars often featured the nation's best young athletes and were described by reporters as Kenya's "most important school athletics matches."[93] Lebo Serem, a St. Patrick's student who regularly attended triangulars as a spectator in the early 1970s, remembered them as "the highlight of the year."[94]

With such a high level of competition, St. Patrick's did not always emerge victorious. Alliance, the dominant school athletics program in Kenya until the late 1960s, won the inaugural iteration of their triangular matchup with St. Patrick's and Kapsabet in 1968 in a meet that featured future US inter-collegiate and Olympic sprinter Julius Sang (running for Kapsabet) and future US inter-collegiate athlete Thomas Eshikati (running for Alliance).[95] In 1971, in a match between St. Patrick's, Cardinal Otunga, and Kaplong, the team from Otunga won in a meet that came down to the final two relay events of the day, the victory hinging largely on the winning

[92] "Around The Track – And Over The Stick," 44; Peter Moll, "Alliance face big track challenge," *Daily Nation*, June 15, 1968, 22; "Onyango's jump not recorded," *East African Standard*, June 8, 1970, 10; "Fine performances by schoolboys at Mosocho," *East African Standard*, June 9, 1971, 12; "Close win in triangular," *East African Standard*, June 15, 1971, 12; "Boit is fastest," *East African Standard*, June 21, 1971, 10;
[93] "Internationals running at schools meeting," *East African Standard*, June 15, 1968, 10; "Fine performances by schoolboys at Mosocho," 12; Moll, "Alliance face big track challenge," 22; Norman da Costa, "Sang will stick to the sprints," *Daily Nation*, June 17, 1968, 18; "Onyango's jump not recorded," 10; "Close win in triangular," 12.
[94] "Highlight of the year" quote from Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020. Similar sentiments were expressed by Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya, February 25, 2020; Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, August 1, 2019; Paul Cherop, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, February 15, 2019.
[95] Costa, "Sang will stick to the sprints," 18.

performance of Otunga's star sprinter John Mwebi, who would compete in the Munich Olympics the following year.[96]

However, by the early 1970s, St. Patrick's was noted for regularly winning these matchups, with the school's athletes posting notable performances. In 1969, for example, after beating Alliance and Kapsabet for the first time, the Saints went on to win every triangular between the three schools until 1976.[97] Two years later, in the 1971 iteration, St. Patrick's athletes won fourteen out of eighteen events, with Saints runner Hilary Songok posting a double in the 800 and 1500 metres races, a difficult achievement at any level of track and field.[98] Such successes were central to an emerging reputation for St. Patrick's as one of the nation's top athletics programs, with one writer in the *East African Standard* arguing in 1976 that the Saints had become "the top athletics school in the country."[99]

In addition to helping solidify athletic achievement as central to the culture and identity of St. Patrick's, taking part in triangulars fostered memorable experiences for both participants and observers. Mike Murei, who in 1969 ran the 400 metres hurdles for the first St. Patrick's team to beat Alliance and Kapsabet, recalled with a sense of pride how "Alliance and Kapsabet were sharing the short distances, but in 800 [metres], 400 [metres], we were dominating."[100] Mike Boit, who excelled in the 400 metres and 800 metres at St. Patrick's during the same period, described to me during an interview decades later how he took great satisfaction from taking part in and succeeding in these meets, especially when he was considered an underdog. "We used to have a triangular competition between Alliance, Kapsabet, and St. Patrick's," Boit

[96] "Close win in triangular," 12; "Silei and Mwebi sweep in," *East African Standard*, July 3, 1972, 11.
[97] "Iten keeps athletics title," 10.
[98] "Army athletes give GSU some practice," *East African Standard*, June 30, 1971, 16.
[99] "Iten keeps athletics title," 10.
[100] Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya, February 25, 2020.

recalled. “We were hosting Alliance and Kapsabet at Kamariny [Stadium]…This was a major competition. It was in the national papers that Ndumu of Alliance was going to crush the boys from St. Patrick’s, Iten…But when we ran, I still won.”[101]

Following their regular season schedule, St. Patrick’s would embark on a series of provincial and national schools’ athletics championship meets. As in cross-country, the Saints regularly posted winning performances in Rift Valley Championships. For example, in each year from 1968 to 1975, Saints won multiple individual Rift Valley schools’ titles, with the number of their successes at each year’s meet increasing over time. According to results posted in the *East African Standard,* St. Patrick’s won four of eighteen contested events at the Rift Valley championships in 1968, tops for any school there.[102] In 1971, that number increased to five individual victories, while in 1973 it was up to eight.[103] By the 1975 event, according to the *Daily Nation*, the school won ten out of twenty contested events, a thoroughly dominant performance in the nation’s most prominent athletics region. (See Figure 4.6) As a result, St. Patrick’s was cited as the province’s top team for boys in 1968, 1969, 1970, 1974, and 1975.[104]

With so much success in the Rift Valley, St. Patrick’s athletes regularly qualified for and excelled in the National Secondary Schools’ Athletics Championships, where they often anchored the Rift Valley Provincial team in national rankings. In 1966, at the first national athletics championships for school athletes, Alfred Chepkoiyo and Paul Cherop won three

[101] Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, October 16, 2019.
[102] "National Youth Service could produce stars," *East African Standard*, July 3, 1968, 13.
[103] "Records galore at Rift Valley," *East African Standard*, July 22, 1971, 11; Hezekia Wepukhulu, "46 book places on UK athletics trip," *East African Standard*, July 16, 1973, 11; Peter Moll, “Rift whizz kids set fast pace at Nakuru,” *Daily Nation*, July 16, 1973, 26.
[104] "National Youth Service could produce stars," 13; "Mike Boit Sets New School Mark in Rift Valley Meet," *Daily Nation*, July 23, 1969, 18; "Fine performances by schoolboys," *East African Standard*, June 20, 1970, 10; "Records galore at Rift Valley," *East African Standard*, July 22, 1971, 11; "AAA calls two coaches to Kiganjo," *East African Standard*, July 18, 1972, 10; Wepukhulu, "46 book places on UK athletics trip," 11; "Nine records set at Rift meet," *East African Standard*, July 29, 1974, 10; "Eleven records broken at Eldoret meeting," *Daily Nation*, July 24, 1975, 18.

Figure 4.6 – 1st Place SPHS Athletes at Rift Valley (RV) Athletics Champs. (1968-1975)

Year	*Athlete(s)*	*Venue*	*Event (Place)*	*Performance*
1968	Mike Murei	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	54.4 seconds*
1968	Mike Boit	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	800 Metres Run (1st)	1 minute, 52.6 seconds
1968	Cosmas Chemweno	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	Javelin (1st)	54.08 metres*
1968	Boit, Murei, Melly, Kogo	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	4X400 Metres Relay	3 minutes, 17.7 seconds*
1969	Kiplangat (Kiptoo) Melly	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	400 Metres Run (1st)	47.7 seconds*
1970	Mike Murei	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	400 Metres Run (1st)	47.5 seconds*
1970	Mike Murei	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	51.9 seconds
1971	Hilary Songok	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	800 Metres Run (1st)	1 minute, 51 seconds
1971	Joseph Kimei	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	1500 Metres Run (1st)	3 minutes, 52.5 seconds
1971	Daniel Tum	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	52.6 seconds
1971	John Changwony	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	2 k Steeplechase (1st)	5 minutes, 46.8 seconds
1971	David Kandina	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	Pole Vault (1st)	3.7 metres
1972	Wesley Moso	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	Shot Put (1st)	11.63 metres*
1973	Stephen Koech	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	200 Metres Run (1st)	21.9 seconds
1973	Joseph Kimei	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	800 Metres Run (1st)	1 minute, 51.7 seconds
1973	Joseph Kimei	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	1500 Metres Run (1st)	3 minutes, 53.2 second
1973	Rafael Kigen	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	5 K Run (1st)	15 minutes, 10.1 seconds
1973	Jackson Melly	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	400 Metres Hurldes (1st)	52.9 seconds
1973	Kiyeng Kibiego	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	Pole Vault (1st)	3.53 metres
1973	D. Koskei	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	Long Jump (1st)	6.68 metres
1973	Wesley Moso	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	Shot Put (1st)	12.21 metres*
1974	Joseph Kimei	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	800 Metres Run (1st)	1 minute, 50.2 seconds
1974	Joseph Kimei	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	1500 Metres Run (1st)	3 minutes, 48 seconds
1975	Jackson Melly	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Eldoret	200 Metres Run (1st)	22.2 seconds
1975	Ngetich	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Eldoret	400 Metres Run (1st)	49.6 seconds
1975	Jackson Melly	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Eldoret	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	53.5 seconds
1975	Rafael Kigen	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Eldoret	1500 Metres Run (1st)	3 minutes, 57.3 seconds
1975	Japhet Kiplimo	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Eldoret	Pole Vault (1st)	12 feet
1975	Jackson Melly	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Eldoret	High Jump (1st)	1.92 metres
1975	Japhet Kiplimo	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Eldoret	Javelin (1st)	188 feet, 11 inches
1975	Mackeze	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Eldoret	Shot Put (1st)	11.32 metres
1975	Kogo	RV Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Eldoret	Long Jump (1st)	7.08 metres

SPHS = St. Patrick's High School
* = Kenya Schools' Record

Note: These results do not include relay events, primarily because newspapers rarely reported the make-up of relay teams, making it difficult to determine school affiliations. Also, because national newspapers did not always carry full results, I believe this list to be incomplete. Data not available from national sports reports or school records are denoted with N/A

Sources: "National Youth Service could produce stars," *East African Standard*, July 3, 1968, 13; Philip Ndoo, "Mike Boit Sets New School Mark in Rift Valley Meet," *Daily Nation*, July 23, 1969, 18; "Fine performances by schoolboys," *East African Standard*, June 20, 1970, 10; "Fine performances by schoolboys," *East African Standard*, June 20, 1970, 10; Records galore at Rift Valley," *East African Standard*, July 22, 1971, 11; "AAA calls two coaches to Kiganjo," *East African Standard*, July 18, 1972, 10; Hezekia Wepukhulu, "46 book places on UK athletics trip," *East African Standard*, July 16, 1973, 11; Peter Moll, "Rift whizz kids set fast pace at Nakuru," *Daily Nation*, July 16, 1973, 26; "Nine records set at Rift meet," *East African Standard*, July 29, 1974, 10; "Eleven records broken at Eldoret meeting," *Daily Nation*, July 24, 1975, 18; Colm O'Connell, "A Brief Look at St. Patrick's High School, Iten as a Sports Institution," *The Patrician – Golden Jubilee Souvenir Edition*, 2011, 12.

individual titles between them, with Cherop taking the mile and three mile and Chepkoiyo the 1500 metres steeplechase.[105] From that point forward, the Saints regularly led the way for the province, with Rift Valley squads winning every national team title between 1967 and 1974.[106] In some national meets, such as the 1969 iteration, in which the St. Patrick's 4X400 metres relay team gave Rift Valley a two point victory in the meet's final event, the Saints were the literal difference between winning and losing.[107] As sportswriter Philip Ndoo, himself an internationally competitive athlete who won the individual national schools' cross-country championship in 1968, such performances established the Saints as central to a collection of up-and-coming Kenyan school athletes that constituted "a depth of youthful talent unmatched on the continent of Africa."[108]

Individually, the statistical tally of national track and field achievements accumulated by the Saints from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s is truly stunning and is perhaps one of the strongest measures of the school's place as one of the most successful Kenyan athletics institutions of the period. Between 1966 and 1974, the school's athletes won thirty individual national schools' titles. (See Figure 4.7) Though most of these came in the running events from the 400 metres to the mile, Saints also won multiple titles in the hurdles, throws, and the

[105] "Future stars at Kabete," *East African Standard*, August 1, 1966, 9. The 1st national championships for school athletes, held in Kabete in 1966, were referred to as the Kenya Junior National Athletics Championships. In later years, they would be called the National Secondary Schools' Athletics Championships. In 1971, an article in the East African Standard referred to that year's championship meet as the sixth iteration of the national secondary schools' athletics championships, making the 1966 event the first, even though it went by a different name. See, "Keen competition makes up for lack of records," *East African Standard*, August 2, 1971, 21.
[106] "15 Kenya schools' records at Mombasa," *East African Standard*, July 22, 1968, 7; "Schools' championships produce results," *East African Standard*, July 28, 1969, 8; Norman Da Costa, "More records set at Nakuru," *Daily Nation*, August 11, 1969, 19; "Ministry bursary for Amos Biwott," *East African Standard*, August 3, 1970, 12; Peter Moll, "Rift again top schools meet," *Daily Nation*, August 2, 1971, 21; "Rift Valley all the way in Kakamega event," *East African Standard*, July 31, 1972, 10; "Girls of Rift Valley steal the limelight," *East African Standard*, August 6, 1973, 9; "Rift again," *Daily Nation*, August 8, 1974, 18.
[107] "Schools' championships produce results," 8.
[108] Philip Ndoo, "A spate of records expected at Nakuru," *Daily Nation*, August 9, 1969, 23.

Figure 4.7 - Accolades of St. Patrick's Athletes at Nat. and Reg. Athletics (1966-1974)

Year	*Athlete(s)*	*Venue*	*Event (Place)*	*Performance*
1966	Paul Cherop	Nat. Jr. Ath. Champs., Kabete	1 Mile Run (1st)	4 minutes, 17.7 seconds
1966	Paul Cherop	Nat. Jr. Ath. Champs., Kabete	3 Mile Run (1st)	14 minutes, 37.6 seconds
1966	Alfred Chepkoiyo	Nat. Jr. Ath. Champs., Kabete	1.5 K Steeplechase (1st)	4 minutes, 32 seconds
1967	Mike Boit	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	800 Metres Run (1st)	N/A
1967	Paul Cherop	East African Ath. Champs., Kisumu	3 Mile Run (2nd)	13 minutes, 55.7 seconds^
1968	Mike Murei	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Mombasa	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	52.9 seconds*
1968	Cosmas Chemweno	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Mombasa	Javelin (1st)	202 feet 11 ½ inches*
1969	Mike Murei	Nat. Sec. Sch. Dec. Champs., N/A	Decathlon (1st)	6,720 points
1969	Kiplangat (Kiptoo) Melly	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nyeri	400 Metres Run (1st)	48.9 seconds
1969	Mike Boit	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nyeri	800 Metres Run (1st)	1 minute, 48.9 seconds*
1969	Cosmas Silei	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nyeri	1500 Metres Run (1st)	3 minutes, 54.1 seconds
1969	Joseph Kamau	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nyeri	5 K Run (1st)	14 minutes, 43.3 seconds
1969	Mike Murei	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nyeri	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	53.3 seconds
1969	Boit, Murei, Melly, Kogo	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nyeri	4X400 Metres Relay(1st)	3 minutes, 13.8 seconds*#
1969	Mike Murei	KAAA Champs., Nakuru	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	51.9 seconds#
1969	Mike Boit	KAAA Champs., Nakuru	800 Metres Run (4th)	N/A
1969	Boit, Murei, Melly, Kogo	KAAA Champs., Nakuru	4X400 Metres Relay (2nd)	3 minutes, 12 seconds*
1969	Mike Murei	East African Ath. Champs., Kampala	400 Metres Hurdles (2nd)	51.7 seconds
1970	Daniel Tum	Nat. Sec. Sch. Dec. Champs., Kericho	Decathlon (1st)	6,453 points
1970	Mike Murei	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Kisumu	400 Metres Run (1st)	47.8 seconds
1970	Kiptanui Sirma	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Kisumu	5 K Run (1st)	14 minutes, 52.3 seconds
1970	Mike Murei	East African Ath. Champs., Nairobi	400 Metres Hurdles (3rd)	50.9 seconds
1971	Hilary Songok	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Machakos	800 Metres Run (1st)	1 minute, 51.3 seconds
1971	Daniel Tum	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Machakos	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	52.9 seconds
1971	John Changwony	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Machakos	2K Steeplechase (1st)	5 minutes, 53.6 seconds
1972	Daniel Tum	Nat. Sec. Sch. Dec. Champs., Kisi	Decathlon (1st)	5,960 points
1972	Kipsubai Koskei	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Kakamega	1500 Metres Run (1st)	3 minutes, 53.9 seconds
1972	Daniel Tum	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Kakamega	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	52.4 seconds
1972	Welsey Moso	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Kakamega	Shot Put (1st)	45 feet, 6 ¼ inches
1972	Philip Bitok	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Kakamega	Javelin (1st)	206 feet, 3 inches
1973	Stephen Koech	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nairobi	100 Metres Run (1st)	10.6 seconds
1973	Wesley Moso	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nairobi	Shot Put (1st)	23.21 metres
1973	Wesley Moso	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nairobi	Hammer Throw (1st)	11.64 metres
1974	Jackson Melly	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	400 Metres Hurdles (1st)	53.5 seconds
1974	Joseph Kimei	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	1500 Metres Run (1st)	3 minutes, 45.9 seconds
1974	Japhet Kiplimo	Nat. Sec. Sch. Ath. Champs., Nakuru	Javelin (1st)	61.33 metres

* = Kenya National Schools' Record
^ = Kenya National Junior Record
# = Kenya National Amateur Athletic Association Record

Note: Other than the 1969 4X400 relay team, these results do not include relay events, primarily because newspapers rarely reported the make-up of relay teams, making it difficult to determine school affiliations. Also, because national newspapers did not always carry full results, I believe this list to be incomplete. Data not available from national sports reports or school records are denoted with N/A

Sources: James Kamenja Nganga, "Form Four East," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 10; "Future stars at Kabete," *East African Standard*, August 1, 1966, 9; "Sang wins his first 440 yards in fast time," *East African Standard*, June 17, 1968, 7; "Around The Track – And Over The Stick," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 44; "Around The Track – And Over The Stick," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 44; "Schools' Meet Will Wind up 1967 Season," *East African Standard*, September 12, 1967, 16 (My dearest thanks to Michele Sikes for providing me with a copy of the *East African Standard* article); "15 Kenya schools' records at Mombasa," *East African Standard*, July 22, 1968, 7; Philip Ndoo, "Munich means medals for these Kenya schoolboys," Sunday Nation, August 9, 1970, 37; "Schools' championships produce results," *East African Standard*, July 28, 1969, 8; Norman Da Costa, "More records set at Nakuru," *Daily Nation*, August 11, 1969, 19; Philip Ndoo, "KAAA build-up for Edinburgh," *Daily Nation*, August 23, 1969, 23; "Amos Biwott fades out at Kampala," *East African Standard*, August 18, 1969, 8; "St. Patrick's (Iten) challenge Ugandans," *East African Standard*, June 24, 1970, 15; "Ministry bursary for Amos Biwott," *East African Standard*, August 3, 1970, 12; "Spiking, elbowing and pushing fail to stop Keino," *East African Standard*, August 31, 1970, 10; "Keen competition makes up for lack of records," *East African Standard*, August 2, 1971, 21; "Peter Moll, "Rift again top schools meet," *Daily Nation*, August 2, 1971, 21; "Tum wins, but slips a bit," *East African Standard*, May 30, 1972, 12; "Rift Valley all the way in Kakamega event," *East African Standard*, July 31, 1972, 10; "Girls of Rift Valley steal the limelight," *East African Standard*, August 6, 1973, 9; "Rift Valley shatter two national records," *East African Standard*, August 4, 1973, 10; "Six records go at Nakuru meet," *Daily Nation*, August 4, 1974, 1; "Rift again," *Daily Nation*, August 8, 1974, 18; "Rift dominate at schools' event," *East African Standard*, August 5, 1974, 8.

decathlon. During the same period, the school's athletes set twelve national records while competing at either the provincial or national championships, the most impressive coming in 1969 when the 4X400 metres relay team of Mike Murei, Mike Boit, Kiplangat (Kiptoo) Melly, and Jackson Kogo set a national school, Kenya Amateur Athletic Association (KAAA), and East Africa record.[109] In addition, after winning the national schools' titles in 1969, Mike Boit, Mike Murei, and the rest of the St. Patrick's 4X400 metres relay team each recorded top four finishes at the KAAA National Championships, the highest level of track and field in Kenya at the time.[110]

Through it all, in cross-country and track and field, the Saints competed, and succeeded, in athletics competitions across Kenya – in Eldoret, Kapsabet, Kisumu, Nyeri, Nakuru, Nairobi, Machakos, and Mombasa. They broke records and were presented with honors in the form of trophies and medals in front of crowds that included Vice Presidents, Cabinet Ministers, local government officials, and throngs of *wananchi*.[111] Their performances established St. Patrick's as one of the most important and successful sporting institutions in Kenya, providing them with literal podiums from which they were able, as athletics team captain Joseph Barno wrote in *The Patrician* in 1976, "to uplift the school's name and run with flying colours."[112] However, perhaps most importantly, performing well and winning in athletics gave the athletes of St. Patrick's, schoolboys and young men, a way to achieve a level of social honor and prestige

[109] "Schools' championships produce results," 8; "Kenya A.A.A. compiles list of metric records," *East African Standard*, August 6, 1969, 16.
[110] Costa, "More records set at Nakuru," 19; Philip Ndoo, "KAAA build-up for Edinburgh," *Daily Nation*, August 23, 1969, 23.
[111] For just a few examples, Moi attended the 1969 national secondary schools' athletics championships, while provincial administrator Simeon Nyachae watched the Rift Valley championships the same year. In 1970, Masinde Muliro, then the Minister of Cooperatives and Social Services, was a spectator at the 1970 national schools' championships, while Assistant Minister of Education Charles Rubia handed out trophies at the 1973 national championships. "Records likely at schools meet," *East African Standard*, July 2, 1969, 15; Philip Ndoo, "Mike Boit sets new school mark in Rift meet," *Daily Nation*, July 23, 1969, 18; "Ministry bursary for Amos Biwott," 12.
[112] Joseph Barno, "Athletics," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 32.

usually reserved for elders and powerful men.[113] In this way, athletics achievement made meaningful and measurable contributions to their lives and personal identities, and allowed them to make a place of prestige for themselves both at their school and in Kenya.

'Crossing the border…It was a big experience': Athletic Achievement and Transnational Lives at St. Patrick's

As the school's elite reputation in athletics solidified, local, provincial, and national successes led to opportunities for international competition. From short trips across the border to neighboring Uganda to trans-oceanic journeys to Europe and the United States, during the 1970s, St. Patrick's athletes and former Saints leveraged their success in athletics to develop strong international sporting connections. As a result, a distinct component of the school's sports culture emerged during the period in which the school's students and athletes increasingly saw themselves as having the potential to live global sporting lives.[114]

Some of the earliest transnational experiences for St. Patrick's athletes came in the form of offers for some of the school's top individual runners to compete in regional championship meets against international competition. On three different occasions in the late-1960s and early-1970s, following their school season, St. Patrick's athletes were invited to compete in the East African Championships, where they performed admirably. In 1967, running behind fellow Kenyan Kipchoge Keino, Africa's dominant middle and long distance runner of the period, Paul Cherop took a silver medal in the three mile run at the East African Athletics Championships in Kisumu, setting a Kenya junior record of 13 minutes, 57.3 seconds.[115] Two years later, after a

[113] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*.
[114] Several recent scholars have sought to pay extra attention to transnational, or global, lives in East Africa. For an overview of this emerging scholarship, see Ismay Milford, Gerard McCann, Emma Hunter, and Daniel Branch, "Another world? East Africa, Decolonisation, and the Global History of the Mid-Twentieth Century," *The Journal of African History* 62, no. 3 (2021): 394-410.
[115] "Schools' Meet Will Wind up 1967 Season," *East African Standard*, September 12, 1967, 16 (My dearest thanks to Michele Sikes for providing me with a copy of the *East African Standard* article); "Amos Biwott fades out at

season which saw him win the KAAA individual title in the 400 metres hurdles and set several national records, Mike Murei left Kenya for the first time in his life, traveling with the Kenyan national team to Kampala, where, like Cherop, he won an East African Athletics Championships silver medal, a performance which he followed up the next year with a bronze at the same event.[116]

Other international opportunities were extended to the entire St. Patrick's athletics team. In 1970, in a trip that, according to the *East African Standard*, was the first time a Kenyan school team had competed in Uganda, the Saints travelled to Kampala to take part in a four-team meet against some of Uganda's top schools.[117] Indeed, St. Leo's College, Kyegobe from Fort Portal, was described by a Ugandan coach of the period as "dominating sport in Uganda, especially athletics and cross country running," and boasted three members of the 1969 Ugandan national team.[118] In a reflection of the way official discourses on sport functioned as a vehicle for promoting nationalism in Kenya during the period, the meet was described by one national newspaper as a test of "the prestige of Kenya athletics in East Africa."[119]

However, for St. Patrick's team members, the opportunity to compete internationally represented more than a chance to promote nationalism. Mike Murei expressed how the social connections embedded within the experience of crossing an international border were equally important, if not more, than the need to protect the prestige of Kenyan athletics. "I enjoyed experiencing Uganda, the weather, the people, and everything," Murei recalled during an interview at his home in Kapsaga in 2020. "Crossing the border…It was a big experience," he

Kampala," *East African Standard*, August 18, 1969, 8; "Spiking, elbowing and pushing fail to stop Keino," *East African Standard*, August 31, 1970, 10.
[116] "Amos Biwott fades out at Kampala," 8; "Spiking, elbowing and pushing fail to stop Keino," 10.
[117] "St. Patrick's (Iten) challenge Ugandans," *East African Standard*, June 24, 1970, 15.
[118] Ibid; Peter Mullin, email conversation, January 1, 2020.
[119] "St. Patrick's (Iten) challenge Ugandans," 15.

continued, "We had tea at Tororo…We stopped in Jinja and then we drove in to Kampala…One of the things that let us stay there nicely was Ugandan tea...haha. Ugandan tea was very good tea. And then in the evening we went to town and saw the people…We bought a soda and sat under the bananas… They welcomed us…They said, come and sit. They were very good."[120]

At the same time, competitive achievement was important, but only insofar as it buttressed notions of individual and institutional prestige. Behind a strong performance by team captain Mike Murei, in which he took both the 400 meters hurdles and the long jump, St. Patrick's won easily, beating second-place St. Leo's by over fifty points, a wide margin in a school track and field meet.[121] Individually, the Saints recorded first place finishes in six events, with team members Daniel Tum, Kiplangat (Kiptoo) Melli, John Birech, and Kiptanui Sirma, in addition to Murei, all winning their events (See Figure 4.8).[122] In addition, several St. Patrick's athletes put up times that would have been competitive at elite, international competitions of the period. Quarter milers Kiplangat (Kiptoo) Melly and Jackson Kogo, both of whom ran under 49 seconds for the 400 metres run, would have easily qualified for a quarterfinals birth in that year's Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, while Mike Murei's time of 51.7 seconds in the 400 meters hurdles would have placed him in the Commonwealth finals, despite the fact that he had been kept off the Kenyan national team in a controversial decision.[123] As Murei recalled, "We dominated the field. Even [those] who were preparing for the Olympics. They said thank you, we have seen you, and we will train for next year. And it was really good."[124]

[120] Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya, February 25, 2020.
[121] "Mike Murei leads St. Patrick's spree," *East African Standard*, July 3, 1970, 12.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid; "Mike Murei still top hurdler, says coach," *East African Standard*, June 26, 1970, 12.
[124] Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya, February 25, 2020.

Figure 4.8 – Members of the 1970 St. Patrick's track and field team that went to Uganda (Left to Right, Back - Hillary Songok, Kiptanui Sirma, D. Biwott, Sylvester Meli, Jackson Kogo, J. Cheptum, Mike Murei; Front Left – John Birech; Front Right – Daniel Tum)
(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

Another important transnational experience for St. Patrick's athletes came in 1973, in the form of a trip organized by the Rift Valley Schools Sports Association that sent a team of Rift Valley school athletes to Britain for a series of competitions against British schools. Funded through a joint effort of Rift Valley teacher-coaches and international benefactors, who raised an estimated 200,000 Kenyan shillings for the project, the tour was cited in the press as the first overseas trip by a Kenyan school team and was seen as a way to "give the young Rift athletes a taste of international competition" so that they might "achieve qualifying standards" for international competitions and "continue their track careers in the senior ranks."[125]

With a team of 31 boys and 16 girls chosen from the top two finishers in each event at that year's Rift Valley athletics championships, the idea of focusing on school-aged athletes was

[125] "Rift schools off today," *Daily Nation*, August 8, 1973, 31; Wepukhulu, "Ambitious tour by Rift Valley 'hopefuls'," 9.

largely the result of the success of Rift Valley secondary schools in producing top-level performers throughout the 1960s and early-1970s.[126] Citing the long list of internationally competitive athletes that had emerged from Rift Valley schools, such as Olympians Julius Sang, Amos Biwott, and Tecla Chemabwai, sports reporter Hezekiah Wepukhulu of the *East African Standard* rightly pointed out that it was "the schools in the area" which were primarily responsible for tapping the "wealth of talent" in the region.[127] As the most successful school program in the Rift Valley, St. Patrick's was heavily represented, with Saints making up one-third of the team's roster, the largest contingent of any participating school. (See Figure 4.9) In Britain, the team competed in Peterborough, Blackburn, London, and Yeovil, where they lived with English host families and were taken on several social outings, including multiple town hall dinners, a night at a bowling alley, a discotheque dance, and a visit to London Theatre.[128]

On the track, they competed in front of crowds of up to a thousand spectators against mostly college and university British athletes, several of whom were already established international runners, with the boys team winning three of four meets and the girls side losing all four, despite victories in both the 800 and 1,500 metres runs by Rose Chepyator from Sing'ore Girls Secondary School, St. Patrick's sister school.[129] As the largest contingent on the boys side, St. Patrick's athletes figured prominently, with Joseph Kemei and Rafael Kigen finishing in the top three in the 1,500 metres in both Blackburn and London, Kemei clocking an elite time of

[126] "Highlight for Rift Valley," *East African Standard*, July 13, 1973, 14; Wepukhulu, "46 book places on U.K. athletics trip," 11.
[127] Hezekiah Wepukhulu, "Ambitious tour by Rift Valley 'hopefuls'," *East African Standard*, August 9, 1973, 9.
[128] "Civic reception for Rift athletes," *East African Standard*, August 14, 1973, 14; "Rift athletes a big hit at Lancashire," *East African Standard*, August 23, 1973, 10; "Kemei is hit at Crystal Palace," *East African Standard*, August 25, 1973, 10; "Rift athletes back after great tour," *East African Standard*, August 31, 1973, 16.
[129] "Rift athletes a big hit in Lancashire," 10; "Kemei is hit at Crystal Palace," 10; "Rift athletes back after great tour," 16.

Figure 4.9 – Roster for Rift Valley Schools' Athletics Team to United Kingdom (1973)

Boys Roster			*Girls Roster*		
Athlete	**School**	**Event**	**Athlete**	**School**	**Event**
Dan Taruru	Kapsabet Boys HS	100 metres	**S. Cheptarus**	St. Joseph Chep. Girls HS	100, 200 metres
Stephen Koech	St. Patrick's HS	100, 200 metres	**E. Achieng**	Nakuru Sec	100, 200 metres
D. Kosgei	St. Patrick's HS	200 metres	**J. Boit**	Kapsabet Girls HS	400 metres
Stephen Chepkwony	Kabianga School	400 metres	**J. Barno**	Kapsabet Girls HS	400 metres
P. Ngetich	Kapsabet Boys HS	400 metres	**C. Sigilai**	Sing'ore Girls HS	800, 1500 metres
Jospeh Kemei	St. Patrick's HS	800, 1500 metres	**Rose Chepyator**	Sing'ore Girls HS	800, 1500 metres
Charles Aginga	Njoro Boys HS	800 metres	**M. Bulungu**	Kapsabet Girls HS	100 metres hurd.
Rafael Kigen	St. Patrick's HS	1500, 5K	**L. Chirchir**	St. Joseph Chep. Girls HS	100 metres hurd.
Sang	Samoei Boys Sec	5K	**M. Chesire**	St. Brigid's Girls HS	High Jump
J. Cheruiyot	Cheptenye Boys HS	10K	**D. Korir**	Kapkenda Girls HS	High Jump
Samson Kimombwa	Chewoyet HS	10K	**A. Atieno**	Menengai HS	Long Jump
Joshua Kimeto	Njoro Boys HS	5K, 10K	**G. Chepkemoi**	Kipsigis Girls HS	Long Jump
J. Lagat	Kapsabet Boys HS	110 metres hurd.	**J. Amoit**	Sing'ore Girls HS	Shot Put, Discus
M. Owinyo	Njoro Boys HS	110 metres hurd.	**G. Chepkirui**	Nakuru Sec	Shot Put, Javelin
Jackson Melly	St. Patrick's HS	400 metres hurd.	**L. Wangeci**	Nakuru Day Sec	Discus
C. Cherono	Menengai HS	400 metres hurd.	**N. Chesang**	Masai Girls Sec	Javelin
Hillary Tuwei	Lelmokwo Boys HS	3K SC			
Stephen Chepkonga	St. Patrick's HS	3K SC			
J. Bocheche	Nakuru Sec	High Jump			
C. Bor	St. Patrick's HS	High Jump			
Kiyeng Kibiego	St. Patrick's HS	Pole Vault			
B. Waitake	Kabungut Boys HS	Pole Vault			
D. Koswei	St. Patrick's HS	Long Jump			
L. Gichuru	Tambach HS	Long Jump			
A. Chomboi	Njoro Boys HS	Discus			
K. Kangogo	Tenges Boys HS	Triple Jump			
Wesley Moso	St. Patrick's HS	Shot Put			
R. Turoitich	Tenges Boys HS	Shot Put			
A. Sawe	Rift Technical	Discus			
M. Salana	Motonyi Sec	Javelin			
D. Soi	Sigor HS	Javelin			

Note: Newspaper reports for high school sports during this period often listed names with the first initial only. I have filled in first names where I have been able to identify them. In addition, these reports regularly misspelled names, therefore, I have included the most commonly used spellings across multiple newspapers reports. As these reports often made mistakes in listing names and school affiliations, some athletes or schools may be missing or incorrect. The events listed are based on the events that the athletes competed in during qualifying at the 1973 Rift Valley Province Secondary Schools' Athletics Championships. The lone exception is Joshua Kimeto, who was competing internationally for Kenya during the Rift Valley Championships and was added to the team to compete in the 5K and 10K.

Sources: "Highlight for Rift Valley," *East African Standard*, July 13, 1973, 14; Peter Moll, "Rift whizz kids set fast pace at Nakuru," *Daily Nation*, July 16, 1973, 26; Hezekiah Wepukhulu, "46 book places on U.K. athletics trip," *East African Standard*, July 16, 1973, 11; "Rift schools off today," *Daily Nation*, August 81, 1973, 31; Hezekiah Wepukhulu, "Ambitious tour by Rift Valley 'hopefuls'," *East African Standard*, August 9, 1973.

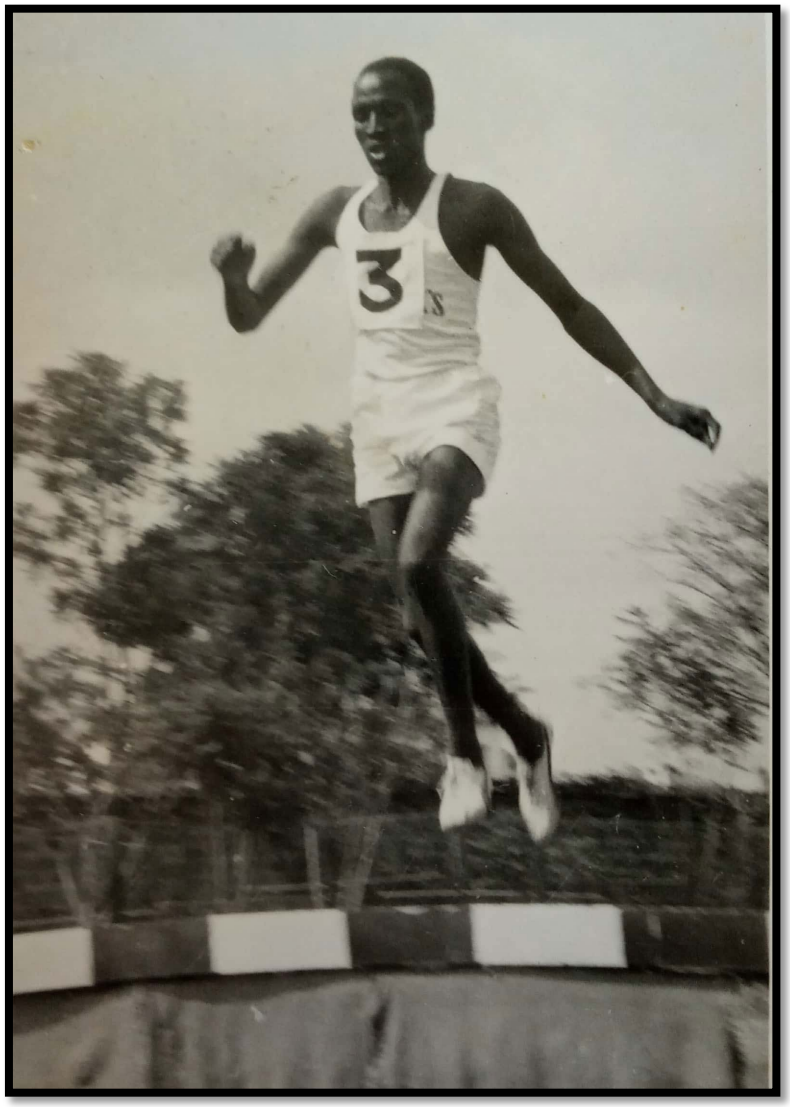

Figure 4.10 – St. Patrick's steeplechaser Stephen Chepkonga, who competed in the UK during the 1973 Rift Valley tour.
(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

3 minutes, 42.5 seconds.[130] In another impressive performance, St. Patrick's Stephen Chepkonga (See Figure 4.10) put up a time of 8 minutes, 52.8 seconds in the 3,000 metres steeplechase.[131] Both times remained school records at St. Patrick's into the 1980s.

[130] "Rift athletes a big hit in Lancashire," 10; "Kemei is hit at Crystal Palace," 10; "Rift athletes back after great tour," 16.
[131] "St. Patrick's High School Athletics Records," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, 1979, 73.

A third area in which St. Patrick's athletes developed transnational connections and experiences was through the receipt of athletics scholarships to universities in the United States. Beginning in the early-1970s, large numbers of Kenyan student-athletes began receiving scholarships to run for US colleges and universities, with the main destinations being University of Richmond (UR), Iowa State University (ISU), Washington State University (WSU), University of Wisconsin (UW), Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU), University of New Mexico (UNM), and University of Texas, El Paso (UTEP).[132] As with other trends in Kenyan running history, athletes from St. Patrick's were central to this process. For example, of the 35 Kenyan runners competing in US colleges and universities in 1975, five of them were former St. Patrick's athletes.[133] By 1980, that number had grown to nine. (See Figure 4.11)

For some St. Patrick's athletes, scholarship offers often came after several years of competing for Kenyan colleges or running for the Kenya national team in international competitions. Kiptanui Sirma, who finished at St. Patrick's in 1970 and enrolled at University of Texas, El Paso in 1975, ran at Eregi Teachers Training College in Maragoli during the interim and was regularly in discussions for inclusion on Kenya national teams.[134] After finishing at St. Patrick's in 1969, Mike Boit spent three years training and competing at Kenyatta College, during which time he represented Kenya in international competitions in Ivory Coast, Israel, and West Germany, before receiving an athletics scholarship to Eastern New Mexico University in

[132] Chapman, "Running to School," 20–47; Michelle Sikes, "A 'Rebel' on the Run: Kenyan Gambles on Intercollegiate Athletics, Apartheid Sport, and US Road Racing of the 1980s – The Case of Samson Obwocha," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 39, no. 8-9 (2022): 959-986; John Bale and Joe Sang, "Out of Africa: The 'Development' of Kenyan Athletics Talent Migration and the Global Sports System" in *The Global Sports Arena: Athletic Talent Migration in an Interdependent World*, eds. John Bale and Joseph Maguire (London: Frank Cass, 1994), 206-225.
[133] Philip Ndoo, "Sang threatens to quit if Ouko is not reinstated," *Daily Nation*, April 8, 1975, 15.
[134] "Sirma wins at Njoro," 9.

Figure 4.11 – Former Saints (1967-1979) Who Competed in US Colleges and Universities

Athlete	Years at SPHS	US University/College Attended (Years)
Mike Boit	1967-1969	Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU, 1973-1976)
Mike Murei	1967-1970	University of Wisconsin (UW, 1976-1978)*
Kiptanui Sirma	1967-1970	University of Texas, El Paso (UTEP, 1975-1978)
Kipsubai Koskei	1971-1972	University of New Mexico (UNM, 1979-1980)
Jospeh Kemei	1971-1974	West Texas State University (WT, 1975-1978)
Gabriel Boit	1971-1974	West Texas State University (WT, 1975-1978)
Joseph Barno	1972-1976	West Texas State University (WT, 1977-1980)
Richard Kaitany	1974-1977	Iowa State University (ISU, 1978-1981)
Ibrahim Hussein	1978-1979	University of New Mexico (1980-1984)

* Mike Murei began his intercollegiate career in the United States at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) in 1975, however, Murei transferred to University of Wisconsin (UW) in 1976 because he was worried that his presence at ENMU would take a scholarship away from a fellow Kenyan runner, and he wanted to compete for a better funded program. See, Don Lindstrom, "Kenyan connection runs in Badger family," *Wisconsin State Journal,* November 15, 1975, 10 and John Manners, "The African Recruiting Boom" in *The African Running Revolution,* ed. Dave Prokop (Mountain View, CA: Runner's World Magazine, 1975), 67.

Note: Some oral testimonies have suggested that Hillary Tuwei, who ran for University of Richmond from 1976 to 1980, attended St. Patrick's as an 'A' Level student in the mid-1970s, however, I have been unable to verify this.

Sources: Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, November 13, 2019; Richard Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 13, 2019; Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya, February 2, 2025; John Manners, "The African Recruiting Boom" in *The African Running Revolution,* ed. Dave Prokop (Mountain View, CA: Runner's World Magazine, 1975), 62-69. "St. Patrick's High School Athletes Who Made it to the States on Athletic Scholarships," *The Patrician Silver Jubilee* – St. Patrick's High School, Iten Kenya, 1986, 25.

1973.[135] Mike Murei, who finished at Iten in 1970, ran at Mosoriot Teachers Training College and competed for Kenya in West Germany, England, and Zanzibar before joining Boit at Eastern New Mexico University and then transferring to University of Wisconsin in 1976.[136] In 1972, Boit and Murei joined another former Saint, Cosmas Silei, achieving one of the highest levels of transnational athletics acclaim, with all three competing for Kenya at the Munich Olympics, where Boit won a bronze medal in the half-mile run.[137]

[135] "Kenyans steal the show in Abidjan," *East African Standard*, Aril 5, 1971, 12; Mike Boit, interview with author, August 1, 2019.
[136] "Mike Murei gets his big break in Germany," *East African Standard*, August 24, 1971, 12; "Kenya second string first in Zanzibar," *East African Standard,* January 19, 1974, 8; Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya, February 25, 2020.
[137] "Silei and Mwebi sweep in," 11; Don Beet, "Kenya athletes off to a dismal start," *East African Standard*, September 1, 1972, 20; Don Beet, "At last – two medals come to East Africa," *East African Standard*, September 4, 1972, 1.

Given these experiences, in addition to their long list of successes at Iten, it is not surprising that once they arrived on US campuses, former St. Patrick's athletes excelled. Mike Boit, the first former Saint to receive an athletics scholarship in the US, won 14 NAIA individual national track and cross-country titles during his time in New Mexico between 1973 to 1976, establishing himself as one of the best collegiate performers at any level in the United States at the time.[138] While at Wisconsin, Mike Murei became an All-American performer and won multiple Big 10 Conference Championships in the 400 metres hurdles, setting both school and conference records in the process.[139] Kiptanui Sirma, who competed at UTEP between 1975 to 1979 with a slew of other Kenyan athletes, was an All-American in both cross-country and track and field, a member of multiple NCAA championship teams in both sports, and set a school record in the 10K while finishing fourth in the NCAA championships in 1976.[140] Richard Kaitany was both a cross-country All-American and a national NCAA runner-up in the 5K while at Iowa State University in the early-1980s, while Joseph Kemei set several school records while garnering All-America honors in track and field at West Texas State during the late-1970s.[141]

At the same time, running in the US was not just about competition and athletic achievement. Former Saints came away from their college careers with memories and relationships that shaped their lives for years to come. Mike Murei recalled the enjoyment of taking summer jobs in Wisconsin, where he worked at a bank and lived with a family called the Morrisons.[142] "I lived in their house…and in the morning I used their bike to go and work. They

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[138] "Three past standouts to Drake Relays Hall," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, April 12, 1981, 2D.
[139] Don Lindstrom, "Johnson, Murei named most valuable," *Wisconsin State Journal*, May 26, 1977, Page 2, Section 3; "UW's Murei earns All-American," *Wisconsin State Journal*, June 5, 1977, Section 3, Page 5.
[140] "USC snaps Miners title string," *Prospector*, June 10, 1976, 4; Derry Eads, "Kip Sirma rates ***," *El Paso Herald Post*, November 15, 1976, 21; "Sirma's uphill style far from 'Run Down'," *El Paso Times*, October 14, 1977, 43.
[141] "Crowell wins discus, ISU places 8th," *The Gazette*, June 7, 1981, 47; "Buffs qualify four for national championships," *The Canyon Sunday News*, February 5, 1978, 12.
[142] Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya, February 25, 2020.

didn't want me to stay without," Murei recalled.[143] During his time in New Mexico, Mike Boit developed a strong connection to the university and the surrounding town of Portales. "I was so much at home," Boit told me about his time there. "And when I wanted to leave, at the same time, I wished I could stay longer, because I had come to like the community."[144] Richard Kaitany, who met his wife, Andrea, while in Iowa, recalled how the experience of travelling alone to a foreign country to attend school forced him to "grow up quick" and "become responsible."[145] "I am who I am today," Kaitany told me, "because of my going to America."[146]

Academically, several former Saints excelled in the classroom, receiving degrees that they used to build careers for themselves, as well as give back to their home communities. Mike Murei, who arrived at Wisconsin with a teaching diploma from Mosoriot Teacher's Training College, received a degree in geography, which he later put to use during an eleven-year teaching geography career in Kenya.[147] After finishing his undergraduate degree in three years at Eastern New Mexico, Mike Boit went to Stanford, where he received two Master's Degrees, and then to University of Oregon, completing a PhD in Education in 1986.[148] After returning to Kenya to work as a university professor at Kenyatta University, Boit helped co-found, along with John Manners (who coached cross-country at Kaplong Secondary School in the early 1970s), the Kenya Scholar Athlete Project (KenSAP), an organization which helps high-achieving, low-income Kenyan students gain admission and financial aid to selective North American colleges and universities.[149] Richard Kaitany, who told me that his major reason for going abroad was

[143] Ibid.
[144] Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, November 13, 2019.
[145] Richard Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 13, 2019.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya; February 25, 2020.
[148] Mike Boit, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, August 1, 2019.
[149] For a full description of KenSAP's activities, see the "What we do," KenSAP, accessed June 2, 2024, https://www.kensap.org/what-we-do.

because it offered him "an opportunity for an advanced education," received undergraduate, Master's, and Doctoral degrees, which he partially funded by running road races in the late-1980s (Kaitany won the Houston Marathon in 1989 by setting a course record of 2 hours, 10 minutes, 4 seconds).[150] He later took a job with the Department of Agriculture in Michigan, where he worked for over two decades.[151] In 2022, after more than twenty years of fund-raising, planning, and construction, Kaitany and his wife successfully opened an all-girls school in Iten called Simbolei Academy, whose initial class of students all received financial aid.[152] Jepkorir Rose Chepyator Thomson, herself a former inter-collegiate runner and All-American performer at University of Wisconsin, where she received a two Master's Degrees and PhD, has dubbed athletes such as these Kenya's "scholar-runners."[153]

Back in Iten, the transnational experiences and achievements of former Saints resonated with the school's athletes and students, inspiring many of them to see themselves and their school as a key component of larger transnational networks of competitive achievement and sporting prestige. Decathlete John Rono, writing in *The Patrician* in the mid-1970s, recognized the power of "sports, which are strongly encouraged by our Headmaster, [to] give tremendous opportunities for social contact and travel."[154] Another student, reflecting on the 1976 cross-country season, cited the school's penchant for producing internationally competitive cross-country runners as a source of inspiration for the school's aspiring athletes. "We hope that the reputation of Iten cross-country runners continues to spread across the globe," the student wrote,

[150] Richard Kaitany, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, September 13, 2019; "Kenyan, Brit Claim Houston Marathon," *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, January 16, 1989, 17.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Sarah Barker, "Richard Kaitany Gives Back in His Return to Kenya," *Runner's World*, July 5, 2022. https://www.runnersworld.com/runners-stories/a40475926/richard-kaitany-simbolei-academy-iten-kenya/.
[153] Chepyator-Thomson, 'Kenyan Scholar-Runners in the United States," 32.
[154] John Rono, "On the achievements of the school," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 21.

"and that others will follow in the footsteps of people like Joseph Kemei, who went to the USA in 1974 for further studies and continues to be a cross-country champion."[155]

Such commentary provides insight into the ways that athletics achievement, in addition to providing a platform for the development of identities of honor and prestige, were leveraged for the creation of transnational connections. By linking their local and national experiences and achievements in sport with aspirations for travelling and excelling in global sporting networks, St. Patrick's students and athletes demonstrated an interest and willingness to "engage with worldly practices and ideas" that both shaped and were shaped by themselves and their school.[156]

'He went home to get the money for his exam fees and we haven't seen him since': Failure and Disappointment in the Midst of Athletic Achievement at St. Patrick's

Despite these achievements and experiences, success in athletics was never guaranteed for St. Patrick's students. As in all sports, failures, disappointments, and hardships were a regular accompaniment to achievements in the athletics arena. Though the school's written record and oral histories rarely documented the hardships, failures, and disappointments faced by the school's athletes, they did exist. Defeats, academic challenges, financial hardships, injuries, and the strain that high-level athletics competition could place on personal relationships were just as much a part of competitive sport as the glory and prestige of achievement.

Like all athletes, St. Patrick's runners experienced the stinging disappointment of defeat, sometimes by the slimmest of margins. In 1972, for example, all-around athlete Daniel Tum, competing in the National Secondary Schools' Athletics Championships in Kakamega, lost out on the individual national title in the 110 metres hurdles, losing to the winner James Lagat by less than one-tenth of second.[157] Similarly, in 1973, both Joseph Kemei and Rafael Kigen missed

[155] "Cross-Country Report," 19.
[156] Milford, et. al., "Another world?," 401.
[157] "Rift Valley all the way in Kakamega event," 10.

out on individual national titles in the 1500 and 5000 metres runs, respectively, losing by slim margins.[158] That same year, racing in the 400 metres hurdles in the Rift Valley championships, Dominic Yator tripped on a hurdle and fell as he came down the final straightaway, finishing in third place.[159] Joseph Barno, Yator's schoolmate, had a similar disappointment in the 800 metres run at the same competition, being passed in the final bend by Charles Aginga of Njoro Boys' Secondary School, pushing Barno to third place by a single second.[160] For both Yator and Barno, the defeats not only meant failing to qualify for the national championships, but they also cost them a chance to be part of the 1973 Rift Valley team that went to Britian the following month.

At other times, promising athletes never got the chance to compete at St. Patrick's due to financial reasons. Although the school's officials were known for supporting promising athletes to make sure they could pay their school fees, with some former runners recalling how they were allowed to work on campus during school holidays to help pay tuition, some left because of financial pressures.[161] Speaking to a visiting teacher and coach in the early 1970s, headmaster Simeon Geraghty told of an unnamed, talented young runner who never ran for the school because "he went home to get the money for his exam fees and we haven't seen him since."[162] Others were lured away from the school by outside groups. Peter Mullin, who coached the school's athletics team in the mid-1970s, recalled how a group of Army athletes came to Iten in 1975 to train at the nearby Location Field, and after asking to train with the St. Patrick's team, succeeded in coaxing several of the school's athletes to leave in favor of taking a job with Kenya Army.[163]

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[158] "Girls of Rift Valley steal the limelight," 9.
[159] Dominic Yator, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020.
[160] Moll, "Rift whizz kids set fast pace at Nakuru," 26.
[161] Luka Talam, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, August 15, 2019.
[162] Tulloh, "'She's run 4 min. 20 sec. for 1,500 metres," 26.
[163] Peter Mullin, email exchange with author, January 8th and January 14th, 2020.

Challenges also came in the form of decisions made by school officials and sports administrators to suspend or disqualify St. Patrick's athletes from competition. At the 1970 National Secondary Schools' Athletics Championships, where Mike Murei was set to defend the 400 metres hurdles title that he had won the year before, Murei was disqualified in the first heat by meet officials "for having failed to take one of the hurdles."[164] Two years prior, in preparation for defending his individual cross-country title at the 1968 National Secondary Schools' Cross-Country Championships, Paul Cherop was reportedly suspended by St. Patrick's administrators for taking part, without permission, in an amateur athletics meet in Mombasa sponsored by British American Tobacco, Kenya (B.A.T. Kenya).[165] According to fellow cross-country team member James Kiplagat, not having Cherop meant that the entire Saints team was hampered in competing for the national team title that year. "We had not the leader who could lead us," Kiplagat lamented in *The Paten*, "so we were thrown to the back."[166]

One of the most pernicious and uncontrollable challenge came in the form of injuries. In 1970, Mike Murei lost out on a chance to defend his national school's decathlon title because, according to press reports, of "an injured tendon."[167] Two years prior, after missing the 1968 national schools' cross-country championships, Paul Cherop experienced an injury to the back of his foot while preparing for an attempt to qualify for the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. "That is where I was spiked," Cherop told me. "We were running in Kericho. I had an injury here," he explained while pointing to a scar on the back of his left heel. "When we were running, I was negotiating the corner with a group for the team," Cherop continued as his voice trailed off into silence. "The scar is still there," he finished with a clear sense of disappointment.

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[164] "Ministry bursary for Amos Biwott," 12.
[165] "Ndoo schools' cross-country champion," 1968.
[166] Kiplagat and Cherop, "The Cross-Country," 7.
[167] "Mike Murei still top hurdler, says coach," 12.

Going abroad to compete inter-collegiately could also provide challenges. One of the most difficult of these was the distance that attempting to lead a transnational sporting life put between individual athletes and their families. Mike Boit, who cited his parents as being instrumental in encouraging him to excel in both sports and academics, recalled how he invested huge amounts of effort and money travelling back to Kenya every year to see his family.[168] For others, family tragedies struck while they were away. After finishing his time at the University of Wisconsin, Mike Murei recalled how he planned on staying longer in the US to find work. However, after receiving word that his father had passed away, Murei felt a deep pressure to return to Kenya to help support his family. "I was still going to extend my stay in the US, but difficulties happened here at home," Murei recalled. "My father passed away. Then when they wrote me a latter, then I said, let me go [home]."[169]

Some Saints, perhaps with such examples in mind, declined the opportunity to travel, live, and compete abroad. St. Patrick's hurdler and decathlete Dominic Yator told of how he turned down a chance to compete collegiately in the United States because of rumors that he heard of Kenyan athletes never returning home. "Brother Simeon and Brother Marcellus made an arrangement with the University of Texas and California," Yator recalled. "They wanted to give me a scholarship for athletics. But you know, at that time, a good number of athletes who went abroad to US never came back…So, when that story went around, then I told Brother Marcellus, I think I'm not in a position now. I told him I better join the teacher training college first."[170] Yator chose, instead, to attend Mosoriot Teachers Training College, where he competed in athletics and volleyball while earning a teaching diploma.[171]

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[168] Mike Boit, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, November 13, 2019.
[169] Mike Murei, interview with author, Kapsaga, Kenya, February 25, 2020.
[170] Dominic Yator, interview with author, Waitaluk, Kenya, February 20, 2020.
[171] Ibid.

In addition, while several former St. Patrick's athletes excelled in the university classroom while abroad, some were unable to remain academically eligible. Former St. Patrick's runner Kipsubai Koskei, who made a splash immediately after arriving at University of New Mexico in 1979 by finishing in third place at that year's NCAA National Cross-Country Championships, was forced to sit out and eventually leave the school in 1980 because he did not have "enough hours to be academically eligible," according to a report in the *Albuquerque Journal*.[172] Though Koskei would go on to become a highly successful international runner, with a career highlighted by several top finishes in the 5K and 10K at the African Championships and a bronze medal at the 1988 World Cross Country Championships (in which Kenya placed eight runners in the top ten finishers), it is unclear whether Koskei ever returned to school.[173]

As these examples demonstrate, despite a strong belief in athletics success as an avenue for the realization of individual honor, institutional prestige, and social opportunities, such achievements did not create a perfect world. Winning medals, breaking records, and earning athletic scholarships certainly opened doors and created possibilities, however they did not erase the very real sting of defeat, the vagaries of financial hardship, the misery and pain of physical injuries, or the heartbreak of missing time with loved ones or having to deal with personal tragedies from afar. Such experiences are reminders that, in the world of achievement sport inhabited by so many St. Patrick's athletes of the period, the highs of winning could exist simultaneously with the lows of failure, disappointment, and tragedy. In this way, athletics at St. Patrick's, though often remembered as a story of glorious success and endless victory, truly

[172] Ed Johnson, "Lobo Track Coach's Contract is Reviewed," *Albuquerque Journal*, June 13, 1980, 53; Ed Johnson, "New Lobo Track, Cross Country Coach Looking to Future," *Albuquerque Journal*, September 5, 1980, D-3.
[173] Doug Gillon, "Cross-country in Britian could be running out of time," *Glasgow Herald*, March 28, 1988, 1.

reflected the ambiguity of life and the full range of emotions that define the human experience, in early post-colonial Kenya.

'No matter how short, tall, thin, fat, old, young or bow-legged you are, a place exists for you': The Uses of Team Sports at Iten

While students at St. Patrick's experienced the entirety of the human condition through athletics, interschool team games such as field hockey, basketball, football, doubles lawn tennis, and volleyball also played important roles in the school's institutional identity. At most times, interscholastic teams mirrored the achievement culture and search for prestige embedded within athletics. At others, team sports acted as spaces where students were encouraged and enabled to challenge commonly held cultural and social stereotypes related to ethnicity, race, and class, while carving out new venues for the attainment of sporting honors. For a few students, team sports provided a platform to critique, although mildly, the school's emphasis on winning. However, at all times, team sports represented an important set of daily activities that provide insight into the everyday life of St. Patrick's students of the period.

The most important team sport at St. Patrick's during the 1960s and 1970s was volleyball. Played by students during the school's founding years, volleyball remained a largely recreational sport on campus until the arrival of Brother Marcellus Broderick, who was introduced to the sport while in California during the early-1960s.[174] After arriving in Iten in 1968, Broderick took over the program, began organizing students into a competitive team, and started coordinating local and provincial interschool volleyball competitions, most notably through the establishment of the Rift Volleyball Association in the early 1970s.[175] Broderick's efforts would come to have a sizable influence, both at the school and throughout Kenya, with St.

[174] O'Connell, "A Brief Look at St. Patrick's High School, Iten as a Sports Institution," 12.
[175] "New body for volleyball," *East African Standard*, November 16, 1972, 10.

Patrick's establishing itself, out of the over 600 schools participating in the sport by the mid-1970s, as the country's top school volleyball program.[176] At St. Patrick's, volleyball largely served to reinforce the school's culture of competitive achievement, and alongside cross-country and track and field, became a key place where players and coaches achieved prestige for themselves and their school.

In contrast to other sports on campus, national success in volleyball followed almost immediately after the sport was contested interscholastically. In 1970, in just the school's second full season of interschool competitions, the Saints won Kenya's inaugural National Boys' Secondary Schools' Volleyball Championship, sweeping through the tournament with a performance described in the national media as skillful and precise.[177] Recounting the national championship match against nearby Tambach High School, who would become a rival to St. Patrick's on the national volleyball circuit, reporters for the *East African Standard* wrote:

> Iten completely outclassed their neighbors from Elgeyo. [Sixtoo] Kirongo and [Philip] Saina mesmerised (sic) the opposition with their powerful overhead serving…[John] Birech, [Daniel] Tum, and [Isaac] Kibitok again and again soared into the air to smash the ball into the opponents' court or to block the sharp spikes…David Sang displayed keen volleyball sense and his precision forward and overhead setting paved the way for a 15-2, 15-4, 15-6 win.[178]

The *Daily Nation* praised the play of team captain John Birech, who was chosen as the tournament's most outstanding player, as "kill[ing] any hope [the opposition] had with his smashing, feinting, and blocking."[179] In the years that followed, the Saints established themselves as the preeminent school volleyball side in the country, winning every national

[176] O'Connell, "A Brief Look at St. Patrick's High School, Iten as a Sports Institution," 12; "The name of the game is volleyball," *East African Standard*, April 27, 1974, 7.
[177] "St. Patrick's win volleyball marathon," *East African Standard*, November 5, 1970, 10; "St Patrick's are schools' champs," *Daily Nation*, November 6, 1970, 12.
[178] "St. Patrick's win volleyball marathon," 10.
[179] "St Patrick's are schools' champs," 12.

secondary schools' title between 1970 and 1985.[180] As Edward Kimosop, St. Patrick's volleyball team captain during the mid-1970s and a member of six successive national championship teams from 1972 to 1977, wrote in *The Patrician*, such a string of national success gave the Saints "the title of the best team in the country."[181]

In addition to dominating at the secondary school level, the Saints often participated in, and won, invitational volleyball tournaments across Kenya, and even in Uganda. Competing in locales as far afield as Eldoret, Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kampala against some of Kenya's and East Africa's best amateur club teams, the Saints established a reputation for themselves as the

Figure 4.12 – The St. Patrick's Volleyball team at the 1973 Eldoret Open where they defeated the Kenya National Youth Service team and a select team from Kampala, Uganda.

(Image courtesy of Dominic Yator)

[180] "St. Patrick's win volleyball marathon," 10; "St Patrick's are schools' champs," 12; "Fourth Cup win by St. Patrick's," East African Standard, October 25, 1973, 10; Edward K. Kimosop, "The Volleyball – Team: Champions for Seven Consecutive Years," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 8; O'Connell, "A Brief Look at St. Patrick's High School, Iten as a Sports Institution," 12.
[181] Kimosop, "The Volleyball – Team: Champions for Seven Consecutive Years," 8.

country's top side at any level. For example, in 1973, St. Patrick's won the Eldoret Open Volleyball Tournament by placing first in a field of 32 teams that included the Mombasa-based Kenya National Youth Service team and a select team from Kampala, Uganda.[182] (See Figure 4.12) The following year, competing in a tournament organized by the Kenya Volleyball Association in Kabete, team captain Dominic Yator was cited as having "the greatest potential that Kenya volleyball has seen" after leading the Saints to victory, for which they were presented the OrbitSports Limited Trophy, an award voted on by Kenyan sportswriters to recognize the top sports performances in the country.[183]

As in athletics, though to a lesser degree, national volleyball successes led to international opportunities for competition. In 1975, after five straight years of high-level performances in both schools' competitions and invitational tournaments, St. Patrick's was chosen by Kenyan sports officials to travel to neighboring Uganda to represent Kenya in a match with several top Ugandan sides.[184] After lodging for three days at Makerere University, the Saints defeated both the Uganda Armed Forces side and a select team of top players from Kampala, the latter of which was contested in front of 40,000 spectators at Nakivubo Stadium, a crowd that included Ugandan President Idi Amin.[185] As team member Gideon Too wrote in the school magazine the year after the trip, the victory allowed St. Patrick's volleyball to both reinforce their status as "a *Jogoo* (Kiswahili for rooster) throughout Kenya," while also providing a "chance to demonstrate our skill across the border."[186]

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[182] "Iten boys are made to fight," *East African Standard*, September 26, 1973, 16.
[183] "Easy for Iten," *East African Standard*, March 18, 1974, 8; Picture of Yator receiving the trophy in *East African Standard*, March 20, 1974, 8.
[184] "Iten make successful Uganda tour," *Daily Nation*, May 7, 1975, 30; Gideon Moiben Too, "Visiting Uganda: The Volleyball Team," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten,* October 29th, 1976*,* 28.
[185] "Iten make successful Uganda tour," 30; Too, "Visiting Uganda: The Volleyball Team," 28; Simeon Geraghty, phone interview with author, March 3, 2020.
[186] The term *Jogoo*, Kiswahili for rooster, used by Too denotes the biggest or toughest of a group. Too, "Visiting Uganda: The Volleyball Team," 28.

While volleyball functioned as a space for the reinforcement of the school's culture of achievement and prestige, football provides a counter example. Perhaps the most popular sport in Kenyan schools of the period, football was one of the few places where critiques of the school's obsession with winning surfaced.[187] Always a popular sport among the student body, and one of the earliest team games to be introduced to the school, football was also one of the few sports in which the school did not garner provincial or national accolades during the 1960s and 1970s. In the sport's early years on campus, the Saints had measured local success, winning the North West Rift district championship in 1966 and 1968.[188] The 1968 team, one of the school's most talented teams, was coached by Desmond Healy and competed only against schools from western Kenya. Posting a record of 8-1-1, the school's only defeat came to Nakuru Secondary School in the finals of the Rift Valley Provincial Championship, a loss which, according to team captain Jerenews Othieno, brought "the football world to a standstill" on campus.[189]

Despite not advancing beyond the district level, members of the 1968 team received acclaim for their efforts from fellow classmates, who noted their physical talents and tough character in the student magazine. Augustine Opell and Ernest Mosii, for example, were described in *The Paten* by their class prefect James Nganga as "towers of strength to the soccer team," while Sostern Kiptoo was compared to legendary British footballer Stanley "Wizard of the Dribble" Matthews.[190] Though they had limited championship success, the 1968 team was

[187] Though students at St. Patrick's used both "football" and "soccer," I have chosen to use "football" because it was the most common term deployed by students. In addition, Kenyans generally refer to the sport as "football."
[188] Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," 6; Jerenews E. Othieno, "Soccer," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 5.
[189] Othieno, "Soccer," 5.
[190] Nganga, "Form Four East," 10; William Wainaina & Philip Nyanjui, "Form III West," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's, Iten,* Vol 3, 1967, 11. As an aside, Stanely Matthews was highly revered by many African football enthusiasts during the 1950s and 1960s. Historian Peter Alegi has written about how, during a visit to Ghana in 1957, Matthews was honored with the title *Soccerhene* (a play on f the traditional title for the Asante monarch, *Asantehene*). See Alegi, *African Soccerscapes*, 54.

exceptionally talented, with a number of their top players, such as Ernest Ingosi, Andrew Makokha, Apollo Ochieng, and Francis Kigara, competing on municipal and district level clubs in Kitale, Kisumu, and Thomson Falls.[191] Team captain Jerenews Othieno even competed for Gor Mahia B, the second team for what would become one of Kenya's most notable pro clubs.[192]

Despite these promising early beginnings, by the 1970s, unlike other St. Patrick's sports programs, the football team had little to show in the way of high-level competitive improvements. By 1976, they finished a very good 8-2-1, again competing only against local teams in western Kenya, in route to winning the North West Rift Valley district championship.[193] However, a close 4-3 loss in the Rift Valley Provincial Finals against Kapsabet Boys High School, in a match that was described as a "tiring game" that ended in a "controversial fourth goal," again finished their season without advancing past the provincial level.[194] According to football captain Joseph Wangala, such a crushing loss made the team and its supporters "miserable because we would otherwise have represented the province."[195]

Perhaps this limited championship success is why one of the few critiques of the school's achievement culture to show up in the written record came from a football player. While paying attention to give credit to the school's achievement culture, football player John Rono nonetheless called on his fellow students, and perhaps the school's leadership, to remember that winning was not the only thing. "You will agree that our achievements have been something to be proud of," Rono wrote in *The Patrician* in 1976. "Sports, which are strongly encouraged by our Headmaster, give tremendous opportunities," he continued, "[but] it can also lead to jealousy

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[191] Othieno, "Soccer," 5.
[192] Ibid. For a discussion of Gor Mahi, as well as AFC Leopards, see Wycliffe W. Simiyu Njororai, "Colonial legacy, minorities and association football in Kenya," *Soccer and Society* 10, no. 6 (November 2009), 866-882.
[193] Joseph Wanjala, "Football Report - 1976," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 13.
[194] Wanjala, "Football Report - 1976," 13.
[195] Ibid.

and bad feeling among those who think that the first thing in sport is to win. Such people should keep in mind that the first thing in sport is to take part, the second to do one's best according to the needs of the team."[196] Though students of the period rarely expressed critiques such as this, such commentary suggests that not everyone on campus was happy with the school's dominant culture of achievement.

While the football program struggled to attain high levels of success in the school's first decades, other teams blended the search for achievement with discourses of ethnicity, race, and class in Kenya, seeking out and successfully establishing new sites from which to achieve sporting honors and prestige. Some also served as spaces where students were able to challenge common social and cultural stereotypes. A key example of this can be seen in the emergence of the school's inter-scholastic field hockey program. Established by James Tirop in 1965, field hockey was the first of any team sport at St. Patrick's to win a major championship, with Tirop coaching the Saints to the Rift Valley Provincial Secondary Schools' Field Hockey Championship in the program's second year.[197] For some, like Ernest Katainy, who would serve as the team's captain in 1968 and 1969, such victories provided motivation to take up the sport. "I remember, in 1966," Kaitany recalled during an interview in 2019, "We were given a holiday because they won hockey in [the] entire Rift Valley…We got a big cup. So, Brother Ambrose, he bought sweets and gave [them to] us and gave us a holiday…That one now made some of us to be playing."[198] Others, such as Joseph Chepkiyeng Arap Kew, saw such victories as a defining moment in the development of the school's culture of competition, writing in *The Paten* that it

[196] Rono, "On the achievements of the school," 21.
[197] Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," p 6.
[198] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, December 17, 2019, Kapteren, Kenya.

was in 1966 when "Iten students emerged into the scene of competition with true challenging spirit."[199]

However, while contributing to this rising culture of achievement, the field hockey program also provided space for students to contest common social and cultural stereotypes. At times, albeit in limited ways, these challenges took the form of incorporating women into the school's almost exclusively male sports scene. During both the 1967 and 1968 seasons, after the departure of James Tirop, the field hockey program was coached by one of the school's female teachers, a woman named Pauline Healy.[200] According to Ernest Kaitany, in addition to organizing and overseeing the team's "daily energetic practices," Healy would herself participate in intersquad scrimmages.[201] Decades later, Kaitany described how Healy's participation stood out. "There was a woman," he recalled, "She was a foreigner – a lady who used to play hockey…She used to play hockey, when I was in Form Two, [she] was playing hockey with us, the boys."[202] In 1967, under Healy's direction, St. Patrick's even competed in a "friendly" match against the team from Eldoret's Loreto Girls School.[203]

Field hockey was also space where students were encouraged to reconsider commonly held stereotypes related to ethnicity. As a sport that was viewed by many Kenyans of the period as the domain of the country's Asian community, student leaders of the field hockey program challenged their fellow students to think beyond these labels. "I have heard a frequent phrase which goes like this: Singhs and DeSouzas were born with hockey sticks in their hands," team captain William Wainaina wrote in *The Paten* in 1968. "This tends to persuade some of us away

[199] Kew, "The Transformation Development of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Iten," 6.
[200] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, October 17, 2019.
[201] William A. Hillary Wainaina, "Hockey – 1967," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 3, 1967, 45.
[202] Ernest Kaitany, interview with author, Kapteren, Kenya, October 17, 2019.
[203] Wainaina, "Hockey – 1967," 45.

from the game when we should really be applying our talents and learning," he continued. "How can you know whether or not you can play hockey before trying it one of these days? You will always be welcomed…Gain skill and do more exercise by joining the hockey club!"[204]

The idea that field hockey was not solely a sport for Kenya's Asian athletes carried over into the school's competitive schedule. In the late-1960s and 1970s, a period in which the team's roster regularly consisted of only African players, St. Patrick's took part in a highly competitive schedule that not only included schools from Tambach, Usain Gishu, and Kabsabet, but also pitted the Saints against predominantly Asian sides like the Sikh Union of Eldoret and Nairobi's Goan Institute.[205] At other times, the school's team attended matches headlined by the Indian National team, one of world's most dominant field hockey squads of the period, where they were exposed to different playing strategies.[206] Following one such match in 1968, the team's captain wrote in *The Paten* of how players returned to school "discussing the different styles they had seen and grasped."[207]

Team members learned their lessons well. During the 1970s, St. Patrick's emerged as one of the Rift Valley's most successful school field hockey programs. In 1973, the Saints defeated a predominantly Asian team from Uasin Gishu to win the Nathwani Memorial Cup Competition, western Kenya's most coveted interschool field hockey tournament, while also taking the boys' secondary schools' trophy for the North West District championships.[208] Later that same year, competing against a largely Asian squad from Kisumu Boys' High School, the Saints lost in the

[204] A. William Wainaina, *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 10.
[205] Kenny Otieno, "Hockey," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 7; A. William Wainaina, *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 10.
[206] Between 1952 and 1972, the Indian men's national field hockey team won three gold medals, one silver medal, and two bronze medals at the Olympics. For a tally of these Olympic results, see "Medals by country," Olympedia, accessed June 2, 2024, https://www.olympedia.org/statistics/medal/country.
[207] A. William Wainaina, *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 10.
[208] "Nyeri High in sweep of Central cross-countries," *Daily Nation*, April 4, 1973, 30.

National Boys' Secondary Schools' Field Hockey Championships.[209] In later years, field hockey players, such as the 1976 team captain Kenny Otieno, celebrated how such a victory demonstrated the way the "old-established game on the Iten compound" had "flourished" through the efforts of the team's coaches and players.[210] As these examples suggest, by the middle of the 1970s, St. Patrick's field hockey players had successfully established a place for themselves in the sport as Africans, adding names such as Kaitany, Otieno, and Wanaiana to those of DeSouza and Singh in the upper echelons of Kenyan school field hockey.

A similar discourse, combining faith in competitive achievement with a culture that encouraged students to look beyond sports-related stereotypes, existed within the school's basketball team. Introduced to campus during the mid-to-late 1960s, the school's basketball program had limited competitive success in its early years.[211] In 1968, the first season for which there are records, the team competed in only three games with other schools, winning two, while the school's administration organized a three team intraschool league on campus.[212] The season came to an inauspicious close when the Saints were defeated by four points against Nakuru Secondary School in the Rift Valley Province tournament.[213]

Despite such modest efforts, basketball proved to be popular among students. According to an oft-repeated story related by several of the school's basketball alumni and former coaches, the sport was so prevalent on campus that a visitor once remarked that the most common sound

[209] "Basketball title for Aquinas High," *East African Standard,* April 16, 1973, 9.
[210] Otieno, "Hockey," 7.
[211] Though it is unclear who exactly introduced the game to the school, during the mid-1960s, there was a US Peace Corps volunteer by the name of Ian Donner at St Patrick's. US Peace Corps volunteers were instrumental in introducing basketball in other places of the world during this period, suggesting that Donner may have had some influence here.
[212] Gitau and Kinuthia, "Basketball at St. Patrick's, Iten," 11-12.
[213] Ibid, 12.

at St. Patrick's was "the bouncing of a basketball."[214] Records from the late 1960s and 1970s corroborate this. Writing in *The Paten* in 1968, the team's captain Joseph Gitau, along with team member John Kinuthia, described the way team members promoted "metabolism, katabolism, anabolism, stamina and dexterity" as they competed on their dirt court, kicking up a "heavy brown blanket of dust" in the process.[215] Appealing for others to join up, Gitau and Kinuthia encouraged the student body to disregard ideas that the sport was solely for the physically gifted. "Let not your physical structure or posture make you lose heart in basketball," they pleaded. "No matter how short, tall, thin, fat, old, young or bow-legged you are, a place exists for you in basketball."[216]

Later years saw a greater emphasis placed on competitive achievement. By the early-1970s, the basketball team was playing a full schedule, competing in interschool tournaments and stand-alone games in places like Nyeri, Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kijabe, Kisumu, and Kamusinga.[217] Under the coaching of Norman Thomson, a US Peace Corps volunteer who arrived in 1973 and also helped coach the cross-country team, practices became more organized, with morning conditioning, afternoon exercises, and intersquad scrimmages.[218] By the mid-1970s, a tarmacked basketball court was completed through the efforts of both staff and students, with student labor being requisitioned from those who violated school rules.[219]

Such efforts no doubt contributed to the rising competitive success of the program. In 1973, the team won, for the first time, the Rift Valley championship, a trophy that they would not

[214] Brother Paul Brennan, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, October 30, 2019; Joe Odhiambo, interview with author, Nairobi, Kenya, September 11, 2019. The story is also related in O'Connell, "A Brief Look at St. Patrick's High School, Iten as a Sports Institution," 12
[215] Gitau and Kinuthia, "Basketball at St. Patrick's, Iten," 11.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Aywah, "Basketball," 29.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid; Lebo Serem, interview with author, Eldoret, Kenya, February 14, 2020.

relinquishing for nineteen years straight.[220] Two years later, led by the play of Kenyan Schools Basketball All-Star Aggrey Massawa, the Saints advanced all the way to the National Boys' Secondary Schools' Basketball Championships, losing to national basketball power Aquinas High School from Nairobi, an outcome they would repeat in 1976.[221] While this newfound success brought with it an increased competitive emphasis, with the 1976 team captain David Ameyo Aywah promising "great victories" for the future, the foundational idea of developing younger players by "helping to train boys from lower forms," as Aywah put it in *The Patrician*, remained a core feature of the team's philosophy.

In similar ways, the school's lawn tennis team, one of the last sports to be introduced to campus, was a place where high-level achievement was both prized and seen as a way to challenge social norms, especially as they related to class and race. In late-1968, after being introduced to the sport by watching some of the school staff play on dirt courts, a group of six students petitioned the school's administration for the creation of the Lawn Tennis Club.[222] By the end of the year, under the direction of Bob Bloodsworth, the club included a dozen players, with members competing only in intraschool competitions on two clay courts on campus.[223] In 1970 and 1971, again with the help of compulsory student labor, the staff and grounds crew successfully constructed three new courts.[224] It was during the same period, with Brother Simeon Geraghty taking over coaching responsibilities, that the team began entering interschool

[220] O'Connell, "A Brief Look at St. Patrick's High School, Iten as a Sports Institution," 12.
[221] Aywah, "Basketball," 29; "Prize Day. October 29th, 1976," *The Patrician*, St. Patrick's High School, Iten, October 29th, 1976, 2.
[222] Francis Mwangi, "The Lawn Tennis Club," *The Paten Student Magazine – St. Patrick's Iten*, Vol 4, 1968, 13.
[223] Mwangi, "The Lawn Tennis Club," 13; O'Connell, "A Brief Look at St. Patrick's High School, Iten as a Sports Institution," 12
[224] Barry Reese, "St. Patrick's has tremendous potential," *Daily Nation*, December 20, 1971, 33; Elias Komen, interview with author, Iten, Kenya, October 3, 2019.

competitions, travelling to Nairobi to compete against what tennis player Peter Kipruto described as "the old-established tennis-playing schools."[225]

Though such a trip may seem innocuous, entering Black African athletes from rural backgrounds in Kenyan school tennis matches, a sport predominantly populated by white and Asian players from urban upper-class schools, was a rarity during the early 1970s. During this period, St. Patrick's was one of the few schools anywhere in Kenya to regularly enter Black African tennis players in school competitions. For example, after taking part in a circuit of tournaments in Nakuru, Eldoret, and Nairobi in mid-1971, St. Patrick's competed in the Rift Valley Junior tennis tournament by entering fifteen players, a contingent that constituted more than half of the twenty-eight Black African competitors in the event.[226] The remaining thirteen came from a collection of schools from Nairobi and Nakuru.[227]

Such efforts led to groundbreaking achievements in the sport. In October of 1971, the school's top tennis players, Patrick Orina and Cornelius Serem, became the first Black Africans to win a junior tennis title in Kenya, taking the under-15 boys' doubles title in the Kenya Junior Tennis Championships in Nairobi, a milestone that was noted in both the school magazine and national newspapers.[228] Competing individually, Orina also finished second in singles, an achievement which inspired him to tell a reporter from the *Daily Nation*, "One day I shall be Kenya's top player."[229] (See Figure 4.13) Similar commentary looking towards more success for the Saints was found in the national press, where the Kenya Lawn Tennis Association's coach Barry Reese wrote of St. Patrick's as a "school to look out for in the future."[230]

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[225] Peter Kipruto, "Tennis," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 37.
[226] Reese, "Orina: One day I'll be Kenya's top player," 39; "Full results from Rift Valley," *East African Standard*, August 6, 1971, 14.
[227] Ibid.
[228] "Iten boys win junior doubles," *East African Standard*, October 18, 1971, 12; Kipruto, "Tennis," 37.
[229] "Orina: One day I'll be Kenya's top player," *Sunday Nation*, October 24, 1971, 39.
[230] Reese, "St. Patrick's has tremendous potential," 33.

Figure 4.13 – Patrick Orina and Cornelius Serem after winning the 1971 under-15 boys' doubles title in the Kenya Junior Tennis Championships in Nairobi, becoming the first Africans in Kenya to ever accomplish the feat.
(Image courtesy of the St. Patrick's House of Memories)

These achievements became the norm during the first half of the 1970s, as St. Patrick's tennis players, often the only fully Black African squad, competed against teams and individuals from prestigious urban schools like Nairobi School (formerly all-white Prince of Wales School), Kenton College Preparatory School, and Aga Khan Academy.[231] In 1972, the Saints won the national schools' tennis tournament for the first time, taking home the prestigious Carthusian Cup, a feat that they would repeat in 1973 and 1974.[232] During the same period, the school's doubles team of Boniface Kipkemboi and Arthur Oduor twice won the under-18 title in the

[231] Ibid; Sulubu Tuva, "Juniors ensure bright future," *East African Standard*, December 18, 1973, 11.
[232] "Carthusian Cup to St. Patrick's," *East African Standard*, March 20, 1973, 10; Kipruto, "Tennis," 37.

Kenya Junior Tennis Championships, while Chris Maiyo and Peter Kafuna took home a national secondary schools' doubles title in 1976.[233]

Not only were these milestones and achievements important for the individuals involved, but they also signaled a marked change in the history of Kenyan tennis on the junior and school levels. For a sport historically segregated by race and class, the efforts of St. Patrick's coaches and players to compete in and succeed in secondary school and junior tennis competitions represents a small, yet important, intervention in the Africanization of racially segregated corners of Kenyan sport and society. In the words of sportswriter Sulubu Tuva from the *East African Standard*, the performances of the St. Patrick's tennis players during the first half of the 1970s contributed to "a tremendous improvement in Kenya tennis" and marked "a great achievement" for the country's aspiring African players.[234]

As the story of St. Patrick's lawn tennis highlights, team sports were important places where many of the school's students continued the search for achievement, honor, and prestige through competitive success. While a handful of students expressed criticism of the school's fixation on winning, most competitive teams on campus solidified the use sport as a means of achieving individual honor and prestige, while placing the name of St. Patrick's "on the map" in Kenya and abroad. Sports teams also became spaces that encouraged and enabled members to challenge stereotypes related to ethnicity, race, and class, while carving out room for the attainment of honors in sports that were often inaccessible to Africans. In addition to these, at times, radical interventions in Kenyan school sport, these experiences demonstrate the dynamic role that team sports played in the lives of St. Patrick's students of the period.

[233] Kipruto, "Tennis," 37.
[234] Tuva, "Juniors ensure bright future," 11.

Conclusion

The sports history of St. Patrick's provides insight into several important trends, themes, and historical processes of change that are of interest to education historians and historians of sports. At St. Patrick's, sports were used to teach and form students, as a vehicle to achieve honor and prestige, and as a tool for challenging social stereotypes and upending the status quo in competitions like field hockey and lawn tennis. Taken together, however, sports were perhaps one of the most dynamic ways that members of the school's community sought to make their school a social place from which they could derive meaning and purpose in their lives. These patterns mark sport as an important social practice that historians of schools and education should pay closer attention to.

In addition, St. Patrick's helped to transform the national athletics scene in Kenya, as athletes from the school played central roles in the development of Kenyan athletics in the first decades after independence. They were key competitors in the developing complex of local Kenyan cross-country and track and field competitions of the period. They were central to the first iteration of provincial and national schools' championships in both sports, posting more consistently successful performances than athletes from any other school. They were part of the first group of Kenyan athletes to have international success in regional, continental, and global running events during the 1960s and early 1970s and were among the first generation of Kenyan runners to receive scholarships to US colleges and universities during the 1970s. For a nation like Kenya, famous for its successes in cross-country and athletics, understanding this history demonstrates the central role of local African institutions like St. Patrick's, as well as school athletes, in larger patterns of national, regional, and global historical change, serving as a reminder to sports historians that schools have much to add to the field's historiography.

CONCLUSION:
'THE GREAT PARTY'

On June 25th, 1976, there was a party on the campus at St. Patrick's. The gathering, intended as a farewell to the school's Headmaster Brother Simeon Geraghty, who was returning to Ireland, was attended by over 400 students, teachers, and guests from across Elgeyo-Marakwet District and consisted of a student play, a dance, and a meal of chicken, rice, and soup served in the school's new dining hall.[1] Geraghty, who arrived in Iten as a teacher in 1966, had served as headmaster for almost a decade and was viewed by many as one the school's most influential leaders.[2] His departure, therefore, was celebrated as a seminal moment for the school. At the party, students and teachers gave speeches celebrating Geraghty's contributions. Others wrote notes of farewell and appreciation in *The Patrician.* One student, Joseph Odhiambo, captured the general tenor of the event, heroizing Geraghty by citing what he described as an African proverb. "A Luo saying goes, 'It is hard to bear a hero'," Odhiambo wrote, "But [Geraghty] was one of them. His skin was white, his accent was Irish but his heart was African."[3]

Yet, behind the pomp and circumstance of the "Great Party," as one student described it, the event provides a window into how members of the St. Patrick's community, as well as some outside observers, understood the school's identity and past.[4] Sprinkled throughout the notes celebrating Geraghty's time as headmaster were references to many of the school's core ideals and values. Student Andrew Maritim, for example, noted the "high standard of discipline" and the "hardworking students…and dedicated teachers" that he had come to know during

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[1] Mike Waiganjo, "The Great Party: Brother Simeon's Farewell," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 6.
[2] Simeon Geraghty, phone interview with author, March 3, 2020; O'Connell, *Like a Tree Planted Near a Stream*, 33.
[3] Joshua Odhiambo, "Messages from our Four Prefects," *The Patrician – St. Patrick's High School, Iten*, October 29th, 1976, 21.
[4] Waiganjo, "The Great Party: Brother Simeon's Farewell," 6.

Geraghty's time.[5] Maritim's schoolmate Mike Waiganjo commented on the "progress" and "great acts of development" that had taken place under Geraghty's watch.[6] Cross-country runners Moses Kamar and Jacob Sum described how the efforts of Geraghty and the school's athletes had done much "to uplift the standard and name of St. Patrick's School," while David Tanui highlighted the importance of "honour" in the school's identity under Geraghty's leadership.[7] Even writers in the *Daily Nation*, one of Kenya's most widely read national newspapers, marked Geraghty's departure by highlighting the rise of St. Patrick's as "a leading sports school in East Africa."[8]

Such commentary provides a way to step back and take stock of the values that many members of the St. Patrick's community had come to see as central to the school's identity and history during its first fifteen years of existence. Put another way, they give us a window into the meanings that many students, teachers, administrators, and staff had been able to make and take from their time at Iten. Unsurprisingly, as they are throughout the school's written and oral records, ideals such as discipline, progress, development, prestige, and honor were common in student comments. St. Patrick's students are, rightfully I believe, often proud of their individual and institutional accomplishments and achievements, especially coming within the context of a Kenyan system of schooling that has historically been underfunded, unresponsive, and organized to benefit a tiny segment of society. Such important meanings and experiences of success and achievement should not be discounted, as they have played central roles in defining and shaping

[5] Andrew A. Maritim, *The Patrician*, St. Patrick's High School, Iten, October 29th, 1976, 24.
[6] Waiganjo, "The Great Party: Brother Simeon's Farewell," 6
[7] Kamar and Sum, "Cross Country Report," 20; David Tanui, *The Patrician*, St. Patrick's High School, Iten, October 29th, 1976, 22.
[8] "Richard Kaitany stars again," *Daily Nation,* July 29, 1976, 19.

the lives of thousands of men and boys – students, teachers, administrators, and staff – that have called St. Patrick's their school and home since its founding.

However, as this study has demonstrated, the creation of these meanings did not emerge seamlessly, nor were they innate to the school's identity. They are not simply the product of an unending faith in hard work, discipline, and good character, but rather were constructed through a discourse that sought to create a school that members and leaders could be proud of. At St. Patrick's, they were also born out of the very real history of struggle and contestation that marked the transition from colony to independent nation in Kenya from the beginning of the 1960s until the mid-1970s. The fact that such conflicts were not mentioned by the students celebrating Geraghty's tenure provides a key insight into how social place was made at St. Patrick's. Nowhere, for example, did students mention the violence of monolization, a tradition to which school leaders regularly turned a blind eye. The use of the *kiboko* in the school's early history was absent, as were policies that marginalized students because of their religion or lack of sportiness. While references to the school's most prized ideals show how students helped to give their school meaning, the elision of less palatable realities of the school's history demonstrate how important parts of place making have often been left out in this process. To put it simply, even in the most prestigious, honorable, and successful schools, like St. Patrick's, some people fail. Others are pushed to the side, asked to leave, and forgotten. Though their experiences are rarely celebrated in the school's written and oral record, and indeed often intentionally forgotten, they were as much a part of making place at St. Patrick's as those who won medals, scored well on national exams, founded student organizations, or committed themselves to the school's religious mission.

Taken together, the combination of these high-minded ideals and very real challenges demonstrates how schools like St. Patrick's operate as places where people negotiate meaning, where the complexities and contradictions of individual and institutional histories are on display if we are willing to patiently dig deep into the messiness, murkiness, and contradictions of daily life reflected in both oral and written records.

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