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COLONIZATION SOCIETY, 1831-1857.

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1967

MARYLAND IN AFRICA:
THE MARYLAND STATE COLONIZATION SOCIETY,
1831-1857

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of
The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1967

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CHAPTER I

COLONIZATION BEGINNINGS IN MARYLAND

From the early days of our history, the presence of Negroes within white midst has been viewed with alarm by some citizens. The incompatibility of the two races as neighbors on the North American continent has preoccupied both the lowly and the high placed in our society. The solution advocated by many has been colonization of Negroes, emancipated and free born, beyond United States' borders. The colonial legislature of Virginia was the first to concern itself with the free blacks problem. In 1691, it prohibited further emancipation of slaves unless the owner arranged for their transportation out of the colony within six months.¹ Early in the nineteenth century, the Virginia state legislature renewed its interest in the problem of Negroes residing there. First, it considered establishment of a penal colony for those convicted of conspiracy or rebellion. Thomas Jefferson, a native son personally favoring Negro colonization, was asked, as President of the United States, to make arrangements for carrying out that project. The Chief Executive, who wanted Negroes colonized both outside the territorial limits of the United States and apart from

¹Henry Noble Sherwood, "Early Negro Deportation Projects," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, II (March, 1916), 485.

any prospective national possession,² corresponded with Great Britain about the use of the newly established Sierra Leone colony. Agreement was never reached, but that did not diminish Jefferson's estimate of colonization as wise from the viewpoint of both races. He foresaw the eventual extermination of one race or the other unless separation were effected.³ Later, the Virginia legislature solicited the services of President James Monroe in obtaining territory in Africa, or along the coast of the North Pacific, or at some other spot outside the United States for a colony.⁴

One of the first serious proposals from an individual for the establishment of an African colony was made about 1790 by Ferdinando Fairfax, a neighbor and friend of Washington. A promoter by nature, Fairfax advocated a colony in Africa because the climate there seemed best suited for Negroes. Even more important, the miles of ocean separating white Americans from the colonists would prevent any intermarriage. His plan called for the United States government to provide for the defense, support and government of the colony until it could stand on its own. Moreover, the emigrants were to come not merely from Virginia, but from the whole nation. Fairfax's motives were both selfish and religious: he expected the United States to benefit from a profitable commerce with Africa and he considered the establishment of a

²Thomas Jefferson, Writings, edited by Paul Leicester Ford (10 vols.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1892-1899), III, 243-44; VIII, 104-105.

³Ibid., III, 244.

⁴Herman V. Ames, State Documents on Federal Relations (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1911), No. 96, 195-96.

colony as a means of spreading Christianity on the Dark Continent.⁵

A New Englander stirred by the plight of Negroes in this country was Samuel D. Hopkins, Yale graduate and long-time pastor of the First Congregational Church in Newport, Rhode Island. He was bold enough not only to preach against the slave trade, in which some of his parishioners engaged, but he devised a plan for the education of prospective Negro missionaries to Africa. In 1793, he spelled out a program for the establishment of a colony of American blacks which, he believed, would spread Christianity on that continent, lead to the end of slavery in America, and provide a home and new opportunities for the Negro.⁶ Nothing concrete came of Hopkins' idea before his death in 1803. However, at one time in the years during which he was pondering the colony idea, he consulted Granville Sharp, the English philanthropist and humanitarian, about the possibility of experimental groups of American Negro families emigrating to Sierra Leone. Indeed, Hopkins seems to have gotten some of his ideas from his dynamic correspondent.

Sharp was the leading light in securing the Mansfield judgment of 1772 which ruled that slavery was contrary to English law and that there could therefore be no bondsmen in that country. In 1786, Sharp was a leader, though not a formal member, of the London-based Committee for the Black Poor. Undertaking the task of planting destitute Negroes in Africa, Sharp made plans for establishing a settlement near the Sierra Leone River. The British Treasury underwrote the operation, and

⁵Sherwood, op. cit., pp. 490-91.

⁶Ibid., p. 505.

the Committee rounded up willing and unwilling prospects wherever they could be found. After numerous delays, including outbreaks of fever and repairs to vessels in the small fleet, 411 passengers set sail from Plymouth, England, in April, 1787.⁷

The story of this first settlement in the Province of Freedom, as Sharp liked to call it, is an unhappy one. In spite of careful planning, abundant stores and painful devotion by the Committee to the project, disaster struck with regularity. Within three months after landing, a third of the emigrants were dead of the fever.⁸ Even industrious colonists found their agricultural efforts futile because the seeds died even when fertile spots were chosen for planting and they had to depend heavily upon stores which had been sent out. As these dwindled, the new settlers were reduced to working for neighboring slave traders or seeking employment on passing ships. Less than a year after having embarked from England, only 130 blacks were left in the colony. Sharp, directing operations from home, undertook to send out more emigrants and to provide the colony with livestock and supplies.⁹

Meanwhile, another group, to which Sharp likewise belonged, set about to form a private concern to take over the faltering settlement. At length, in 1791, the Sierra Leone Company, having won abolitionist support throughout Britain, succeeded in getting parliamentary approval for its incorporation.¹⁰ However, Sharp, although a director of the

⁷Christopher Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 14-19.

⁸Ibid., p. 20.

⁹Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 27.

new organization, was no longer its leader because he emphasized the philanthropic rather than the business nature of the company. Other directors passed over him to elect Henry Thornton, a wealthy banker, chairman in 1791 and thereafter the latter was the dominant force behind the settlement.¹¹ Yet, even a commercial concern with an eye on profits could not place the settlement on a self-sufficient footing. The Company was soon dependent upon parliamentary grants which, by 1806, totaled £67,000. The following year, a bill which transferred the colony to the Crown passed Parliament and, on January 1, 1808, the Union Jack replaced the Company's flag above the tiny settlement.¹² Of the original settlers, but ten were listed as heads of families in 1802 and, in 1808, the total number of inhabitants was just two thousand.¹³

Nonetheless, the existence, however tenuous, of a colony on the coast of Africa founded by voluntary means gave impetus to concerted action in the United States. The spirit of colonization, already widely diffused throughout the nation was to add a new movement to the numerous benevolent organizations springing up in the United States during the first decades of the nineteenth century. All that was necessary was someone to initiate it. The spark kindling the flame was provided by Robert Finley of Baskingridge, New Jersey. He was a prominent Presbyterian clergyman who counted theologians, educators, politicians and wealthy businessmen among his intimates. Influenced by the British efforts in Sierra Leone, Finley envisioned a colony which

¹¹Ibid., p. 28.

¹²Ibid., p. 97.

¹³Ibid., p. 98.

would enable white Americans to right their forefathers' wrongs. He expected both Africa and America to benefit. The first would receive partially civilized and christianized settlers; the second would eliminate a servile class in its presence.¹⁴ Finley believed Negroes capable of improvement and self-government but he also argued that only in Africa, which God had designed as their home, could they achieve that equality necessary for their uplift.¹⁵ Well aware that such a project would require large sums of money and widespread public support, Finley determined to make Washington the movement's headquarters.

In December, 1816, after enlisting the aid of his brother-in-law, Elias B. Caldwell, Clerk of the Supreme Court, and of Francis Scott Key, then best known as a prominent Washington attorney, Finley called for an organizational meeting to be held at the Davis Hotel. A small group of distinguished men met there on December 21. Presided over by Henry Clay, it voted to establish a colonization society and, a few days later, it reconvened in the hall of the House of Representatives, adopted a constitution, and chose the name "American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color in the United States."¹⁶

The subsequent effort to persuade Congress to provide funds for an African colony was less successful. In 1817, the Congressional Committee on the Slave Trade rejected a proposal that Congress back such an undertaking. Two years later, President Monroe, who had

¹⁴Philip J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 17.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 27-30.

himself favored the colonization idea ever since his governorship in Virginia when the legislature commanded him to communicate with President Jefferson respecting an overseas settlement for black insurrectionists, was unable to persuade the Cabinet to endorse his interpretation of the new Slave Trade Act. By it, the President was authorized to make arrangements for the care and removal of rescued Africans stranded in this country, to send a naval squadron to African waters and to resettle in Africa those Negroes retrieved from slave traders. Under its authority, he sought to apply the \$100,000 appropriation for purchasing African lands and establishing a colony there. To this, his official family was distinctly cool.¹⁷

Nonetheless, colonizationists won the battle when they succeeded in badgering Attorney General William Wirt into approving a broad interpretation of the act. President Monroe was consequently able to appoint two agents to travel to Africa with a group of laborers and mechanics to prepare a station for westward bound Africans rescued from the slave traders.¹⁸ The two agents were men nominated by the colonization society and the expedition of eighty-six, sailing aboard the Elizabeth early in 1820, was clearly a colonization venture.¹⁹ This initial group settled at Sherbro Island, off the west African coast south of Sierra Leone. Within a few weeks, both agents were dead of African fever and the remaining settlers fled to British protection at Freetown in Sierra Leone. A second expedition in 1821 fared no better.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 50-51.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 57.

Finally, late in 1821, Lieutenant Robert F. Stockton, a naval officer, and Doctor Eli Ayres, a Baltimore physician, acting as agents of the United States Government, purchased Cape Mesurado, near the mouth of St. Paul's River some 225 miles south of Sierra Leone, from the local chieftains for less than \$300.²⁰ The third group of settlers arrived here in August, 1822, to augment those already brought back from Sierra Leone. By the middle of 1823, there were 150 colonists at the Cape.²¹ Under the American government's auspices, the colonization society had obtained the site for its colony. From then on, however, it was obliged to carry on as a private agency dependent upon individual citizens for financial support.

As its financial needs increased, the body turned to fund raising. The establishment of state and local auxiliaries to publicize the society's activity and the progress of the colony as well as to raise money and to recruit colonists became increasingly important. To carry out this objective, to coordinate other society activities and to oversee the colony's administration from the home base, Ralph Gurley, a young Yale graduate destined to spend most of his life in the service of the American Colonization Society, was chosen as resident agent in 1823.²² Thenceforth, the society's operations were widely extended.

Auxiliaries were founded both in New England and in the southern states. From time to time, travelling agents, some voluntary, others commissioned by society managers, toured the cities and countryside

²⁰Ibid., pp. 63-65.

²¹Ibid., p. 66.

²²Ibid., p. 78.

appealing for aid. A variety of arguments was employed to arouse interest. The missionary aspect of colonization was always stressed. The evils of the slave trade were likewise harped upon. Colonization as an orderly method of emancipation was a favorite argument in the North.²³ The approach in the South, on the other hand, stressed the potential of insurrection among the blacks and the need to provide a home for those whose owners wished to set them free.²⁴

The strikingly different appeals made to Northerners and Southerners pointed up a growing problem within the American Colonization Society. Early advocates of colonization unconsciously supported the society for different reasons. Northerners generally looked to it as a means of ending slavery. Southerners favored the scheme because it offered hope for removing freed blacks from their midst. The extent of this sectional disagreement became apparent only when colonization became involved in politics. In 1824, the society renewed its efforts to secure federal aid. Encouraged by prominent colonizationists, the legislatures of such states as Ohio, Connecticut and New Jersey endorsed federal assistance. Each, in its resolutions, also attacked the institution of slavery.²⁵ The response from southern legislatures was a vehement denunciation of all colonization proposals as part of an abolition plot in interference with the right of each state to control and regulate its own affairs.²⁶ Colonization, moreover, became a partisan issue in the 1828 presidential election. Henry Clay, as

²³Ibid., p. 80.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 104-105.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 169-70.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 170-73.

John Quincy Adams' Secretary of State, identified it with his own program; Andrew Jackson carefully preserved southern state support by a cautious attitude.

Jackson's election, while dashing colonizationist hopes for immediate direct federal aid, did not affect the government's African agency or alter the naval protection accorded Liberia, as the new colony was called. These continued in spite of the disclosure that, since 1819, the United States Treasury had paid out \$264,710 for the repatriation and care of a mere 260 Africans rescued from illicit slave traders.²⁷ Throughout this period of controversy, the society in Washington and its secretary, Ralph Gurley, assumed a conciliatory and mediating role. Gurley declared that the body was not an abolitionist organization but, rather, one aiming at the removal of the free Negro population, which he characterized as ignorant, vicious and unhappy.²⁸ Nevertheless, the battle between Southerners and Northerners continued to rage. Colonization remained an issue of partisan debate, with the consequence that direct federal aid was never received and that the unanimity of feeling necessary for the complete success of any movement was absent.

Among the colonization proponents, none were more sensitive to the factionalism within the organization than a small group of prominent Baltimoreans. After all, Francis Scott Key and Senator Robert H. Goldsborough were among the Marylanders present at the founding of the national movement. One of the first state auxiliaries was founded in

²⁷Ibid., p. 178.

²⁸Ibid., p. 171.

Baltimore. In 1817, a group of prominent citizens approved a constitution which stated that the body's object was "to promote and execute a plan to colonize (with their own consent), the free people of color in our country, either in Africa or such other place as Congress shall deem most expedient. . . ."29

Doctor Richard Randall, a native of Annapolis and a graduate of St. John's College, was colonial agent in Liberia before dying there in 1829 of the fever.³⁰ Doctor Eli Ayres, who was so influential in the purchase of Cape Mesurado, was an active member of the Maryland auxiliary. Furthermore, Marylander interest in the colonization cause is attested to by the reorganization of their branch in 1827. Meeting in Baltimore, these friends of colonization stressed the desirability of establishing as many chapters as possible in every town, village and district in Maryland. They stated the object of their agency to be the improved efficiency of the parent society's operations, the procurement of members, the promotion of superintendance of emigration, the instruction of the public and the collection of funds.³¹ In the Maryland legislature that year, interest in colonization was attested by the approval of an annual appropriation for the cause. Asserting its belief that the scheme of African colonization as established by the

²⁹Maryland Historical Society, Broadsides, "Constitution for the Government of the Maryland Auxiliary Society, for colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States," [1817].

³⁰Staudenraus, op. cit., p. 162.

³¹Maryland Historical Society, "African Colonization. Proceedings of a meeting of the Friends of African Colonization, Held in the City of Baltimore, on the 17 October, 1827."

American Colonization Society was "the only one which can promise practical benefit to the country, or to that class of the community which it is intended to relieve," the legislature voted the sum of \$1,000 a year to the state auxiliary for the colonization on the coast of Africa of free people of color who had been actual residents of Maryland during the twelve months preceding their embarkation.³²

In spite of the diligence of leading citizens and legislative encouragement, the colonization cause in Maryland languished. In 1829, emigration from the state was so small that the parent society was unable to collect the state's subscription for that year. Moreover, the dearth of emigrants so discouraged supporters who had held a fair in Baltimore that year and had raised several thousand dollars that all interest in colonization seemed to die out.³³ However, the visit to Baltimore early in 1831 of Robert Smith Finley, son of the Reverend Robert Finley who had initiated the national colonization movement, drastically changed the situation. As a travelling agent for the parent society, young Finley held meetings in numerous Baltimore churches where he appealed to friends of the cause for larger contributions. On February 14, 1831, he addressed "a large and respectable meeting" at the First Presbyterian Church. John H. B. Labrobe, a Baltimore attorney about to become Maryland's leading

³²Maryland Colonization Journal, n. s. IX, no. 12 (May, 1858), 183.

³³John H. B. Latrobe, Maryland in Liberia; A History of the Colony Planted by the Maryland State Colonization Society under the Auspices of the State of Maryland, U. S., at Cape Palmas on the South-West Coast of Africa, 1833-1853 (Maryland Historical Society Fund Publication, No. 21; Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1885), pp. 11-12.

colonizationist, later described the gathering this way: "'I introduced Finley, he carried the audience away, all present became Colonizationists. . . .'"³⁴ On February 16, Finley spoke at St. Paul's Church and, on February 20, in the Methodist Protestant Church on Pitt Street and at another on Liberty Street.³⁵

The Finley visit coincided with a swell of feeling among Maryland colonizationists that cooperation with the parent society was retarding the movement in the state. Citizens began to ask what good was being accomplished by the national organization. Contributions credited to Marylanders in the society's official journal, the African Repository, were not spent for emigrants from Maryland. Although large numbers were sent from below the Potomac, the colonization movement north of it was moribund.³⁶ The consequences of this more critical attitude were the founding of a new state colonization society to supervise the collection of funds and the sending of emigrants to Monrovia.

By invitation to the general public published in the Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser on February 21, 1831, a meeting of the friends of African colonization was held in the Saloon of the Athenaeum, an assembly hall for cultural events, that evening. Nicholas Brice of the Baltimore City Court presided and both Robert S.

³⁴Quoted in John Edward Semmes, John H. B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803-1891 (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1917), p. 144.

³⁵Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser, February 15, 1831, and February 19, 1831.

³⁶Maryland State Colonization Society MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Cortland Van Rensselaer, Baltimore, July 10, 1833.

Finley, who was concluding his speaking tour of the city, and John Latrobe, heretofore active in the parent society, addressed the group. Stirred by their eloquent pleas, the audience voted that the idea of a colony of free Negroes from the United States on the African coast was "perfectly practicable." Moreover, it recognized that a greater concentration of effort and multiplication of resources than previously attained was urgently needed if success were to be attained. Pledging to apply monies raised in Maryland to the venture, the group announced that "known application of these means will cause a great increase in their amount, and thus materially advance the great aim of the Parent Society, as well as the particular interest of the State of Maryland."³⁷

A state society was immediately created by attendants and a constitution, drawn up in advance by Latrobe, was adopted. Although dissatisfied with the delays encountered in sending Maryland emigrants to Liberia and conscious of the growing rift between northern and southern supporters of the Washington society, Maryland colonizationists still considered themselves a part of that national movement. Article 2 of their constitution declared, "The object to which it [The Maryland State Colonization Society] shall be exclusively directed shall be to aid the Parent Institution at Washington, in the colonization of free people of color of Maryland with their own consent to the coast of Africa."³⁸

³⁷Maryland State Colonization Society MSS, Records of 1831, February 21, 1831.

³⁸Ibid.

With this specific objective proclaimed, the new Society set about to erect a framework for the organization. At this historic February meeting, specific terms for membership and for administration were laid down. An annual contribution of at least one dollar was necessary for membership; a lump payment of \$20 or more made the donor a life member. There were to be three Presidents, delineated as the first, second and third. Three vice presidents, twelve managers, a secretary and a treasurer rounded out the leadership. The Board of Managers, of which the presidents, vice presidents, secretary and treasurer were ex-officio members, was to transact Society business, fill vacancies and immediately to draw up pertinent byelaws. Annual meetings were to be held each second Monday of December in Baltimore.³⁹

Several days later, the officers met at Judge Brice's chambers and adopted the byelaws. Except for special occasions, the Board of Managers was to meet quarterly. The highest ranking officer would preside. An Executive Committee of three was established to carry on day-by-day operations. It was however prohibited from taking any major step. It could not decide upon emigration, charter a vessel or spend more than \$100 without Board approval. Recognizing that women would undoubtedly constitute an important element of the Society, the Board stipulated in one byelaw that female subscribers could vote by proxy at all elections for officers of the Society.⁴⁰

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, February 24, 1831.

The question of an agent to traverse the state was one of the first to occupy the new officers. After hearing a committee report on the subject, the Managers resolved in February, 1831, to appoint an agent who would organize auxiliary societies, keep an accurate list of members and donations, recruit emigrants and prepare and supervise emigrant embarkations to Liberia.⁴¹ At the next Board meeting, on March 7, Doctor Eli Ayres was named to fill this important post. When not travelling for the Society, he was to serve as resident agent in the Baltimore office. His salary was set at \$1,000 per annum, plus daily expenses while in the field. The latter monies were to come exclusively from collections he made but, when stationed in Baltimore, the salary was to be paid from Society funds. The Executive Committee was to issue him his instructions.⁴²

The list of officers elected at the Athenaeum in Baltimore that February night is an impressive one. George Hoffman, selected first president, was one of the organizers of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and for many years served as one of its directors.⁴³ The second president, Thomas Ellicott, was president of the Union Bank of Maryland. Nicholas Brice, the third president, was the Chief Judge of the Baltimore City Court. Doctor Thomas E. Bond, a vice president, was a prominent city physician. A founder of the University of Maryland medical school, he was such a devout Christian layman that he retired from his

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 7, 1831.

⁴³Baltimore: Past and Present (Baltimore: Richardson & Bennett, 1871), pp. 296-97.

medical practice in 1844 to become editor of The Christian Advocate, the official organ of the Methodist Episcopal Church.⁴⁴ The body's first treasurer was John Hoffman, a highly successful businessman. The secretary, James Howard, came from an old-line Maryland family. He held a number of important posts in the community during a long and busy life, including the presidency of the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad and of the Franklin Bank.⁴⁵

More men of eminence were found among the Society's Managers. Moses Sheppard, successful both in the grocery business and as a manufacturer of cotton twine, is today remembered as the donor of the bulk of his estate, some \$600,000, for the founding of the Asylum for Curable Insane in Baltimore County.⁴⁶ Peter Hoffman was also a successful businessman, continuing the dry goods firm founded by his father.⁴⁷ Solomon Etting participated in a number of ventures. Early in his life, he ran a hardware store and, later, organized the city's Union Bank. He was one of the founders of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and served it as a director. At another time, he operated a general shipping and commercial enterprise.⁴⁸ Doctor Samuel Baker was a professor at the University of Maryland and at the Maryland College of

⁴⁴Genealogical and Memorial Encyclopedia of the State of Maryland (2 vols.; New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1919), I, 51-52.

⁴⁵Biographical Cyclopedia of Representative Men of Maryland and District of Columbia (Baltimore: National Biographical Publishing Co., 1879), p. 335.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 214.

⁴⁷Baltimore: Past and Present, op. cit., p. 291.

⁴⁸Abraham D. Glushakov, A Pictorial History of Maryland Jewry (Baltimore: Jewish Voice Publishing Co., 1955), pp. 20-22.

Medicine. Just prior to his participation in the Maryland colonization movement, he completed a six-year term as the Baltimore Medical Society's president.⁴⁹ Latrobe, himself selected a Manager at the first meeting, later remarked that, "in place of filling the Board with clergymen, the directors chosen were businessmen of intelligence and character--a good business arrangement, but one that prejudiced the Society then and ever afterwards with the clergy."⁵⁰

Of all the new State Society officers, none was to play a more significant role in its history than John H. B. Latrobe. In addition to his election as a Manager, he was shortly thereafter accorded membership on the Executive Committee. Latrobe was born in Philadelphia in 1803. His father, the architect Benjamin H. Latrobe, was called to Washington in 1807 to complete the Capitol. The son entered West Point Military Academy in December, 1817, but withdrew during his senior year, following his father's death. He then began the study of law in Baltimore in the office of his father's friend, General Robert Goodloe Harper. It was here that he first became aware of colonization, the movement to transport free blacks across the Atlantic, for Harper's two leading interests were Internal Improvement and African settlement.⁵¹ Through Harper's conscious efforts, Latrobe met the leading men of Baltimore. He also became acquainted with Doctor Ayres after Ayres' trip with Lieutenant Stockton to purchase Cape

⁴⁹Eugene F. Cordell, The Medical Annals of Maryland, 1799-1899 (Baltimore: The Medical and Chirurgical Faculty of the State of Maryland, 1903), p. 310.

⁵⁰Quoted in Semmes, op. cit., p. 144.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 139.

Mesurado. With Ayres' help he drew the first map of Liberia.⁵² Although Latrobe grew in prominence as a lawyer and enjoyed a notable legal career, a significant portion of his energies from early manhood to old age went into the colonization movement.

The enthusiasm of the new Colonization Society's officers was reflected immediately by their decision to send an emigrant vessel to Liberia in June, 1831. The Board of Managers considered this move a wise strategy for gaining public confidence, promoting the formation of auxiliary societies throughout the state and acquiring funds.⁵³ At the same time, the Board directed the secretary to correspond with the parent society about arrangements for receiving the Maryland emigrants at Liberia.

It was now that the Maryland Society learned how it was viewed in Washington. Upon receipt of the Baltimore letter, the American Colonization Society's officers resolved that the Maryland group managers be appointed a committee of the parent organization to promote the objects of that society and to raise funds within Maryland. Moreover, it decided that, although as a rule all funds collected were to be paid into the central treasury (and hence spent only at the discretion of the parent group), an exception would be made for the Marylanders. Monies raised within that state were to be held by the parent board subject to the Maryland Society's Managers and spent, with

⁵²Ibid., pp. 141-42.

⁵³MSCS MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 7, 1831.

Washington approval, only for the planting of free people of color from Maryland in Africa.⁵⁴

Several days later, a committee of the Washington society appointed to consider these resolutions reported that the society constitution precluded any alternatives other than those suggested. In a statement denoting uncertainty, it remarked, "If the Maryland Society adhere to the principles on which it seems to have been organized, its course may not be in accordance with what the committee think the Parent Society owes to its object and to its patrons. Collision may result; and one fact may illustrate this--that the Parent and auxiliary societies both advertise vessels to sail from the same port, in the same state, about the same time."⁵⁵ Face-to-face negotiation was obviously called for. Equipped with seven proposed points of arrangement to present to the Maryland Society, Doctor Henderson and the Reverend Mr. Laurie travelled to Baltimore to meet George Hoffman, Judge Brice, John Latrobe and Moses Sheppard.

These were the propositions offered the Maryland Society: (1) it was to be recognized as an auxiliary of the parent society, (2) it should accord the parent society the custody of its funds in return for the expenditure of them in any special way suggested by the auxiliary which might be consistent with parent board objectives, (3) the parent society would expect auxiliaries to deposit whatever money they collected or a reasonable contribution from them to the fund for parent

⁵⁴American Colonization Society MSS, Board of Managers Minutes: 1828-33, March 14, 1831.

⁵⁵Ibid., March 17, 1831.

society general expenses at home and in Africa, (4) the Maryland Society was invited to transfer its funds to the parent society on condition that they be used to promote Maryland aims, (5) if the Maryland State Society placed its funds in the parent society treasury, the latter body would provide for the support of Maryland emigrants in Liberia; otherwise, the Maryland Society must meet such expenses, (6) the parent board would regulate all aspects of emigration, including the vessel chartered, the date of the sailing and the number of emigrants, (7) whenever an unfilled vessel should sail from Baltimore, it would stop at Norfolk to pick up additional emigrants who would travel at parent society expense.⁵⁶

The Maryland committee later reported to its own Board of Managers that the only subject of discussion and difference between the two groups concerned the point requiring money collected by the Maryland Society to pass into parent society keeping.⁵⁷ The response of the Maryland Society was to offer counter-propositions. It expressed its willingness to report quarterly the funds raised and expended; it offered to pay all expenses incurred in sending Maryland emigrants out to Africa; with the exception of the vessel stopping at Norfolk, the Maryland colonizationists were agreeable to the suggestion that the parent organization regulate all aspects of expeditions. Rather than picking up additional emigrees at Norfolk, the Maryland Society

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷MSCS MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 26, 1831.

preferred to take any extra from the original place of departure and free of cost to the parent society.⁵⁸

Accompanying these suggestions, the Maryland Board reiterated its conviction that it legally remained a part of and auxiliary to the parent society. But, it argued, it could not continue to exist if the parent society refused to allow it to have exclusive management and appropriation of its own funds. Citing the inefficiency of the earlier system of auxiliary societies, the Baltimoreans stoutly declared that, if the new movement were crushed, Maryland must hopelessly continue to endure her free colored population. Moreover, the injurious effects would reach beyond Maryland and affect the whole colonization cause.⁵⁹ These were formal manager views. John Latrobe, speaking for himself, was equally pessimistic. Writing candidly to Ralph Gurley in Washington, he insisted that exclusive control and appropriation were the sources of vitality in the Maryland program. He noted that Doctor Ayres, then travelling the state, was having astonishing success from this feature of their constitution. He predicted that, were the parent society to persist in its views, the policy would be fatal to Maryland and harmful to the cause, "for it will put the Parent Society in an attitude of seeming hostility to the emancipation of Maryland from the bond of her free colored population."⁶⁰

Whereas the four Baltimore men meeting with Doctor Henderson and Mr. Laurie reported the money matter to be the only point of difference

⁵⁸Ibid. ⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. XXIX A (1831), Latrobe to Ralph Gurley, Baltimore, March 30, 1831.

and were greatly discouraged thereby, the account of the returning committee to the Board of Managers in Washington named numerous disagreements between the two bodies. The control of funds was the major source of contention. Chiding the Maryland colonizationists for ignoring established rules for auxiliary societies, the committee asserted that, were auxiliaries allowed to retain their funds, local prejudices and commercial interests would determine their expenditure. The committee declared its belief that this was already the state of affairs in Maryland. It had queried the Society there respecting continuation of the annual legislative grant and had asked how well Marylanders would receive a parent society agent. Sadly, it had inquired into the fate of the annual Fourth of July collection taken in the churches for the support of colonization. The Maryland Society had been silent on all points and the committee thereupon concluded that, in all financial respects, the Baltimore group was anything but auxiliary to the parent society.

These were not the only investigator complaints. Analyzing the Maryland counter-proposals, they noted that the offer to carry out free any emigrants of the parent society from Baltimore, the point of embarkation, should extra space be available was, in reality, worthless. Undoubtedly a ship only large enough to accommodate Maryland emigrants would be chartered. Furthermore, the offer to pay the parent board the expenses of Maryland emigrants received in Africa was also specious because of the difficulties attending the establishment of an equitable proportion of the expenses. Finally, the committee averred that, were parent society unity to be impaired and were state resources

not concentrated for national purposes, the movement's goals would be thwarted. In a statement bespeaking the committee's estimate of the motives behind the Maryland action, it remarked that, "There may be trade and traffic with Liberia; there may be a promotion of the commercial interests of men and cities; but the work of philanthropy and religion will become secondary, the exertions of Christians will flag; the efficiency of the Colonization Society will be nominal." The report concluded with the admission that, "Already this Parent Board has enough to contend with in the States, their views on political grounds, their people of colour as free or slaves, their sectional feelings and policy . . ." and with the plea, "Lest the States follow the example of Maryland, your Committee think this Board should interpose."⁶¹

Despite the harsh words about the Maryland activities, the parent board adopted a conciliatory tone. It conceded most of the terms originally suggested by the Maryland Society. Of the money collected in Maryland, only a statement of the amounts collected and expended was to be sent the parent society. For each emigrant, it was to receive \$20 to cover colony expenses and arrivee accommodation and subsistence. Omitting mention of the legislative appropriation and the operations of an agent in Maryland, the parent board asked only that the Fourth of July collections continue to flow into the national movement.⁶²

⁶¹ACS MSS, Board of Managers Minutes: 1828-33, April 4, 1831.

⁶²MSCS MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 12, 1831.

This new tact was generated not only by the pressure of the Maryland colonizationists but by the influence of prominent supporters in other states as well. Elliott Cresson, a wealthy Philadelphia Quaker who had accompanied Robert S. Finley on his speaking tour of Baltimore in February, upon hearing of the negotiations, took the parent board to task. In a letter to Gurley marked "Private & Confidential," he queried, "What matters it to you, if by the course their knowledge of local circumstances induces them to believe is the only one [they] revive drooping confidence & get thousands instead of meager units, whether they have the mere reputation of sending a few more or few less slaves? To send emigrants to the Colony, is I presume, the great object of our labours--if therefore Balto sends the people and you send the stores, where is the difference at the year's end? . . . "63

Lamentably enough, the modest requirements which the national society hoped would heal the breach had the opposite effect upon the Marylanders. A study committee filed a bitter report in which it condemned the Washington board for imposing what it considered a tax of \$20 per emigrant and for restricting the time and number of expeditions being sent. Professing ignorance of the parent board's reasons and forgetting its own earlier suggestions, the committee denounced the proposed regulations, called the tax unjust and impolitic and suggested resistance.

It charged that the American Colonization Society constitution gave it no power to tax. Moreover, the designation of \$20 per emigrant

⁶³ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. XXX (1831), Elliott Cresson to Ralph Gurley, Philadelphia, April 4, 1831.

exceeded, the members thought, the fair proportion of expenses which Maryland should rightfully pay. It noted that, only two years before, the parent society had applied for the \$1,000 annual appropriation from Maryland, listing \$30 per emigrant as the whole cost of transporting and settling him in Liberia. Arguing in a different vein, the Maryland committee pointed out that a large portion of the annual American Colonization Society receipts came from states which had no free blacks to remove. Since Maryland, which had emigrants, should share in such funds, her proportion, applied to the colony, should more than cover the \$20 per emigrant now asked. As for the Fourth of July collections, the committee was adamant in denying the parent society's right to them.⁶⁴

Plainly warmed up to the fight, the committee next went into the issue of state auxiliaries. Its ideas were to be repeated more forcefully and completely later, but the germ of each argument already existed in this initial controversy. It asserted that the success of African colonization rested upon the formation of societies within each state. In slaveholding areas, the citizens would contribute in proportion to the immediate benefit they perceived from the removal of free blacks. In others, donors could direct their funds where they might wish. Pointing out again the discordant views of northern and southern American Colonization Society members, the committee argued that the differences would be resolved if each state could direct the application of its funds according to its own ideas on colonization. The

⁶⁴MCS MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, May 4, 1831.

committee did not envision the end of all central control over colonization and suggested that the Washington board was still necessary to procure unity of action in this country and to provide for the government of the colony. It proposed that the annual meeting be transformed from a single evening of flowery oratory and laudatory comment to a working convention with the delegates from all states reviewing all operations both in America and in Africa. Expressing the belief that the colonization societies in Pennsylvania and New York held similar views on independent state action, the Maryland committee declared that it would not hesitate to found a separate colony if that were the only alternative to the continuance of a great and increasing evil.⁶⁵

The Maryland Board of Managers, accepting the committee report, adopted resolutions denying the payment of \$20 per emigrant and claiming all monies collected within Maryland and undertook correspondence with the New York and Pennsylvania societies regarding cooperation against the parent body. It voted to notify the latter both of its rejection of the \$20 tax and of its willingness to continue negotiations over the fair proportion of expenses, provided the State Society were permitted to adhere to its constitution.⁶⁶

The proposed June expedition from Maryland was naturally cancelled, but the Executive Committee was instructed to prepare for a sailing later in the year.⁶⁷ No more was heard from the parent society until August, when it asked the Marylanders to give attention to

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, June 17, 1831.

settling the dispute by suggesting an alternate sum. Noting that it felt itself under no obligation to make further propositions until it again heard from the Maryland Society, the parent board declared itself just as willing to consent to Maryland's other proposals as it had been in April.⁶⁸

Gurley received no correspondence from Baltimore until October when the Maryland body requested that the American Colonization Society instruct its agents in Liberia to receive emigrants about to sail aboard the Orion upon the same terms as it did others.⁶⁹ This sanction the parent board refused to give, offering once more its own resolutions of April 4.⁷⁰ The Maryland Society thereupon appointed a group of Board members to travel to Washington for personal negotiations.⁷¹ Its belligerency now turned into humility, for the schooner Orion, chartered at the rate of \$550 a month, lay anchored in Baltimore harbor with emigrants aboard and ready to sail. Pledging that never again would they get up an expedition without parent board authority and approval, the Maryland representatives sought permission for immediate departure and landing in Liberia. Such contriteness soothed the Washington group. It agreed to the request, with the express condition that Maryland reimburse the parent board whatever expenses were incurred

⁶⁸ACS MSS, Board of Managers Minutes: 1828-33, August 11, 1831.

⁶⁹Substance of letter is recorded in MSCS MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 12, 1831.

⁷⁰Ibid., letter of Gurley to James Howard, Washington, October 10, 1831.

⁷¹Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 12, 1831.

for the maintenance of the new emigrants in Africa, the colonial agent to ascertain that sum.⁷²

That an emigrant expedition sailed in the fall of 1831 was largely due to the perseverance of the agent, Doctor Eli Ayres. Appointed in March, his duties included travelling throughout Maryland in the hope of establishing auxiliary societies, diffusing information and collecting funds, as well as superintending the departure of applicants.⁷³ The Executive Committee instructed him to set out from Baltimore on March 15 for a six-week canvass of the state. He was to go first to Bel Air in Harford County, north of Baltimore, and then to Port Deposit, Havre-de-Grace, and Elkton. Proceeding around the head of Chesapeake Bay and on to the Eastern Shore, Ayres was directed to visit Chestertown, Church-Hill, Centreville and Denton. The last leg of the trip included Cambridge, Vienna, Salisbury, Snow Hill, Princess Anne and back to Cambridge in order to catch the steamship for Baltimore.⁷⁴ He was to hold a public meeting at each place and to attempt the organization of an auxiliary to the State Colonization Society. This circular route, designed to cover many of the Maryland counties systematically, was never completed. Doctor Ayres left Baltimore on March 15, as instructed, and opened his agency with a public meeting at Bel Air. He found the citizens of Harford County favorably disposed to the idea of colonization and an auxiliary was readily

⁷²ACS MSS, Board of Managers Minutes: 1828-33, October 17, 1831.

⁷³MSCS MSS, Proceedings of Executive Committee of Managers of Maryland State Colonization Society, March 9, 1831.

⁷⁴Ibid.

established.⁷⁵ Operating on the theory that the most auspicious places and times to found auxiliaries were during court sessions at the county seats when citizens were already gathered for other business,⁷⁶ Doctor Ayres concluded that to continue on to Cecil County would be of no value because its court would not convene until later in the month. He therefore returned to Baltimore and was sent to Chestertown in Kent County, where the court was then sitting.⁷⁷ A second auxiliary was formed there. In May, he shifted the field of operations to central and western Maryland, visiting Frederick and Hagerstown and establishing a county auxiliary in each place.

Late in June, Ayres returned to the Eastern Shore. His efforts in Easton, Cambridge, Denton and Centreville had the desired result in those towns too.⁷⁸ From this period of travel, he collected a total of \$214.03. Travelling expenses came to \$83.68, leaving a balance of \$130.35. Since his salary of \$1,000 per annum was to come from his collections except when stationed in Baltimore, it is evident that not only were his exertions unprofitable to the Society, but to himself as well.⁷⁹

⁷⁵MSCS MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, August 5, 1831.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷MSCS MSS, Proceedings of Executive Committee, op. cit., March 23, 1831.

⁷⁸MSCS MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, August 5, 1831.

⁷⁹MSCS MSS, Proceedings of Executive Committee, op. cit., August 9, 1831.

In spite of this unhappy pecuniary aspect, Doctor Ayres was generally encouraged by the attitudes toward colonization encountered round about the state. On his first trip, to Harford County, he noted how admirably the area was situated for comparing the effects of free and slave labor. Across the line in Pennsylvania, improvement of the soil, population increase and wealth accumulation stood in marked contrast to the soil deterioration, slow increase of the white population and low land prices of Harford County. He also pointed to the immensely higher yield per acre on land cultivated solely by whites even in Harford County as proof that free men, who felt an interest in their labors, were superior to slaves. Ayres was confident that realization of this fact would result in support of the Colonization Society.⁸⁰ His visit to Frederick County convinced him even more that the idea of free labor being preferable to a servile regime had been accepted by the white farmers. He reported that, in consequence of frequent manumissions, the free blacks had become a public burden. Modification of the laws regulating manumission was loudly called for.⁸¹ In Washington County, Doctor Ayres found both free blacks and slaves decreasing in number. He attributed this both to the simultaneous increase in whites and the recent heavy demand for land. He observed that, although from eighty to a hundred miles to market and of marked inferior quality, the land was selling readily for thirty dollars an acre.⁸² That the steady westward movements across the Baltimore

⁸⁰MSCS MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, August 5, 1831.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

Turnpike and the National Road might more reasonably explain Western Maryland's increased prosperity appears not to have struck him.

While remaining optimistic, Ayres reported a different situation on the Eastern Shore. Time and again he was accused while there of being a Georgia slave dealer. Not infrequently, the Negroes professed belief that those of their number who had previously emigrated under American Colonization Society auspices were sold back into slavery in Georgia. In Cambridge, Ayres found black opposition rooted in an actual case of misfortune. From this town came some of the earliest inhabitants of Liberia and when they were killed or wounded by native attacks upon the African settlement, their friends abandoned the idea of joining them there. The Negro attitude carried over to their white masters, who also lost interest in colonization.

Another hindrance to the rekindling of the colonization spirit on the Eastern Shore was the deception practiced by some blacks. There were cases in which a Negro family, pretending to be going to the colony, toured the neighborhood. With the money and goods collected from white sympathizers, the family moved on to Baltimore and settled. Ayres was convinced that the proper antidote to all these rumors and occurrences lay in the dissemination of correct information. He concluded that when the blacks knew Africa as he did, there would not be one in all America who did not want to go there as soon as possible.⁸³

From his months of travel throughout the state, excepting Southern Maryland, Doctor Ayres surmised that the taxable inhabitants of

⁸³Ibid.

Maryland were willing to contribute their proper portion of the cost of transporting the free colored peoples to Liberia. Moreover, it was the desire of every thinking man in Maryland that slavery be abolished if the slaves could be conveyed from this country to a place where their condition would improve. Finally, Ayres believed, all that was necessary to end slavery was to demonstrate to slaveholders how much cheaper white laborers were than the maintenance of the all-too-numerous idlers among the slaves.⁸⁴

In addition to the full report of his activities and his conclusions respecting colonization, Doctor Ayres became highly optimistic respecting the Maryland State Colonization Society goals. Estimating that, of the state's approximately 450,000 inhabitants, 100,000 were slaves and 50,000 free colored, Ayres pointed out that it took the support of six whites to send one free black to Liberia. Estimating the total cost per emigrant at \$20, each white would be responsible for only \$3.33. This would be the cost if all free colored were returned to Africa in one year. But, if migration were spread over thirty years, the supposed Society goal, the annual cost for each white person would be only eleven cents. By carrying freight on the return passage, the cost could be reduced to a mere seven and a half cents per white person. However, recognizing that only about one-fifth of the white inhabitants were taxable, Ayres concluded that the sum would amount to about thirty-one cents per annum.

⁸⁴Ibid.

The prospects of a commercial arrangement with Africa were even more appealing to Doctor Ayres. In his opinion, the colony was the most important cause for the drastic decline of the slave trade off the west African coast. The consequence for the natives, however, was deprivation of the supplies they were accustomed to receiving for the exchange of slaves. Were the colonists to call for rice, dyewood or other indigenous productions, natives from miles around would supply them. Abolition of the slave trade would turn their attention to soil cultivation. Rice, ivory, indigo, gold, and other items could be exchanged for the implements the natives needed for carrying on agricultural pursuits. Estimating the African population at 150 million, Ayres argued that they would demand 300 million pairs of shoes a year. To clothe them would require the entire cotton production of America and England. But, Ayres stressed, Americans had the advantage over all other countries which might try to compete because the colonists were, in fact, agents stationed there. They would gather the raw materials to be supplied the United States in exchange for manufactured products.⁸⁵ Such visionary calculations from an ordinarily practical man who had visited the coast and had participated in the purchase of the first American colony were sure to wield a powerful influence upon his hopeful colleagues.

The unrealistic nature of Doctor Ayres' project for the emigration of Maryland's colored population became apparent much sooner than it did for his mercantile expectations. Gathering emigrants for

⁸⁵Ibid.

departure on the Orion readily demonstrated that only hard work and constant attention would bring success. That chartered schooner was capable of transporting more than sixty passengers and their personal goods. Sixty became the goal of the first voyage but, although about that number applied to go, the Orion carried only thirty-one when it sailed from Baltimore on October 25. A variety of reasons was responsible for this sharp reduction in the number of emigrants. Some could not procure conclusive evidence respecting their emancipation in time for the sailing. Others were unable to settle small matters and complete arrangements.⁸⁶

The chief obstacle, however, came from leading free blacks in Baltimore and special envoys from neighboring districts. As preparations for the voyage became known, opposition increased and became organized. Prospective emigrants were repeatedly visited by agitators who made bold assertions and misrepresentations. Even public meetings were held ostensibly to warn potential colonists of their fate. At last, when sailing day came, but half the original number of applicants was willing to go. The last effort of voyage opponents was to follow intending emigrants on board, begging them to return to shore rather than to sail on to certain death in Africa.⁸⁷

With the first expedition at length en route, the Maryland Society Managers settled down to paying bills and re-evaluating their

⁸⁶MSCS MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, November 16, 1831.

⁸⁷ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. XXXV (1831), Charles Howard to Gurley, Baltimore, November 15, 1831.

methods. One of their first considerations was money. Provisions and stores to supply the original sixty applicants for six months in Africa had been sent aboard the Orion. They had now to be paid for. Doctor Ayres' salary was another responsibility. His collections were not even enough to provide for this. The \$1,000 state appropriation was the best immediate hope for avoiding bankruptcy. The Maryland colonizationists requested the American Colonization Society, originally designated as the recipient of the annual sum, to pass it along to them.⁸⁸ The parent group actually paid over to the Maryland Society \$930, allowing \$30 for each of the thirty-one emigrants transported aboard the Orion.⁸⁹

The Board itself decided to canvass the City of Baltimore personally to cover the balance. Dividing the city into twelve wards and assigning three members to each, it launched an active campaign for contributions.⁹⁰ This plan was not successful. Numerous ward chairmen and collectors failed to secure results.⁹¹ A third effort to obtain funds involved the newly formed auxiliaries in the state. They were contacted and asked to send any cash they had raised. Moreover, persons who had earlier pledged sums to the Society were now requested to pay up.⁹² As a last resort, the Managers decided to release Doctor Ayres. Asserting that the existing state of Society finances did not justify

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹ACS MSS, Board of Managers Minutes: 1828-33, November 28, 1831.

⁹⁰MSS, Records of 1831, Meeting of the Board of Managers, November 16, 1831.

⁹¹Ibid., November 18, 1831.

⁹²Ibid.

the continued employment of an agent, the Board resolved to discontinue the office.⁹³ Ayres was, however, not notified of this action and remained on as agent until the following spring.⁹⁴ The Board was obliged to pay him nevertheless.

At the end of the year, the Maryland State Colonization Society was heavily in debt. The expenses of the Orion expedition alone had been more than \$3,200.⁹⁵ Contributions were highly disappointing. It was apparent to the colonizationists that the future of their movement rested upon a steady source of income. To obtain this became their goal for 1832.

⁹³Ibid., December 6, 1831.

⁹⁴MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes, Package of reports of the Board of Managers, etc., for 1832, Eli Ayres to the Board of Managers, Baltimore, April 24, 1832.

⁹⁵Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1845), p. 13.

CHAPTER II

LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND EARLY EXPEDITIONS

The Maryland State Colonization Society was backed against the wall. Its funds were depleted. Creditors sent notice after notice of unpaid bills. Contributions were negligible. Applicants for passage to the colony were few. Yet, this picture does not accurately reflect the interest of white Maryland citizens in colonization. Neither does it gauge the existing undercurrent of support for the Society's goals. Doctor Eli Ayres, in his canvass of the state in 1831, found prevalent a general apprehension respecting the free blacks and the future of slavery. His emphasis on the problem of slave versus free labor in counties such as Harford and Frederick harmonized with attitudes being expressed elsewhere in the state. Niles' Register editorialized, in October, 1831, that the continuation of slavery below the Susquehanna River would drive out the white laboring classes. It declared, "Free labor and slave labor cannot abide together. In preferring the latter . . . the former seeks a new location in which it is protected or HONORED; and hence the one becomes stronger and stronger as the other becomes weaker and weaker. . . ." ¹

¹Niles' Register, October 15, 1831, p. 130.

Another consideration uniting white citizens was the generally accepted view that free colored people were a nuisance. Early in 1831, Henry Brawner, representing Charles County in the Maryland House of Delegates, proposed the creation of a committee to study this problem. He deplored the evils growing out of the unrestrained association of free blacks with slaves. Noting that the proportion of free Negroes to the white population in Maryland was steadily growing, he complained that employment was increasingly being taken from the white laboring class. He called for a consideration of colonization as a means of diminishing the relative proportion between the two groups. Although deploring the existence of slavery, he considered the unrestricted power of manumission as potentially more dangerous.² Again, Niles' Register expressed its opinion respecting free blacks. Professing hatred of Negro slavery per se, this famous publication reminded its readers that "we have the blacks, and must make the best of the unhappy condition in which we are placed that we can. . . ."³ It declared certainty that a large majority of the slaves were better fed and clothed, more comfortable and virtuous, than were the free Negroes, the pests of society in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and other northern cities. Emancipation without removal only increased problems.⁴ Thus, Niles' Register publicized what most thinking persons had already come to accept: that it was not enough to free slaves, but that they must be removed altogether from the white community.

²Maryland, Journal of Proceedings of the House of Delegates, December Session, 1830, p. 136.

³Niles' Register, September 17, 1831, p. 35.

⁴Ibid.

While these ideas were gaining wide support of their own accord, they were given immense new import by events in Virginia. Late in the summer of 1831, the fears of watchful citizens were realized by servile outbreaks in southern districts and in North Carolina. Known as the Southhampton Massacre, the murder of some fifty-five whites, largely in Southhampton County, Virginia, created panic among Caucasians of neighboring states. Led by Nat Turner, a Negro who called himself a Baptist preacher, a band of sixty-odd slaves roamed the countryside plundering and killing. In the crisis, Army and Navy troops were hastened in to restore order.⁵

Eventually all of the insurrectionists were captured and tried. Many of them, including Turner, were executed.⁶ For weeks thereafter, reports of murder and treachery elsewhere in Virginia and in other southern states swept the country. In some towns, such as Wilmington, North Carolina, martial law was declared, as citizens prepared to ward off armies of slaves. Volunteer militias were organized in numerous areas. The movements of all Negroes, both free and slave, were studied for suspicious signs.⁷ Even in Delaware and on Maryland's Eastern Shore many Negroes were arrested while citizens sent urgent pleas for arms and men and general excitement prevailed.⁸

⁵Ibid., September 3, 1831, pp. 4-5.

⁶Ibid., September 24, 1831, p. 67; November 19, 1831, p. 221.

⁷Ibid., September 24, 1831, p. 67.

⁸Ibid., October 15, 1831, p. 131.

In the midst of the speculation, accusations and demands for action, one moderating influence was the editorial voice of Niles' Register, which, from the outset, sought to sift rumor from fact in its accounts of the widespread disorders. While it sympathized with citizens who suffered from current agitations, the weekly applauded colonizationist efforts. "Let the way be prepared," it suggested, "that humane owners of slaves shall not feel themselves checked in manumitting them, that they may have a country and a home,--and become men."⁹ Several weeks later, the paper called upon the soundest heads and the best hearts of the nation to engage in developing some practicable project which would afford the hope of security to whites and offer the prospect of an improved condition to the slaves.¹⁰ Caucasian citizens were not the only objects of the paper's exhortations--it also cautioned the free colored to be guarded in both conduct and conversation.¹¹

In Maryland, the Nat Turner rebellion fostered a rapidly growing movement to more closely regulate slavery and to curtail liberties of the free blacks who were held responsible for the outrages below the Potomac. Public meetings of white citizens were held in numerous towns to prepare memorials for the approaching session of the state legislature. The best preserved record of such gatherings covers the meetings of Prince George's County whites at the Upper Marlboro Court House.

⁹Ibid., September 24, 1831, p. 67.

¹⁰Ibid., October 15, 1831, p. 130.

¹¹Ibid., November 19, 1831, p. 221.

The initial gathering, on October 13, 1831, resulted in the appointment of a committee to suggest "such measures as in their judgement will best secure the white population of the state generally, and of this county in particular, from the dangerous and insurrectional spirit which has been recently most awfully manifested by the slaves in an adjoining state; and to recommend such proceedings to . . . best insure our exemption from the like dreadful calamity."¹²

In its report, the committee first undertook to fix blame for the recent disturbances. It cited certain printed works originating in Boston and New York as calculated to encourage people of color to adopt odious and detestable doctrines leading to the occurrences in Virginia. Charging that such publications were the organs of a widely extended conspiracy against the community's peace and safety, the Prince George's citizens accused itinerant colored clergymen of promoting these abominable doctrines. Even local colored preachers were criticized for the secrecy of their movements. Finally, the committee listed the mounting free colored population as a subject of grave apprehension, terming the intermixture of free persons of color with the slaves a sore and growing evil.

The resolutions offered by the group were far-reaching. The Governor of Maryland was requested to take all constitutional steps available to punish the editor or publisher of any paper circulated in Maryland designed to produce insurrection among the slaves. It called for a prohibition of local and itinerant colored preachers travelling

¹²The Maryland Gazette, January 12, 1832.

about Prince George's County. Another resolution called upon the next session of the Maryland General Assembly to pass a law forbidding future emancipation of slaves within the state unless their old owners provided them with transmission to Africa. Moreover, colored persons were to be permitted to travel into or through Prince George's County only if they possessed certificates, signed by some well-known and respectable white, stating their business and attesting to their good character. Unless unconstitutional, free blacks were to be required to give security of good behavior.

Concluding the report, the committee sought to avert any misconception of its motives by announcing that the objects of the several recommendations were the safety and welfare of white and colored people. "To see . . . [the colored population] on all proper occasions availing themselves of the opportunities of public worship and necessary instruction from those who are able and willing to teach them their duties both to God and man, will at all times, afford us the truest gratification." Another committee of eight was then appointed to visit Annapolis during approaching legislative session to seek the passage of laws suggested in these resolutions.¹³

The Prince George's County memorial was among the many presented to the December Session of the Maryland legislature by various counties. There were at least two petitions from religious groups. The members of the Methodist Episcopal Churches in Baltimore and Annapolis submitted requests, like those from the counties, that the legislature consider

¹³Ibid.

the problem of the colored population in the state and initiate effective action.¹⁴ All these memorials were referred to the Committee on Grievances and Courts of Justice, of which Henry Brawner was the chairman. Recognizing the importance of his assignment and declaring that legislative action was imperative during the current session, Brawner proposed joint consideration of the problem by the House of Delegates and the Senate. The latter body concurred and appointed a committee to meet with Brawner and the House group and, in February, the joint body laid before the legislature a bill "Relating to the Free Coloured Population of This State."

The Brawner Commission's realistic proposal was based upon a practical consideration of the problems existing in Maryland. The various memorials had proposed legislative action in four areas: (1) prohibiting the future emancipation of slaves unless provision were also made for their removal from the state, (2) the appropriation of funds for the removal of those already free, (3) the establishment of a police system to keep closer check upon the free blacks, and, from several parts of the state, (4) the complete abolition of slavery.

A basic assumption by the Delegates was that the colored population's presence was injurious to Maryland's prosperity. They pointed out the great disparity in land values in servile and free states and concluded that slavery's existence alone accounted for the difference. The increased value of land would more than repay the cost of making Maryland a free state. The continuance of slavery, the committee

¹⁴Maryland, Journal of Proceedings of the House of Delegates, December Session, 1831, passim.

predicted, would sink Maryland to lowest rank in the Union, but the removal of this evil would raise the state's land value so that, proportional to her territory, she would rank among the highest in total worth. The object of any legislation should be to remove all or all but an inconsiderable number of the colored population, both free and slave, from Maryland.

The committee placed that population at 155,932, of whom 52,938 were free. Estimating the cost of removal and the support of emigrants in Africa until they could maintain themselves at \$30 per head and calculating, by an intricate scheme, that the annual increase of the colored population was then 868, the Delegates "proved" that a mere \$26,040 yearly would eliminate the entire group from the state's population. At that rate, only one generation would be necessary to eradicate the problem. The increased value of property, if only one dollar for each of Maryland's nine million acres, would be more than sufficient to finance the project.

Another argument which the Brawner Committee raised concerned white workers. It blamed slavery as the leading cause of the laboring whites' emigration from the state. The resultant sparse population presented an obstacle to the increase and improvement of free schools. While every means possible was to be employed in removing free colored folk and to prevent an increase of slaves in the state, the committee refused to propose abolition. It pointed out that the people of Maryland had voluntarily emancipated a third of their slaves without any inducement. Were removal of emancipated slaves from the state offered

and patriotism and good sense appealed to, it would not be necessary to set up a system of future or progressive abolition.¹⁵

Simultaneously with the Brawner Commission's deliberations, the officers of the nearly defunct Maryland State Colonization Society were arranging the formal chartering of their organization under the laws of Maryland. The reciprocal effect of the existence of a state colonization society and the legislature's consideration of that body's charter upon the study of the colored problem in Maryland can only be estimated. The Society's supporters embraced leading citizens throughout the state. The pending legislation depended for its success upon the operation of the Maryland State Colonization Society. The latter could not survive without the funds accompanying such legislation. Although no evidence that active members of the Society lobbied for the legislation has come to light, the mere existence of an organization supported by leading citizens was sufficient to give encouragement to its passage.

In March, 1832, "An Act Relating to the People of Color in This State," as the Brawner bill was now called, was approved by the General Assembly.¹⁶ Its wording indicated its dependency upon the Colonization Society. It stipulated, first, that the Governor and Council appoint a Board of Managers, consisting of three members of the Maryland State

¹⁵Henry Brawner, "Report of the Committee on Grievances and Courts of Justice, of the House of Delegates, relative to the Colored Population of Maryland," The Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser, March 17, 1832.

¹⁶Maryland, Journal of Proceedings of the House of Delegates, December Session, 1831, pp. 94, 114, 304, 543, 557.

Colonization Society, whose duty would be to remove from the state persons of color already free, and those thereafter freed, to Liberia or some other place outside the bounds of Maryland. The State Treasurer was instructed to pay the Board of Managers whatever sums it needed, not exceeding \$20,000 the first year nor more than \$200,000 over a period of twenty years. The clerks and registers of will of the Maryland counties were ordered to report to the Board of Managers within five days any deed of manumission or will admitted to probate which freed slaves and the managers were then to inform the Colonization Society.

Should that body decline to accept and remove the person or persons manumitted or should such individuals refuse to be removed to some designated place, it then became the duty of the three Managers to banish such persons beyond the limits of the state. Should a freed ex-slave refuse to depart, the State Managers must inform the local sheriff, who would then arrest the recalcitrant and transport him outside the state.

An exception to this general rule for the removal of free colored persons was contained in a provision allowing the state orphan's court or the Baltimore City court to grant annually a permit to any ex-slave to remain in his county if he could produce respected testimony of his exceptional good conduct and character.

To raise monies for the accomplishment of these several goals, the law specified the amount which each county was to supply from its assessment of taxable property within its limits. To determine the number of potential emigrants, the sheriffs were directed to take a census of the

free colored in their counties and to report details of names, sexes and ages to the county clerks and the State Board of Managers. The penalty for failure to comply was a \$200 fine but the compensation for such sheriffs and assistants as complied was \$2.25 for every fifty persons listed. The remuneration per Baltimore official was set on a different scale of \$1.25 each for the first three thousand listed and \$1.25 for every three hundred over that residing in the city. It was assumed that the smaller effort on his part justified the lower payment. In addition to the census which the sheriffs were to take they were, starting in June, to report from time to time the names and circumstances of any free persons willing to leave the state.¹⁷

Two days later, on March 14, 1832, the General Assembly passed an act of incorporation for the Maryland State Colonization Society by which it was given the right to receive and to dispose of all items and goods which it considered "to be best adapted, and most conducive to the object of colonizing, with their own consent, in Africa, the free people of color of Maryland, and such slaves as may be manumitted for the purpose, and which is hereby declared to be the sole and exclusive object of the said society; . . . "18

The Colonization Society's incorporation and the passage of legislation calculated to provide it with ample business were just two facets of the legislature's reply to aroused citizens. The other means designed to alleviate the Negro problem was "An Act Relating to Free

¹⁷Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1831), Chapter 281.

¹⁸Ibid., Chapter 314.

Negroes and Slaves," which severely restricted the colored population's liberty within Maryland and sought to prevent the settlement of any additional free blacks or slaves within the state. No free Negro or mulatto could move into the state or even stay there for more than ten successive days without incurring a fine of \$50 for each week he continued there. Employers were forbidden, also under penalty of fine, to hire free Negroes or mulattoes who settled in Maryland after June, 1832. Moreover, it became unlawful thereafter to bring into the state by land or water any Negro, mulatto, or other slave for sale or for residence.

Free Negroes and mulattoes were forbidden to possess any kind of firelock, military weapon or gunpowder and lead unless they had obtained from the local authorities a license, renewable annually and subject to withdrawal at any moment. It now became generally unlawful for any free Negroes or slaves to assemble or attend any meetings for religious purposes unless they were conducted by a white clergyman or some other respectable white person of the neighborhood. There were two exceptions. An owner of slaves could permit his servants to hold religious services upon his own land, and, in the cities of Baltimore and Annapolis, worship not lasting beyond 10 p.m. was permitted with the written consent of a white ordained preacher.

For any free Negro, mulatto or slave to sell goods such as bacon, pork, corn and tobacco, he had to present a certificate from a justice of the peace or from three respectable persons of his neighborhood that he had come honestly into possession of the articles placed on sale. Another section of this far-reaching Act made it illegal for any

retailer or storekeeper to sell liquor, gunpowder, shot or lead to any free Negro, mulatto or slave unless he brought either a license or a permit from his master. The final section carried an ominous warning: any free Negro or mulatto thereafter convicted of a crime not punishable by hanging might be sentenced to the penalties and punishments provided by law, "or be banished from this state by transportation into some foreign country."¹⁹

These several acts resulted from a combination of circumstances in Maryland bringing to a head public concern for the Negro population. An energetic colonization society already successful save in the procurement of funds presented itself and was made the instrument of state policy. Assured of a steady income for two decades, the Society, to hold a position of esteem in Maryland, needed only to prove itself capable of alleviating the tension growing between the two races and of altering the racial balance in favor of the whites.

With a charter and an annual appropriation, Colonization Society officials met at Judge Brice's chambers in the Baltimore Court House on March 24, 1832, to formalize the body's organization in line with recent developments. Among its first actions was the recommendation to the Governor and Council of Moses Sheppard, Charles Howard and Charles C. Harper as managers.²⁰ Several days later, the group adopted byelaws which were few, because "it is difficult to foresee what will be through practical operation and what modes of proceeding will be found most

¹⁹Ibid., Chapter 323.

²⁰MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 24, 1832.

advantageous for this society to adopt. . . . "²¹ Many of the byelaws were identical or similar to those approved the year before. One significant change concerned the officers and administration of the Society. There were now to be only one president but six vice-presidents. Moreover, there was no stipulation that the Board of Managers should meet quarterly. Under the new laws, it was invested with full authority to act for the Society whenever seven officers were present. The Executive Committee of three continued. George Hoffman, first chief executive in the earlier organization, was elected president, and most of the former officers again held positions of authority. John H. B. Latrobe became Corresponding Secretary, a position of more significance than the title implies.²²

The unique relationship existing between the Colonization Society's Board of Managers and the State Managers appointed by the Governor is well illustrated by the negotiations concerning the hiring of an agent to tour the state. Hoping to capitalize upon the recent attention given colonization by the passage of legislation affecting the whole colored population, the Society considered the formation of auxiliaries throughout Maryland as the best means of enlarging its operations and its funds. An agent was necessary but, since the Society still owed for the Orion trip, it obviously possessed no means for the employment of such a man. The Board of Managers, reminding the three State Managers of the intimate relationship existing between them,

²¹Ibid., March 28, 1832.

²²Ibid., and April 24, 1832.

requested the State Managers to employ an agent.²³ They promptly hired Robert S. Finley, formerly an Ohio resident, for a term of six months at a salary of \$500 and travelling expenses. His remuneration was to come from the state appropriation; travelling expenses were to be paid by the Colonization Society.²⁴

The State Managers then notified Society officials that Finley was not immediately needed by them and that he could be sent wherever they deemed advisable.²⁵ The Colonization Society soon named Finley as its agent also and instructed him to form auxiliary branches wherever practicable throughout the state, especially in county seats, and to obtain as many new members as possible.²⁶ The agent was to be mindful of his role in persuading Negroes to emigrate. No specific date for the departure of another expedition was set at this time, but all agreed that it would be necessary to dispatch one within the year in order to hold public attention.²⁷

Agent Finley left Baltimore early in May, 1832, for a canvass of the Eastern Shore, taking with him a large quantity of colonization

²³Ibid., April 11, 1832.

²⁴MSCS MSS, Manumission Books, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of State Managers, April 18, 1832.

²⁵MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Charles Howard, Moses Sheppard, and C. C. Harper to Board of Managers, Maryland State Colonization Society, Baltimore, April 23, 1832.

²⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 24, 1832.

²⁷MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, C. C. Harper to Ralph Gurley, Baltimore, April 17, 1832. ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. XLIII (1832), Charles Howard to Gurley, Baltimore, September 3, 1832.

literature. His first report, from Chestertown on May 7, spoke of widespread interest and of the good reception accorded the literature. One Negro, he wrote, carefully read a pamphlet, proclaimed it the best work that he had ever seen and a very satisfactory one too since it "came straight from Headquarters." Finley happily related that a large meeting of whites and blacks had been held in the Methodist Episcopal Church where an Episcopalian rector had offered prayer, a Reformed Methodist clergyman had officiated as clerk and the local pastor had presided.²⁸

For five weeks, he visited most of the principal Eastern Shore towns, forming auxiliary societies in many of them. His mode of operation, as the Chestertown letter indicates, was to call public meetings which the colored people were urged to attend, for himself to address the audience and then to distribute colonization pamphlets. Whether the meetings were biracial in character or only for the blacks, Finley invariably arranged for the local clergy to participate and for other respected citizens of the community to attend and to make beneficial remarks.²⁹

Finley found colonization popular among Eastern Shore whites. The best that he could say for the colored population was that the recent

²⁸MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Robert S. Finley to Sheppard, Chester River, May 7, 1832.

²⁹Ibid., Finley to John Latrobe, Baltimore, August 8, 1832.

legislation affecting them was causing them to begin thinking seriously of leaving the state.³⁰

A tour of the Western Shore counties in June and July uncovered the fact that the white population there, too, was generally favorable to the idea of colonization and cooperative in arranging meetings. On the other hand, Finley found the colored population there downright hostile to the movement. He attributed such opposition to the circulation of falsehoods and rumors by Baltimore free blacks.

From his hundreds of miles of travel throughout Maryland in the few months following the legislature's action, Finley concluded that the great obstacle to colonization success among the colored population was their lack of confidence in the plan. He found almost universal among them the belief that the legislation originated in sordid white motives of fear and interest. He encountered everywhere the conviction that the laws were designed to perpetuate and to strengthen slavery. These views, moreover, were shared by many respectable and intelligent Caucasians. Finley urged the Board of Managers to make a public declaration of their views on slavery in such clear and simple language that the most obtuse intellect could not misunderstand them and so explicit that the most malicious could not pervert their meaning. He advised the Society to push for legislation which would bring the gradual abolition of slavery in Maryland. Even if the effort were

³⁰Ibid., Finley to Managers of the State Colonization Fund, Easton, May 15, 1832.

unsuccessful, it would favorably impress the colored people and skeptical whites.³¹

The most encouraging reports could not disguise the dearth of applicants for the colony. Even the State Managers' efforts in notifying each sheriff, each clerk of the Courts and each Register of Wills of his additional duties bore scant fruit. Soon after the enactment of the legislation, the State Managers addressed a circular to the clerks and registers which requested cooperation in reporting all new manumissions and in ascertaining the attitude of the colored population towards removal to Africa.³² The travelling agent was not infrequently supplied with a list of manumitted slaves in the area he was visiting and was asked to notify such people of recent legislation and of the alternatives before them.³³

Early in June, 1832, the State Managers again reminded all sheriffs of their new responsibilities. Each of them was furnished with a list of persons manumitted in his county since the passage of the law. He was instructed to inquire of these people when he took the census of his county's free colored population as to their willingness to depart to Liberia.³⁴ Many a sheriff reported opposition. The Calvert County one notified the State Managers that, among the free blacks within his jurisdiction, there was unanimous voice against leaving the state

³¹Ibid., Finley to Latrobe, Baltimore, August 8, 1832.

³²MSS, State Managers Book, "Circular to Clerks of Courts and Registers of Wills," Baltimore, n. d. [1832].

³³Ibid., Charles Howard to Finley, Baltimore, May 9, 1832.

³⁴Ibid., "Circular to the Sheriffs," Baltimore, June 7, 1832.

without the privilege of returning.³⁵ The sheriff of Queen Anne's County reported the same situation.³⁶

Beginning in July, as sheriffs' reports were checked against lists of newly manumitted slaves from the clerks and registers of wills, the State Managers notified each sheriff of the persons in his county who were violating the law by remaining in the state. The implication was that the sheriffs should remove them forcibly.³⁷ Difficulties in the interpretation of the law actually resulted in few of the penalties written into it being enforced. One notable example occurred in Frederick County. There, the sheriff, with the names of several Negroes manumitted since passage of the law, confessed confusion as to what compensation he was to receive for the transportation of each Negro, where and when he was to be granted such payment and, more important, where he was to take the Negroes. He reported that both Virginia and Pennsylvania forbade the importation of free Negroes. In exasperation he exclaimed, "Indeed I cannot conceive how the legislature, should require them to be transported beyond the limits of the state and not specifically provide some place for their reception."³⁸

³⁵MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes, 60 Letters to the Board of Managers, Henry L. Harrison to Charles Howard, Lower Marlbro, August 1, 1832.

³⁶Ibid., Thomas Ashcom to Charles Howard, Centreville, August 28, 1832.

³⁷MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Sheppard, Charles Howard, and Harper to Henry Green, Esq., Sheriff of Baltimore County, Baltimore, July 3, 1832; "Circular to the Sheriffs," Baltimore, October 1, 1832.

³⁸MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters, op. cit., Peter Brengle to Charles Howard, Frederick, October 11, 1832.

The State Managers conceded that they had expected these difficulties. They, however, argued that their duty was merely to inform the different sheriffs of the violators within their respective districts. Pledging to direct the legislature's attention to the ambiguities of the law at its next session, the State Managers understated the situation when they replied to the baffled sheriff that, in their opinion, the legislature had not explained with sufficient detail its intentions on compensation and the places to which the newly freed were to be removed.³⁹ That other officials were equally uncertain about sections of the law for which they were responsible is attested by a letter of the Register of Wills of St. Mary's County. He reported that Moses, a recently manumitted slave, had come in for his "pardon papers." Asked if he were willing to remove to the colony of Liberia, the black had replied in the negative. He had, however, been willing to move to the District of Columbia. The Register of Wills had attempted to persuade Moses to emigrate to Liberia and, when that worthy had persisted in his refusal, he had been denied a certificate of manumission.⁴⁰

Fall was fast approaching and Finley, capable and enthusiastic, wished to return to his former field of labor in Ohio. He was consequently appointed to the American Colonization Society's Western Agency. From Columbus, in August, he wrote, "I have again safely arrived within

³⁹MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Charles Howard to Brengle, Baltimore, October 16, 1832.

⁴⁰MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters, op. cit., E. J. Millard to Charles Howard, Leonard Town, Saint Marys County, October 11, 1832.

my own diocese."⁴¹ To replace him, the State Managers now appointed William McKenney, a native of Norfolk, Virginia. He was hired specifically to devote two months on the Eastern Shore enrolling emigrants for a fall expedition.⁴² The situation on the Western Shore was such that the Society despaired of gaining any there, northern abolitionists and fanatical emancipationists being blamed for creating violent opposition to emigration among the blacks.⁴³

Unfortunately, rather than taking up work immediately, McKenney was detained until October by family illness. Meanwhile, the Colonization Society distributed among the auxiliaries literature especially prepared to advertise the colony and the plan. One publication, The Statement of Facts, was written to lay a full account of the Liberia colony before both races. It was also designed to demonstrate that, while the colored population would never be forcibly driven out, the force of circumstances would eventually compel it to leave Maryland. The purpose, furthermore, was to publicize the fact that an asylum where they could enjoy real liberty and happiness, which they could never obtain in the United States, awaited them in Africa. Another pamphlet, News From Africa, through its simplicity, was intended for circulation only among the blacks.⁴⁴ It was principally addressed to

⁴¹ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. XLIII (1832), Finley to Gurley, Baltimore, August 11, 1832; Finley to Gurley, Columbus, Ohio, August 22, 1832.

⁴²MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Charles Howard to Rev. William McKenney, Baltimore, July 25, 1832.

⁴³Ibid., Charles Howard to E. K. Wilson, Baltimore, August 15, 1832.

⁴⁴Ibid.

residents of rural areas and villages. The State Managers, who paid for the printing of these leaflets, encouraged friends of colonization to loan them to good prospects rather than give them away.⁴⁵

McKenney began his actual work on the Eastern Shore early in October, 1832. The prospects for getting an expedition off before the end of the year immediately improved. A Methodist minister by profession, Mr. McKenney possessed inordinate persuasive ability. Like Agent Finley before him, he operated through the local churches. He reported from numerous towns that, after he had spent several days in the area, a general excitement overtook the free blacks.⁴⁶ His boundless energy allowed him to proceed at a rapid pace. From almost every town he reported a number of emigrants willing to embark that autumn. McKenney was also an individual inclined to speak for his employers before first consulting them. He soon took the liberty of declaring that a vessel would sail from the Cambridge area or from Baltimore between the middle and the close of November if there were sufficient prospective emigrants.⁴⁷ Before the end of October, McKenney was confident that there would be at least eighty applicants, and urged the Colonization Society to advertise for a suitable vessel.⁴⁸ Early in November, McKenney advised Charles Howard that there would be not

⁴⁵Ibid., Harper to Gurley, Baltimore, August 1, 1832.

⁴⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, McKenney to Charles Howard, Cambridge, October 15, 1832.

⁴⁷Ibid. ⁴⁸Ibid., Salisbury, October 26, 1832.

less than a hundred, if not 125 departees. Several days later, he revised his estimate upward to 140-150 persons.⁴⁹

At last, on December 9, 1832, 146 emigrants left Baltimore on the Lafayette bound for Monrovia. Clergymen representing various city churches, the State Managers and other members of the Colonization Society went aboard the vessel to conduct services. Prayers, hymns, Scripture reading and a short address lent a solemn and sacred air to the farewell.⁵⁰ That such a large number of passengers was gathered in spite of the cholera epidemic persisting in Baltimore through the summer and early fall and in spite of the continued opposition of Baltimore's free blacks and those in other areas must be attributed to a combination of luck and diligence.

As late as October 6, Charles Howard expressed doubts about sending an expedition while the possibility of an outbreak of cholera existed.⁵¹ Cholera had almost disappeared in the city by the middle of November, and Howard was then able to inform McKenney that fear of the disease need no longer deter them from definite arrangements for the departure.⁵² Negro opposition in Baltimore continued unabated. Desirous of avoiding a repetition of events such as those which had occurred before the sailing of the Orion the previous year, Howard, writing for the State Managers, requested the Captain of the Watch in the

⁴⁹Ibid., November 5, 1832.

⁵⁰The Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser, December 14, 1832.

⁵¹MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Charles Howard to L. Medtart, Esq., Baltimore, October 6, 1832.

⁵²Ibid., Charles Howard to McKenney, Baltimore, November 16, 1832.

Eastern District of Baltimore City to instruct his officers to protect persons then arriving for embarkation to Africa. Howard reminded the official that they were going out at the expense of the State and that they were entitled to all the security they might need. He asked specifically that the city blacks be prevented from molesting the emigrants and from attempting to spread lies among them.⁵³

Procurement of a large group of colonists within two months' time was due chiefly to the work of two men. One of those, Agent McKenney, was instrumental in spreading a favorable view of colonization in every hamlet and town of the Eastern Shore. Besides his personal qualities, the fact that he was an ordained Methodist minister undoubtedly contributed to his success. Both colored and white citizens usually revered the word of a clergyman more than that of other persons. The second individual playing a leading role in forming the expedition was Jacob W. Prout, an early settler in Liberia and Register of Wills there, who was back in the United States for a visit. Many emigrants were induced to go that autumn by the knowledge that Prout would be the expedition leader.⁵⁴ His trips in the state testified to the actual existence of a colony, to the keen satisfaction of a resident with his new home and of his willingness to return to Africa.

The liberal terms offered emigrants were also a factor in getting together such a large number for the Lafayette. Not only were they

⁵³Ibid., Charles Howard to the Captain of the Watch, Eastern District, Baltimore, November 25, 1832.

⁵⁴ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. XLV (1832), Charles Howard to Gurley, Baltimore, November 3, 1832.

promised passage, provisions for the voyage and for six months after their arrival in the colony, but free land as well. Each emigrant was to receive immediately a certificate for a town lot of five acres. In addition, each married man was to receive two acres for his wife and one acre for each child accompanying the parents. However, no family could receive more than ten acres in town. If, within two years after its arrival, the family had cleared and enclosed the lot, had built a substantial house, and had brought two acres of land under cultivation, it would be able to exchange the certificate for a deed in fee simple. Should the emigrant, upon arrival, wish to settle in the country at least three miles from town, he would receive forty acres with the option of purchasing as many as another fifty at 25 cents each within the next five years.⁵⁵

The Orion expedition had taught the Maryland State Colonization Society officials more than how to shield departees from their detractors. It had proved the necessity of working hand-in-hand with their fellow-colonizationists in Washington. Rather than chartering a schooner, fitting it out for an expedition and then appealing to the national society for approval of the venture, the Marylanders now communicated every fear, hope and wish to the parent society. Initially, Society officials had planned to charter a vessel and to carry out all the operations of sending it themselves. When they had advertised in October for a suitable ship, only the Lafayette, capable of carrying more than 150 passengers and costing \$2,500 rental, had been offered.

⁵⁵MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Charles Howard to Frisby Henderson, Baltimore, October 31, 1832.

At that time, only sixty to eighty Maryland emigrants had been expected. Consequently, the State Managers had suggested to the parent society that it charter the Lafayette, that it take out the colonists from Maryland at a rate of \$30 each (\$20 for passage and \$10 for six months' subsistence in Liberia) and that it fill the remaining spaces with its own emigrants.⁵⁶ This had been agreed upon. However, by the time the Lafayette sailed, the number of Maryland emigrants had almost doubled and only four other passengers, one of those Prout, were aboard.⁵⁷ The arrangements previously made were none the less carried out.

The contrast between the Orion's thirty-one emigrants and the Lafayette's 146 produced a feeling of satisfaction among Maryland colonizationists. To them, it demonstrated that sufficient effort by a capable man could change their opponents' hearts. Not unmindful of McKenney's role in all this, the State Managers conveyed to him an expression of their whole-hearted approbation along with an offer of continued employment as their agent.⁵⁸ The factor which they expected thereafter to have the greatest sway among the colored population of Maryland, however, was favorable word from departees in the Lafayette. This they eagerly awaited. Unfortunately, they were to be bitterly disappointed and to be thrown upon a new ocean in their history.

⁵⁶Ibid., Charles Howard to Gurley, Baltimore, October 30, 1832.

⁵⁷Ibid., Charles Howard to John Kennedy, Baltimore, December 14, 1832.

⁵⁸Ibid., Charles Howard to McKenney, Baltimore, December 14, 1832.

News of the voyage reached the Baltimore colonizationists early in February. Typical of that age of limited communications, a handful of letters arrived at the same time with the returning ship. Jacob W. Prout, the temporary agent of the Maryland Society who was to superintend the trip out, distribute the provisions and goods sent along equitably among the emigrants, and to report the state of the colony, assured his employers that all the Lafayette passengers arrived safely after a forty-one day sail from Cape Henry to Monrovia. He described the new settlers as being as satisfied as many emigrants who had been in the colony for such a short duration and perhaps even more so. He reported that most of his late charges were then living in a comfortable building at Caldwell, a settlement several miles inland, being acclimatized. Only a few had suffered from fever which had struck down so many earlier emigrants who had settled in the coastal lowlands. The relationship between fever and elevation had actually not yet been recognized. The one hint that all was not harmonious came in Prout's proposal that steps be taken to prevent murmuring and complaining letters being sent to America. These he dismissed as generally coming from widows apprehensive of their fate after the initial six months.⁵⁹

Quite another picture was presented by six of the Lafayette group. In a joint communication to Moses Sheppard, they reported deplorable conditions. First, they complained that their weekly rations had been reduced by the Monrovia citizens to a pound of spoiling beef, a pound of putrid fish and a quarter pint of molasses per person.

⁵⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Jacob W. Prout to Charles Howard, Monrovia, February 7, 1833.

They accounted for the inedible food by explaining that they were being issued old supplies left over from previous voyages while the good ones sent aboard the Lafayette were being held by the Monroviaans. The new emigrants claimed that they had received no tea, coffee or sugar since their arrival. They described Caldwell as overrun with mangrove which gave off such an offensive odor when they began turning the soil that it gave them fever. They charged, further, that no land had been cleared and that there was no way of doing so. Moreover, at the Cape, settlers with a little capital traded with the natives and sent back glowing false reports concerning the colony in order to entice more emigrants, whose provisions were then taken over.⁶⁰

Another Maryland emigrant, a shoemaker by trade, requested the Board of Managers to send him leather, declaring it to be either unavailable or too expensive in the colony. He conceded that Caldwell was in reality a good place for a new settlement, but complained that prior settlers were hostile to newcomers.⁶¹

Governor Mecklin's account of the new arrivals told still another story. He attributed the "little dissatisfaction" among the Marylanders to the rations reduction and to the quality of one barrel of beef which had been accidentally damaged. He considered this insignificant in comparison to the indiscretion of the Lafayette's second officer who, reputedly, advised the disappointed emigrants to relay their

⁶⁰Ibid., abstract of letter from James Price and five others to Moses Sheppard, Caldwell, Liberia, February 3, 1833.

⁶¹Ibid., abstract of letter from A. James Reese to Board of Managers, Caldwell, Liberia, February 2, 1833.

grievances to friends back home. Concluding his report on the new arrivals, Mechlin stated that, in his opinion, most of the problems had been worked out; he then went on to one of his favorite topics: the recruitment of emigrants. He complained of the extravagant promises made to prospective colonists by well-meaning but over-zealous friends. Many emigrants, he said, came expecting every comfort and many of the luxuries of civilized life. They apparently believed that they had but to tell the agent of their wants to realize them. As for the Lafayette emigrants, Mechlin laid their unhappiness upon friends who "excited hopes which can never be realized: of course their dissatisfaction will be equally great with their disappointment. . . ."62

Dismayed by these messages, the Baltimore colonization leaders sought first-hand accounts from ship officers and crew members. Captain Robert Hardie and his top-ranking men met with Society representatives. Hardie had been ashore regularly during the sixteen days the ship lay off Monrovia. He found the houses far apart, no sign of industriousness among the settlers, and an atmosphere of suspicious watchfulness. Natives went about in a state of near nakedness and were called upon by the settlers to perform all their menial tasks. He inferred from what he heard and saw that the land allowance was used to influence the election of civil officials in the colony. Moreover, he had never heard that any settlers were compelled to work and thought the colony rift with jealousy, envy and selfishness. The Captain had also received a very unfavorable impression of Caldwell. Expecting to

⁶²Ibid., Joseph Mechlin to Harper, Liberia, February 10, 1833.

see cleared lands and fields, he found the countryside a wilderness. When he had rebuked Mechlin for issuing the new emigrants beef which was literally green and fish so rotten that it scarcely hung together, Mechlin had argued that the bad must be used first.

The Lafayette's crew verified the Captain's statements. The first officer, Mr. David C. Landis, who was served brandy when he dined at Prout's house, remarked that, were he to judge the colonists' morals by their church attendance, he would think favorably indeed of them. But, were he to judge their morals from other factors, he must need assume that there were rogues among them. Landis also reported unfavorably upon Prout's conduct during the passage to Liberia. That worthy, it appeared, was prone to assume airs. With the authority vested in him by the State Managers, he had access to the provisions and pampered his appetite. Although one of his major duties was to care for ill passengers, Prout ignored them and the comfort of everyone else when he could. Landis further charged that Prout was familiar with the women on board, committing the only indecency of the voyage. Once in Africa, Prout likewise neglected the emigrants. The second officer, James F. Cooksey, completed the description of this sordid affair by recounting his departure from Caldwell. The women called after him, saying that they were willing to be slaves in America for the rest of their lives to anyone who would feed and clothe them. The Lafayette's crew thus concluded that,

under the then government, colonization must go backward rather than forward.⁶³

The Maryland colonizationists' chagrin was deep and they called upon the parent society to launch an immediate investigation. Ralph Gurley was incredulous. Doubting the accuracy of the emigrants' statements, he expressed skepticism that the Colonial Agent, Mechlin, with such ample instructions to leave nothing undone for their comfort and general satisfaction, should allow the abuses reported.⁶⁴ The report of Captain Hardie and his officers could not, however, be refuted. Hardie was widely respected in Baltimore; his word was never doubted. The information from Cooksey, the second officer, likewise received credence because of his special interest in the trip. He had gone out to ascertain the condition and prospects of the colony in order better to advise friends and relatives in Virginia who were considering emancipating their slaves for the purpose of sending them to Liberia.⁶⁵

Before the parent board had had time to make a move, the Maryland colonizationists received another packet of letters via a passing vessel from the colony. The situation appeared to have improved somewhat since departure of the Lafayette, but was still far from flattering or even satisfactory. Moses Sheppard, addressing Gurley as a private

⁶³MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters and Minutes, "Capt. Hardie and crew's statement in regard to Emigrants per Ship Lafayette," Office of the Maryland State Colonization Society, April 11, 1833.

⁶⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Gurley to Harper, Washington, April 12, 1833.

⁶⁵ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. XLVIII (1833), Charles Howard to Francis Scott Key, Baltimore, April 13, 1833.

individual, noted that the two chief sources of dissatisfaction were shelter and subsistence. Reminding Gurley that the frames for two houses went out aboard the Lafayette, Sheppard expressed amazement that they had not been erected. In addition, he asked, why was it that, when the construction of cabins was so simple anywhere, the carpenters in the colony have not been put to work building houses for settlers and expected new arrivals. "To send lumber across the Atlantic to be carried into the woods of Africa presents a case on which I will not venture a single remark. I know building stone were brought from England to Alexandria and Brick were imported from Holland and dragged over the sand to Schenectady, but these things were not done in the 19th century." Sheppard also took Gurley to task respecting the provisions. He queried why the colonists, with highly productive soil right under their feet, depended upon provisions from the natives around them, from passing ships and from the United States.⁶⁶

Pressed to meet an apparently critical situation, the American Colonization Society immediately dispatched a shipload of provisions to the colony. Moreover, it summoned Meclin home to explain the various matters of conflict.⁶⁷ It consented to the resolution of the Maryland Society that all provisions, agricultural implements and other goods sent out for or with the Maryland emigrants be stored apart from the general colonial depository. It agreed to allow the Maryland Society to appoint an agent resident in Africa to disburse and superintend

⁶⁶Ibid., Sheppard to Gurley, Baltimore, April 16, 1833.

⁶⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Gurley to Harper, Washington, April 25, 1833.

those supplies. Finally, it assured that body that the surveying of the colony would be accelerated so that suitable lots and lands could be assigned the emigrants as soon as they were able to begin work.⁶⁸

The parent board, however, was not without supporters. One colonist informed it that there would always be false reports from casual visitors who sought sensational news from the lazy and improvident rather than attempting to form an impartial picture. He replied in some degree to every accusation made against the colony. He declared the charge that the old and more prosperous settlers were becoming vain and selfish to be totally unfounded. Everyone stood on a basis of equality before the law. Conceding that some of the complaints concerning agriculture might have a semblance of truth, he predicted rapid correction of the situation. As for the newly arrived emigrants, this colonial stalwart argued that the residents could not drop their work and run to the wharf to hail every arriving ship. Denying ill treatment of the natives, he averred that the magistrates were constantly being denounced for showing them more favor than they did the settlers. Finally, while lamenting the sale of liquor, this worthy maintained that, to disrupt it, would destroy commerce with the natives and result in revival of the slave trade.⁶⁹

A well-known defender of the colony was John B. Russwurm, an 1826 graduate of Bowdoin College and now editor of the Liberia Herald

⁶⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meetings of the Board of Managers, May 18, 1833 and June 28, 1833.

⁶⁹ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. LI (1833), C. M. Waring to Gurley, Monrovia, August 1, 1833.

in Monrovia. He was by no means blind to faults existing in the settlement. He admitted that agricultural pursuits were far from the minds of the colonists and that they preferred trading with the natives to planting crops. This commerce all too often involved rum, of which the natives and many of the settlers were excessively fond. Russwurm advocated that the importation of liquor into the colony be prohibited. Respecting the complaint of old settlers' unfriendliness, he denied any obligation to take "Tom, Dick, and Harry because they were colored men to my table and honor as equals. . . ." He asserted, indeed, that, in many cases, the fault lay with the newcomers who expected special consideration and felt themselves above any work assigned to them. In a remark which portended a modern day problem in Liberia, the editor summarized the prevailing attitude: "It is human nature that the old settlers should be a little lifted up with the success which has crowned their efforts, and new emigrants ought not to expect to be placed on par with them unless they bring undoubted letters of introduction and recommendation from home. . . ." A similar attitude, while not with the approval of Russwurm, was held toward the natives: ". . . they [The colonists] are unwilling to divest themselves of the idea of inferiority whenever circumstances have thrown educated native Africans in their society. 'He is native' is enough."⁷⁰

Disheartened and disillusioned by this lamentable turn of events, the Maryland Society's Board of Managers agreed that the establishment of a new colony on the coast of Africa was its only hope. This it

⁷⁰Ibid., John B. Russwurm to Curley, Liberia, August 6, 1833.

agreed upon at the end of April, 1833. In reality, a new settlement had been considered and debated by both leaders of the Washington society and the Maryland one during the past several years. It seems to have originated with Latrobe. At an annual meeting of the American Colonization Society, probably in 1828, Latrobe first advocated a settlement at Cape Palmas, some distance south of Cape Mesurado where the first colony was situated. He appears to have been influenced by scraps of information picked up from Doctor Ayres and from other travelers and traders he met in Baltimore. With the knowledge he gleaned in this informal way, Latrobe concocted a plan whereby northern Negroes would be settled above Sierra Leone on Bulama Island, while those from the middle states would live at Mesurado and those from the South at Cape Palmas.⁷¹ That the British occupied Sierra Leone apparently did not bother Latrobe. Nothing came of his proposal and it seems to have lain dormant until the spring of 1831 when Latrobe renewed his interest in a second settlement. He then addressed George R. McGill, a Baltimorean who had emigrated to Liberia in 1827, seeking information on suitable locations, agricultural and commercial potentials and the possibility of having some Monroviaans participate in the founding of another colony. McGill was very enthusiastic, suggesting Bulama as a desirable spot and reporting great enthusiasm among the colonists in favor of the idea.⁷²

⁷¹John Edward Semmes, John H. B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803-1891 (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1917), pp. 142-43.

⁷²MSSC MSS, Letters, Vol. I, George R. McGill to Latrobe, Monrovia, September 2, 1831. There is no direct evidence of Latrobe's letter.

In mid-1832, Latrobe, apparently once more on his own initiative, queried McGill on the desirability of a second colony, where the most likely situation might be obtained and what was the best method of carrying out the project. To the first question, McGill replied that any place on the African coast was preferable to the Monrovia site where the soil was unfertile and mangrove swamps dominated the landscape. For a desirable location, McGill now advocated a spot below Monrovia between the Sestos River and Cape Palmas, although Cape Palmas itself was very suitable. He estimated that, should the Maryland Society obtain such a place of its own, it could reduce expenses by three-fourths within two years. The most effective mode of founding a new settlement, McGill wrote, would be to send a small vessel with emigrants, supplies and ammunition, pick up some Marylanders from Liberia and proceed down the coast and purchase desired area. McGill also favored the formation of a colony consisting of only Maryland emigrants because Liberian citizens were disputing the superiority of the several states from which they had come.⁷³

Russwurm, also approached by Latrobe for information, corroborated McGill's estimate of the Cape Palmas country. He wrote that one of Monrovia's most respectable citizens had been offered land within sight of the Cape for \$200 worth of trade goods. Russwurm quoted a Massachusetts ship captain as calling Cape Palmas' advantages too great to be ignored, especially with the English anxious to extend their

⁷³Ibid., George R. McGill to Latrobe, Monrovia, July 12, 1832. No record of Latrobe's letter to McGill exists.

settlements along the Western Coast.⁷⁴ Russwurm, be it added, was the Maryland group's best source of accurate information on the colony during the first years of the State Society's existence. The correspondence was confidential and private, not known to any save his Maryland friends.⁷⁵

Upon receipt of these latest letters from McGill and Russwurm, the Maryland Board of Managers appointed a committee of three--Latrobe, Brice and Harper--to consider the recommendations and to suggest what steps the State Society should take in relation to a new settlement.⁷⁶ With the coming expedition and the remarks of their African informants in mind, the committee hastily consulted the parent body. Harper warned Gurley that Cape Palmas was such an important site that it must be secured as soon as possible. He inquired what assistance the national organization could give the Marylanders in effecting this. Harper assured Gurley that they had no intention of founding an independent colony but only of settling another portion of the Liberian area. Speaking as a colonizationists rather than simply as a Marylander, Harper talked of lining the whole coast with American settlements which would spread laterally until they met and then penetrate far into the

⁷⁴Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Liberia, July 18, 1832.

⁷⁵Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Liberia, February 5, 1833.

⁷⁶MSCS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 4, 1832.

interior. All settlements in Africa, he emphasized, would be parts of one great confederacy.⁷⁷

That this was then the general feeling of Maryland Society members is corroborated by Latrobe's reply to McGill. Referring directly to the latter's proposed solution for the bickering among emigrants from different states, Latrobe questioned the desirability of permitting national American distinctions being perpetuated in Africa. He considered the establishment of an independent Maryland colony undesirable from the Society viewpoint and advised McGill to work for the success of the existing colony. Only the proved feasibility of one, he concluded, could ever justify the establishment of a second.⁷⁸

Gurley's reply to Harper's questions about extending the colonizationists' possessions along the west coast of Africa was farsighted and judicious but lethargic. Agreeing that Cape Palmas was an important point which should be quickly secured, Gurley cautioned that the resident natives' savage disposition would make settlement difficult. Relying upon Mechlin's opinions, Gurley suggested a program of exploration along the coast as far south as Accra or the mouths of the Niger. The purchase of as many sites as possible would substantiate Liberia's claim while she gradually extended her coastal settlements. Rather than founding such additional colonies with new emigrants, Gurley advocated encouraging Monrovia colonists to be the pioneers.

⁷⁷ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. VL (1832), Harper to Gurley, Baltimore, October 7, 1832.

⁷⁸MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary's Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to George R. McGill, Baltimore, October 12, 1832.

He warned that, should the Maryland Society attempt planting an establishment at Cape Palmas, it must count upon substantially the same expense, hazard and calamity which accompanied the early years of the Cape Mesurado settlement. A far better idea, he believed, was for the Maryland colonizationists to join with their national organization colleagues in an exploring voyage. All territorial purchases would be in the parent society's name and under the control of the Liberian colonial government.⁷⁹ Nothing was, however, done. The Lafayette with its large complement of colonists went on to Mesurado and it was news of their difficulties which gave final impetus to the establishment of a new colony for Maryland Society emigrants.

Armed with information from friends in Liberia and with the complaints of Lafayette passengers, the Board of Managers on April 30, 1833, unanimously adopted a position advocating the gradual extirpation of slavery in Maryland and the formation of a new settlement at Cape Palmas.⁸⁰ The committee appointed the previous October to study the problem was now directed to work on the details of such a venture and, in June, it set forth the principles upon which a new settlement was to be founded. The extirpation of slavery in Maryland, by proper and gradual efforts, was the primary object. Colonization was not only to benefit the people of color, but to spread the lights of civilization and the Gospel in Africa. Commenting on the demoralizing effects of

⁷⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Gurley to Harper, Washington, October 10, 1832.

⁸⁰MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 30, 1833.

using ardent spirits, the committee declared that no emigrant was to be permitted to go to the settlement unless he swore to do without its use. Moreover, the principle of abstention, except for medicinal purposes, was to be incorporated into the local government of the colony. No person was to be eligible to hold public office unless he pledged himself to abstain from the use of or traffic in alcohol. In linking colonization and temperance, the Society believed that the best interests of both causes would be promoted. Finally, it stated that agricultural pursuits were to be the chief object of effort in the proposed colony. Accepting the committee recommendations, the Board resolved that it appoint an agent to gather funds north of Maryland and choose a suitable person to proceed to Africa to purchase a site at or near Cape Palmas.⁸¹

The man who came immediately to mind as the best qualified to carry out the Maryland Society's goal of purchasing territory and establishing a colony was Doctor James Hall. An 1822 graduate of the Medical School of Maine, Doctor Hall had sailed to Liberia aboard the Orion late in 1831 to serve as the Colonial Physician of the American Colonization Society.⁸² During his tenure there, both Ayres and Latrobe corresponded with him about the colony's affairs. Early in 1833, ill-health forced Hall to return to the United States. While recovering in Baltimore, he was appointed to lead the Maryland expedition set for

⁸¹Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, June 28, 1833.

⁸²ACS MSS, Board of Managers Minutes: 1828-33, September 12, 1831.

that fall.⁸³ The news which he brought from the colony confirmed what the Marylanders had heard of the maladministration of African affairs. The officers of the Society felt fortunate in getting an agent whose two years' residence upon the Liberian coast made him eminently prepared to form a new colony.⁸⁴

Efforts to hire an agent to tour the North for funds were futile. Although a guaranteed salary of \$1,500 for one year was offered,⁸⁵ the post could not be filled. The first man to whom it was offered was reluctant to leave his position as American Sunday School Union representative. He suggested that the Maryland body appoint Courtland Van Rensselaer, from whose family they could expect considerable financial aid, since it would be but a trifle, he thought, for that family to donate ten or fifteen thousand dollars.⁸⁶ Actually, Latrobe, in search of financial support from northern sympathizers, had already addressed a long letter to Van Rensselaer.⁸⁷ There is no evidence that Van Rensselaer had ever replied, but Latrobe met him on a trip to New England that summer and found him a warm friend, if not a financial

⁸³MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Special Meeting of the Board of Managers, July 19, 1833; Corresponding Secretary's Books, Vol. I, Latrobe, Charles Howard and Frank Anderson to Dr. James Hall, Maryland State Colonization Office, September 10, 1833.

⁸⁴MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary's Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Finley, Baltimore, July 22, 1833.

⁸⁵MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Special Meeting of the Board of Managers, July 19, 1833.

⁸⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Robert Baird to Latrobe, Philadelphia, July 31, 1833.

⁸⁷MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary's Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Van Rensselaer, Baltimore, July 10, 1833.

supporter, of the Maryland scheme. So many men turned down the Society's offer in turn that the body became reluctant to approach anyone.⁸⁸ Not until more than a year later was an out-of-state agent appointed.

Rebuffed in attempts to gain funds from the North, the Board of Managers became dependent upon the good will of those allotting the legislative appropriation. To convince officials that the Assembly act warranted the use of public funds for the purchase of a remote colonial site overseas and the outfitting of an expedition was indeed a major task. State Managers were requested to advance \$8,000 for the project. Of this sum, \$3,000 would be for the transportation and supplies of the emigrants by the next voyage. Two thousand dollars was the estimated cost of land to be bought and the remaining \$3,000 would go to arm the colony and to purchase tools, implements and the like.⁸⁹ These officials were quite amenable to advancing the money for the use indicated, but they would not give outright any funds except those to be spent directly for the emigrants. They agreed to pay in advance \$30 for each emigrant transported to Africa that year. Moreover, they consented to loan the Colonization Society whatever additional amount might be necessary to cover a total outlay of \$8,000. That sum was to be repaid

⁸⁸Ibid., Latrobe to Finley, Baltimore, September 5, 1833.

⁸⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, George Hoffman, Anderson and Latrobe to Sheppard, Charles Howard and Harper, Baltimore, September 7, 1833.

thereafter as the Maryland Society transported emigrants to Africa at its own expense.⁹⁰

An issue which was apparently overlooked when the study committee presented its recommendations to the Society was the purchase of Cape Palmas. No mention whatsoever was made as to how this was to be effected or by what means the territory was to be paid for. In fact, it was several months before the question came to the attention of the State Society's officers. It was then rather forcefully presented by Manager Will G. Read, who asked if ardent spirits were to be used in barter in acquiring the site. He was vehemently opposed to this because he considered it "criminal to supply barbarians with what will constitute an insuperable barrier to their intellectual, moral or religious improvement. . . . If we commence our enterprise with a deliberate violation of what we acknowledge to be right, can we hope for the blessing of God? . . ."

Taking up the subject of what the natives would expect to receive for the land they were alienating, Read argued that when they were convinced that no spiritous liquor would be available, they would be satisfied with other articles. He contended that even if the natives operated according to certain rules of exchange, of which rum and other liquor were an integral part, they applied to the bartering of commodities. The Maryland Society, however, intended to exchange merchandise for land and no evidence existed that an African attached a rum value to a certain measure of land.

⁹⁰MSCS MSS, Manumission Books, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of State Managers, September 9, 1833.

The other worry of Read was whether liquor, except for medical purposes, was to be allowed in the colony. He presented another strong argument against it, evidently without realizing that the Board of Managers had already prohibited its use, with the lone exception noted, in the proposed colony.⁹¹

The Board of Managers was not convinced by Read's argument and, relying upon Doctor Hall's African knowledge, authorized its Executive Committee, which was supervising the outfitting of the trip, to purchase whatever amount of liquor Doctor Hall thought necessary to accomplish the purchase of Cape Palmas. Affirming its previous vow to found a new colony and to govern it on the principal of excluding, so far as practicable, the use of alcohol, the Board asserted its belief that no territory could be purchased unless the universal custom of trade and barter in Africa, which involved rum, was complied with. It claimed, nevertheless, that it was not violating that pledge. The decision to take along liquor and to use it as a last resort was not unanimously supported. Mirroring such divided opinion, an additional resolution was passed that every effort should be made to purchase Cape Palmas without liquor, even if the cost involved an increased expenditure of other articles.⁹²

The relations to be maintained between the Maryland Society and the American Colonization organization and between their respective

⁹¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Will G. Read to Board of Managers of Maryland Colonization Society, October, 1833.

⁹²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 9, 1833.

colonies in Africa were now looked into. Transmitting to the parent board the various resolutions concerning a new settlement, the Marylanders informed the Washington colonizers that they expected their continued permission to land at Monrovia or Grand Bassa, a newly opened area near Monrovia, those Maryland emigrants who preferred those locations. Moreover, if the Maryland attempts to settle Cape Palmas failed, they expected the parent society to allow them to make special arrangements for the temporary settlement of the emigrants under exclusive Maryland control in Liberia.⁹³ William McKenney, still serving as the Society's agent, was sent to Washington early in October to meet with American Colonization officers and to explain his employers' purposes. He obtained two favorable resolutions from them. One expressed their trust that the contemplated settlement on Cape Palmas would effectually promote colonization while contributing to the civilization and happiness of the African continent. The other expressed the Washington board's willingness for Maryland emigrants to remain in Monrovia or Grand Bassa until the new settlement was prepared. The same terms, conditions and regulations agreed upon after the Lafayette incident earlier that year were to apply to the new colonists.⁹⁴ The questions left unanswered were, however, at least as important as those decided. The most important consideration, of course, was the relations between

⁹¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Will G. Read to Board of Managers of Maryland Colonization Society, October, 1833.

⁹²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 9, 1833.

the two settlements in Africa should the Maryland venture at Cape Palmas succeed. Of this nothing was said.

And so the bold decision to form a new colony for Maryland emigrants was made. An old African hand, Doctor Hall, was ready to lead the expedition. At least \$8,000 was assured to underwrite expenses. All that was needed were emigrants. McKenney, the agent so successful in building up the Lafayette group, had been reappointed back in January.⁹⁵ He renewed his efforts in March, once more concentrating on the Eastern Shore. From Snow Hill, McKenney wrote that, while the prospect of success was not discouraging, it was essential that the first authentic news from the Lafayette emigrants immediately be spread, for nothing effective could be done until then.⁹⁶ A few days later, he reported meetings in Berlin, St. Martin's Parish and Newark. At each one, the listeners seemed more interested than previously in colonization. In fact, McKenney was so swayed by the prospects that he took the liberty of stating that the Colonization Society would probably dispatch a vessel to Africa early in June.⁹⁷ Two weeks later, McKenney again begged for all the good news that might have been received from the Lafayette and predicted that there would not be the least difficulty in getting off an expedition of at least two hundred by June 1 if reports were favorable.⁹⁸

⁹⁵Ibid., January 7, 1833.

⁹⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, McKenney to Charles Howard, Snow Hill, Worcester County, March 27, 1833.

⁹⁷Ibid., April 2, 1833.

⁹⁸Ibid., Church Hill, Eastern Shore, Maryland, April 14, 1833.

Unknown to him, at that very moment, the long awaited communiqué was en route to him. Charles Howard, writing for the Board of State Managers, confessed that they were mortified to have to inform him of the unpleasant nature of the few letters brought by the returning Lafayette. Explaining that the reports all dealt with the inefficient management of affairs and improper conduct of the authorities in the colony itself, Howard stressed that, under proper management, there was nothing in the soil or climate of Liberia to prevent the realization of a successful colony. McKenney was instructed to explain the difficulties to the white and colored population, to assure them that the Maryland Society would not advise any person to emigrate until it was convinced that the evils were remedied, and to come to Baltimore to work in the colonization office.⁹⁹ However simple these orders may have appeared to the men in Baltimore, they presented enormous difficulties to McKinney who had spread word about that an expedition would sail within the next two months. It took him several weeks to travel a circuit of about a hundred miles explaining the situation.¹⁰⁰ At that, he only partially corrected matters because, as he went, he assured his listeners that the expedition would certainly sail early in the fall and that all persons expecting to go should remain ready to embark on short notice.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Charles Howard to McKenney, Baltimore, April 13, 1833.

¹⁰⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, McKenney to Charles Howard, Salisbury, May 4, 1833.

¹⁰¹Ibid., April 23, 1833.

McKenney was ordered back to the Eastern Shore in September to recruit emigrants and to collect money for the proposed colony. The Board of Managers gave him specific instructions. Prospective colonists were able to choose Monrovia, Grand Bassa or Cape Palmas as their home. McKenney was to approve only persons with exceptionable moral character for the trip. He was directed to acquire as many adults as possible, keeping in mind all the while the Society's policy regarding liquor.¹⁰² That he ever went is not recorded.

In October, McKenney covered central and western Maryland under orders to obtain not less than twenty nor more than thirty emigrants. As many as possible of these were to be able-bodied men.¹⁰³ In Frederick, McKenney found two highly recommended Negro families considering colonization. The members of both groups were slaves. In one case, the Jacob Gross family was offered its freedom if it consented to go to the Maryland colony. In the other, the family, offered emigration or resale, had delayed its decision for two years. The owner now demanded an immediate answer.¹⁰⁴ Travelling westward to Williamsport in Washington County, McKenney could report no prospective colonists but he did form an auxiliary branch of the State Colonization Society

¹⁰²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 9, 1833.

¹⁰³Ibid., October 16, 1833.

¹⁰⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, McKenney to Charles Howard, Frederick City, October 23, 1833.

and received a contribution of four \$500 banknotes from the president of the Bank of Washington County.¹⁰⁵

The dearth of emigrants did not delay preparations for the voyage. In mid-October, the Board of Managers appointed a general committee of nine men, including members of the Executive Committee and the Committee on New Settlements, to meet daily except Sundays at twelve o'clock noon to superintend and expedite the venture. Two other men were selected to advertise for and to charter a suitable vessel to carry out the emigrants, supplies, armaments and equipment.¹⁰⁶ Early in November, the Society booked the Brig Ann which was to sail on the 20th. Meanwhile, an order for many of the articles needed, especially muskets and other armaments, was being filled in New York City. The final cost of all goods sent aboard the Ann was \$7,903.¹⁰⁷

On November 28 at 9 a.m., the Ann sailed from Baltimore under a favorable wind. The departure was solemnized with the usual prayers and blessings. Atop the mast flew the newly adopted colony flag. Similar to the United States one, it substituted a cross of equal arms for the stars of the American ensign. Nineteen emigrants from Frederick and Washington Counties and from Baltimore were aboard. Of these, only ten were at least eighteen years old, but seven were men. One was a barber, tailor and cooper, but his nineteen-year-old son listed no

¹⁰⁵Ibid., McKenney to Latrobe, Williamsport, Washington County, October 30, 1833.

¹⁰⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 16, 1833.

¹⁰⁷MSCS MSS, Proceedings of Executive Committee, November 25, 1833.

occupation. Another was a barber and saddler. Jacob Gross, the head of the large Frederick County family manumitted upon condition that it go to Africa, was a farmer, as were the other three adult males. Accompanying the emigrants were Doctor Hall, the agent in charge, John Hersey, assistant agent, and two missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In light of the devotion and energy applied by Maryland colonizationists, Latrobe's conclusion that, contrary to his expectations should the experiment fail, it would not be attributable to any oversight or neglect on this side of the Atlantic seems perfectly just.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, December 7, 1833.

CHAPTER III

ESTABLISHMENT OF MARYLAND IN LIBERIA

The Maryland State Colonization Society, as an active organization, was less than three years old when it embarked upon the project of establishing a colony of its own in Africa. Until this time, it had worked with the parent society in Washington and had sent its emigrants to one of the several settlements in Liberia. Now the Marylanders were intent upon founding an independent establishment south of Liberia. Ostensibly the impetus came from the fiasco and disappointment attending the Lafayette venture. Other reasons of a more serious nature were, however, numerous. Careful study immediately reveals that Society officers underwent a change of attitude during the first two years of their effort. In founding the group in 1831, they announced their aim to be the removal of the state's willing free people of color to Africa.¹ When the Society was incorporated by the legislature early in 1832, its objective was given as the "colonizing, with their own consent, in Africa, the free people of color of Maryland, and such slaves as may be manumitted for the purpose. . . ." ² Obviously, Maryland colonizationists expected a great voluntary exodus by the free

¹MSCS MSS, Records of 1831, February 21, 1831.

²Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1831), Chapter 314.

and by ex-slaves to their ancestral land. This failed to materialize. Only extraordinary effort got off less than two hundred emigrants aboard the Orion and the Lafayette. Even severely restricting legislative measures and the threat of banishment to some foreign country would not budge the Maryland blacks. Now, in mid-June, the Society came out for the complete eradication of slavery in Maryland.³ The new objective was to convert Maryland into a free state and to make the Potomac River, rather than the Mason-Dixon Line, the slaveholding states' boundary.⁴

The assertion of its hopes for the extinction of slavery in Maryland did not mean that the colonizationists had become abolitionists. The Society emphasized that it viewed the end of slavery as a natural event, the result of voluntary action by slaveholders. It stressed that it intended in no way to enter upon a crusade against a time-honored and legally entrenched institution. Society heads reiterated that colonization differed from abolition in that it refrained from any other interference with slavery than encouraging owners to manumit their Negroes for the purpose of colonizing them in Africa.⁵

Fifty years later, Latrobe, in an address before the Maryland Historical Society, remarked that his listeners might think it strange

³MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, June 28, 1833.

⁴MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, John H. B. Latrobe to Courtland Van Rensselaer, Baltimore, July 10, 1833.

⁵MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 8, 1834.

that there was any question as to the propriety of adopting such a resolution. But, he continued,

Half a century ago, slavery was regarded in the States where it existed as an institution upon whose permanence the wealth and prosperity of so many were dependent, that anything which, by possibility, might interfere with it, was looked upon with jealousy and distrust. So fixed, indeed, did it seem to be, that even those who deplored its existence, seeing no way to get rid of it, and never dreaming of the civil war which closed with its destruction, were disposed to consider it as a necessary evil, and to leave it with the future to be dealt with. The Constitution of the American Colonization Society had carefully avoided all reference to it, when it declared the object to be "the removal of the free people of color, with their own consent, to Africa," and the Maryland law of 1831 [December Session, passed March, 1832] found supporters in the belief that, by such removal, the property in slaves would be enhanced in value or made more secure. The action of the State Society, therefore, which frankly declared that the extirpation of slavery in Maryland was its ultimate object, was far in advance of anything that had been done in this connection in the slave-holding States, and the discussion of the resolutions was naturally careful and deliberate. Not only was the principle involved to be considered, but the effect of the resolutions upon the public, and especially their effect on the Legislature, upon which the Act of 1831 made the Society practically dependent for the means of accomplishing its purposes.⁶

The key to the matter appears in Latrobe's recollection that consideration of the slavery extirpation principle involved consideration of possible public reaction. In reality, the Society's decision to support gradual decline of slavery in Maryland was aimed at gaining financial backing from the northern states. The determination to support this new program was rooted in the annual American Colonization Society meeting held in Washington early in 1833. The storm which had

⁶ John H. B. Latrobe, Maryland in Liberia: A History of the Colony Planted by the Maryland State Colonization Society under the Auspices of the State of Maryland, U. S. at Cape Palmas on the South-West Coast of Africa, 1833-1853 (Maryland Historical Society Fund Publication, No. 21; Baltimore: John Murphy, 1885), pp. 19-20.

been brewing between the Southerners who supported the parent society largely because it promised aid in dealing with the free blacks and protecting slavery and the Northerners who considered colonization a means of ending slavery now broke out in full fury. This feud within the national movement had been a prime reason for the establishment of a new state organization in Maryland in 1831. It now became a major reason for Maryland colonizationists to form their own African establishment.⁷ The heated arguments, the discord and the general confusion attending the annual meeting convinced Maryland observers that a compromise between the two factions could never be effected. Southern participants complained that Northern society members dominated its policies; they insisted that abolition, rather than colonization, was becoming the organization's objective and that they were about to be deprived their right, guaranteed by law, to possess slaves. Representatives from the North alleged that the parent society's trend was to perpetuate slavery because it would not undertake a crusade against the institution in the South, but, rather, contented itself with colonizing free blacks and slaves freed for settlement in Liberia. Maryland participants concluded that such arguments expressed more political feeling than was desirable for a purely philanthropic institution. They became convinced that the two groups could not operate under the same

⁷MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Van Rensselaer, Baltimore, July 10, 1833.

roof and that the whole movement would ultimately be destroyed unless drastic steps were taken.⁸

As a slaveholding state herself, Maryland was just as zealous as any in that camp in seeking to prevent interference with her domestic Negro policy. Maryland colonizationists would therefore not support meddling in their southern neighbors' affairs. However, if dissention within the national movement destroyed the Liberian project, what would become of Maryland interests and efforts in its behalf? The formation of an independent colony operated exclusively by the Maryland State Society was the obvious answer. Maryland representatives, to a great degree, took the side of their northern colleagues at that Washington meeting. While they refused to co-operate in a general anti-slavery crusade, they now emphasized their hope for its gradual extinction in Maryland and underscored the probable beneficial example their success would have upon other slaveholding states.⁹

Maryland colonizationists also expected, by the creation of their own colony, to be the heirs of Liberian interest in the United States following the probable disintegration of the American Colonization Society. Southern states, following the Maryland precedent, would undertake the management of colonization within their own borders for whatever reasons suited them. Northern champions of West African settlement would channel their contributions through the Maryland Society. With a new establishment resting upon Christian and temperance

⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 8, 1834.

⁹Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 2, 1833.

principles, with the advantageous location of Baltimore, with a program advocating the extirpation of slavery but committed to noninterference, the Maryland Society looked forward to taking the lead and soon heading the colonization movement in the United States. As the parent society in Washington progressively weakened, the Maryland one would, if necessary, take over the existing Liberian establishment. Baltimore, a natural port of preparation and embarkation, would keep Maryland at the front of the movement.¹⁰

That events did not take the anticipated turn and that the American Colonization Society outlasted the Maryland body as an effective organization is not particularly important. Nor does it matter much for the present discussion that the Maryland colonizationists' new emphasis upon the gradual eradication of slavery failed to gain financial support from the North. What is significant is that these rather visionary expectations were among the primary motives attending the establishment of a new African colony.

Another factor in the Maryland Society's determination to launch such an undertaking was its view that Liberia could not expand its facilities rapidly enough to accommodate the anticipated flow of Maryland emigrants. The original colony's capacity was limited and was likely to enlarge so slowly that the parent society would have to apportion the number of emigrants going out in any given year among the various states with persons awaiting departure. But, were the emigration movement to expand, as the State Society officers believed it

¹⁰MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Latrobe to R. S. Finley, Baltimore, September 5, 1833.

would, the quota allowed Maryland might materially impede her colonization efforts. This bleak prospect made a multiplication of settlements imperative for Maryland Society success.¹¹

The Marylanders' lack of confidence in the parent society's ability to accommodate increasing numbers of colonists in Liberia was symptomatic of their general disapproval of the way that enterprise was being run. One of the most severe charges leveled against the Liberian settlements was their commercial character. Some of the settlers had actually acquired considerable wealth by trading with the natives and with passing vessels.¹² Many others had turned to traffic with back-country residents as the only means of supporting their families. Destitute after reckless consumption of the conventional six-months supply of provisions given upon arrival, newcomers commonly went into the swamps to saw timber for the colonial government. For this they received, at inflated prices, trade articles at the Agency store. Such wares were then taken into the interior to exchange for food. The consequence was that the immigrants were cheated by the natives, who were keen traders, and returned to their families, remaining behind on the coast, worse off than before.¹³ The Maryland Society wanted its colonists to be independent of the natives for their food. Moreover, not only were most of the settlers more likely to be successful farmers

¹¹Ibid., Latrobe to William McKenney, Baltimore, July 24, 1833.

¹²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 2, 1833.

¹³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Remus Harvey to C. C. Harper and Moses Sheppard, Liberia, Africa, July 29, 1833.

than businessmen, but close relations with the natives would engender vicious habits and make the colonists less receptive to and protective of religious and moral demands. An agricultural community, spreading gradually into the interior, would, moreover, present a better example to the heathen and provide greater facilities for a rapidly increasing emigration from the United States than would commercial centers.¹⁴

Another charge against the west coast settlements was mismanagement of affairs. Reports from the Lafayette emigrants and crew were sufficient to convince the Maryland Society's Board of Managers that conditions were highly unsatisfactory. Letters from established colonists corroborated such accounts. One asserted that duties on tobacco, gunpowder and spiritous liquors, designed to pay the salaries of colony teachers, amounted to more than \$5,000 annually. There were three teachers, each employed at \$400 a year, but they could not collect their pay and one was even forced to resign for lack of resources.¹⁵

Shortly after the Maryland Society had dispatched the Ann, committing itself to the new course of action, even more damning evidence of the state of Liberian affairs reached the parent board in Washington. George McGill, acting as the American Colonization Society's agent while Governor Mechlin returned home to explain the tangled situation in the colony, reported that there was not one dollar in the treasury and that insurmountable debts had accumulated. The

¹⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 2, 1832.

¹⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Hilary Teage to Harper, Liberia, July 29, 1833.

schools had all been closed because no new supplies had arrived and all public property was in a state of delapidation. He described the colony as in ruins and attributed this to the improper handling of provisions and agricultural equipment which had been provided.¹⁶ The Maryland Society had suspected this all along and had already come to the conclusion that the only alternative to the abandonment of colonization was the establishment of a new colony.¹⁷

One of the fundamental problems of the original settlement, thought the Marylanders, lay in the character of the emigrants and their preparation for a new life in Africa. Long before they determined upon a colony of their own, the Maryland Society officials were cautious in screening their applicants. They stressed to all inquirers that they must carry with them legal proof of freedom. Slaveowners were admonished to manumit their hands according to law, with a deed to become effective at the time of their emigrating.¹⁸

Another precaution which the Society took was the insistence that all married persons carry marriage certificates with them. If outgoing couples possessed none and could not obtain proof of wedlock, they were to be remarried before embarkation. Agent McKenney was advised that such was the high tone of moral feeling in the colony that

¹⁶ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. LIV (1833), George R. McGill to Board of the American Colonization Society, Monrovia, November 16, 1833.

¹⁷MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Van Rensselaer, Baltimore, July 10, 1833; Latrobe to Finley, Baltimore, July 22, 1833.

¹⁸MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Charles Howard to McKenney, Baltimore, November 8, 1832.

new arrivals would be looked upon askance were there any doubt respecting their having been legally married.¹⁹ Although this regulation was initially adopted to make Maryland emigrants acceptable to the Liberian colonists, it was enforced just as rigorously after the new Cape Palmas colony was established.

Adherence to this rule was at most a nuisance to couples without the necessary evidence, but a real problem faced many slave families contemplating emigration when the husband or wife was owned by an individual who refused to allow the partner to join the departee group. Families were frequently deterred by their inability to go to Africa together. Even in cases where wives were willing to leave and to take their families with them, the Colonization Society sought to prevent their emigration because such women had so little to offer in building up a settlement.²⁰

Single females were, however, another matter. With adult unmarried women eligible for the same allotments of land given men, their prospects for early marriage after arrival in Liberia and at Cape Palmas were excellent. Young females were encouraged to go to Africa under the protection of respectable families with which they could live until they married.²¹

¹⁹Ibid., Howard to McKenney, Baltimore, October 30, 1832.

²⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Frisby Henderson to Howard, Elkton, November 14, 1832; Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes, Collection of 75 Letters from William McKenney, McKenney to Rev. E. Bosworth, Baltimore, October 14, 1833.

²¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Ralph Gurley to Howard, Washington, October 10, 1832.

The Maryland Society also sought to provide better guidance for their emigrants than those already in Africa appear to have received. Persons preparing to move could take two barrels of baggage apiece. They were urged to include their beds, bedding and cooking utensils. Bulky items such as tables and chairs were excluded because they were worth less than freight charges would be.²² Where departees were too poor to provide such basic needs, auxiliary branches of the State Society and private individuals were encouraged to donate suitable goods.²³ The Maryland Board of Managers was particularly anxious to have them decently clothed and equipped when emigrants were destined for settlement in one of the Liberian communities. Nothing, thought the Maryland officers, was so prejudicial to the future welfare of the emigrants as a squalid and comfortless appearance which would create a bad initial impression. The officers, however, soon found by experience that some items sent from the United States were inferior to those available on the African coast. Agricultural implements with edges, such as axes, were useless because of the humidity of the coast and the poor quality of the implements. Other equipment was found unsuited to colonist needs. Emigrants were consequently supplied with money to buy axes and other tools from visiting traders carrying superior English goods after they actually got to Africa.²⁴

²²MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Howard to Henderson, Baltimore, October 31, 1832.

²³MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, November 24, 1832.

²⁴MSCS MSS, Minutes and Proceedings of the Executive Committee of the Maryland State Colonization Society, October 15, 1832.

While the Maryland Society encouraged citizens and auxiliaries to furnish indigent emigrants with their needs, it would not condone attempts to secure emigrants whose only hindrance was unpaid debts. It received numerous requests for monies to release applicants from financial encumbrances. The organization, however, deemed it bad policy to apply funds in this manner, since donors might object to the practice. To individuals seeking such assistance, the standard reply was that, in the few cases where persons actually received aid in paying off bills, the cash came from personally solicited donations of the philanthropic.²⁵

A regulation which was not immediately established, but which became part of the Maryland Society's byelaws late in 1834 was the stipulation that all emigrants must be vaccinated before they embarked for Africa. This safeguard against smallpox was introduced into the United States in 1800 by Doctor Benjamin Waterhouse, a Boston physician and Harvard professor whose European training had opened the way for correspondence with Edward Jenner, developer of the procedure. It was rapidly accepted in this country, partially because prominent men such as Thomas Jefferson advocated the practice. The first vaccine institution in the United States was established in Baltimore in 1802. Considering these facts, it seems unusual that this preventive practice had not been adopted with departees long before. Now, both vaccination and general health certificates issued by a qualified physician were required. The Board of Managers was annually to appoint a

²⁵MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Howard to L. H. Patrick, Baltimore, September 19, 1832.

physician to carry out these requirements.²⁶ That this was done is not recorded, perhaps because, among the Society's active members, there were numerous physicians who could provide service without difficulty.

Another lesson Marylanders took from observance of the Liberians was the necessity of investigating the character of their applicants. Aware of the numerous lazy citizens already in the West Coast American settlements of Africa, the Maryland Society informed its auxiliary chapters that worthless vagabonds would not be received.²⁷ This admonition became particularly important after the Society decided to plant its own colony at Cape Palmas. McKenney, seeking candidates on the Eastern Shore, was instructed to accept no one unless he was of exceptionable moral character and to give preference to those distinguished for piety and learning.²⁸ In keeping with its determination to prohibit the use of liquor in the new colony, the Colonization Society drew up a pledge before the Ann's departure which each emigrant was obliged to sign:

We the persons whose names are hereunto signed do hereby solemnly promise and declare that we will severally support and obey the foregoing Constitution, and we hereby also solemnly

²⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, December 30, 1834; John B. Blake, Benjamin Waterhouse and the Introduction of Vaccination: A Reappraisal (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), pp. 11, 42, 62-63.

²⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, McKenney to Doctor Martin, Salisbury, November 3, 1832.

²⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 9, 1833.

promise and declare that we will abstain from the use of ardent spirit except in case of sickness.²⁹

The term, ardent spirit, was never defined.

Once an applicant was approved, had fulfilled all the requirements, and had taken the oath, he was still bound by regulations. Emigrants were divided into groups or messes during their voyage to Africa. The ship captain or some individual named as overseer by the Maryland Society selected group leaders to supervise the distribution of provisions and the cooking of meals. Each of them was responsible for the order, good conduct and cleanliness of his charges. All emigrants, save for the sick, were to be up and to wash on deck by sunrise. Experience showed that they tended to remain in their berths and between decks much of the day. Overseers were consequently urged to prevent this when the weather permitted them to remain outside. Regulations for scrubbing the decks and living quarters aimed at maintaining sanitary conditions. Religious observance, too, was an important feature of the voyage out. Family prayers were to be held before breakfast and after supper. On Sunday, two public services were to be held and an additional one was scheduled for each Wednesday. Officers of the Maryland Society were worried lest idleness during the long voyage might lead to improper conduct. They urged such passengers as could do so to spend much time reading to others and to devoting as much effort as practical to teaching those wishing to learn.³⁰

²⁹Ibid., November 22, 1833.

³⁰MSCS MSS, State Managers Book, Directions to J. W. Prout, December 7, 1832; Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe et al. to James Hall, Baltimore, November 25, 1833.

Once in Africa, the new arrivals were entitled to provisions for six months. Although the variety, quantity and quality of goods varied with circumstances, the standard weekly allowance per person was about three pounds of meat, some fish, six quarts of bread, tea and a half pint of molasses.³¹ Rice and palm oil were also distributed in small quantities when they could be purchased from the natives.³²

The Brig Ann was en route to Africa. The State Society Board had studied every aspect of founding a new colony. The nineteen emigrants were deemed suitable material for the nucleus of the proposed settlement at Cape Palmas. Detailed instructions covering every conceivable problem were in Doctor Hall's hands. These stipulated that the Ann should sail first to Monrovia. Hall was to show the person in charge there the American Colonization Society resolutions which gave blessings to the attempt at settling Cape Palmas. Monrovia citizens were to be procured to accompany the Ann's passengers to Cape Palmas, but they, too, were to sign the pledge respecting support of the colony and abstinence from ardent spirits. Should no volunteers for the venture appear in Monrovia, Hall was to proceed down the coast to Bassa and repeat his effort there. He was at all times to speak in friendly terms of the parent society and to repudiate the idea that the Maryland body was either an opponent or a rival. Cape Palmas, both because of its desirableness and the public attention already given it, was to be the site of the new settlement, if at all possible. The Reverend

³¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Hall To Latrobe, Cape Palmas, June 10, 1834.

³²Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, October 1, 1834.

John Hersey was employed to assist Doctor Hall. His specific duties were to supervise the survey and allotment of the land and to superintend the settlement's agricultural pursuits.³³

Although the brig left Baltimore on November 28 in good weather, it encountered storms and contrary winds down Chesapeake Bay. Hall discovered that the vessel was a poor sailor; the log revealed that, on the last voyage, it averaged only three knots an hour. He also found that the cargo was so badly arranged that he had to repack in order to get at necessities. Moreover, a fire broke out which, Doctor Hall estimated, would have completely destroyed the ship had it blazed another fifteen minutes. All this occurred while the Ann was still in the Bay.³⁴ The rest of the voyage was at least as difficult. During the first month at sea, a continued gale kept the decks wet. The emigrants' berths were filled with sea water. Hall found that the captain had little knowledge respecting longitude because he had no chronometer or nautical almanac aboard. Worried that they might reach the African coast south of Monrovia and then be unable to sail against the prevailing northeast winds, Hall made soundings off Gambia and decided to pick the way south. However, they were now plagued with the calms and, fearful that they might not reach their destination before the annual rainy season setting in during April, Hall, Hersey, one of the two ABCFM missionaries and four emigrants left the brig in an open boat some 350

³³MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe et al. to Hall, Baltimore, November 25, 1833.

³⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Hall to Latrobe, Brig Ann, near Cape Henry, December 2, 1833.

miles at sea. After great fatigue, exposure to the sun and to the night dews, they reached Monrovia five days later, on January 27. The Ann arrived the next day, having experienced good winds from the time the seven had left the vessel.³⁵

Another difficulty confronting Hall on this initial voyage as agent for the Maryland Society was the conflict between his assistant, John Hersey, and nearly everyone else aboard. Hersey almost immediately became embroiled with the ship's captain who was a heavy drinker, possessed a violent temper, and studded his speech with profanity. As an ordained minister, Hersey protested such conduct. Matters worsened. On Christmas morning, the captain suggested that the emigrants celebrate by getting out a fiddle and having a big dance. Hersey objected. He also complained to the captain that one of his crew ridiculed religion before the passengers. The more his protests were ignored, the more Hersey became obsessed with the idea that he was being abused by all aboard the Ann and that his was the lone righteous soul in the multitude.

While still at sea, Hersey considered resigning his post upon reaching Monrovia. He however decided upon further reflection to sacrifice his own feelings and to continue on with the party to Cape Palmas.³⁶ This he did. By that time, however, he was complaining that he had no specific duties and hence no actual authority, and that he

³⁵Ibid., Vol. II, Hall to Latrobe, Monrovia, Liberia, January 29, 1834.

³⁶Ibid., Vol. II, John Hersey to McKenney, at sea, January 14, 1834.

was forced to submit to the commands of Doctor Hall who did not regard the Bible as the word of God.³⁷ His resignation and return home were honestly regretted by Hall who still considered the potential of his services valuable, but his departure reduced the ranks of chronic complainers.

The arrival of the Ann in Monrovia was hailed by some citizens as evidence that deliverance from the badly managed existing colony was at last possible. Hall made the necessary contact with colonial authorities and received permission for a number of the old settlers to leave for Cape Palmas. Meeting with potential Cape colonists both publicly and privately, he soon found great opposition to the project among almost all persons not originally from Maryland. He attributed the hostility principally to a jealousy of the new colony and to a desire by the wealthy to maintain their existing labor force. Persons anxious to move to Cape Palmas were often deterred by unpaid debts in Monrovia, by promises of assistance in case they remained and by threats if they left.³⁸ These measures were resorted to both by ordinary citizens and by at least one colonial employee, Doctor G. P. Todsén, the physician.³⁹ Additional opposition came from English traders who endeavored to discourage colonists from moving and to dissuade the natives from forming contract with the Marylanders. British denunciation of temperance

³⁷Ibid., Hersey to Latrobe, Monrovia, February 3, 1834.

³⁸MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Hall to [Latrobe], Monrovia, Liberia, January 29, 1834.

³⁹Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Liberia, February 23, 1834.

regulations which would bind persons going to Palmas also wielded great influence.

Fearing that English merchants might arrive at the Cape before the Maryland expedition and worried that the quest for additional settlers in Monrovia would heighten opposition, Hall departed from there on February 4.⁴⁰ With thirty Monroviaans, including nineteen adult males, added to his original company, Hall anchored off Bassa the following morning, recruited five more men there, and set sail for Palmas soon after. The Ann arrived at Garroway, about ten miles from the Cape, on the 10th. Doctor Hall immediately sent a native friend from Palmas, who had been in Monrovia awaiting him when he had arrived and who had joined him there, ahead in a canoe to inform the inhabitants that the Americans would arrive the following day. News that the emigrants were en route had actually reached the area some days before. Even at Garroway, fifty to a hundred Africans had greeted the ship, begging for rum and tobacco. Late in the afternoon on February 11, 1834, the Ann anchored at its destination.⁴¹

Selection of Cape Palmas as the new colony's site was one of the Maryland Society's easiest decisions. As Americans and Europeans gained accurate information respecting the African west coast, the promontory was habitually referred to in highly laudatory terms. Observation soon taught visitors and merchants that the steady northwest

⁴⁰Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, Monrovia, Liberia, January 29, 1834.

⁴¹Ibid., Hall to [Latrobe], Brig Ann off Drov, February 9, 1834. Although dated February 9, this letter chronicled events from the 9th through February 16.

trade winds made return voyages from there to Europe or America easy, whereas, farther south, toward the Biafra Bight, calms and currents made sailing difficult. Furthermore, only a few years before, in 1830, the mouths of the Niger River had finally been identified. Latrobe believed that Cape Palmas, with its Cavally River and a good harbor for small ships, would become a maritime victualling station akin to that at the Cape of Good Hope.⁴² Although Governor Mechlin reported the area's inhabitants to be savages, a considerable number of Liberian settlers claimed that the Cape people were mild mannered and industrious and that they were anxious to have Americans locate there. The surrounding country was reputedly fertile, producing rice and palm oil as well as yielding ivory and camwood, a valuable hard timber.⁴³

For a colony whose basis was to be agriculture, unanimously favorable soil reports gave encouragement to the Cape's selection. Another major reason for its choice was the accepted opinion in Africa and America that it was healthier than the Monrovia area. At the time the Board of Managers announced its plans for a new settlement, it had pointed out that the country from the Senegal to the St. Paul's River was intersected with streams rising far in the interior. All brought vast quantities of alluvial deposits to the ocean, thus giving rank luxuriance to the mangrove swamp. Assuming this to be the factor in causing the dreaded fever, the Board noted that no rivers of any length

⁴²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 2, 1833; Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Van Rensselaer, Baltimore, July 10, 1833.

⁴³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, George R. McGill to Latrobe, Monrovia, July 12, 1832.

existed between the St. Paul near Monrovia and the Assinie, close to Three Points. It had concluded that the absence of streams bringing rich deposits from the interior was further evidence that Palmas must be one of the healthiest spots on the coast.⁴⁴

Indeed, Doctor Hall's first reports gave heart to the anxious colonizationists in Maryland. He wrote that the appearance of the country, the bay and the river was exceedingly fine, and that no place could be more desirable for a settlement. The natives were anxious for a settlement in the area.⁴⁵ George McGill, the Baltimorean who had corresponded frequently with Latrobe since 1827 following his settling in Liberia, was among those accompanying the Ann to Palmas and reported that the natives welcomed the party with open arms. They told the colonists that they had long wanted the Americans to settle there in order to have someone to teach them English, to buy their produce, and to supply them with merchandise. According to this exceptionally able informant, Palmas was held in as high esteem among the Africans themselves as Cape Mesurado and Sierra Leone.⁴⁶ Even John Hersey, the disaffected assistant agent, stated that vegetation grew as luxuriously at the cape as on the best lands back home in America. He confirmed the popular view that Palmas was much healthier than Monrovia and

⁴⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 2, 1833.

⁴⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Hall to [Latrobe], Brig Ann off Drov, February 9, 1834.

⁴⁶Ibid., George McGill to Latrobe, Monrovia, Liberia, March 8, 1834.

declared that there was little danger of sickness among the Maryland emigrants.⁴⁷

The task of negotiating with native residents called for expert maneuvering. Hall had specifically been chosen for the job because of his knowledge of African ways. His instructions from the Board of Managers were to purchase as much land as possible. Boundaries, so far as possible, were to be streams of water. While the Marylanders hoped to purchase the land in fee simple, they were willing to agree to any of a variety of other arrangements to gain a foothold. Hall was ordered to use rum only if the territory could not be purchased without it.⁴⁸

Hall found that the Cape Palmas area was under the control of three African groups, each taking the name of the region in which it dwelled, but jointly known as the Grebo people. He had, consequently, to deal with the King of Cape Palmas, immediately dubbed King Freeman, the Grahway Headman, thereafter known as King Will, and the King of Grand Cavally, nicknamed King Joe Holland. On February 13, Hall held his first palaver with the three kings. In one day's time, he secured a deed for as much land as the Society could possibly desire at a price far less than anticipated. Although twenty puncheons of rum, a quantity impossible to ascertain because of varying sizes of casks, were among items sought in exchange for the territory, that demand was

⁴⁷Ibid., Hersey to Latrobe and the Board of Managers, Baltimore, July 21, 1834.

⁴⁸MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe et al. to Hall, Baltimore, November 25, 1833.

easily dismissed when Hall insisted that his master had sent him to purchase land without rum. In reality, Hall's success must be attributed to the work done by the Cape friend who had met him in Monrovia. Though under protest, this person lobbied among the petty rulers before negotiations opened and had largely pushed aside the insistence upon liquor.⁴⁹

Hall signed a deed of cession with Kings Freeman, Will and Joe Holland for land extending some twenty miles along the seashore and twenty into the interior.⁵⁰ Ownership gave possession of all the rivers, bays, creeks, anchorages, timber and mines on it, except for a tract of land deeded to King Yellow Will of Little Cavally sometime back by the Grahway Headman and lands already under cultivation or occupied by the natives as towns and villages. The Africans reserved the right to travel by stream and to traverse all sections of the country not inhabited by Maryland Society colonists. That body was deeded the land for its own special benefit in perpetuity, but the natives retained the right of governing any groups of their own people who might wish to occupy any part of the territory. They acknowledged themselves "members of the colony of Maryland in Liberia, so far as to unite in common defence, in case of war or foreign aggression." Hall, in the Society's name, guaranteed the reserved rights, agreed that neither the person nor property of the kings and their dependents would be trespassed upon or molested, and accepted the stipulation that no

⁴⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Hall to [Latrobe], Brig Ann off Drov, February 9, 1834.

⁵⁰Ibid.

lands under cultivation, towns or villages, would be taken over save by special contract and the payment of compensation agreed upon. Finally, the Maryland Society was to establish within one year a free school for the children at Palmas, Grahway and Grand Cavally.⁵¹

Beside the twenty puncheons of rum, the Cape natives sought an extensive list of items, among them being twenty cases of guns, twenty and a half barrels of gunpowder, twenty bales of cloth, twenty cases of looking glasses, a hundred dozen red caps, a hundred iron pots, twenty hogsheads of tobacco, a box of umbrellas and a wide assortment of ornamental and practical articles.⁵² A comparison of the items requested with those finally given for Cape Palmas reveals that Hall had justifiably earned his reputation for skill in handling the natives. First, they got no rum whatsoever. Save for a small quantity reserved for the infirmary, all was poured overboard.⁵³ Instead of twenty cases of guns, only four were received. Likewise, the natives received but twenty kegs of powder rather than twenty and a half barrels of it, a considerable difference in quantity. Then too, they got only twenty hats and three hogsheads of tobacco. All else was likewise reduced in quantity.⁵⁴

Hall was a cunning agent in other respects as well. For example, the deed specified no exact bounds to the Society's territory. The

⁵¹"Deed for Maryland in Liberia" in the Appendix to The Third Annual Report of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1835), pp. 29-30.

⁵²MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Hall to Latrobe, Brig Ann off Drov, February 9, 1834.

⁵³Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 16, 1834.

⁵⁴"Deed for Maryland in Liberia," loc. cit.

terms delineating property under the colony's jurisdiction were such terms as "a coconut tree, known as the large cocoanut," "one day's journey," "six-hours walk," and "running along the beach." Other portions of the deed bearing upon native claims were likewise indefinite. A principal reason for such vagueness was Hall's ignorance of the country's potential and the most desirable tracts for agriculture. Furthermore, knowing that English traders whose self-interest would prompt them to undertake blocking the Society's purchase were due any day from Cape Mesurado, Hall wanted to lay claim to as much coast-line as possible. A deed in which the natives' possessions could not be clearly distinguished from the Society's property and which, in fact, made Cape Palmas appear almost under joint ownership, afforded outsiders scant opportunity to interfere with Society aims.⁵⁵

Another clever move on Hall's part was arranging to send a son of each of the three rulers to the United States for schooling. In this initial phase of good feeling, the kings were enthusiastic and acquiesced. Hall considered it a judicious measure, for the boys could be held as hostages should relations between the colonists and the natives grow unfriendly. In addition, the presence of three African princes in their midst was certain to inspire the Christian public at home to work harder for the colonization cause.⁵⁶

Doctor Hall's orders from the Board of Managers for the creation of the colony were specific. His first task was to build a large

⁵⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Hall to [Latrobe], Brig Ann off Drov, February 9, 1834.

⁵⁶Ibid.

stockade. Detailed instructions for every aspect were given. As soon as the site had been chosen, a wide street was to be laid out perpendicular to one side of it. Lots with 300 feet frontage and 726 feet in length were to be marked off. Each family or single adult immigrant was to be assigned a town lot and a farm one. Those nearest the stockade were to be held for town purposes and could be divided into smaller ones for distribution to immigrant traders. Other streets were to be laid out parallel to the first and occasional narrow cross ones were to afford access between the main streets. Each grantee was to be responsible for keeping the road in front of his lot in good repair and clear of brush to the center. In making town and farm allotments, compactness of the settlement was to be kept in mind. The assigning of farm lands was to be undertaken as soon as the stockade had been built and the emigrants were comfortably housed. Later, townships approximately four miles square were to be delineated.⁵⁷

Although orderly development was desirable, Doctor Hall found that local circumstances prevented such step by step procedures. Aware that English traders opposed Maryland efforts at Palmas, Doctor Hall deemed that secure possession of the harbor was the most important goal. Consequently, the site he chose for the stockade and town, while possessing many inconveniences, was on the northwest point of the cape overlooking the harbor. It was some distance from the landing spots along the beach and necessitated spreading the farm lots a considerable distance from the town. Moreover, the timber for the stockade was

⁵⁷MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe et al. to Hall, Baltimore, November 25, 1833.

found to be of an improper size, leaving the settlement without means of building a defense.⁵⁸ The government house was built in two weeks' time, but only with great difficulty. While the frame had been sent out aboard the Ann, the colonists found that mistakes had been made in framing and marking the different pieces. The frame was entirely too slender for the height of the house, which then had to be reduced by some four feet. Hersey, still at the colony, admitted that part of their problems stemmed from unacquaintance with this type of work. He went on to remark that, though unaccustomed to house building, he thought the government building had the most slender frame he had ever seen in a structure of its size and cost.⁵⁹

By mid-April, Hall could write that most of the newcomers were in their own houses and that most of the town lots were fenced. Not a single colonist had died of fever.⁶⁰ Other parts of his report were far less favorable. Hall had known from the beginning that the settlers were not the most desirable ones for establishing a colony. As they sailed from Monrovia to Cape Palmas, Hall had written that, "our emigrants are not exactly what I could wish, although some few are sterling men. . . ." ⁶¹ His low estimate of this human stock bore him out when actual development got under way in the colony. His first

⁵⁸MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Hall to [Latrobe], Brig Ann off Drov, February 9, 1834.

⁵⁹Ibid., Hersey to Latrobe and the Board of Managers, Baltimore, July 21, 1834.

⁶⁰Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 16, 1834.

⁶¹Ibid., Hall to [Latrobe], Brig Ann off Drov, February 9, 1834.

letter from Cape Palmas noted that, "Much public work is to be done; and I do assure you with such emigrants as I now have but little can be effected. There is not the least particle of public spirit or patriotism in them, and it is with utmost effort that I can produce unanimity of feeling sufficient to enable them to mess together. . . ."62 Hersey also testified that, upon their arrival at Cape Palmas, the emigrants revealed not only a marked disinclination to work, but became hostile toward the natives and argumentative among themselves.63

Another difficulty plaguing the colony was the need for food and supplies. Many of the provisions sent aboard the Ann had been left at Cape Mesurado and Bassa for the families of the men volunteering to settle Palmas. Most of these pioneers would never have left the older settlements had arrangements not been made to care for their dependents in the interval before the Cape was ready to receive them. By April, most of the families had arrived. The lateness of the season unfortunately prevented them from planting crops. Matters were made worse by a scarcity of rice along the coast.64 The natives, knowing of the colonists' need, were determined to charge them at least twice the amount paid by passing trading vessels. They even prevented Doctor Hall from making purchases from neighboring tribes. He concluded that the only way to avoid war with the natives was to go along with them until a small schooner could be sent for the colony's use. With it,

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., Hersey to Latrobe et al., Baltimore, July 21, 1834.

⁶⁴Ibid., Hall to [Latrobe], Brig Ann off Drov, February 9, 1834.

the Marylanders could obtain rice at reasonable rates. While acknowledging that such a vessel would be expensive, Hall warned the Board of Managers that it was absolutely necessary to the safety and welfare of the colony.⁶⁵ It was several years, however, before a ship was actually sent.

With Cape Palmas purchased, the government house erected and most of the colonists settled on their own allotments, the next task was the establishment of government. The Maryland Society's Managers, seeking to meet every eventuality, had sent with Hall a constitution and an ordinance for the colony's temporary administration. The name chosen for it was "Maryland in Liberia," suggested by Robert S. Finley who had happened to be passing through Baltimore as preparations for the Ann's voyage were under way.⁶⁶ While a committee of three was entrusted with drawing up the documents, the actual work had been done by Latrobe. His recall of the circumstances is particularly ingenuous:

It was necessary to provide a settlement with a government to give it laws. This I undertook to do. So I prepared a charter containing a Bill of Rights, to begin with. I studied the charters and constitutions of the different states of the United States and selected the best, or made one up from the best of them. I then took Nathan Danes' ordinance of 1787 for the government of the Northwest Territory and modified it until I fancied it would do for the Maryland colony. I introduced a clause into the Bill of Rights making it a penal offense to drink. In the ordinance I made real and personal property assets in the hands of the administration without distinction, save that the personal property was to be resorted to in the first instance. And I would have done away with the trial by jury in civil cases, but was deterred by a decent respect for the opinions of mankind. I forget all

⁶⁵Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 16, 1834.

⁶⁶John Edward Semmes, John H. B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803-1891 (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1917), p. 146.

the modifications I made in existing systems; . . . It was a rare opportunity to a young lawyer to lay the foundations of what might grow to be a great nation, and I did the best I could. . . .⁶⁷

By this constitution, the Maryland State Colonization Society retained full power and the right to make the rules, regulations, and ordinances for the territory in Africa until that body withdrew its agents and placed control wholly into the colonists' hands. Every adult emigrant was to be required to sign a pledge to uphold the constitution and to refrain from the use of liquor save in case of illness. The natives were to be treated justly and their property, rights and liberty were never to be invaded or disturbed, "unless it may become necessary to do so, to repel aggressions on their part." No taxes were to be levied except for purposes of defense, internal improvement, education and the support of local government. The Society, however, reserved the right to impose duties and port charges.

All elections were to be by ballot, with the State Society setting voter qualifications. The seventh article of the constitution embraced a Bill of Rights. This guaranteed the citizens of Maryland in Liberia the rights to worship as they pleased; freely to speak, write, and publish their personal views in all matters; of free assembly and the application for redress of grievances, as well as the enjoyment of a wide range of additional activities. Finally, the constitution, save for the Bill of Rights which might never be touched, could be altered only by the unanimous consent of a meeting of the Board of Managers or

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 146-47.

by a two-thirds vote of the members present at two successive meetings of that body.⁶⁸

An argument prominent in the decision to found an additional colony in Africa was the assertion that this would promote Christianity among the heathen. To implement this objective, the Maryland Society had, early in its preparations, notified the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in Boston of its intentions and had offered the latter accommodations and aid for any agents it might wish to send to Cape Palmas.⁶⁹ By coincidence, the ABCFM had already decided to send a representative to Africa that autumn to inspect the country and to investigate mission possibilities.⁷⁰ The Maryland Society offer was quickly accepted. The Reverend J. Leighton Wilson of South Carolina and Stephen R. Wynkoop of Pennsylvania were chosen to sail on the Ann to Cape Palmas and to arrange for a station or stations there. The plan was to have Wilson and Wynkoop accompanied by several Negro men who would remain in Africa and continue preparations while the two missionaries returned to America with accurate information on needs and prospects. The ABCFM concluded that its primary object at the

⁶⁸"Constitution of Maryland in Liberia," in the Appendix to The Fourth Annual Report of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1836), pp. 62-66.

⁶⁹MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Board of Foreign Missions, Baltimore, September 10, 1833.

⁷⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, B. B. Wisner to Latrobe, Boston, September 14, 1833.

outset would be to establish a high school in which colonists and natives could be trained as teachers for the common schools.⁷¹

Actually only Wilson and Wynkoop, the two missionaries, went aboard the Ann. In spite of the numerous problems attending the journey, their reports on Africa as a field for operations were enthusiastic. Wilson commended the Marylanders on "the rumless purchase" of Cape Palmas and judged Doctor Hall as uncommonly expert in managing settlement affairs.⁷² ABCFM officers, aware of the provision in the Cape Palmas deed that three schools were to be established within a year, voted to found and conduct them. Moreover they accepted an earlier Maryland Society offer to grant them a mission house site in the colony.⁷³ The response of the ABCFM prompted the Board to offer to the members of all religious denominations every facility in their power to establish schools and to carry on missionary work in the colony.⁷⁴ It was two years, however, before other denominations, the Methodist Protestant Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church, launched plans to establish stations at Cape Palmas.⁷⁵

⁷¹Ibid., Wisner to Latrobe, Philadelphia, October 5, 1833.

⁷²Ibid., Vol. II, J. Leighton Wilson to Latrobe, New York, April 15, 1834.

⁷³MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Letter from R. Anderson, read at a meeting of the Board of Managers, April 29, 1834.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. V, John Clark and James R. Williams to the Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society, Baltimore, October 26, 1836; Hall to Ira Easter, Hot Springs, Virginia, August 28, 1836. Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, June 23, 1836.

Latrobe's choice of the ABCFM for his initial correspondence respecting mission enterprise appears entirely at random. But the ABCFM's rapid decision to make Palmas the site of its next operations was purposeful. Experience had proven that it was preferable for missionaries of different societies, and especially of different denominations, to labor apart, if possible. Its general practice had become the establishment of missions where no other society had gone.⁷⁶ The Cape certainly met that specification, hence the American Board's speed in approving work there. Wishing to start immediately rather than waiting for the next sailing of Maryland emigrants from Baltimore, Wilson, his wife, and two Negro male assistants sailed aboard the Schooner Edgar from New York on November 7, 1834.⁷⁷

The Maryland Society Board's reaction to the news of Doctor Hall's accomplishments was one of approbation and gratitude. It ratified his agreements, including the one providing for the education of the three African princes. The only matter which the Board requested Hall to alter concerned the lands reserved by the natives as their own. Hall was to secure to the Society a pre-emption, thus preventing the native chieftains from selling their areas to outsiders. Hall's plea for immediate supplies was heeded by a decision to send a vessel carrying some \$1,500

⁷⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IV, Anderson to Easter, Boston, February 17, 1836. That Latrobe probably had only a vague idea of what mission group he was contacting can be detected in the heading of his letter of September 10, 1833. It was addressed to the Board of Foreign Missions, Boston. In actuality, Boston was the headquarters of the ABCFM. Later, the activities of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Protestant Church came to Latrobe's attention, as suggested above.

⁷⁷Ibid., Vol. II, Anderson to McKenney, Boston, November 11, 1834.

worth of goods.⁷⁸ In addition to the request for provisions and conventional items such as tobacco, beads, and wash basins designed to ease native relations, Hall transmitted the desires of the three kings who requested such symbols of royalty as dining chairs and cocked hats and feathers.⁷⁹ Early in June, 1834, the Sarah and Priscilla left Baltimore with a cargo embracing flour, pork, molasses and soap, together with agricultural implements such as handsaws, axes and files, and plank, bricks and nails for building operations. These items were all selected for the colonists. Numerous trade goods were also sent, but Hall was warned that over-emphasis upon commerce had been a great source of evil in Monrovia. For each of the three African kings, the Board sent a multi-colored silk umbrella. Latrobe, writing for his colleagues, confessed that they were somewhat at a loss as to what would be suitable presents, but, he concluded, "I don't know why they [The umbrellas] may not answer as well as a cocked hat to designate Royalty."⁸⁰

The colony at this time--June, 1834--was actually in a precarious position. Government buildings completed were a large kitchen and storehouse for rice, a stockade fort and jail and one large and two small houses for arriving immigrants. A hundred and fifty such persons

⁷⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 22, 1834.

⁷⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Hall to [Latrobe], Brig Ann off Drov, February 9, 1834.

⁸⁰MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, May 22, 1834. Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Hall, Office of the Maryland State Colonization Society, June 2, 1834.

could be accommodated. The original colonists had built twelve framed houses and were finishing two stone dwellings. But, though most of the town lots were cleared, fenced, and planted, what food could be expected from them would be insufficient to keep the colonists alive. Public funds were nearly exhausted and Doctor Hall, periodically ill, was without any assistant to survey the lands, inspect public affairs, or advise settlers on the best course of their work. Fortunately, the natives at this time were peaceable.⁸¹

The Sarah and Priscilla's arrival in Cape Palmas harbor on August 9 must have seemed anti-climactic to a man who, for months, had contended with colonists and natives in his efforts to carry out his employers' instructions. Before the vessel's arrival, Hall had found it necessary to trade with passing vessels in order to obtain provisions. He paid specie to a captain from Salem, Massachusetts, for cloth and gunpowder. A few days later, a Spanish schooner anchored in the harbor, and Hall bartered a half of hogshead of tobacco for iron and cloth. A week before the Sara and Priscilla arrived, Hall exchanged palm oil for crockery with a Philadelphia captain. Hall considered all of these deals necessary, although he stood at a decided disadvantage in not knowing when to expect relief from home. The colony was, in fact, rather well supplied when the Board's cargo arrived. Nevertheless, it was unloaded in three working days, and Hall was glad to have it. It proved a mixed blessing. Sight of the goods bred great dissatisfaction among the natives over the amount agreed upon and received

⁸¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, June 27, 1834.

when they had sold Cape Palmas a few months before. They now laid claim to half of the cargo. Hall was perturbed. If he gave in, the price would be high, for only a considerable amount of goods would mollify them. Moreover, there would be no end to their extortions. On the other hand, to refuse their claims would cause constant clamor among them, much ill-will, and the continual possibility of war. Hall chose the latter course, swearing never to grant their unreasonable demands. Aware that the Society would have to support newcomers then in the colony beyond the customary six months, and repeatedly warned of financial difficulties at home, Hall opted to retain a full larder.⁸²

The disappointing feature of the Sarah and Priscilla's arrival was the complete lack of immigrants. Hall had informed the natives and had regularly reminded them that he daily expected at least a hundred new colonists. Two houses, or receptacles, as they were called, stood ready for occupancy. He was mortified that only cargo had come. He plead with the State Society to send him settlers as soon as possible because he realized that the natives would never attach much importance to the colony until it had more people and ample stores of guns, powder, tobacco and cloth.⁸³

By the close of the next year, the Board had sent out three additional loads of immigrants. The Bourne, with fifty-eight such aboard, arrived at the Cape on January 24, 1835.⁸⁴ Twenty-seven passengers

⁸²Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, August 17, 1834.

⁸³Ibid.; also Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, October 15, 1834.

⁸⁴Ibid., Vol. III, Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, January 27, 1835.

went out on the Harmony in June, 1835.⁸⁵ At the end of 1835, another complement, numbering thirty-nine, and led by Oliver Holmes, Jr., who went out to replace the ailing Hall, sailed on the Fortune.⁸⁶

The natives' attitude at the docking of the Sarah and Priscilla and their obstinancy in refusing to sell rice or allowing Hall to purchase from neighboring tribes were merely two examples of difficulties confronting the colonists. An equally serious problem was theft. One ship captain who traded along the west African coast called the native inhabitants at the Maryland settlement the greatest thieves between Capes Mesurado and Palmas.⁸⁷ Many of them considered theft commendatory, especially if carried out adroitly. Seldom were they punished, save when colonists took matters into their own hands. This usually worsened relations without any beneficial consequence. Articles stolen from the colonists or from vessels were divided among the headmen, with the pilfering individual retaining half the loot. Even a constant guard of two men could not prevent nightly theft. There were cases in which thieves slipped their hands through the wattling of houses and stripped bed clothes from the sick. Even Hall's order to the watchmen to shoot any native prowling about after dark was useless. While the colony was still too weak to risk a major conflict with the

⁸⁵Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, Harper, Liberia, August 26, 1835.

⁸⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers December 5, 1835. Letters, Vol. III, Oliver Holmes, Jr., to Latrobe Cape Henry, December 27, 1835.

⁸⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Captain Richard E. Lawlin to Latrobe, New York, July 21, 1834.

indigenes, only palavers with the kings could be resorted to and they, too, proved ineffective.⁸⁸

Theft was not a habit restricted to the natives. The colonists themselves were guilty from time to time. On one occasion, a native king brought in a colonist caught appropriating cassada from his fields. This proved a particularly embarrassing situation for Hall for he had been attempting to make the kings responsible for their peoples' misdeeds. In the end, a settlement was effected, Hall giving the king 800 pounds of tobacco which was so bad that he could not trade it off and 214 yards of cloth, besides property known to have been taken from the natives.⁸⁹

The constant loss by theft was reflected semi-annually when the Agent made his financial report to the Maryland State Colonization Society. One early accounting noted that nearly two barrels of beef, probably stolen by the colonists, were missing from the government warehouse. Hall concluded that "this thief palaver is one grand attendant expense on all establishments in this country. Night watch, locks, mare traps, and watch dogs are of no avail." He sought to balance financial records by charging at least a hundred percent profit on goods sold in the Agency store.⁹⁰

The six months for provisioning the colonists were up in August, 1834. Doctor Hall, a shrewd man, was dedicated to the colony and mindful

⁸⁸Ibid., Vol. II, Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 24, 1834.

⁸⁹Ibid., October 15, 1834.

⁹⁰Ibid., Vol. III, Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 1, 1835.

of its citizen needs. Rather than throwing the colonists on their own, Hall continued to provide them with meat and bread for another four weeks. Even at the end of that time, no one had any means of subsistence other than public welfare. The settlers were preparing their farm lands for March planting, but would have nothing save government stores to live on until crop time. Under the circumstances, Hall did the only possible thing: he inaugurated a public works program. Making it a point to have every able-bodied man work for his fare, even when the work was of little consequence, he undertook the construction of a stone warehouse, a wharf and a tower. He considered the additional expense to the Society entirely justified, for, as he pointed out, once commercial mercantile houses opened in the colony, the Agency would have an advantage over them. Moreover, during the colony's infancy, work could be accomplished on far more favorable terms than later when demand for labor would arise from other sources.⁹¹

By the end of the year, Hall was plainly worn out. The grumbings of the natives, who were finding that the Americans were not the mighty men they had originally thought them to be, tore at the Agent's strength. Although he deemed himself able to keep his chin above water and felt that his influence over all parties on the Cape was increasing, he declared to Latrobe that he had growled daily at both colonists and natives ever since setting out. For all his effort, the Africans called him stingy and the colonists assigned him a variety of uncomplimentary names. Still, many of the two-acre farm lots were cleared and Hall was

⁹¹Ibid., Vol. II, Hall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, October 15, 1834.

convinced that, could Southern slave-holders see how delightful Cape Palmas was, they would not only release their bondsmen, but would come out themselves.⁹²

Public employment may have rescued the settlers from certain starvation and have insured gradual improvement in the colony, but it did not improve their quarrelsome nature. As the spring of 1835 came and the citizens finished the clearing and planting of their farm allotments, they began to complain about the manner in which land was being distributed. While each adult immigrant came with the expectation of receiving the minimum five acres promised colonists at the other American settlements, he found that Hall had limited the size of the outlying plots to two acres because he considered this the maximum amount that any one man would cultivate. Consequently, after receiving his town lot, the new colonist was given the choice of a two-acre lot beyond the village, with the right to three acres more at a farther distance out after he had met deed requirements for the first two, or he might take five acres immediately at some more remote location. Most of the newcomers had chosen the two-acre plan, but once they got to attending their farm lots they became dissatisfied with Hall's procedure and charged him with deceiving them as well as failing to follow his instructions from the Board of Managers.⁹³ Hall's opinion was that, should a colonist be so ambitious that he required more than five

⁹²Ibid., December 29, 1834.

⁹³Ibid., Vol. III, Petition of Colonists to the Agent [Hall], n.d. [June 24, 1835].

acres, it should be given him. He placed chances that this might happen at a hundred to one.⁹⁴

As the colonists began to get their farms into cultivation, Doctor Hall was urged by the Board of Managers to create a public farm. The instructions and advice sent Hall sound like those of a gentleman farmer to his estate manager. Board members prided themselves upon corresponding with friends throughout the United States and receiving from them seeds which they passed on to Hall for use in the colony. While cotton and tobacco cultivation were to receive immediate attention, plans for producing coffee and palm oil were not to be neglected. Coffee was considered a potentially important export crop because it was not raised in the United States. A major reason for developing a public farm simultaneously with the opening of individual ones was to encourage colonists with the success the Board anticipated. It could also be used to determine the most successful agricultural methods and crops for the Palmas area. Moreover, the public farm would provide work opportunities for colonists unable to make a living at their own occupations or temporarily destitute.⁹⁵

The Board now finally got around to naming colonial landmarks. The fort was designated as Fort Hall, in honor of their agent. The town itself was to be called Harper, commemorating the late Robert Goodloe Harper. The next township founded was to be named Latrobe. The main thoroughfare of town would be Baltimore Street and the main

⁹⁴Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, Harper, June 1, 1835.

⁹⁵MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Hall, Baltimore, February 21, 1835.

colonial road was to be Maryland Avenue. Other streets and sites were to be named for prominent Society officers.⁹⁶

Doctor Hall complained of ill-health in letter after letter following upon his arrival in Africa. His condition worsened as he struggled to keep the colony going. Early in June, 1835, he informed Society officers that he could not continue to act as their agent either with advantage to the colony's development or in safety to himself. Cognizant that the spring season was always the most damaging to his health, he urged that the Board send out a new agent in the fall whom Hall could train before he left. An alternative, which Hall supported, was to appoint someone already in the colony to act as his assistant before he left and then to take charge of affairs while Hall returned to Baltimore and conferred with the Board on the subject.⁹⁷

By his own experience on the African coast, and through observation of the sacrifices of health and life by Europeans visiting Africa, Hall had become convinced that, if a colony were to flourish, it must be under the direction of "some spirited, intelligent, patriotic coloured man" acting in behalf of the Board of Managers.⁹⁸ The frequent interregnums at Monrovia were enough, in Hall's mind, to corroborate his opinion that Africa meant death for most white men. The contrast between his own chronic illness and the general healthiness of the

⁹⁶Ibid., and Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 10, 1835.

⁹⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, Hall to Latrobe, Harper, June 1, 1835.

⁹⁸Ibid., Hall to [Latrobe], Cape Palmas, March 1, 1835.

black colonists further confirmed the belief. Hall must have anticipated the Board's attitude, hence his suggestion that he be allowed to air his views before a permanent agent was appointed. He was, indeed, correct in his assumption that difficulties loomed ahead, for at that very time, a letter to him was being drafted which expressed Board hopes that Hall could hold out until they got another white man out to the colony to replace him. With an air of superior knowledge, Charles Howard wrote, "However confident [you] might be in the abilities of a Coloured person as your representative in your absence[,] yet some years must elapse before such an one will be viewed with the respect that is accorded to a white man. . . . "99

Fearful that Doctor Hall, whose letters evinced progressive physical deterioration, might soon die, Oliver Holmes, Jr., was chosen to lead a group of emigrants leaving aboard the Fortune in December, 1835. He was a twenty-eight year old dentist who had built up a very lucrative practice in Maryland. Holmes volunteered to go out to Africa for six months as the Colonization Society's agent from sincere interest in the cause. The plan was for him to assist Hall during those months and, health permitting, Holmes was not to leave the colony unless a white agent replaced him or he received emergency permission of the Board of Managers to depart.¹⁰⁰ Holmes was further instructed to assume

⁹⁹MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. II, Howard to Hall, Office of the Maryland State Colonization Society, May 30, 1835.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., Latrobe to Hall, Office of the Maryland State Colonization Society, n.d. [Late 1835].

powers as governor pro tempore should Hall withdraw.¹⁰¹ Informing Holmes that the Board had fully sanctioned all of Hall's actions and had passed a unanimous vote of approbation governing his conduct, Latrobe advised him to follow the same system in handling the natives and colonists: "If you make no attempt at innovation but firmly & vigorously with temper and kindness, keep things as you find them, the result will be mutually satisfactory."¹⁰²

In a restatement of the Society's philosophy, Latrobe wrote:

It would seem that his [Hall's] success with natives has been the result of his firmness of purpose, not less than the Justice of his course. A vacillating conduct is the worst possible, with ignorant men in any country, and essentially [especially] bad in Africa. It has been the policy of many colonists heretofore to drive out the aborigines--as in the case of the colonies in this country of our own. . . . Such is not our policy however. We would amalgamate the native with the colonist, raise the Farmer [former] to the standard of the latter, and then carry both on together to the highest eminences of civilization and the Gospel. In doing this, great care is necessary to prevent the colonist sinking to the native standard. This work of amalgamation should be managed discretely, and the native should be made to feel, that it is a privilege to be considered the equal of the colonist. In a word, let the natives be taught to look on your colonists as benefactors and brothers, not as conquerors and enemies.¹⁰³

Upon Holmes' arrival in West Africa early in February, 1836, Hall immediately surrendered to him the colony's property and interests, although he would remain for some weeks until passage could be secured.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹Ibid., Latrobe to Holmes, Office of the Maryland State Colonization Society, December 18, 1835.

¹⁰²Ibid., Latrobe to Holmes, Baltimore, February 11, 1836.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IV, Statement of Holmes, Harper, Liberia, February 11, 1836.

During his two-year tenure, Hall had succeeded in enlarging Maryland State Colonization Society territory from approximately twenty square miles to control of an area largely in the interior from six to eight hundred miles square. Most of this had been accomplished in the last six months of his term as he had sought to carry out Board instructions to gain pre-emptions on the native reserves specified within the original deed. Hall had likewise been able to establish contracts with tribes neighboring the Cape, Grahway and Grand Cavally people. Hall confessed that all such groups had a vague hope of benefitting from their connection with the colony. According to Hall, they had deeded their land believing that the Marylanders would never be able to find a use for it, and most of the natives would certainly oppose any attempt to occupy it. The sole good which many tribes counted on was the advantage of free trade. Hall's conception of his achievement was that the colony could now expect ready and unrestrained intercourse with all adjacent tribes and that the colony had obtained a legal right to territory of almost unlimited extent, to take over when, in due course, it might be needed.¹⁰⁵

Visible evidence of Hall's achievements were to be seen in a large Agency house, which served both as his home and as the public court room; a two-story stone warehouse; a long wharf; a public farm of which some ten acres were cleared, enclosed, and partly cultivated; a country house for the farm superintendent; a jail; and three large structures to accommodate newly arriving emigrants. Four miles of road

¹⁰⁵Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, Brig Luna, at sea, May 1, 1836.

had been built and were open. The ABCFM mission, named "Fair Hope," embraced a number of buildings for worship, study and housing. In Harper village, there were twenty-five frame houses belonging to private individuals. On the farm lots beyond town limits, there were eight frame dwellings and twelve temporary structures. The colony's population was about 220, of whom 60 were adult males. More than 60 acres of the colonists' land was planted with sweet potatoes, cassada, corn, beans and other foodstuffs. Tobacco and cotton were also under cultivation. In Hall's reasoned view, the colony could, in 1836, be considered as beyond the threat of famine.¹⁰⁶

Hall's accomplishments were highly commendable. In comparison with the early history of the Monrovia parent colony, Maryland in Liberia had far surpassed what might reasonably have been expected in so short a time. Most of the success was directly attributable to Doctor Hall's perseverance, astuteness and effort. There were, however, flaws in his operations and transactions. For one thing, he had allowed many of the colonists to run up heavy debts at the Agency store. He called this unavoidable because of the newcomers' poverty during the first twelve or eighteen months after the colony was established. There was, likewise, no uniformity of pay for the public employment provided hard-pressed colonists. This was especially true while the warehouse, the wharf and other government buildings were under construction, but the problem decreased when the public farm became the only project

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

offering work. It was easier to equate the worth of different services on the farm and to pay accordingly.¹⁰⁷

Another problem of which Hall was cognizant and called upon the Board of Managers for remedial action concerned the establishment of a monetary system to replace barter. One of the difficulties of barter, even if the relative prices of goods were established, was bringing together parties each of whom had what the other wanted. It often happened that a person wanting to buy cotton cloth, for example, would have only rice to exchange for it. But, if the person possessing the cloth had no use for the rice, one of them would have to make a sacrifice of his property in order to induce the other to effect a transaction.

In order to meet the problem of an exchange medium, the Board, in February, 1836, adopted an ordinance which made cotton grown in the colony legal tender at the rate of ten cents a pound. The colonial agent took charge of purchasing and handling it. The Board expected the set value of cotton to regulate the prices of the articles of trade and produce in the colony. If there was demand abroad for cotton and the set price rose, the price of things in the colony would fall, and vice versa. Some cotton was already being successfully grown in the colony and this ordinance was seen as the best means of stimulating the colonists to become agriculturalists.¹⁰⁸ Holmes was immediately instructed to appoint cotton inspectors and to explain the ordinance to

¹⁰⁷Ibid., Hall to Holmes, Harper, Liberia, March 18, 1836.

¹⁰⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, February 19, 1836.

the settlers. Forewarning the Acting Agent that it would be some time before gins could be supplied, Latrobe reminded him that fingers had been invented before the gins. Moreover, picking cotton by hand would occupy both young and old and would offer everyone gainful activity during bad weather and long evenings.¹⁰⁹

While the Maryland Society officers expressed their full appreciation and approval of Hall's work, some individuals on the scene voiced less admiration for it. Holmes was severely critical of everything concerning Hall. He charged that the doctor treated him rudely and slighted him at every opportunity before returning to the United States. He complained that Hall withheld valuable information bearing on colonial accounts and ignored his responsibility in training him for his new post. Moreover, Holmes accused Hall of manifold irregularities in business dealings with colonists, natives and trading vessels. He blamed Hall for carrying on the Agency books numerous debts which could never be collected and for possessing invoices of goods which were not in the public store. The tone of his accusations is well illustrated by his concluding remarks on Hall's conduct:

I have been placed by him [Hall] in a situation that could not be worse or more disagreeable and although neither being acquainted with all of Colonial business, having Solomons [sic], wisdom or Dr. Halls [sic] salary, I have done as well as he could.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Holmes, Baltimore, March 7, 1836.

¹¹⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IV, Holmes to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, July 13, 1836.

Hall's departure also prompted the colonists to send a lengthy communique to the Baltimore Board. Opening with complimentary remarks respecting his devotion to duty and his manifold efforts in their behalf and their veneration for him, they soon got to the purpose of their letter: to ask for changes in the administration of colonial affairs. Certain that their situation had been misrepresented as comfortable and that they had been erroneously described as self-sufficient, the settlers asserted that, were their credit at the Agency store eliminated and no other aid given them, they could not survive.

Reminding the Board that they had carved a settlement out of the African wilderness within a short time and that they had endured endless tribulations, the petitioners complained of their debts. They attributed these largely to the mark-up of goods in the Agency store, which, they claimed, was often over a hundred percent of the original cost. They also blamed the low wages paid them for working on public projects. Numerous other dissatisfactions--lack of adequate clothing, uncomfortable accommodations for newcomers and so on--were listed. The colonists criticized Hall for his neglect of the new agent and for the indifferent manner in which he treated them before he left. Lamenting that the old agent had alienated their affections for him, the citizens asked to be excused from having him serve in the colony again.¹¹¹

Many of Holmes' complaints and those of the colonists were, in reality, legitimate. Hall had indeed permitted settlers to incur heavy

¹¹¹Ibid., the Committee of Report to the Board of Managers, n.p. [Cape Palmas], June 15, 1836.

debts by extending unreasonable credit at the public store. Most items were heavily marked up to balance petty theft and loss through other circumstances. He was fully aware that those in his care suffered for want of sufficient clothing and he had repeatedly asked the Board for assistance on that score. Hall definitely had a propensity for keeping tallies on commercial transactions in his head rather than in the Agency books. However, in submitting the required semi-annual accounts, he always apologized for their informality and sent along detailed explanations.

While recognizing the departing agent's failings and flaws, at least one person in Maryland in Liberia staunchly defended Doctor Hall. J. Leighton Wilson, the first missionary at Cape Palmas, of his own volition wrote Latrobe that Hall had carried on colonial affairs with the utmost zeal, energy, judgement and fidelity, that he ever had the settlement's welfare uppermost in his mind, and that many of his achievements were the result of extraordinary personal sacrifices.¹¹²

An investigation of the colonists' grievances, of Holmes' complaints, of Hall's official records, and a careful study of miscellaneous letters from diverse individuals connected with the colony resulted in a complete vindication of Hall's administration. A Board committee reported that his conduct throughout appeared to have been honorable and able in all respects.¹¹³ Replying to the colonists,

¹¹²Ibid., Wilson to Latrobe, Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, February 8, 1836.

¹¹³MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 13, 1836.

State Society officers wrote that they were fully aware of the situation at Cape Palmas and that Doctor Hall had not misrepresented conditions and problems in the settlement. Necessity, declared the Board, is the parent of invention, and happiness and independence could be gained by toil alone. The citizens were enjoined to gird themselves for enduring struggle with disappointment and difficulty, being buoyed with the hope that their prosperity would become known throughout all lands.¹¹⁴

The study of Hall's administration was soon superceded by unpleasant and contrary reports of Holmes' stewardship. The complaints and charges made against the new governor were, in themselves, sufficient to raise his employers' eyebrows. The accounts of persons in the colony and Holmes' own actions soon marked him as unsuited for his duties. Although he undertook some projects in the colony, most notably the digging of a well,¹¹⁵ he rapidly became a controversial figure. Throughout his brief tenure, the new administrator engaged in a dispute with Charles Snetter, the Colonial Secretary and Bookkeeper appointed by Hall shortly before his successor's arrival in Africa.

Unfortunately, Snetter inherited the mantle of dislike which Holmes held for Hall. He had been brought from Monrovia to aid in the administration of Maryland in Liberia but, while useful in managing governmental affairs, had only a limited knowledge of accounting. This deficiency

¹¹⁴MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. III, Latrobe to Committee of the Citizens of Harper, Cape Palmas, Baltimore, n.d. /Fall, 1836/.

¹¹⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IV, Holmes to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, July 13, 1836.

enabled Holmes to lay the blame for colonial problems and financial disputes upon Snetter. Some citizens, like Wilson, defended Snetter as the victim of unreasonable prejudice.¹¹⁶ Others claimed that he had not proved to be the type of man Doctor Hall and they had expected him to be and that he was incapable of adequately discharging the duties of his office.¹¹⁷

Wilson also charged Holmes with serving native workmen and others a drink he called wine but which was, in reality, a mixture of water, molasses and rum personally prepared by him, obviously a breach of the basic no-liquor regulation. When Wilson got nowhere in his remonstrances to Holmes, he reported it to the Colonization Society. Another unfavorable aspect of the new administrator's stay in the colony was the serious mental derangement he suffered periodically as a result of the fever. No individual specified to Maryland Society officers the events which transpired during such intervals, but Wilson thought that, once Holmes had left the colony and had regained his health, he would either bitterly regret his actions or would not remember them at all.¹¹⁸

While the colonists were enumerating their grievances and Holmes was seeking to keep the colony running as he deemed best, the Board of Managers in Baltimore was considering a successor. The slowness of communication between the United States and Africa necessitated early

¹¹⁶Ibid., Vol. V, Wilson to Latrobe, Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, September 6, 1836.

¹¹⁷Ibid., James M. Thomson to Latrobe, Harper, September 6, 1836.

¹¹⁸Ibid., Wilson to Latrobe, Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, September 6, 1836.

action in order to have Holmes' replacement on the scene when his six months were up or as soon thereafter as possible. Hall, who advocated the appointment of a Negro governor, arrived in Baltimore early in June, 1836. During that month, the Board seriously deliberated the proposal. The members ultimately unanimously decided to appoint John B. Russwurm, who was a Negro. They believed that Russwurm, a resident of Monrovia for almost ten years, possessed all the qualifications held necessary for the position. The Board expected that illness, which had reduced Hall's and Holmes' effectiveness, would not interfere with Russwurm's work.¹¹⁹ In its Annual Report for 1836, the Board explained the appointment:

Ultimately, the government of the colonies on the coast of Africa must pass into the hands of the colonists, and the tutelage of the societies in this country must cease. . . . In the United States the coloured people are habituated to seeing all power in the hands of the whites. Here they know no other rulers. Hitherto, in Africa it has been the same. The power there was still in the hands of a white man; and the impression, so adverse to a proper exercise of their full capacities for self-government, was still maintained, that the duties of agent and governor could only be discharged by one of a different colour from the colonists themselves. The great difficulty to be overcome, in fitting the colonists for the task of self-government, was inspiring them, not a few ambitious and self-important individuals, but the whole mass, with the belief that they were competent to it; and this could never be done, while the system of white overseers, to which most of them were accustomed in the United States, was kept up in Africa. The smaller the community too, the easier the Board thought it could be governed by a coloured man, the less difficult would be its affairs to manage so far as he was concerned, and the fewer would be the malcontents and opposers of his authority. As the small colony also grew to be a large one, the new emigrants would find an order of things established, against which opposition would be useless, and

¹¹⁹MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Holmes, Baltimore, n.d. [June, 1836].

would fall at once into the habits and convictions of the already established colonists.¹²⁰

The Board fully realized that its decision was a gamble. It could only hope that Russwurm would command respect from both the colonists and the natives. It risked the colony's future on its belief that the new governor would prove competent. Society officers acted upon the conviction that the colored race was capable of the same mental improvement expected of whites. In their letter of appointment, they reminded Russwurm that they bore a heavy responsibility for their act and besought him to aim at a high reputation and honorable fame.¹²¹

When news of his appointment as Maryland State Colonization Society agent and Governor of Maryland in Liberia reached Russwurm at Monrovia late in September, Holmes was residing in that settlement. On September 7, he had appointed three citizens to manage colony affairs while he was absent from it or until another agent arrived to take over.¹²² The purpose of his stay in Monrovia cannot be ascertained from any material in the Society's archives, but he agreed to Russwurm's request to return to Cape Palmas to settle accounts and to continue in control until Russwurm could take over some weeks later.¹²³ He did return to the Cape, but left again within twenty-four hours having done

¹²⁰The Fifth Annual Report of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1837), p. 8.

¹²¹MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, June 30, 1836.

¹²²MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. V, Holmes to Latrobe, [Cape Palmas], September 7, 1836.

¹²³Ibid., Vol. VII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Monrovia, Liberia September 28, 1836.

nothing to arrange affairs. Snetter, the beleaguered Colonial Secretary, attributed Holmes' untoward action to his mortification over the appointment of Russwurm, a Negro, to the high post. In a very belated defense of his own work, Snetter charged that, during the Holmes' administration, he had never seen the Society's books, although, he admitted, he did not know what he might have done with them anyhow.¹²⁴ The Board of Managers now appointed a committee to investigate the colony's financial accounts. Although it did not seek to censure Holmes, the committee reported that a great portion of them were absolutely unintelligible. Part of the difficulty was attributed to the lack of system attending bookkeeping in the colony at the outset and a new body was named to establish improved accounting procedures.¹²⁵

Of Holmes' unhappy and unsuccessful stay in Africa, one charitable colonist wrote that the type of men Holmes had had to deal with had been enough to dampen the zeal and perseverance of any person of his years and experience. He concluded that Holmes had managed the colony's affairs as judiciously and discreetly as had been possible.¹²⁶ It now became the duty of John Russwurm to prove that a Negro governor could achieve what white men had proven incapable of doing.

¹²⁴Ibid., Charles Snetter to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, July 7, 1837.

¹²⁵MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 29, 1837.

¹²⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. V, Thomson to Latrobe, Harper, September 6, 1836.

CHAPTER IV

DOMESTIC OPERATIONS, LATE 1833-1840

The generous state appropriation to Maryland colonizationists dating from 1832 largely covered the expense of sending emigrants to Monrovia and the other American Colonization Society Liberian settlements. When, however, Marylanders decided to found their own colony, they discovered that the terms of the law prevented it from being the instrument they had taken it to be. The measure specified that fund managers were to apply the money at their discretion in removing slaves or free blacks from the state. In addition, they were given the authority to "make such preparations at the said colony of Liberia, or elsewhere, as they may think best, which shall seem to them expedient for the reception and accommodation and support of the said persons so to be removed, until they can be enabled to support themselves. . . ."1

State Society officers asserted that the Act's phraseology fully warranted the application of monies appropriated to any cost connected with the establishment of the colony.² Privately, however, at least John Latrobe conceded that the state fund could be applied only to the removal of emigrants, not to the acquisition or government of some

¹Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1831), Chapter 281.

²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 9, 1833.

African territory.³ Nevertheless, as a member of the Committee on New Settlements, he had joined with other officers in requesting the additional grant from the State Managers. The result, already noted, had been the agreement to allow \$30 per emigrant who went to the new colony in 1833 and to loan the Society an additional amount not exceeding a total outlay of \$8,000.⁴

This sum was, however, only a small portion of the money the Colonization Society deemed necessary for its project. Latrobe, its corresponding secretary, was directed to contact state societies headquarters in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, informing them of the need for another \$10,000. While hoping to raise several thousand dollars in Baltimore, the Marylanders definitely counted upon the Northern states for the balance. They expected \$2,500 to be raised in each of these Northern cities.⁵ One New Yorker, who offered an unsuccessful resolution to raise \$20,000 for the establishment of a colony by the New York Society at one of its meetings, was pressed by Latrobe to raise \$5,000 instead for the proposed Maryland colony. The latter reminded him that, if the colony succeeded, "there will be many a fair town to name, and rich godfathers, you know, are always remembered at christenings. . . ."6

³MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, John Latrobe to Courtland Van Rensselaer, Baltimore, July 10, 1833.

⁴MSCS MSS, Manumission Books, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of State Managers, September 9, 1833.

⁵MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Robert S. Finley, Baltimore, October 11, 1833.

⁶Ibid., Latrobe to Hugh Maxwell, Baltimore, October 12, 1833.

Unhappily for the Maryland colonizationists, they were unable to raise much money in the North. Robert S. Finley, now the New York Colonization Society's agent, informed Latrobe that his auxiliary's constitution prevented any contribution to the Maryland enterprise. While many members might be willing to amend that document, this would, in Finley's view, be unwise.⁷ The New York Society of course continued committed to parent society support. However, before the end of the year, it decided to spend the money it had collected to send out and settle emigrants independently within the bounds of the original Liberian colony.⁸ Boston colonizationists, already finding other movements of more interest and promise, gave scarcely more support than the New Yorkers. John Tappan, deeply involved in the temperance cause, could promise nothing from his city, but he did personally contribute \$100.⁹ The Pennsylvania Colonization Society declined to aid the Marylanders because it held itself obligated to assist the American Colonization Society in every way possible. Although it did not entirely approve the parent board's course, it considered itself bound to aid that debt-ridden organization.¹⁰

No one was more disappointed at these futile efforts than Latrobe whose knowledge of Maryland Society operations exceeded that of any other officer. When the Ann had left Baltimore in November, 1833, the

⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Finley to Latrobe, New York, /October7, 1833.

⁸Ibid., Finley to Latrobe, New York, December 31, 1833.

⁹Ibid., John Tappan to Latrobe, Boston, October 16, 1833.

¹⁰Ibid., James Bayard to Latrobe, Philadelphia, October 22, 1833.

Society had had but \$500 left. Anticipated expenses would far exceed this. Upon the vessel's return, \$3,500 would be due for the voyage. Moreover, another expedition, which would cost some \$7,000, was considered necessary in the near future. Adding Doctor Hall's \$2,000 a year salary, payable quarterly, anticipated expenses over the next six months would run from \$12 to \$15,000.¹¹

Latrobe complained to Finley that the Maryland Society had launched the venture confident of help from the North. Not a cent other than Tappan's contribution had come from that area. The diligent secretary vowed to quit the cause altogether unless cooperation came forthwith, and reminded Finley that, since he had had a hand in getting the Baltimore settlers into their unhappy situation, he was obligated to listen to their troubles.¹² A month later, Latrobe again lamented to Finley his disappointment at the lack of sympathy and support for the Maryland scheme in the North. Had he not been so instrumental in the decision to found a settlement at Cape Palmas, Latrobe wrote, he would not care what resulted, whether it was a success or a failure.¹³

When written requests to the northern colonization societies failed to bring in cash, the Maryland Society decided to send up envoys in the summer of 1834 to solicit contributions. The two men chosen to accompany the Society's agent, William McKenney, were the brothers, John and Robert Breckenridge. Natives of Kentucky, both were deeply

¹¹MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. I, Latrobe to Finley, Baltimore, November 25, 1833.

¹²Ibid., Latrobe to Finley, Philadelphia, December 5, 1833.

¹³Ibid., Latrobe to Finley, Baltimore, January 9, 1834.

committed to colonization.¹⁴ They proposed to enlist the aid of Leonard Bacon, a prominent New Haven clergyman and colonizationist, but Bacon, an outspoken and opinionated man, laid down conditions for his help. As an ardent, though critical, supporter of the American Colonization Society, he refused to participate in any campaign which might weaken the parent organization. He asked that funds collected be divided by the two groups and that their activity be made to appear a joint project for the benefit of both societies.¹⁵ The Board of Managers directed the Breckenridges to abandon their plan of working with Bacon unless, after arriving in New England, they found such a coalition absolutely necessary for the success of their mission. Even then, they were to cooperate to the least extent possible.¹⁶

Accompanying McKenney and the Breckenridges were the African princes who, according to the Cape Palmas purchase agreement, had been sent to the United States for education. The Maryland Society had agreed to support the boys, to sponsor their learning to read, write and do arithmetic, and to have them trained in a trade. They were to be returned safely to their families by the fourth anniversary of the Cape transaction.¹⁷ J. Leighton Wilson, the ABCFM missionary returning to Boston after a reconnaissance trip to Africa, had been in charge of

¹⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, June 23, 1834.

¹⁵Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, July 11, 1834; letter from Leonard Bacon to John Breckenridge, New Haven, July 3, 1834.

¹⁶Ibid., letter of Board of Managers to Rev. R. J. Breckenridge, July 11, 1834.

¹⁷Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 22, 1834.

the boys during the voyage. Each of the three native kings had sent a son, but one boy became so ill by the time Wilson reached Monrovia, that he had been sent back home. The other two, named John Cavally and Charles Grahway, and Wilson had landed in New York in April, 1834.¹⁸

The princes' arrival in Baltimore had created great interest in Africa. The Board of Managers had promptly set about arranging meetings in numerous city churches to display the princes and to take up collections for the Society's benefit. Requests for personal appearances from other colonization societies, such as the New York one, had been rejected in order for the Maryland group to enjoy full benefit from their appearances.¹⁹

Evidence of the trip to New England is sketchy. The entourage arrived in Boston early in August and held meetings in a number of churches. Lack of success and opposition from many quarters induced the group to cut short its tour and return home. The best source available on occurrences in Boston is a letter from B. B. Wisner, the ABCFM Secretary. Addressing Latrobe as a private citizen, Wisner explained that a more unfavorable time for the tour could hardly have been selected. General economic conditions in the country, reflecting the Jackson-Biddle bank fight, were so bad as almost to prohibit philanthropists from contributing to a new cause. Moreover, Orthodox Congregationalists in Boston were under pledge permitting the Reverend Lyman Beecher to solicit funds for the Lane Theological Seminary in

¹⁸MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, J. Leighton Wilson to Latrobe, New York, April 15, 1834.

¹⁹Ibid., D. M. Reese to William McKenney, New York, May 17, 1834.

Cincinnati, of which he was the first president, and he was expected daily. Another timing difficulty was that New York had lately experienced a violent clash between colonizationists and members of the recently formed American Anti-Slavery Society and Bostonians were wary that they might suffer the same clamor.²⁰ Their fears were certainly justified, for one of their best known citizens was William Lloyd Garrison, a rabid abolitionist, publisher of The Liberator and a founder of the new national anti-slavery organization.

Not only were circumstances attending the visit unfortunate, but the Maryland agents' actions were unwise and injudicious. McKenney immediately arranged with his Methodist brethren to hold a meeting in one of their churches on Sunday evening. The announcement in Saturday's paper alienated some townsmen because there was "rather to [sic] much of a flourish about it. . . ." Meanwhile, the agents also met with clergymen of the Orthodox Congregational Churches and made plans for supplying pulpits on Sunday and holding other meetings the following week. But, Boston's mayor declared that such gatherings would draw unruly mobs and, at his behest, the Sunday evening program was cancelled. During the succeeding week, however, several public meetings were held despite the mayor's protest. Of these, the most important occurred at the Masonic Temple where a few rowdies sought to disturb proceedings with hisses, groans and the like. Otherwise everything was orderly.

²⁰Ibid., B. B. Wisner to Latrobe, Boston, August 5, 1834; Reese to McKenney, New York, May 17, 1834.

Contributions in Boston proved negligible. Wisner believed that, aside from the financial stringency of the times, the great deterrence to fund raising in Boston was that the agents never made clear the urgent need for further money to keep the colony going. He claimed that no one gave a satisfactory explanation why the state appropriation was proving insufficient. Evidently critical of McKenney's work, Wisner advised Latrobe that the Maryland Society needed an agent well versed in colonization, slavery and emancipation, not a bellicose individual feeling that he must fight because he encountered abolitionist opposition. Wisner also suggested that no agent could gain much by working with religious bodies, at least if situations elsewhere were comparable to that in Boston where abolition and colonization advocates within congregations made pastors reluctant to allow any meeting which might further divide their flocks.²¹

As for the African princes, their presence seems to have had little influence upon the more sophisticated Bostonians. Unfortunately, Charles died of an undisclosed illness in November, 1834, and it was decided to return John to Palmas immediately to tell of their good treatment. The Board of Managers, leery of the consequences of Charles' death, sent a special envoy, the Reverend R. B. F. Gould, to the colony bearing the dead boy's belongings and a generous peace offering for his parents and family. The gifts included a black and gilt looking glass, a dozen tumblers, a pair of glass pitchers, a half dozen china cups and

²¹Ibid., Wisner to Latrobe, Boston, August 5, 1834.

saucers, a set of castors, nine dozen beads and one pair of lustre pitchers.²²

The Boston trip showed the ineffectiveness of whirlwind excursions and the Board of Managers continued its search for someone who could methodically canvass states north of Maryland. Early in 1835, Stephen F. Wynkoop, Wilson's companion to Africa and now a theological student at Princeton, was appointed to that task. He could devote only three months or so a year, divided between the spring and fall, to collecting for the Maryland cause, but the Society was glad to end its embarrassing two-year hunt for such an agent.²³

Later that year, almost twelve months after the Breckenridge tour, Wynkoop visited Boston and found little warmth for colonization. He learned from friends of the cause that the damage done the previous summer would take years to repair. The presentation of the Maryland plan had left the impression that the Negroes in that state must either emigrate to Africa or suffer extermination. Furthermore, the effort of Garrison to impress upon the community the belief that Maryland laws were designed to drive Negroes into the arms of the colonizationists was meeting with considerable success.²⁴

Wynkoop maintained a loose connection with the Maryland Society for several years. The arguments which he developed were two-fold: that the climate of North America, particularly in the middle and

²²MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. II, Nathaniel Williams to James Hall, Baltimore, December 11, 1834; Williams to Weak Bolio, King of Grahway, Baltimore, December 9, 1834.

²³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, S. R. Wynkoop to Latrobe, Princeton, New Jersey, December 17, 1834.

Northern states, was highly destructive to the physical constitution of Negroes and that it was also unfavorable for the development of their intellect.²⁵ His efforts were largely confined to calling upon New Jersey pastors and urging them ever to keep colonization in the minds of members of their congregations. He confessed that he lacked the ability of persuading citizens to donate, and that he disliked conflict with colonization foes.²⁶ That he correctly assessed his personal weaknesses is attested to by the financial account of his work. From October 20, 1835 to November 14, 1836, Wynkoop spent seventy-nine days in Society service. His collections were \$265, but his expenses and salary came to \$215, leaving a net amount of just \$50 to the good of his employers.²⁷

Other unrealistic efforts to gain financial aid in the North likewise failed. The New York Colonization Society, again requested to contribute to Maryland operations, declined on the ground that it could raise funds only when it undertook to send emigrants out itself from the port of New York. Although many of the members still professed a desire to assist the Cape Palmas colony, they claimed that any evidence of cooperation with a slave-holding state would doom chances of success in that city.²⁸

²⁵Ibid., Wynkoop to Latrobe, Princeton, January 29, 1835.

²⁶Ibid., Vol. IV, Wynkoop to Latrobe, Washington, D. C., February 18, 1836.

²⁷Ibid., Vol. V, Wynkoop to Ira Easter, Princeton, New Jersey, November 14, 1836.

²⁸Ibid., Vol. IV, Reese to Latrobe, New York, April 7, 1836.

The American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race, a short-lived Boston organization, refused Agent McKenney's plea for funds because its members no longer considered colonization an adequate remedy for slavery evils. Many of them were former colonizationists who now considered that effort primarily as a means of introducing civilization and Christianity into Africa. Whatever benefit it might have on the colored population in the United States would be indirect.²⁹

Even Doctor James Hall, just returned from his service at the Cape, could do nothing for the Maryland Society in his native New England. He felt that the leading citizens were now doubting the Marylanders' benevolence because of abolitionist arguments that they were motivated by self-interest. Moreover, were the community element normally supporting causes disposed to aid colonization, he held that it could not now switch commitments from the parent society to the Maryland group without adding fuel to the abolitionists' fire. Hall concluded that only a gradual grassroots adoption of the colonization cause could turn the elite of New England back to its support.³⁰

The American Colonization Society was naturally hostile to and jealous of Maryland colonizationist activities in the North. The Breckenridge, McKenney and the African princes trip to Boston in 1834 was particularly disliked. Elliott Cresson of Philadelphia complained

²⁹Ibid., Vol. IV, E. A. Andrews to McKenney, Boston, May 3, 1836.

³⁰Ibid., Hall to Latrobe, New Haven, Connecticut, July 5, 1836.

to the parent society that poachers had invaded their field.³¹ Ralph Gurley, recalling that John Breckenridge was then president of the Young Men's Colonization Society of Philadelphia, speculated that Cresson and the Breckenridges were collaborating with the Maryland Society to gain united Northern support.³² National group champions followed Robert S. Finley's actions with particular interest since he had originally been in their employ, in turn taking up the Maryland cause and then that of the New York State Colonization Society. They were thoroughly disillusioned to see him espouse separate state action and to encourage both Louisiana and Mississippi to follow the Maryland example in founding their own colonies in Africa. Friends of the national movement were also disturbed by the Marylanders' increasing indifference toward the parent group. Maryland aggressiveness in pursuing a state program and in wooing support outside the state was held by many to be a definite menace to the founding body.³³

In the summer of 1834, when creditor pressure and the realization that voluntary contributions would not be forthcoming weighed heavily on the Maryland Board, it took matters into its own hands. Nineteen officers were assigned amounts ranging from \$50 to \$3,000 which they were to undertake raising during the following week. It is interesting to note that eighteen were responsible for the collection of but

³¹ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. LVIII, Pt. 2 (1834), Elliott Cresson to Joseph Gales, Philadelphia, August 3, 1834.

³²Ibid., Vol. LVIII, Pt. 3 (1834), Ralph Gurley to Gales, Annfich near Millwood P. O., August 18, 1834.

³³Ibid., Vol. LXI, Pt. 1 (1835), Gurley to P. R. Fendall, Baltimore, November 27, 1835.

\$2,450 among them, while one, Hugh Davey Evans, was requested to raise \$3,000.³⁴ Evans, a well-to-do lawyer and banker, evidently disliked the plan, for he immediately submitted his resignation.³⁵ The Board, however, refused to act upon it, and persuaded Evans to continue as the Society's recording secretary. Unfortunately, personal solicitation by the officers was scarcely more successful than previous efforts had been. Only \$975, of which \$500 was raised by Peter Hoffman, a manager, was obtained in this manner.³⁶

The debt hanging over the Society was nearly \$6,000. The Maryland colonizationists were in a dilemma. They could not raise funds to meet outstanding bills, yet they felt it imperative to dispatch another expedition that fall in order to demonstrate to skeptics that they were actually engaged in carrying out that body's ambitious program. Signs of activity and accomplishment would stimulate contributions. A number of additional measures to correct the financial situation were launched by the Managers. Thus, an increase was arranged in the allowance per emigrant from the legislative appropriation--this was now raised from \$30 to \$50. Likewise, an open letter to the public, assuring it that the smallest contribution would be welcome, was prepared and published. Then too, a special committee undertook to call

³⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, July 3, 1834.

³⁵Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, July 11, 1834.

³⁶Ibid.

upon all the pastors of the city's churches, asking that special collections be taken for colonization.³⁷

Little was achieved and the sailing of the Bourne in December, with fifty-eight emigrants aboard, left the Maryland Society's finances in the same embarrassing state--its indebtedness continued to stand at \$6,000. Officers again applied to the group in charge of the state appropriation to refund them a sum for the purchase of territory and the establishment of a colony at Cape Palmas. Not surprisingly, \$6,000 was suggested as being sufficient.³⁸ But the State Managers, always cautious, replied that they thought that the General Assembly, then in session, should have the opportunity to consider the subject and give an opinion.³⁹ There is no record of the Maryland legislature ever reviewing the request, but the State Managers declined to hand over the \$6,000.

An unusual endeavor to procure funds occurred early in 1835 when the Board of Managers addressed a plea to some civic-minded ladies of Baltimore for contributions. They had recently staged an Oratorio in the city and were now asked to repeat it for the benefit of the Colonization Society. They were already committed to a second performance in behalf of another object, but agreed to split proceeds with the Society. Each member of the Board of Managers was allotted a certain number of

³⁷Ibid., Meetings of the Board of Managers, September 18 and September 25, 1834.

³⁸Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Manager, December 23, 1834.

³⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, Charles Howard to Latrobe, Baltimore, January 2, 1835.

tickets which he was to sell.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, expenses, which came out of the Society's half of the receipts, were greater than anticipated, and the net profit for colonization was but \$15.85.⁴¹

Another fund-raising idea involved the publication of a journal containing extracts from the correspondence of the governor and citizens of Cape Palmas, lists of donors, and general information of interest about Africa. A committee of the officers was set up to prepare materials for a quarterly entitled the Maryland Colonization Journal. The first number, which appeared in May, 1835, was sent to the editors of all political, literary and religious newspapers in Maryland with the request that they comment editorially upon the publication and reprint extracts from it.⁴² The committee continued its control of the paper for more than a year and issues appeared intermittently, depending upon receipt of news from Africa and accumulation of suitable material. Late in 1836, responsibility for publication was assumed by the local agent in Baltimore and issues began to appear every two months.⁴³

While this worthy publication no doubt increased public awareness of the Cape Palmas colony and the Society's pecuniary needs, profits accruing from the venture were still insufficient to relieve the

⁴⁰MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Manager, March 12, 1835.

⁴¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, E. D. Kemp to C. C. Harper, Baltimore, April 9, 1835.

⁴²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meetings of the Board of Managers, February 24, April 3, and May 7, 1835.

⁴³MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. III, Latrobe to Elisha Whittlesey, Baltimore, September 14, 1836.

Marylanders of their debts. They now resorted to begging the state fund managers for an advance payment on future emigrants. In October, 1835, more than \$4,000 was advanced to pay off the most pressing notes.⁴⁴ Distribution of the money reveals the way in which Society officers had reached into their own pockets to maintain organizational credit. Six men--Peter Hoffman, Luke Tiernan, Charles Howard, Franklin Anderson, John Latrobe, and C. C. Harper--were repaid \$300 each with interest for earlier loans.⁴⁵

As the Society's successive efforts to obtain voluntary support came to naught and as attempts to recruit emigrants turned up painfully few, the Board of Managers began to study its organization and operational methods. The subject of closest scrutiny was the agent employed to canvass the state. William McKenney, initially hailed as a hero in getting up the large complement of passengers for the Lafayette in December, 1832, had become a controversial figure. He was never very successful in raising cash and the auxiliary societies he formed in some areas of the state were often temporary creations which withered after his enthusiastic and emotional messages were viewed in the light of practical experience. His voluminous correspondence with his employers when he was in the field and with numerous other persons all the time reveal a propensity for the dramatic, the exaggerated. He was a man who made a splendid first impression, but did not wear well.

⁴⁴MSCS MSS, Manumission Books, Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of State Managers, October 14, 1835.

⁴⁵MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 13, 1835.

From the outset of his association with the Maryland Society he proved to be an independent person who spoke without authority and meddled too much with affairs which were the Board of Managers' province.

The doubts of B. B. Wisner, the highly respected ABCFM Secretary in Boston, on McKenney's activities there in August, 1834, cast doubts upon his usefulness to the Society. Letters such as one summarizing his visit to Talbot County in May, 1835, certainly justified Board fears respecting his tactlessness. McKenney spoke of visiting a wealthy old bachelor who owned more than a hundred slaves. The purpose of his call was to persuade the man to send some of his people to the colony and "to get hold of some of his cash" for the Society. The agent also spoke of visiting an elderly man in Easton, but lamented his failure to enlist support for the cause. McKenney concluded that the man's advanced age combined with his love of money had congealed whatever tide of kindness may once have flowed through his heart.⁴⁶

Perhaps the most serious charge against McKenney was the manner in which he induced Negroes to emigrate to Africa. Joseph Mechlin, governor of Liberia when the Lafayette arrived with 149 immigrants from Maryland, complained that immediate dissension had arisen among them due to the extravagant promises made by over-zealous friends in the United States. He hinted that persons officially connected with the Society were also implicated.⁴⁷ Residents freely corroborated Mechlin's

⁴⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, McKenney to Latrobe, Baltimore, May 13, 1835.

⁴⁷Ibid., Vol. I, Joseph Mechlin to Harper, Liberia, February 10, 1833.

charge. Remus Harvey, a public school teacher at Caldwell, where most of the Lafayette emigrants settled, noted that the newcomers' minds had been filled with unreasonable prospects back home. The consequences were two: the departees frequently before embarking disposed of belongings which would be badly needed in the colony and, the higher their expectations, the greater their disappointment once they reached Africa.⁴⁸

Doctor Hall, in one of his first letters from Cape Palmas, suggested rules which he believed should govern the sending of emigrants to the colony. First, all adults should be of good character and known for their industry. Second, they were to be told the whole truth about Africa. Third, they had to have farming implements if they were agriculturalists.⁴⁹ A colonist who sailed to Cape Palmas aboard the Bourne in December, 1834, informed McKenney that he had found things pretty much as the agent had described them, except that there was no team of horses essential to cultivation. That McKenney was sensitive to complaints respecting disparity between promises and reality is demonstrated by a penciled notation in the agent's handwriting at the bottom of this letter: "I never said there were teams in the colony."⁵⁰

McKenney displayed indignation towards this grumbling. He insisted that the inducements he had held out to prospective colonists

⁴⁸Ibid., Remus Harvey to Harper and Moses Sheppard, Liberia, Africa, July 29, 1833.

⁴⁹Ibid., Vol. II, Hall to Latrobe, Brig Ann, February 9, 1834.

⁵⁰Ibid., Vol. III, Alexander Hance to McKenney, Cape Palmas, March 14, 1835.

were: (1) free passage and subsistence in the colony for six months, or more if absolutely necessary, (2) a town lot and a five-acre farm in the surrounding country with a native house and a half acre of cleared land; in return for this service, the colonist was to build a house and clear the same quantity of land on another farm being staked for a future immigrant, (3) distribution by the Colonization Society of agricultural hand tools to persons unable to furnish themselves.⁵¹ Given McKenney's persuasive nature, it is easy to see that even these fairly accurate statements could be misunderstood in the heat of his oratory.

In the general administrative reorganization which took place during 1835, the Board of Managers decided to replace McKenney. Its resolution, lacking explanation, simply expressed regret that it appeared necessary to change existing relations with him.⁵² McKenney, however, demanded a thorough investigation of the factors behind this decision.⁵³ Seeking to avoid a showdown, the Board did an about-face. It informed him that it wished him to continue as its local agent.⁵⁴ He, of course, continued on the payroll of the State Managers, but the supervision of his work was now turned over to them as well. Members of the State

⁵¹Ibid., Vol. II, McKenney to Latrobe, Ann Arundel County near Owingsville, September 24, 1834.

⁵²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, May 21, 1835.

⁵³MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. I, McKenney to Committee of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society, Baltimore June 9, 1835.

⁵⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, June 16, 1835.

Society Board avoided contact with McKenney thereafter until his resignation a year later.

The colonizationists, meanwhile, decided to extend the field of a man they had hired the previous year. James Reid, a resident of Hagerstown, had several times applied for a position as Society agent. He had finally been appointed in 1834 to serve as such in the Western Maryland counties of Frederick, Washington, and Allegany, and in adjacent Virginia and Pennsylvania areas. His salary was to be a quarter of his collections.⁵⁵ Reid had a hard time of it. The areas covered were generally mountainous and the population sparse. Many people were entirely unaware of the numerous benevolent organizations of the day, including the Colonization Society. On his first tour, Reid covered 450 miles, but collected only \$148.88, which, less his commission, did little to enlarge the Society's treasury.⁵⁶ Other tours, in the dead of winter, were even more difficult and less remunerative. Unable to earn much and affected by severe weather, he became discouraged and talked of resigning. He was, however, of a persevering sort, and carried out a much needed service in remote areas of the state. The Board prevailed on him to continue and extended his sphere of operation to include Montgomery, Prince Georges, Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties.⁵⁷ However, there is no evidence of any further association.

⁵⁵Ibid., Vol. I, Meeting of the Board of Managers, June 23, 1834.

⁵⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, James Reid to McKenney, Hagerstown, September 25, 1834.

⁵⁷MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 25, 1835.

Without Reid in Western Maryland and with a representative, McKenney, that it was unhappy about, the Board again took up the interminable subject of agents. Its solution was to appoint one of its own. McKenney was to continue as the state fund managers' agent and was to work at what he had experienced the most success in: the recruitment and transportation of emigrants. The Society's own agent would be assigned the establishment of auxiliary branches and the collection of funds. His compensation was to be \$1,000 per annum and a commission on his collections.⁵⁸ Subsequently, in October, 1835, Ira A. Easter, a Methodist minister then collecting funds for the Maryland State Bible Society,⁵⁹ was selected for the new post.⁶⁰ In time, his duties were extended to embrace some of the responsibilities formerly borne by McKenney. During months of tolerable weather, he was to tour the state recruiting emigrants.⁶¹

The effort to ease McKenney off the scene by returning his supervision to the State Managers and to break Easter into the recruitment job left a gap in Society administration--the collection of funds and the establishment of local chapters. A newly created Baltimore organization, the Young Men's Colonization Society, an adjunct to the parent

⁵⁸Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 16, 1835.

⁵⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, Easter to Hugh D. Evans, Baltimore, October 29, 1835.

⁶⁰MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 19, 1835.

⁶¹Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, December 28, 1835.

group, appointed its own agent, John H. Kennard, to fill this vacuum.⁶² When McKenney finally resigned, effective as of November, 1836,⁶³ Easter was chosen to replace him as the State Managers' employee and, as the home agent, was responsible now for the bookkeeping, office work and, when possible, the solicitation of funds in Baltimore. Kennard, still under the Young Men's Colonization Society, took over emigrant recruitment. Early in 1837, he assumed the same office with the State Colonization Society.⁶⁴

In the last year of McKenney's connection with Maryland colonization, much of the dissatisfaction attending his continued service seems to have come from a personal clash between McKenney and Latrobe. Because much intimate business was accomplished by conversation rather than by correspondence, one can only infer the reasons for disagreement from fragments imbedded in Society records and in communications between interested parties. One obvious source of contention was McKenney's tendency to offer advice too frequently. For example, when the Cape Palmas colonists complained that Doctor Hall charged at least a hundred percent profit on all goods, McKenney recommended that the colonial agent be allowed to charge no more than a third as much.⁶⁵ A perusal

⁶²MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IV, William F. Giles to Rev. John H. Kennard, Baltimore, March 25, 1836.

⁶³MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. I, McKenney to Messrs. Howard, Harper and Peter Hoffman, State Managers of the State Colonization Society, Emigration and Colonization Office, Baltimore, n.d. May, 18367.

⁶⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 13, 1836, February 7, 1837.

⁶⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, remarks of McKenney at end of letter from Lambert Simpson to McKenney, Cape Palmas, September 1, 1835.

of Latrobe's correspondence with Hall reveals complete confidence in the policies carried out. Later Board resolutions likewise sustained the faith in Hall's work. The feud between McKenney and Latrobe eventually came to the state where the latter threatened to resign as corresponding secretary and discontinue working for colonization altogether unless McKenney were dropped by the state fund managers.⁶⁶ The sharp curtailment of McKenney's duties and other manifestations of a loss of confidence soon induced him to submit his resignation.

During this internal upheaval in the Maryland Society's home operations, efforts still went on in the state to gather emigrants and funds. McKenney, touring southern areas early in 1835, found that his best efforts were of little avail in persuading Negroes to depart. The only manner in which they were tempted was by direct messages from friends who had already taken the step. A common practice of departees was to take a small token of some sort which they enclosed in their letters from Africa. Only when the promised letters arrived with these inside were they considered authentic.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, correspondence between those who had settled in Africa and their friends at home was difficult because most of the Negroes, on both sides of the ocean, were so unaccustomed to sending or receiving letters that they misdirected them or did not think to inquire at the post office.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Ibid., Vol. IV, Easter to Latrobe, Brookville, March 28, 1836.

⁶⁷Ibid., Vol. III, McKenney to Howard, Herring Bay, Anne Arundel County, March 30, 1835.

⁶⁸Ibid., Vol. VIII, Henry Hollingsworth to Easter, Elkton, May 5, 1838, May 11, 1838.

McKenney explained their reluctance to believe whites as a consequence of their training from infancy that white men were "uncartin."⁶⁹ In light of such ingrained suspicion, their reaction to the disastrous results of the Lafayette expedition is not surprising. Three years afterwards, McKenney declared that Maryland Negroes still had not gotten over the shock attending it. He declared that this one bungle had done more than all other causes combined to foster hesitancy over departure.⁷⁰ McKenney did not, naturally, admit his own part in this: fostering the impression that a Utopia awaited emigrants.

Despite success in persuading numerous slave owners to manumit their bondsmen for settlement in the Maryland colony, many Negroes preferred slavery in America to freedom in Africa. This was a baffling problem to slave owners and colonizationists alike. On many occasions, it was not the long-time owner himself who faced the dilemma but the heirs or executors who sought to carry out the benevolence of the deceased. For example, in Easton, Doctor Nicholas Hammond, by his will, freed several male servants upon condition that they emigrate. Much to the distress of his widow and his executor, the men refused the offer, fearing, they said, that they might stop in New Orleans.⁷¹ Doctor Albert Richie of Frederick, an executor of his brother's estate in Tallahassee, was burdened for five years with the support of two young

⁶⁹Ibid., Vol. III, McKenney to Latrobe, Friendship, April 10, 1835.

⁷⁰Ibid., McKenney to Latrobe, Baltimore, September 10, 1835.

⁷¹Ibid., John Goldsborough to McKenney, Easton, March 14, 1835; Goldsborough to Latrobe, Easton, March 31, 1835; McKenney to Latrobe, Baltimore, May 13, 1835.

men who received the option of going to Liberia or being sold upon reaching their majority. Petitioning the Maryland legislature, Richie was able to bring them into the state during the interval. Both men refused to choose either alternative at the end of that time and were hired out temporarily. Their unsatisfactory work and unruly ways exasperated Richie until he sought immediate relief from his responsibility by placing them in jail and requesting the Colonization Society to transport them to Africa.⁷²

Although Richie's men were at length persuaded to depart, the use of force suggested in his letters raised an issue which the Society had avoided. Latrobe, confronted with the request to take the Richie slaves, asserted that, to his knowledge, the Society had never kept emigrants in confinement until departure or even sent Negroes out against their will. In a confusing interpretation of the colonization law, he went on to declare that such was not the intention of the legislature. This conclusion can be reconciled with the specific terms of the law only if one distinguishes between removing them from the state and removing them from the country. Latrobe nevertheless advised the home agent, Ira Easter, to accept Richie's charges only if they were willing to leave. The Society's future, in his mind, would be immensely injured were it said that emigrants were kept in jail until they agreed to leave the country or were taken straight from prison to the ship.⁷³

⁷²Ibid., Vol. VII, Doctor Albert Richie to Easter, Frederick, October 23, 1837, November 2, 1837.

⁷³MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Easter, October 30, 1837.

This problem of interpreting the law and carrying it out was a persistent one. From its passage, conscientious sheriffs inquired what they should do with manumitted slaves who insisted upon remaining in their home areas. The question actually seldom arose because the law was largely ignored or evaded. Within two years after its passage, Agent McKenney could write that Negroes who had been emancipated since 1832 had not been forced out of the state. He argued that this section of the act gave so much offense to pious citizens that, in actual practice, it was null and void.⁷⁴ Another reason why the compulsory feature of the legislation was dead in application was the leniency of Orphan's Courts in granting permits to newly freed Negroes. Even more important in the general evasion of the law was the neglect of sheriffs in carrying out their duties and the lax supervision over such officers.⁷⁵ The truth of the matter was that most of them were not conscientious in this respect and they had good reason not to be because of the problems attending the moving of Negroes from the state. Moreover, Colonization Society officers and state fund managers did not attempt to enforce the law because this could be done only by employing so many agents that the appropriation itself would be eaten up thereby.⁷⁶

⁷⁴MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes. Collection of 75 Letters from the Rev. William McKenney, McKenney to the Rev. Bishop Andrew, Baltimore, March 10, 1834.

⁷⁵MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to William Handy, Baltimore, October 20, 1837.

⁷⁶Ibid.

The most notable example in Maryland Society history of manumitted slaves who refused to leave the state concerned a group of thirty-three blacks belonging to a Charles County family. In January, 1835, George D. Parnham released sixteen hands and his brother-in-law, Henry B. Goodwin, freed seventeen. The two ex-owners notified the State Managers that these persons were at the disposal of the state.⁷⁷ McKenney, sent to persuade the group to emigrate, was impressed with their physical appearance, but found that they had only the most rudimentary an idea of what freedom meant. He believed that, were they given the choice to move to Pennsylvania or to remain in endless servitude upon Parnham's broken up and worn out lands, they would choose the latter. His best efforts produced no more than replies such as "If I must--I must--If Master says I must I cannot help it." McKenney finally resorted to warning the Negroes that they were now under the law. If they refused to go to Maryland in Liberia, the sheriff would be forced to take them to Pennsylvania where, in all probability, they would either starve, be sent to the penitentiary or hanged.⁷⁸ The Negroes still refused to emigrate.

In the succeeding months, harassed by Goodwin and Parnham, a few did sail to Africa, but the bulk remained, refusing to go anywhere. The state fund managers at length decided to hire the able-bodied adults back to their former owners in return for the upkeep of the

⁷⁷MSCS MSS, State Managers Letter Book, Howard to the Sheriff of Charles County, Baltimore, May 4, 1835.

⁷⁸MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, McKenney to Latrobe, Nottingham Prince George's County, April 24, 1835.

whole group.⁷⁹ Reluctantly, Goodwin and Parnham accepted the arrangement until word could be received from those who had emigrated.⁸⁰

One of those remaining behind ran off and worked for himself, whereupon the State Managers instructed the sheriff to capture him and to remove him from the state.⁸¹ Once more, interpretation of the law became an issue. The county officer insisted that he must be told where to take the prisoner and state representatives declared that he must himself decide the matter.⁸² The ex-slave was ultimately released in the District of Columbia. However, the majority of Goodwin and Parnham's former bondsmen remained in their homes. Although forming a chain around their old owners' necks, they proved better workers in their new situation than before having been manumitted.⁸³ They could not, however, be persuaded to emigrate. Even Goodwin, who wanted them off his hands, conceded that they had good reasons for resisting. He spoke of the difficulty of reaching a race in whose character a sense of injustice was written, who had seen actual instances of professed kindness become the means of betrayal, and who had, for generations, received such

⁷⁹MSCS MSS, State Managers Letter Book, McKenney to the Rev. Henry B. Goodwin, Baltimore, June 8, 1835.

⁸⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, Goodwin to McKenney, June 30, 1835.

⁸¹MSCS MSS, State Managers Letter Book, Howard to John B. Lawson, Baltimore, July 13, 1835.

⁸²Ibid., Howard to Lawson, Baltimore, July 20, 1835; November 2, 1835. Letters, Lawson to Howard, Port Tobacco, July 17, 1835, July 27, 1835, October 21, 1835.

⁸³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, Goodwin to McKenney, Parnham's Retreat, October 27, 1835.

treatment from whites as to make the concept of benevolence at their hands improbable.⁸⁴

By the summer of 1836, Goodwin had decided to retain the manumitted slaves in his hire. But Parnham claimed that he could no longer maintain such ex-servants as refused to emigrate.⁸⁵ The Charles County sheriff was consequently ordered to transport them out of the state.⁸⁶ The conclusion of this unhappy episode is not recorded.

Thus, in actual practice, the recruitment of emigrants proved as difficult as the acquisition of gifts to finance operations. Ira Easter, brought into the Society's administration to give it greater efficiency and stability, sought the establishment of a system to business operations. He blamed much of the public's lack of confidence in the colonization cause on lackadaisical office procedures.⁸⁷ He pointed to the want of public interest as demonstrated both by the dearth of contributions and visitors at Society meetings. Contending that it was the Presbyterians who owned and maintained the noble institutions of the country, Easter argued that, "It is precisely because Maryland is almost destitute of them, that the contributions of this important enterprise are so inconsiderable. . . . I feel prepared to say that Jehovah himself could not by the ministry of angels collect

⁸⁴Ibid., Goodwin to McKenney, Parnham's Retreat, November 5, 1835.

⁸⁵Ibid., Vol. IV, George D. Parnham to McKenney, Parnham's Retreat, June 3, 1836.

⁸⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Letter to Sheriff, n.d. [summer, 1836].

⁸⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IV, Easter to Latrobe, Colonization Rooms, March 17, 1836.

twenty-five thousand dollars in Maryland for colonization, without working a miracle." He concluded that the great hindrance to the cause was the fact that the bulk of the population was still unaware of the Colonization Act.⁸⁸

Going upon the assumption that emigration must precede contributions and that both depended upon enlightening the citizenry at large, Easter contended that both problems could be solved if greater efforts were made to inform both whites and blacks of the colonization cause. He held the great defect in previous Society operations to have been unwarranted dependency upon faith--one "which was based wholly upon the supreme excellence of the cause itself. Hence they expected that men everywhere would become practical colonizationists without the trouble of preaching and explaining its doctrines. . . ." ⁸⁹ Easter argued that the Society was obligated to hire qualified agents to travel extensively throughout the state organizing branches and awakening general interest in colonization. He suggested that the Board immediately secure the services of at least two active agents at set salaries rather than making the latter contingent upon their collections.⁹⁰

One practice of which Easter was extremely critical was that of sending a representative to Annapolis, the capital, each winter. After

⁸⁸MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes. Package of Letters to Board of Managers, 1837, Easter to Latrobe, Baltimore, May 18, 1836.

⁸⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IV, Easter to Latrobe, Baltimore, April 30, 1836.

⁹⁰MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes. Package of Letters to Board of Managers, 1837, Easter to Latrobe, Baltimore, May 31, 1836.

the legislature early in 1832 passed the laws effecting the Negro population and appropriating \$200,000 to the colonization cause, McKenney had, under Society direction, gone to the capital city for each legislative session. His instructions were to watch every action which might affect the Society, especially any efforts to reduce, restrict or eliminate the colonization fund. Society archives are full of correspondence from McKenney pleading for favorable African reports or other colonization literature which he could distribute among skeptical legislators. The officers themselves, on many occasions, journeyed to Annapolis to stave off repeal of the laws upon which their cause depended.⁹¹ Moreover, the Society's annual meetings were usually held in the Senate Chamber of the State House each January in order to indicate that the organization was still active and enjoyed the confidence of many of Maryland's leading men. Easter now charged that such procedures, especially maintaining an agent in Annapolis for three months each year, were not only useless but actually detrimental to their cause. Keeping the legislature under such close scrutiny could only throw suspicion upon the Society. He argued that the best means of convincing legislators of the efficiency of the Society's operations was to have agents at work in every part of the state and then to present the success of their operations in the body's annual report.⁹²

⁹¹MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 15, 1836.

⁹²MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes. Package of Letters to Board of Managers, 1837, Easter to Latrobe, Baltimore, May 31, 1836.

With Easter's prodding, not only was John Kennard added to the staff, but other men, at intervals, were hired to solicit emigrants and funds. Thus, early in 1837, the Reverend John C. Cazier of Elkton was employed to seek emigrants from among the emancipated Negroes in his native Cecil County. He was urged to give no encouragement to those known to be dishonest, idle or worthless. He was, in addition, directed to seek contributions, especially through Fourth of July collections in the churches and subscriptions to the Colonization Journal which was sent to all persons donating at least fifty cents.⁹³

Unfortunately Cazier, by his own admission, was quite unsuited for the job. In two months' work, he could not persuade a single individual to emigrate and collected only a pitiful \$15, all of which went to pay his travelling expenses. He confessed that a man of greater ability than his was needed to overcome opposition among the free blacks, who, he reported, looked upon him as their worst enemy and upon the Society as their greatest foe. He resigned a week later and took a position teaching school.⁹⁴

Another agent, John M. Roberts, formerly a successful representative of the Maryland State Bible Society, was hired early the following year, 1838, to visit the southern counties.⁹⁵ He was later

⁹³MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. III, Franklin Anderson to Rev. John C. Cazier, Baltimore, April 8, 1837.

⁹⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VI, Cazier to Easter, North East, June 26, 1837, July 5, 1837, August 23, 1837.

⁹⁵MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 26, 1838; Agent's Books, Vol. II, Easter to the Reverend Clergy of The State of Maryland, Baltimore, May 21, 1838.

sent to other areas of the state. During his two years of service for the State Society, he raised substantial sums of money and secured many Journal subscriptions; indeed, he proved to be one of the most successful workers ever in Society employ. His experience generally corroborated Easter's view that people gave more willingly and liberally when they saw Negroes from their own neighborhoods moving to Africa.⁹⁶ Roberts also found that many whites in Southern Maryland wanted the free Negroes removed by force if necessary, and that some desired all Negroes, free and slave, to be driven out of the community.⁹⁷ Conversely, on a visit to the Eastern Shore he found that the citizens of Kent County who did not own slaves were opposed to colonization because they feared the loss of their laborers.⁹⁸

While temporary efforts were put forth by Cazier, Roberts, and others, John Kennard continued in his duties as official Maryland Society travelling agent. He realized, as Easter did after better acquaintance with that body's operations, that the state appropriation was not sufficient to hire enough representatives adequately to cover the state. However desirable the employment of a full-time representative in each county might be, it was financially impossible.

Kennard, consequently, pursued a policy of attempting to establish through voluntary efforts an active auxiliary to the State Society in

⁹⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VIII, John M. Roberts to Easter, Leonard Town, St. Marys, June 12, 1838.

⁹⁷Ibid., June 26, 1838.

⁹⁸Ibid., Vol. X, Roberts to Easter, Still Pond Crossroads, Kent Co., May 9, 1839.

each Maryland county. His plan was a direct reflection of Easter's view that success would come not so much from public addresses as by door-to-door visitation among Negro and white community leaders and by the judicious use of reports and journals. Moreover, when the white population witnessed the blacks emigrating, it would take the colonization cause seriously and contribute.⁹⁹ Firmly convinced that independent county action was the method most likely to awaken the greatest amount of interest, Kennard addressed letters of inquiry to prominent whites known to favor colonization in each of Maryland's counties.

A lesser man would have quit promptly, for replies from all parts of the state declared that 1838 was an inopportune time to form a society, that Negroes were universally opposed to going to Africa, and that contributions could not be procured. Standardized reasons were always given--that the Negroes were suspicious of the Society's "philanthropic intention," that many blacks had swallowed abolitionist propaganda declaring slaveholders to be behind the colonization movement in order to keep the price of slaves high, and that many white slaveholders simply refused to free their hands.¹⁰⁰

Abolitionist work, which was so detrimental to the movement of Negroes to Liberia and hence to voluntary contributions by white citizens, had become intense in the state by 1837. Although an important

⁹⁹Ibid., Vol. IV, Easter to Latrobe, Woodlands, Montgomery Co., April 14, 1836.

¹⁰⁰For a sampling of the responses, see MSCS MSS, Letters, Vols. VI and VII, John L. Hawkins to Kennard, Port Tobacco, April 5, 1837; David Vance to Kennard, Salisbury, March 18, 1837; Hollingsworth to Dr. John Fonerden and Kennard, Elkton, May 1, 1837; and A. C. Thompson to Kennard, Cambridge, August 30, 1837.

factor in the Society's lack of success from the beginning, at least initially whites and free Negroes who called for the destruction of slavery rather than colonization resided largely in Baltimore and other cities. But now, five years later, all parts of the state were under the mounting influence of abolitionist sentiment. Kennard lamented that Maryland's colored population had been organized by outside agitators and was working in direct concert with the "madmen" of the nation. He reported that the anti-slavery doctrine was clearly discernable in each of the fifteen counties he had visited. The free Negroes in Baltimore, staunch abolitionists, operated a network of contacts throughout the state to spread their views. One doctrine spread among the colored people by abolitionists was that, by remaining in the state, they would ultimately get "their rights," meaning full social and political equality. Persons who emigrated were stigmatized as traitors to their race.¹⁰¹

In Worcester County, Kennard's life was threatened should he return to a certain neighborhood. In Anne Arundel County, colonization and the Devil were equally hated. The story rampant in Charles County was that Parnham's servants who went to Liberia had actually been sold down South, and that he received a peck of silver money for them.¹⁰² Egalitarian sentiment was riding high on every hand.

¹⁰¹Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1839), p. 10.

¹⁰²MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes. Package of Letters to Board of Managers, 1837, Kennard to Board of Managers, Baltimore, February 28, 1837.

To meet this untamed situation, Kennard travelled extensively, putting his independent county action plan into effect. If local leaders could not establish an auxiliary by their own efforts, Kennard visited them, gained their cooperation and then called for a public meeting. As a consequence, State Society branches were founded in numerous counties during 1837 and Kennard was certain that the most successful means of acquiring emigrants and funds had finally been hit upon. He made no effort to collect either emigrants or money in counties where auxiliaries were established, thinking that the local colonizationists could accomplish this more effectively than he.¹⁰³ In other parts of the state, he continued advertising Society needs only to encounter hundreds of falsehoods at every turn which destroyed his influence. During the more than three years between McKenney's exit and the entrance of James Hall to the Society's central post, six expeditions took less than three hundred emigrants to the Maryland colony and many of them were from out of state.

Conventional methods of recruiting emigrants were generally unsuccessful. The Maryland Society was consequently often willing to utilize likely suggestions from varied sources. One idea popping up periodically was that of sending a male Negro who was respected in his home community to Africa to inspect the settlements there and then to return to tell his friends of the actual situation. Although the Managers had declined following this suggestion earlier, they were, by 1836, willing to finance such reconnaissance trips. In April, the

¹⁰³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VI, Kennard to Fonerden, Baltimore June 29, 1837.

Board agreed to permit a representative each from Kent and Queen Anne's Counties to sail to the colony free of cost. Return expenses were, however, to be borne by friends in this country.¹⁰⁴ Occasionally, an auxiliary somewhere in the state paid the homeward fare for a Negro observer after having supported his dependents during his absence.¹⁰⁵ That these inspectors ever affected more than a few of their friends cannot be established. In fact, the sightseer appears seldom himself to have returned to Africa.

A far more productive means of winning emigrants, and probably the most successful method of all those ever employed, was the use of colonists returned to this country for business or pleasure to accompany the Society's agent in trips about the state. An early example of this operation had involved Jacob Prout, so largely responsible for the sizable company aboard the Lafayette.

Another case was that of Alexander Hance, an early settler of Maryland in Liberia. He returned to Calvert County in the fall of 1837 to purchase his children who had remained in slavery. The owner asked almost nine hundred dollars for the three girls. While the Board of Managers maintained its policy of non-involvement in such affairs, it saw in the situation a means of aiding both Hance and the colonization cause. In return for a sum not exceeding five hundred dollars, Hance was asked to assist Kennard in the preparations for the fall

¹⁰⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 12, 1836.

¹⁰⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IV, Thomas C. Browne to Latrobe, Centreville, June 14, 1836.

expedition.¹⁰⁶ The two men visited all parts of Calvert County as well as other sections of the state, and the consequence, largely due to Hance's presence, was the departure of eighty-five emigrants by the Niobe in November.¹⁰⁷ Ironically enough, Hance's final success in purchasing his children had an unexpected twist. Rather than viewing the accomplishment as something meritorious, critical Marylanders looked upon it as proof that Hance was in league with Kennard and that both of them were slave traders.¹⁰⁸

The following fall, another visiting colonist, Thomas Jackson, was hired to tour Maryland with Kennard.¹⁰⁹ His influence again resulted in a larger number of Negroes than usual sailing that fall, although many had withdrawn after colonization opponents visited them. In Calvert County alone, nine families totalling forty-nine members were led to remain.¹¹⁰

Not infrequently, departees sailing for Maryland in Liberia came from other states. In such cases, the benefactor freed his slaves and paid for their passage to Cape Palmas or some charitable organization,

¹⁰⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 29, 1837; Letters, Vol. VII, Hance to Easter, Calvert Co., September 11, 1837.

¹⁰⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VII, Kennard to Easter, Friendship, September 25, 1837; Kennard to Easter, Steamboat, October 8, 1837, and Kennard to Easter, Elkton, October 17, 1837.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., Vol. VIII, Kennard to Latrobe, Baltimore, April 30, 1838.

¹⁰⁹MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 11, 1838.

¹¹⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IX, Kennard to Easter, Friendship, October 9, 1838; Kennard to Easter, Prince Frederick, Calvert County, November 7, 1838.

usually a local independent colonization society, assumed the cost of transporting free blacks to the colony. The most notable example of this practice concerned the forty-eight slaves of Richard Tubman of Augusta, Georgia, who were recipients of \$10,000 and freedom in Africa upon his death early in 1837.¹¹¹ His widow was anxious that those individuals willing to move to Africa select a site where their agricultural abilities could be put to good use. Being partial to the Maryland State Colonization Society because many of the slaves had originally come from her husband's former home in Charles County, she opened negotiations with Latrobe.

The prospect of receiving a large complement of well-disciplined Negroes characterized by their mistress as honest, industrious and temperate stirred the Maryland Society to speedy action.¹¹² After a brief correspondence, arrangements were completed for forty-two Tubman Negroes to sail from Charleston to Baltimore where a brig was readied for their embarkation to Africa. With these emigrants went four others from the Augusta area who had been freed by their owners so that they might accompany their mates among the Tubmans.¹¹³

Maryland Society success in persuading Mrs. Tubman to send the slaves to Cape Palmas also illustrated the continuing rivalry with the American Colonization Society. Ralph Gurley, touring the southeastern states, was infuriated to find that he had arrived in Augusta just three

¹¹¹Ibid., Vol. VIII, Emily H. Tubman to Latrobe, Augusta, May 3, 1838.

¹¹²Ibid., Vol. VI, Tubman to Latrobe, Augusta, April 9, 1837.

¹¹³Ibid., Tubman to Latrobe, Augusta, May 4, 1837.

days after the Tubman group had set out for Charleston. Aware before he left Washington that Mrs. Tubman owned some slaves destined for Africa, Gurley had failed to appreciate the urgency of the case and the existence of a contest with the Maryland Society in securing the widow's confidence.

Gurley was further incensed by the financial loss connected with this missed opportunity. Besides the passage to Baltimore, Mrs. Tubman paid fifty dollars per head for the Negroes' conveyance to Africa and supplied each liberally with everything thought necessary. Gurley was as angry with himself as he was with the Marylanders. He impugned the latter's good faith and honor, asserting that this active state organization intended to destroy the parent institution.¹¹⁴ There were other cases in which the Maryland body snatched prospective colonists from American Colonization Society reaches, but none left such bitterness as did the Tubman episode.

An additional source of tension between the two societies attended the collection of funds in Maryland. On numerous occasions, agents from Baltimore discovered American Colonization Society representatives operating within the bounds of the Old Line State. Late in 1835, William McKenney complained to Gurley that one of his men was actively collecting money on Maryland's Eastern Shore.¹¹⁵ Two years later, John Kennard crossed the same agent's trail and called upon him to halt such

¹¹⁴ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. LXVII, Pt. 1 (1837), Gurley to Gales, Augusta, Georgia, May 7, 1837.

¹¹⁵MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. I, McKenney to Gurley, Baltimore, November 10, 1835.

activities.¹¹⁶ On another occasion, the parent society was not only called upon to recall its agent but was urged to leave Maryland to the State Society's care.¹¹⁷ In effect, Maryland colonizationists sought to deny access to financial sources in the state to all other parties, while they themselves scavenged any likely spot outside their bounds and even instructed agents to canvass areas adjoining the state as well as more-removed locales.

In spite of such disagreements, it became apparent, as the American-planted colonies along the African coast took root, that close cooperation between all colonization societies in the United States was desirable. As early as 1835, Latrobe had suggested the establishment of uniform currency and legal systems in the several settlements. The American Society had, however, viewed this sensible proposal as additional evidence that the Maryland organization aimed at destruction of the national movement.¹¹⁸ Two years later, Agent Ira Easter called for a friendly conference on general colonial interests on the ground that current independent proceedings were prejudicial to the advancement of settlement.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VI, Kennard to Rev. William Matchett, Cambridge, June 13, 1837.

¹¹⁷MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, Kennard to the Honorable Samuel Wilkeson, Baltimore, January 9, 1840.

¹¹⁸ACS MSS, Letters Received, Vol. LXI, Pt. 1 (1835), Gurley to Fendall, Baltimore, November 27, 1835.

¹¹⁹Ibid., Vol. LVII, Pt. 1 (1837), Easter to Gurley, Baltimore, August 2, 1837.

Still, no move toward cooperation took place until 1838, when the parent society, nearly bankrupt but infused with new leadership, agreed to convene in Philadelphia with delegates from New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. The topic of discussion was amalgamation of the American Colonization Society's colonies with those of the three state auxiliaries. Heated and lengthy debates resulted only in the adoption of Latrobe's resolutions that delegates meet again to consider a plan for the commercial cooperation between the different colonies. The Maryland representatives thereupon withdrew.¹²⁰ On succeeding days, New York and Pennsylvania society spokesmen wrung from Gurley and his associates promises to work for the adoption of a new constitution which would substantially alter the parent group's relationship to the state branches and provide for greater unity of action in Africa.

Explanation for the action of the Maryland delegates in first advocating discussion of joint activity among the African settlements and then boycotting the conference after passage of an empty resolution lies in their appraisal of the American Colonization Society. The Marylanders were willing to meet with colonizationists from other states and with representatives of the parent society so long as all respected each other as peers. What coordination might result in Africa was expected to emerge from annual conferences of delegates and was expected to involve only limited measures such as tariff and coinage. The New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians had never advocated independent state

¹²⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IX, Meeting of Committees from Societies having colonies on the coast of Africa, Philadelphia, September 25, 1838.

action as adamantly as the Maryland colonizationists and, intent upon securing domestic changes within the parent society, they were interested in compromising. They were, thus, willing to back a plan whereby a governor-general, under parent board supervision, carried out the laws passed by a general annual convention if reforms within the American Colonization Society were effected.¹²¹

Maryland's secession from the national movement came, basically, because it considered cooperation detrimental to its own projects. Now, upon further reflection of the governor-general plan, the Baltimoreans asserted that such an official would be of little value to any of the colonies because of the distance between them, their scant population, and the lack of communication between them. In short, such an arrangement was premature. A final compelling factor involved John Russwurm. For two years, this black had served satisfactorily as governor of Maryland in Liberia. To appoint a white governor-general, however limited his powers, would seem to depreciate the earlier trust placed in the competency of Negro leadership.¹²²

One concern which remained a major factor in Maryland Society efforts during the years of its active existence was the political climate in the state. Mindful that voluntary contributions were insufficient and that only the continued beneficence of the General Assembly kept their movement alive, Maryland colonizationists were quick to

¹²¹Ibid., Thomas Buchanan to Latrobe, Philadelphia, October 1, 1838.

¹²²MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Finley Baltimore, September 18, 1838; Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

publicize their activities and successes. Until settlement became a political expedient, legislative matters bearing upon the state's Negro population were handled in a haphazard manner. The Committee on Grievances and Courts of Justice, which had, in 1832, considered the many county petitions springing from the Southhampton Massacre, was occasionally given responsibility for the Negro question. Early in 1833, however, the Speaker of the House of Delegates appointed a standing committee of seven to consider Negro affairs throughout the state.¹²³ Known as the Committee on the Coloured Population, it stood guard and judge over Colonization Society proceedings and the latter's expenditure of the state appropriation. Lobbying activities by William McKenney, while Society Agent, and by its officers primarily involved these committee members. While the latter were generally amenable to colonizationists wishes, occasionally they did submit an unfavorable report, suggest passage of laws detrimental to colonization or question the value of continuing the state appropriation. At these times, friends of the cause in the Senate could be counted on to veto any major obstructive action of the lower house.¹²⁴

The Colonization Society had to justify its existence to the Maryland legislature almost annually. It was for this reason that the agent spent each winter in Annapolis and that the Society's annual convention was usually held in the Senate chambers. The General Assembly's

¹²³Maryland, Journal of Proceedings of the House of Delegates of the State of Maryland (December Session, 1832), January 5, 1833.

¹²⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, McKenney to [Latrobe], Annapolis January 16, 1835.

vacillating attitude towards colonization readily explains the necessity of keeping it under watch. The very first year after passage of the 1831 laws affecting the colored population, their intent was violated. The chief aim of such legislation was to restrict the introduction of additional slaves into Maryland. Now, in 1833, by a new provision, owners of blacks who had hired them out in any adjoining state, district or territory, or who wished to do so, could return them to Maryland at their convenience.¹²⁵ The importance of this alteration can only be speculated upon, but it reflected a growing reluctance by Maryland legislators to hinder slave interests in the state.

The colonizationist aim to reduce the number of Negroes in the state was again undermined at the following General Assembly session. The Committee on the Coloured Population, directed by skeptical Delegates to enquire into the expediency of repealing, revising or remodeling the Acts of 1831-1832 bearing upon blacks, came out with a recommendation to repeal those sections prohibiting the introduction of new slaves into the state.¹²⁶ The result was a supplement to the original law which permitted old and new residents of Maryland to bring servants into the state upon payment of \$15 per head on all between the ages of fifteen and forty-five and \$5 per person on those under or over these limits. Such fees were to go to the Colonization Society and the newly introduced bondsmen were to remain slaves for life.¹²⁷

¹²⁵Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1832), Chapter 40.

¹²⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, M. Haynes to McKenney, Annapolis, January 24, 1834.

¹²⁷Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1833), Chapter 87.

In addition to this detrimental legislation, colonizationists now received a rap upon the knuckles from the Committee. Finding in the report of the state fund managers admission that \$8,000 had been advanced to the Colonization Society in 1833 to establish a settlement at Cape Palmas, the Delegates branded the loan unwarrantable. They concluded, "This Committee believes upon a fair construction of the act . . . an immediate removal of the free people of colour, was contemplated, and not a system so prospective, as that adopted by the managers. . . ." In spite of its serious accusation, the Committee made no move to restrict the State Managers.¹²⁸ Explanation may, perhaps, be found in the action of Colonel Thomas Emory, a state senator and an ardent advocate of colonization who immediately called upon the Committee's chairman and persuaded him that the fund was, in reality, being judiciously applied.¹²⁹

With each succeeding year, threats to laws favoring colonization became more serious. Early in 1835, there was offered in the House of Delegates a resolution limiting the state appropriation to meeting costs of removing blacks free early in 1832 when the law had been passed. Another resolution called for the repeal in toto of all legislation aiding colonization.¹³⁰ The Committee on the Coloured Population, to

¹²⁸Maryland, Maryland Public Documents (December Session, 1833), Report of the Committee on the Coloured Population to which was referred the Report of the Managers of the Colonization Society.

¹²⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. II, Col. Thomas Emory to McKenney, Annapolis, March 15, 1834.

¹³⁰Ibid., Vol. III, McKenney to [Latrobe], Annapolis, January 16, 1835.

which these measures were referred, squashed them with the assertion that, to comply with either would be both unwise and impolitic. It further declared that too much praise could not be accorded the Society, which was actuated and governed by a pure and philanthropic spirit.¹³¹

A constructive measure winning the General Assembly's assent that session concerned collection of the colonization tax. In the three years since passage of the appropriation bill which had specified the amount each county was to pay toward the annual \$10,000 grant, most had failed to meet their obligation regularly. Indeed, Baltimore City and Montgomery and Saint Mary's Counties did not levy the tax at all during this period. The counties altogether were by now over nineteen thousand dollars in arrears--only a third of the stipulated monies due had been sent in.¹³² This situation obviously called for action.

First, the General Assembly set July 1, 1836, as the deadline for counties in arrears to settle their accounts and fixed July 1 of each succeeding year as the date for payment of the previous year's tax.¹³³ It then prescribed rules for more effective collection of the annual assessments. Officials in each county and Baltimore's mayor were made responsible for levying the amounts due upon their respective districts. Within one month, a certificate for the amount levied was to be sent to

¹³¹Maryland, Maryland Public Documents (December Session, 1834), Report of the Committee on the Colored [sic] Population.

¹³²Ibid., Report of the Treasurer of the Western Shore concerning the Tax for Colonization, in obedience to an order of the House of Delegates, of 24th January, 1835.

¹³³Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1834), Chapter 160.

the Treasurer of the Western Shore. Each county or city which failed to report was to suffer an equivalent reduction in its portion of the Free School Fund until the sum due colonization was paid. When a default was settled, the area involved was to be reimbursed any money due it from the education reserve.¹³⁴ While the new measures afforded improved administration of the law, the Treasurer still found collection difficult and frequently had to sue the collectors to secure payments.¹³⁵ Even this was not entirely successful. In 1839, for example, more than \$7,000 was still in arrears.¹³⁶ Moreover, compliance with the law gave Marylanders the feeling that they were doing their share to help colonization when they paid their property taxes and most of them bristled at requests from the Society for contributions.

In 1836, the Committee on the Coloured Population again considered two resolutions from House delegates. As usual, one proposition called for repeal of the 1831 law and as before, the Committee stuck by the Colonization Society, pointing out that, with the purchase of five hundred square miles of land in Africa, the gloomiest era of colonization had now been passed. Since the cause was patently on the frontier of success, the Committee concluded that wisdom and enlightened policy

¹³⁴Ibid., Chapter 197.

¹³⁵MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes. Package of Letters to Board of Managers, 1837, Easter to Board of Managers, [Baltimore], October 10, 1837.

¹³⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. X, George Mackubin to Franklin Anderson, Annapolis, May 24, 1839.

combined to dictate continuance of their support.¹³⁷ The second petition sought consideration of the expediency of forcing all the free colored people of Maryland to leave the state within a specified period. The Committee expressed abhorrence for this unrealistic proposal. It declared that such a law would be riddled with injustice, would be contrary to the Bill of Rights, and would be the expression of a selfishness seeking immediate local benefit at the rest of the country's expense.¹³⁸

So forceful were advocates of the second resolution, however, that a committee of opponents was formed within the state senate to study the matter. Its report asserted, first, that it was sometimes necessary for the senators to use their legislative capacity to protect the welfare and true interests of the state at large. Committee members called the existing laws regulating slaves and supporting colonization the best possible for the future good of Maryland. They nevertheless suggested that, were the Colonization Society unable to remove the Negroes with sufficient promptness as they became free, then the newly manumitted blacks were to be encouraged to settle in western New Jersey. In remarks which one hardly knows whether to consider as serious or as an insider's joke, the senators related that, "we have long

¹³⁷Maryland, Report on the Order Directing an Enquiry as to the Expediency of Repealing the Law of 1831-32, relating to the Coloured Population (Annapolis: Committee on the Coloured Population, 1836).

¹³⁸Maryland, Report of the Committee upon the Coloured Population, to which was referred an order of this House, directing them to enquire into the expediency "of forcing all the Free People of Colour to leave this State within a certain period of time" (Annapolis: Committee on the Coloured Population, 1836).

known that a majority of the people of that part of the state of Jersey, have been anxiously disposed to receive, to harbour, to protect and settle amongst them as citizens, as large a portion of free blacks, as kind invitations and protection to their persons, could entice to them."

They suggested that, thereafter, they should use all their power of legislation to make possible "the removal to New Jersey of all that portion of our free colored population which may be unsuited to enjoy rational liberty without the constraint of the white man, or which we cannot find means to remove to their own land of liberty in Maryland in Liberia." Their last suggestion, serious or otherwise, was that, since enterprising whites were annually moving to the Eastern Shore from New Jersey, an exchange of free blacks for whites might be arranged.¹³⁹

The continual reiteration of confidence in colonization by the House Committee on the Coloured Population and by other elected representatives in Annapolis and the perfection of laws directly related to it staved off active opponents, but did little to convince ordinary citizens of its value. Furthermore, legislative approbation did little to open Maryland pocketbooks. In the late 30's, the Society continued to struggle along with meagre voluntary contributions and subscriptions to the Maryland Colonization Journal. It sought to keep its head above water by stretching the fifty dollar per emigrant allowance from the state fund. This could be done by supplying future colonists with

¹³⁹Maryland, Journal of Proceedings of the Senate (Appendix), December Session, 1835, Report on the Coloured Population.

fewer and less expensive articles. It also studied its books to see where savings might be effected.

One of the most expensive features of its operations was the cost of chartering vessels to carry emigrants and supplies out to the colony. Engaging a vessel for a certain number of emigrants and advertising for sufficient freight to fill the ship was, at any time, a game of chance. As abolitionist opposition made it an even more speculative business, the Society sustained serious losses. An Agent usually contracted with a brig captain to transport a specified number of emigrants at a designated rate, agreeing to pay so much for each day of delay in Baltimore and anchored at Cape Palmas, and made arrangements to ship a definite amount of goods. If emigrants were late in arriving, and they usually were because of lacking experience in making trips, the expense of the voyage rose. If a smaller number of emigrants than contracted for sailed, and this usually happened, too, the Society lost out in two ways. It still had to pay the guaranteed sum and it missed the chance to send out enough additional freight to take up the unoccupied space.

After a particularly heavy loss of such a nature late in 1836, Ira Easter, the new home agent attempting to streamline business procedures, suggested that the State Society purchase its own vessel. He believed that this would allow the Society to provide more comfort for the emigrants, would cut costs and would perhaps even earn a profit by making possible a two-way trade with West African settlements.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. V, Easter to Board of Managers, Maryland State Colonization Society Rooms, November 7, 1836.

He sought an estimate from Captain William Mason, an experienced seaman, and was advised that six thousand dollars would buy a good second-hand vessel of about 150 tons. Mason recommended acquisition of a fast Baltimore-built schooner whose speed would afford the emigrants a shorter passage and would also allow for more frequent commercial intercourse with Africa.¹⁴¹ Conversely, the Society's Executive Committee advocated building a vessel specifically designed to meet Society needs in every way. Additional conferences with Mason revealed that a brig of 150 tons could be built for ten thousand dollars.

Not only was ownership of the schooner projected as financially feasible, but the Committee argued that it would reap such beneficial results as increased correspondence between colonists and their friends in America, the encouragement of small capitalists in both countries to engage in commerce, and the destruction of suspicion that emigrants were really being sold in southern markets.¹⁴² Thus bolstered, the Colonization Society enthusiastically embarked upon raising the requisite ten thousand dollars. The officers even resolved to introduce Agent Easter to their wealthy friends and to aid him in soliciting donations from them.¹⁴³ But, alas, while attempts to gain sufficient subscriptions to construct the proposed Liberian Packet dragged on for two years, results were so insignificant that the Society did not publicize

¹⁴¹MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes. Package of Letters to Board of Managers, 1837, Captain William Mason to Easter, Baltimore, October 31, 1836.

¹⁴²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 7, 1837.

¹⁴³Ibid.

them. Finally, in 1839, entangled in manifold debts, officers dropped all idea of constructing or purchasing a Society vessel.

Another proposal for reducing the Society's expenses involved the colonial doctor. Both humaneness and common sense dictated that a qualified medical person be stationed at Cape Palmas to care for new immigrants during their period of acclimation and for all colonists while they lived at the settlement. The presence of Doctor Hall, a physician as well as a businessman and an administrator, obviated the necessity of appointing an additional person in that capacity. While Doctor Holmes was merely a dentist, he was sufficiently versed in medical science and the use of drugs to care for the colonists when he himself was well. His departure late in 1836 left the colony without medical aid and the Maryland Society scurried about seeking a physician. Its greatest concern at the outset had been getting mission boards in the United States to pledge financial support in return for the free services of Hall and Holmes. The Methodist Episcopal Board and the ABCFM had accepted some responsibility, but the Protestant Episcopal Board, whose missionary at Cape Palmas, Thomas Savage, was also a physician, had seen no need to participate in the arrangement.

With Holmes' departure, the Maryland Society recognized that it could not find a qualified person even if it secured the funds, and sought Doctor Savage's services. But, his Board refused to allow him to give more than emergency treatment to colonists not connected with Cape Palmas mission. Maryland colonizationists well realized that such a plan would prove unsatisfactory; indeed, it did, but there was no

alternative.¹⁴⁴ They were willing to accept this solution as a temporary expedient. Arrangements were then made to send a young Palmas colonist to the United States for medical training and one such was soon found.

As early as 1833, when Doctor Hall had entered Maryland State Colonization Society employ, he had recommended that the Board of Managers send a small library of elementary works on medicine to the proposed colony and that it select two young colonists to study under him or a later appointee.¹⁴⁵ Nothing had come of the suggestion until 1835 when Samuel Ford McGill, son of George McGill, the Baltimorean who had emigrated to Liberia in 1827, had asked to come to the United States to learn medicine. Moses Sheppard, assigned to correspond with him, painted a dark picture of his probable reception and the labor necessary to earn a medical degree. He was warned that he could not associate with whites other than as a servant, that he should never expect to hear the term "Mr. McGill" from a white man and that "studying medicine is not strolling through College Halls, reading an hour and whiling away an hour." If McGill could accept such conditions, would put in three hard years of study and agree to return to the colony, he would

¹⁴⁴MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, Easter to Rev. R. Anderson, Baltimore, September 3, 1838; Letters, Vol. V, Hall to Easter, Hot Springs, Virginia, August 28, 1836.

¹⁴⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. I, Hall to the Board of Managers, Baltimore, October 12, 1833.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., Vol. IV, Sheppard to Samuel Ford McGill, Baltimore, January 12, 1836.

be welcome to come.¹⁴⁶ To his great credit, the young man chose this course of action.

The Young Men's Colonization Society which undertook the cost of McGill's training enrolled him in Baltimore's Washington Medical College. Its officers hesitated to send him to a northern school both because they feared the effects of the climate on him and the influence of abolitionists upon their protégé. McGill accordingly began his studies in November, 1836. In less than a month, the otherwise all-white student body besought the faculty to dismiss the newcomer. Asserting that his presence might jeopardize their professional careers and bring everlasting injury to the college itself, the students argued

That we conceive, that this Boy has gone far beyond the limited space granted him, and has encroached as far upon the privilege enjoyed by the students, as to wound their feelings, disgust them by his actions, and has called for their immediate and determined action.¹⁴⁷

Pleas by the colonizationists to the faculty and students to allow McGill to remain in any capacity so long as he could receive instruction were to no avail.¹⁴⁸ He was thereupon withdrawn from the college and sent to Windsor, Vermont, to study with and remain under the supervision of Doctor Edward E. Phelps, an old friend of Hall. McGill made a

¹⁴⁶Ibid., Vol. IV, Sheppard to Samuel Ford McGill, Baltimore, January 12, 1836.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., Vol. V. N. Z. Chapline and Richard E. Harrison to Faculty of Washington Medical College, [Baltimore], n. d. [December, 1836]; Students of Washington Medical College to the Faculty of Washington Medical College, [Baltimore], n. d. [December, 1836].

¹⁴⁸Ibid., George R. Vickers to Chapline and Harrison, Baltimore, December 15, 1836; Easter to Doctor S. K. Jennings, Baltimore, December 17, 1836; H. D. McCulloch et al. to Easter, Baltimore, December 26, 1836.

splendid impression upon his mentor and was received with an unusual degree of respect and attention by the townspeople.¹⁴⁹ While Doctor Phelps remained on the University of Vermont medical school faculty, McGill studied there. He became particularly fond of surgery and, after witnessing three or four operations, declared that he would not hesitate to undertake the amputation of an arm or a leg.¹⁵⁰

When Doctor Phelps returned to private practice, McGill transferred to Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. A kindly faculty member introduced him as a native African, McGill explained away his fluency in English to quizzical students, and he was readily admitted into the classes.¹⁵¹ McGill regularly returned to Windsor to work with Doctor Phelps between terms. Unwilling merely to earn achievement certificates for accomplishments in medical study, McGill made the earning of a degree his goal. He learned Latin by himself and, after less than two years of study, passed examinations in all his subjects.¹⁵² In October, 1838, he earned the M.D. and returned to Baltimore, hoping for a brief period of clinical experience.

The young physician ingenuously argued that some practical application of his learning before leaving the United States would be

¹⁴⁹Ibid., Vol. VI, Dr. Edward E. Phelps to Latrobe, Windsor, Vermont, February 27, 1837.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., Vol. VII, S. F. McGill to Easter, Windsor, Vermont, July 17, 1837.

¹⁵¹Ibid., S. F. McGill to Easter, Hanover, New Hampshire, August 17, 1837.

¹⁵²Ibid., Vol. IX, S. F. McGill to Easter, Hanover, New Hampshire, August 11, 1838; Phelps to Easter, Windsor, Vermont, October 29, 1838.

valuable to him even though lives might be sacrificed in the process. Indeed, he declared that speeding some of Baltimore's colored population out of this world would not be so great a crime, for, if unprepared, their circumstances could not be much worse while, if ready, his mistakes might prove a blessing to them.¹⁵³

But the Board of Managers, heirs of the now defunct Young Men's Colonization Society, had other plans. It hired Doctor Robert Macdowall, formerly the colonial physician at Bassa Cove, Liberia, to accompany Doctor McGill to Cape Palmas and to supervise his work during the following year. In November, 1838, the two sailed aboard the Oberon.¹⁵⁴

Raising money for a vessel and for McGill's education had been designed to reduce Society expenditures. Neither accomplished the desired purpose. As noted, the idea of owning a vessel had to be abandoned for want of support. McGill's medical training cost the body more than seven hundred dollars¹⁵⁵ and, while he was destined to have a long, useful career, he still required a regular salary.

Debt still overwhelmed the Society and it lived from hand to mouth, depending upon the managers of the state appropriation to meet sundry notes as these fell due. Fortunately, these persons had become

¹⁵³Ibid., S. F. McGill to Easter, Hanover, New Hampshire, October 16, 1838.

¹⁵⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 11, 1838; Agent's Books, Vol. II, Easter to Anderson, Baltimore, September 3, 1838.

¹⁵⁵Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1840), p. 11.

more lenient in accepting responsibility for colony costs by 1838, perhaps because the settlement was now gaining in population and strength. The State Managers, in fact, began drawing more than \$10,000 from the Treasury, pointing out that the initial legislation did not specifically set that sum as the yearly financial limit. Everyone had merely understood the appropriation to be \$10,000 because this was the amount of the annual colonization tax. They requested and received payment of \$15,000 for 1839 only to find that the entire appropriation for 1839 had already been spent by the end of 1838.¹⁵⁶

This startling revelation caused the Society's Board of Managers to review finances. It found that the body's total liabilities were more than \$11,000. Since voluntary contributions would yield but little, the Society Board cancelled its regular spring expedition and called for rigid economy.¹⁵⁷ Thirty-two emigrants went to the Cape in the fall but there was otherwise little activity during 1839. Ira Easter continued as the home agent, keeping up with the Society's correspondence and business affairs. John Kennard canvassed the state for emigrants and funds as usual. John Roberts, named Kennard's assistant the previous year, remained in his capacity.

Easter died in January 1840. John Latrobe, Society president since 1837, now saw an opportunity to reduce expenses through administrative reorganization. The combined annual salaries of Easter,

¹⁵⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Special Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 2, 1839; Letters, Vol. X, MacKubin to Anderson, Annapolis, May 24, 1839.

¹⁵⁷MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Special Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 2, 1839.

Kennard, Roberts and an office clerk came to \$3,050. Latrobe recommended that Kennard assume the duties of the late home agent in addition to his former task of soliciting contributions throughout the state and that the clerk, a Mr. Knighton, have his responsibilities enlarged to include canvassing Baltimore City for funds. Roberts was to be released because his collections did not warrant his retention. In this way, salaries would be cut to \$1,300. Latrobe likewise suggested that the Colonization Journal, edited by Easter during most of her service, be turned back to a Board committee.¹⁵⁸

With the acceptance of Latrobe's proposals, the Society sought means of wiping out existing debts. Charles Howard, speaking for a committee named to consider the best ways of raising funds without anticipating the state's appropriation for 1841, recommended several courses of action, all to be done as soon as possible: (1) appealing to all clergymen in Maryland to take up a Fourth of July collection for colonization, (2) the calling of a public meeting and the taking up of donations, (3) canvassing of as much of the state as possible by the home agent, and (4) the holding of a September fair for the Society's benefit.¹⁵⁹ Little was actually done during the entire year. No emigrants were sent out, but the Society still collected \$10,000 of the state fund.

Meanwhile, the Board also undertook retrenchment in colonial activities. Various paid civil positions were abolished, one of the

¹⁵⁸Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 20, 1840.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, May 1, 1840.

two public farms was closed, and Governor Russwurm was urged to keep down his expenditures, especially those involving gifts to the native kings ("the dash account") and care of the poor, sick and invalid.¹⁶⁰

Society affairs stood as follows at the end of 1840: the body had collected \$79,353 from the state (including the appropriation and the per capita tax placed upon slaves introduced into Maryland) since its creation;¹⁶¹ voluntary contributions had totaled \$15,682;¹⁶² expenditures had reached almost \$128,000;¹⁶³ 624 emigrants had been sent out to Capes Mesurado and Palmas in a total of fourteen expeditions;¹⁶⁴ Maryland in Liberia's population stood at 424, of whom 194 were males and 230 females, with approximately half of the citizens adults.¹⁶⁵ To Society officers who had espoused independent state action, the heavy expenditures on the small success attending their efforts must have been doubly painful. Nevertheless they spoke confidently of the future and laid careful plans for more efficient operations in both the United States and Africa.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 17, 1840.

¹⁶¹Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1841), p. 13.

¹⁶²Ibid. ¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Appendix) (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1843), p. 25.

¹⁶⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XI, Census of Maryland in Liberia, 1840.

CHAPTER V

GROWTH OF THE COLONY

John Brown Russwurm, a native of Jamaica and an 1826 graduate of Bowdoin College, was thirty-seven years old when he became the governor of Maryland in Liberia. His emigration to Monrovia in 1829 ended a brief career in the United States as the co-editor of Freedom's Journal, the first Negro newspaper in this country. Until his move to Harper, he published the Liberia Herald and was a leading citizen in the original settlement of the American Colonization Society.¹ Russwurm's appointment came as a surprise both to him and to the inhabitants of all the American-founded colonies along the west coast of Africa. As he himself admitted, it signified a new era in the history of the Negro and was a departure from age-old beliefs.² In Monrovia and in Harper, at least at first, the idea of a Negro governor seems to have been popular. The dearth of comment on the Maryland Society's decision is, however, a surprising deficiency in its archives. Correspondence on the subject is almost non-existent.

¹Philip J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 167, 191.

²MSSC MSS, Letters, Vol. VII, John Russwurm to John Latrobe, Monrovia, Liberia, September 28, 1836.

One white American did venture to give his opinion to Maryland colonizationists. Captain Joseph J. Nicholson, commander of the United States Ship Potomac, on a cruise off Africa late in 1836, visited Cape Palmas. He gave a favorable account of its location and the steady development of the colony, but was skeptical of the Maryland Society's new course. Urging the Society to have white agents at the settlements, Nicholson remarked that, "the native kings and people look up to them with more respect and feel more confidence in them than in those of their own colour, whatever may be their merits, and the Colonists themselves pay a more cheerful obedience to the government of a white man."³ One needs only review Doctor Hall's experiences to know that his commands seldom met "cheerful obedience."

The opinions of Captain Nicholson respecting white agents were not voiced during his tour in the United States but did gain public attention at Cape Palmas. Thomas Jackson, a colonial magistrate, although pleased at the officer's assessment of the settlement, contended that Russwurm's appointment had come at the right time and at the right place. Concurring with the Board of Managers' views, Jackson argued that the time for experimentation was when the colony was young and small. He, moreover, asserted that, even if native Africans were more submissive to whites than to American Negroes, as Nicholson believed, it was a condition created by the colonists themselves, some of whom told the natives that emigrants were former slaves. Lamenting

³MSCS MSS, Miscellaneous Letters & Minutes. Package of Letters to the Board of Managers, 1837, Captain Joseph J. Nicholson to Latrobe, U. S. Ship Potomac, Hampton Roads, March 3, 1837.

that crossing the "briny ocean" could not purge prejudice from the white man's breast, Jackson concluded that this was reason enough to hire a Negro as their leader.⁴

During the first several years of Russwurm's administration, his employers were periodically rocked with unpleasant reports from the colony. Notwithstanding general colonist approbation and explicit instructions of the managerial group, Russwurm found his ability and authority questioned. With his commission as the Society's agent went advice which surpassed the role of mere suggestion. The new governor was reminded that the Society's funds were limited. Drafts on it were to be avoided except in emergency. The Board reiterated its emphasis upon the agricultural nature of the colony and urged Russwurm to continue land surveys, the laying out farms and building houses. Several social concerns were the development of educational facilities, the elevation of women to a place of respect, and the ultimate civilization of the natives.

The last point was a favorite topic of Maryland colonizationists. They expressed the hope that the indigenous blacks would be spared the tragic fate of most aborigines and, instead, would slowly be brought under the colony's laws. The Board recommended that, rather than establishing settlements remote from each other as the colony grew, the original site be expanded in a continuous line along Maryland Avenue and in each direction from it as more land was needed. Settled colonists who wished to extend their farms were to be allowed to buy as much

⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VII, Thomas Jackson to Franklin Anderson, Harper, July 6, 1837.

land as they desired for not less than fifty cents an acre, but had to cultivate the new holdings in order to retain them. In expanding, space was to be reserved for public buildings. The public farm was to receive special attention because of its threefold function as a provider of food for the indigent, a source of hard labor for criminal offenders and a model farm for experimentation.

As for the people with whom he would live and deal, Russwurm again received specific admonitions. Major consideration must be given the many colonists who were in debt to the Society. Refusing to adopt any plan whereby such obligations might be cancelled, the Board insisted that all citizens be held to eventual payment. Several factors lay behind this decision. For one, the Board feared that releasing the colonists now might foster the idea that such a step would be regularly taken. Idlers would never work and all colonists would be less inclined towards diligency and thrift. While debtors were not to be hard pressed to pay up immediately, they were to be kept aware of their responsibility.

Mindful that cooperation among the settlements along the African coast would be advantageous and might prove a life-saver in times of crisis, the new governor was directed to miss no opportunity to serve them. The missionary group residing at Cape Palmas was to be accorded special solicitude. Three major denominations, the Presbyterians (under the auspices of the ABCFM), the Methodists and the Episcopalians had established stations in the colony. Russwurm was advised to "avoid all interference with them in their spiritual effort and allow to them no

interference in your temporal affairs. Promote their interests in all things. . . . "5

To strengthen the new governor's hand in managing the colony, the Board of Managers, during the first year of his administration, reaffirmed the original constitution, adopted additional ordinances and clarified business procedures. The constitution sent out with Doctor Hall in 1833 as well as several subsequent ordinances were printed, bound and a number of copies sent to the colony for distribution. The most important new ordinance was a lengthy one drawn up by Hugh Davey Evans, a distinguished Baltimore attorney, concerning legal procedures and the application of jurisprudence. An appendix provided the colonial magistrates, at that time three men appointed by the governor, with examples of legal papers and forms which were to be used.⁶

In order to straighten out the bookkeeping chaos of the Hall and Holmes' administrations, a system of accounts was drawn up for the colony. To establish an operational base, an inventory of all merchandise, palm oil and other produce on hand was to be taken immediately. All accounts were to be closed, either by cash or note, the promisory notes issued by colonists unable to meet their indebtedness being listed under a Bills Receivable account. All business transactions were to be recorded in a Day Book, which was to be faithfully kept. Ledgers covering cash on hand, merchandise in the Agency store

⁵MSCS MSS, Corresponding Secretary Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, June 30, 1836.

⁶Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia; with an Appendix of Precedents (2nd ed.; Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1847); MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 29, 1837.

and the salaries of colonial officers were to be posted punctually. All accounts were to be balanced and closed semi-annually, on December 31 and June 30, and detailed statements were regularly to be submitted to the managerial body at home.

An innovation introduced was the adoption of decimals for use in all mercantile transactions. Instead of pricing goods at 6 1/4, 12 1/2, 18 3/4 cents and so forth per yard or pound, they were now to be priced at 5, 10, 20 cents and up in like fashion. To facilitate such commercial arrangements, the Board now created paper currency, to be receivable at the government store in payment for goods purchased there.⁷ Such bills aimed at improving and increasing exchanges both among the colonists and between them and the natives. To benefit the illiterate, the notes were printed with pictures distinguishing the several denominations. A head of tobacco, then worth about five cents, appeared on the five-cent note. The ten-cent one carried the picture of a chicken, and so on. While Latrobe asserted that the new circulating medium was not designed to supercede cotton as legal tender, its appearance attests to the failure of the previous ordinance in conquering barter problems. In reality, cotton was just another commodity calling for barter and did not improve commercial intercourse or serve as an incentive for the colonists.⁸ To this, we shall return.

⁷MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 10, 1837.

⁸MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, October 24, 1837.

The currency system and legal code established in Liberia's Maryland proved to be beneficial and were well-accepted by the citizens. Russwurm reported general approbation at having standards to follow in administering justice. He admitted that, though some facets of the judicial procedure might be novel to the colonists, experience would make them known to everyone. An especially wise aspect of the code was the delineation of the judges' powers, for this would prevent contention among a generally ignorant population. The paper currency was popular among the colonists, the natives and the governor alike. Colonists and natives soon came to ask that a portion at least of their earnings from work for the authorities or from produce sold the Agency store be paid in such bills. Some immigrants even began to set aside a part of their pay as savings. Russwurm liked the new arrangement because of its tendency to draw all business to the Society's store, the source of most goods and the point at which currency circulation began.⁹

All of these measures aimed at the domestic development and stability of the colony, rooted in the foresight of Baltimore Board members, were certainly those of practical business and professional men. What, however, these officers could help but little were the relations of the colony with the natives. Doctor Hall was fortunate in governing when the indigenes were generally peaceful. Much of his success, of course, depended upon his frequent use of the dash--gifts to the native kings--and his knack at palaver. Oliver Holmes, Jr.,

⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, April 26, 1838.

maintained harmony with the surrounding tribes through distributing at the outset of his brief administration presents sent by the Board of Managers. But Russwurm, despite his long residence in Africa, saw the very existence of the colony threatened at the commencement of his administration. Immediately upon settling at Harper, he launched the task of straightening out his predecessors' business records. He did not need subsequent instructions from his employers to put some order into bookkeeping. He found that much of the confusion attending accounting stemmed from thefts by Africans who used unauthorized keys to enter the store. Even with a watchman inside every night, whole pieces of cloth and other goods were regularly stolen. Russwurm determined to put additional locks on the doors, to install iron bars on all windows and to erect a guard house outside the store.

As soon as the Africans got word of such plans, the Cape Palmas people, the natives living closest to Harper, staged a raid on the store between the time it closed for the day and the hour the guard arrived. About 500 yards of cloth, 40 or 50 pounds of tobacco, iron bars and other small articles were stolen. The following day Russwurm called on King Freeman, demanding return of the goods and punishment of the culprits. About a quarter of the pilfered supplies were eventually returned by the natives. But when officials began a search of Cape Town to recover the remaining loot, turned it up and incarcerated the guilty native involved, the inhabitants of that village and several other small towns under King Freeman's jurisdiction converged upon the jail with guns and sundry other weapons and released the prisoner.

Unfortunately, the matter did not end there, for the bulk of the colonists were away from Harper attending their farms beyond Cape Town. Not half a dozen men remained in the settlement to fire the two cannon and use other weapons should the mob attack them. In addition, those citizens tending their crops found the path home blocked and were forced to spend the night at Fair Hope, the ABCFM mission station. All during the night, the two groups of colonists, separated by Cape Town, shuddered at the continual beat of the drum and the blowing of the war-horn. The next morning, a great palaver took place between Russwurm and King Freeman. Surrounded by four or five hundred natives, most of whom were armed, the two principals and their chief advisers took seats at opposite sides of the great circle. King Freeman recounted all the injuries his people believed they had suffered since the Americans had arrived at Cape Palmas. Russwurm then answered the accusations, many of them false, one by one until the king began enumerating new grievances. The natives finally broke off the palaver and called for its resumption later in the day. When it reconvened, the change of attitude among the Cape Palmas peoples was evident by the lack of weapons. King Freeman reiterated his contentions and J. Leighton Wilson, representing Russwurm, argued that, were the stealing stopped, all difficulties would disappear. At this, the palaver high priest was directed by King Freeman to signify the end of the controversy. The king met with Russwurm and Wilson the next day and presented a black heifer as an offering for his abusive language during the palaver.¹⁰

¹⁰Ibid., Vol. VI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, January 12, 1837.

Explanation for the natives' conduct seems to lie in their disappointment at not having received gifts from the new agent and in their conviction that the colonial magistrates had abused their power in punishing the thieves.¹¹ Although the colonists came out of the fray seemingly unimpaired in prestige and power, the Board of Managers considered it a Pyrrhic victory. Latrobe expressed the body's view that Russwurm should have warned King Freeman that any attempt to prevent the colonists' return home would bring a discharge from the artillery. While abhorring war, the Board considered the cost of the pilfered goods, the prisoner's release and the interruption of travel through the native town too great a sacrifice for the maintenance of peace.¹²

Russwurm was admonished to foster a military spirit among the colonists. The militia was to be drilled and paraded regularly, firearms were to be kept in a state of readiness, and the cannon were to be kept oiled and dry through a cover of some sort being placed over them. Likewise, their wooden carriages were to be repaired as the weather destroyed them. Experience dictated the need for a second stockade at the other end of the colony, which now extended about four miles to the interior.¹³ Although only Harper citizen farms lay in that direction then, the large group of Tubmans from Georgia arrived

¹¹Ibid., Vol. VI, J. Leighton Wilson to Latrobe, Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, June 6, 1837; Yellow Will to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, June 8, 1837.

¹²MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, October 24, 1837.

¹³Ibid., Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, May 10, 1837.

at Cape Palmas some months later and settled permanently in that remote area. The location was thereafter called Mount Tubman.

Another major confrontation between colonists and natives occurred in the summer of 1838. Late on July 25, the large native town of Cape Palmas accidentally caught fire and most of it burned to the ground. At the request of King Freeman, colonists were posted as guards around the ruins to prevent his native neighbors from looting, as was the custom of the country. Early the next morning, a group of natives from Barraway, ostensibly en route to view the village's charred remains, attacked Ebin Parker, a colonist, in his home and murdered him along with three of his children. Declaring the Parkers innocent victims of savagery, a posse of their neighbors, led by Charles Snetter, undertook immediately to capture the murderers. Unfortunately, members of a small band of armed Cape Palmas natives were mistaken as the guilty parties and, in the ensuing conflict, several were wounded and at least one killed. Investigation turned up the facts that Parker had daily threatened the natives, pointing his gun at them, and that the Barraway townsfolk had murdered him to avenge the wounding of a companion several days before. When civil authorities had gone to arrest Parker at that time, he had threatened to shoot anyone setting foot upon his premises. Before Russwurm had been able to conclude the matter, Parker's murderers had taken advantage of the confusion to cut him down.¹⁴

¹⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IX, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, August 6, 1838 and August 21, 1838.

King Freeman, whose men had suffered the colonists' assault, sought no revenge, but professed great friendship for the Americans. A man of great influence in the back country, his attitude was instrumental in maintaining peace. With the cooperation of Cape Palmas residents, the colonists placed an effective embargo upon goods sold to the Barraways. Russwurm briefly considered uniting with King Freeman in a joint attack upon them, but feared that the wily old chief might commit some treachery and resisted the temptation. The blockage soon brought the Barraways to a willingness to negotiate, but several years of truce passed before differences were settled. Despite the good will pledged by neighboring tribes, Russwurm was skeptical respecting their good faith. Assuming that the colony was surrounded by enemies, the Governor stationed guards in various sections of the settlement and maintained regular night watchmen. One favorable consequence of his more militant posture toward the indigenous population was the cessation of thefts from the Agency Store. The same was not true, however, respecting the colonists' property, perhaps because they themselves were often guilty of appropriating produce from the natives.¹⁵

As for the action of the colonists, a court of inquiry consisting of civil officers and others met in Harper during August, 1838, heard voluminous evidence and concluded that: (1) Snetter had acted without authority in ordering the shooting of the natives, (2) circumstances in the colony at the time mitigated his offense, (3) the case should be

¹⁵Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, August 6, 1838 and August 21, 1838; Vol. X, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, December 8, 1839.

turned over to the Governor for a final, definitive decision.¹⁶ Convinced that the peace and welfare of the community necessitated stringent measures, Russwurm ordered Snetter to resign his civil and military offices, gave him thirty days to settle his personal affairs and ordered him to leave the colony forever by the first means after that time.¹⁷

The Snetter affair unfortunately created domestic difficulties as well as bringing the colony to the verge of native war. Many citizens were bitterly incensed that Snetter, a captain in their militia and an elected official in their government, should be banished. Referring to the constitution and ordinances, they argued that the Court of Inquiry's proceedings were illegal because no such body was provided for in those documents. After citing article upon article in support of their position, the disgruntled colonists turned upon the Governor's person. They charged that "every public request that can be recollected to have been made by the people to our present governor has been refused or no notion taken of the same. But every request that . . . has been known to have been made By the natives he has never failed in granting. . . ." Finally, the irate citizens justified Snetter's actions upon the grounds of Parker's murder and numerous other close calls at the hands of surrounding natives.¹⁸

¹⁶Ibid., Vol. VIII, Proceedings of Court of Inquiry held on August 8 and 20, 1838.

¹⁷Ibid., Governor's Decision, Harper, August 26, 1838.

¹⁸Ibid., Vol. X, Memorial of Citizens of the Colony of Maryland in Liberia, September 12, 1838.

Snetter, with two other prominent citizens, Alexander Hance and Anthony Wood, subsequently petitioned the Board of Managers to intervene in the matter. They charged Russwurm with being unfair, vindictive and aloof.¹⁹ The Board, however, deemed the memorials of the disaffected colonists too objectionable to warrant reply. Instead, it sustained Russwurm in his action and accorded him additional executive power with which to handle civil disturbances. Russwurm was directed to create a small police unit under the immediate supervision of an officer appointed by the governor and paid by the civil authority. One man was to be stationed at each end of the colony and one man every mile in between. The guards were to be uniformed and armed at all times, but were to be allowed to work on their farms during a certain portion of every week. Latrobe hoped that the colonists, who were led to believe that the new military outfit was designed solely to protect them from native depredations, would contribute to its support, but they claimed indigency.²⁰ The expulsion of Snetter, a person of controversy from the time he had been hired as Colonial Secretary, had a general soothing effect on the colony, however.²¹

These incidents are recited in considerable detail because they are illustrative of a variety of problems emerging in the colony. The

¹⁹Ibid., Memorial of Colonists to Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society, Cape Palmas, January 8, 1839.

²⁰MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, November 21, 1839; Letters, Vol. XI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, January 18, 1840.

²¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. X, S. F. McGill to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, April 20, 1839.

most obvious ones concerned the existence of native towns amidst the expanding American settlement and colonist-indigene relations. Colonial defense assumed new importance and the missionaries' role in colonial affairs began to be questioned.

Deteriorating relations with the natives showed most conclusively the need for an enlarged military structure. Whereas James Hall, during his tenure, sought colonists who would impress surrounding tribes with American power, daily contact between newcomers and Africans erased the former's aura of strength. Indeed, the colonists with their few field pieces, small numbers of rifles and their two stockades appeared easy prey for their neighbors. The Brig Oberon, which took Doctors Robert Macdowall and Samuel F. McGill to Maryland in Liberia late in 1838, also carried a good supply of weapons to replace and supplement those already in the colony. Altogether, a hundred good muskets with bayonets, a hundred boxes of cartridges, a hundred bayonet sheaths, a hundred breastplates and enough webbing to make crossbelts for a hundred men were sent. With the authority of his own West Point background, Latrobe ordered Russwurm to have the militia drill and maneuver with bayonets on their guns. The colonists were forbidden to discard bayonets, as some had done previously. Contending that an unloaded musket lacking one was no better than a shillelagh, Latrobe argued that the hardest fought battles had been won with bayonets which he regarded as the only efficient weapons in the woods and against savages.²²

²²MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, November 20, 1838.

Doctor Macdowall's arrival in the settlement coincided with reception of news that Josiah F. C. Finley, brother of Robert S. Finley and governor of the infant colony founded between Cape Mesurado and Cape Palmas by Mississippi colonizationists, had been the victim of a murderous attack by neighboring Africans. The new colonial physician urged the Board of Managers to send out more arms, particularly cannon and large shot, to the colony. From what he heard and saw of the African situation, Macdowall deemed it necessary to maintain the settlement in a complete state of defense at all times. He recommended, moreover, that American ships-of-war visit the coast frequently to prevent attacks upon the colonies and upon American citizens travelling along the coast. He contended that the natives saw the Star-spangled Banner flying at the mastheads of slave vessels so often that they no longer respected either the American flag or United States citizens.²³

Heeding Macdowall's advice, the Colonization Society sent out several small cannon which could be mounted in boats or large canoes. Russwurm was enjoined to let peace be his aim, but to keep the colony prepared for an attack at any moment. Frequent drills and parades were to impress the natives that any aggression on their part would be repelled. In spite of repeated instructions to keep the community compact, it was now spread four miles along Maryland Avenue from Harper to Mount Tubman. Four native towns containing nearly three thousand people were in the midst of the township. Governor Russwurm was

²³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. X, Dr. Robert Macdowall to Ira A. Easter, Mount Vaughan, Cape Palmas, January 15, 1839.

directed to fill in the gaps as new emigrants arrived in order to strengthen contact between the settlement's several areas.²⁴

Getting the United States Navy to send warships along the western coast of Africa more frequently proved difficult. An occasional vessel, such as the U. S. Frigate Potomac, did stop at the various settlements, but it took the combined efforts of all colonization societies in this country to persuade the Navy Department that regular voyages were essential. Success came only when overwhelming evidence demonstrated that the slave trade was still in progress despite increased numbers of British cruisers. Thomas Buchanan, one-time governor of Bassa Cove, the Pennsylvania settlement, asserted that nine-tenths of all slave vessels on the west African coast were built in the United States and that most sailed under American colors, which, consequently, rendered British efforts ineffective. He argued, moreover, that the slavers not only retarded legitimate commerce, but jeopardized the safety of the settlements.²⁵

John Latrobe, taking up Buchanan's plea and adding recent information from Russwurm and Macdowall on slave operations near Cape Palmas, applied directly to President Van Buren permanently to station a man-of-war on the African coast. He also sought two heavy cannon for

²⁴Ibid., Macdowall to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 9, 1839; Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, December 11, 1839.

²⁵National Archives, African Squadron Letters, Vol. IV, Thomas Buchanan to James K. Paulding, Washington, December 15, 1838.

harbor defense and for two smaller field pieces for the Mount Tubman stockade.²⁶

To the disappointment of Maryland Society officials as well as of their colonists, the two United States vessels dispatched to Africa early in 1840 did not carry the desired armaments to Cape Palmas or even visit that southern point, although Monrovia, where the ships were stationed, received a large donation of military equipment.²⁷ Starting in 1841, the African Squadron visited Cape Palmas with regularity, but no explanation has been offered why the colony did not share in the beneficence showered upon the American Colonization Society settlement.

In seeking to give Maryland in Liberia the necessary military complexion to thwart native aggression, the Board of Managers and its paid representatives in the colony came into serious conflict with the local missionary establishment. The Board had recognized the value of linking Christianity and colonization from the outset. Under its direct encouragement, by 1838, the Presbyterians (Fair Hope), Episcopalians (Mount Vaughan) and Methodists (Mount Emory) had founded stations there. The Methodists directed their efforts at the colonists; the other two groups worked primarily among the heathen.²⁸ Almost every Annual Report of the Colonization Society noted the accomplishments of the missions.

²⁶MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Martin Van Buren, Baltimore, May 9, 1839.

²⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 7, 1840 and July 27, 1840.

²⁸Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1839), p. 8.

In consequence of the native riots soon after he took office, Governor Russwurm found himself confronted with the question of the missionaries' proper function in the colony. More delicate was the issue of military service by colonists or educated Africans in mission employ. Section 32 of the Ordinance for the Temporary Government of the colony specified that "all males between the ages of sixteen and sixty, residing in the territory, shall be enrolled in the general militia, and be liable to be called upon, at the discretion of the agent, under officers appointed by him, in the defence of the territory."²⁹ Russwurm's interpretation was that only colored persons sent out by missionary societies at home expressly to be preachers or teachers were exempt from military training and duty.³⁰ When, however, he sought to impress all other able-bodied men into service, he found that J. Leighton Wilson, director of the ABCFM station of Fair Hope, objected to having his three Negro assistants called upon for military or civic obligations. One young man, John Banks, came to Cape Palmas with the original expedition and received bed, board and education through the benevolence of Wilson at Fair Hope. Another, John Dorsey, arrived in Africa only months before, but was under Wilson's tutelage and was expected to become a mission teacher.³¹

²⁹Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia; with an Appendix of Precedents (2nd ed., Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1847), p. 21.

³⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Monrovia, Liberia, June 22, 1837.

³¹Ibid., Vol. VII, Wilson to Latrobe, Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, July 6, 1837.

Russwurm, new in office, was sadly perplexed. Relaying the conflicting opinions to his Board of Managers, the Agent complained that almost every able young man was engaged by the missionaries as soon as he arrived in the colony, with the result that the civil administration suffered from a dearth of competent persons to fill the different offices.³² The Board backed Russwurm and even extended the original ordinance's authority. It declared that public safety necessitated that all able-bodied men participate in the protection of the colony just as a passenger aboard a ship might help to prevent its sinking. While full-time clergymen were not to be expected to drill save in emergencies, their assistants engaged in mechanical trades and farming were to train regularly with the militia, at least during that early period of the colony's history. Russwurm was reminded that the missionaries constituted one of the strong arms of the colonization scheme.³³

During the interval between the Governor's query to his employers and the arrival of instructions, the matter grew into a bitter controversy. Seeking to enforce the law as he interpreted it, Russwurm insisted that Banks and Dorsey train with the militia when they were in Harper on parade days. When they failed to comply with his order, he imposed the fines designated in the ordinances, holding such action

³²Ibid., Vol. VI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Monrovia, Liberia, June 22, 1837.

³³MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, October 24, 1837.

necessary to prevent all missionary societies in the colony from seeking exemption for their colored assistants.³⁴

Wilson was so incensed by the Governor's course and a militia officer's effort to collect the fine that he returned the deed for lands cleared by John Banks and claimed exemption from further military duty for the young colonist. The missionary protested to Russwurm that Banks had never signed the colonial roster but was now forced to abandon his property in order to continue working with the mission. He concluded his diatribe with the warning, "I charge you never again to authorize one of your officers to enter my premises for the purpose of collecting fines [] serving writs [] etc."³⁵

Only slight acquaintance with colonial laws is necessary to recognize three flaws in Wilson's reasoning. First, the ordinance clearly stated the responsibility of able adult men to share in the colony's defense. Moreover, all settlers were required to sign a pledge of obedience and abstinence before embarking for Cape Palmas and this had been done when Doctor Hall recruited Monrovia's citizens, such as Banks, to form a nucleus for the new settlement. Finally, Wilson's attitude in challenging the right of colonial officials to enforce laws when these involved his personnel or mission was directly contrary to the conditions which the missionary societies in the United States accepted in return for land and Colonization Society encouragement.

³⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, April 28, 1838.

³⁵Ibid., Wilson to Russwurm, Fair Hope, April 16, 1838.

The cantankerous Wilson was unfortunately not content to express his anger solely to Governor Russwurm. He notified the American Board in Boston of recent events and requested the Reverend Rufus Anderson, its Secretary, to raise the matter with the Maryland Society. Making inquiry relative to the ordinance respecting military duty, Anderson informed Latrobe that his organization expected to send out as many colored missionaries and assistants as possible because of the climate. He argued, however, that he could scarcely conceive circumstances under which such spreaders of Gospel tidings would be justified in participating in military activity against the natives. Anderson also raised the issue of colonial jurisdiction and questioned the extent of authority which one incorporated benevolent society could assume over another's agents.³⁶ Again, ignorance of the African situation and of colonial laws formed the basis of misunderstanding.

Citing the controversial ordinance in its entirety, Latrobe went on to elaborate upon the subject. Whether missionaries were white or black, if they operated solely in their religious capacity while residing in the colony, they were exempt from all civic responsibilities. Latrobe likened them to foreigners who come to the United States for a temporary period. But, as with aliens in this country, missionaries were still answerable for debt, breaches of the peace and the commission of crimes. Colonists who went to Africa at the expense of the State Society or signed the settlement constitution were in another class, however. If they entered into mission service, they were still

³⁶MSCS MSS, Foreign Letter Books, Vol. II, R. Anderson to Latrobe, Boston, June 25, 1838.

responsible for the performance of all duties expected of other citizens, including military service. The primary difference between the two categories was citizenship. Missionaries sent out by their Boards in the United States were foreign visitors while their employees were citizens of the colony and permanent residents.³⁷

An issue which troubled Latrobe and the Colonization Society even more than the military duty controversy was Wilson's claim to the benefit of sanctuary for the mission premises and Anderson's remark about the jurisdiction of one benevolent society over the agents of another. Both clearly reveal the ABCFM misconception of its position in the Maryland colony. Latrobe's reply to Anderson, and through him to Wilson, left, he thought, no room for an alternate interpretation of the correct relationship:

We claim to be the government of the tract of country that we have purchased from the natives. Except so far as the natives reserved rights in their deeds to us, we are the Legislature of Maryland in Liberia. . . . Our society is to be considered with reference to the Colony in the same light in which you would consider the government of any civilized nation in relation to its people & its territory. . . . The question, therefore, is, not how far one incorporated benevolent society can assume jurisdiction over the agents of another--but how far such agents are subject to the laws of the foreign country into which they go to reside.³⁸

Anderson's acknowledgement of Latrobe's letter on July 11 indicated the persistence of incorrect assumptions and laid the groundwork for even more serious controversy some years later. Thinking that he was restating the Maryland Society position respecting military duty,

³⁷MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to R. Anderson, Baltimore, July 2, 1838.

³⁸Ibid.

Secretary Anderson noted that the views of the two societies were now in accord: they agreed that ABCFM missionaries and assistant missionaries, white and colored, sent from the United States or reared from native tribes not subject to the colonial government, were to be regarded as foreigners when in the colony.³⁹ In reality, this was not the Maryland colonizationists position at all, but Latrobe did not correct his correspondent's mistaken impression.

He reiterated the relationship between missions and the colonial government in studying the position of the Protestant Episcopal Church which, like the American Board, directed its energies at indigenous heathen neighboring the settlers. Considering the question at a satisfactory conclusion, the Maryland State Colonization Society's president assured Governor Russwurm that there would be no further difficulty respecting colonial authority.⁴⁰

Regrettably, only three years later, the mission groups teaching and christianizing the natives were again embroiled in the military obligation controversy. Russwurm then reported that Wilson claimed exemption from military duty for all the young men in his employ. Some were recruits from Sierra Leone and Cape Coast, both British settlements in West Africa; others were passengers aboard visiting ships who decided to remain at Cape Palmas when they found employment available; and still others were native Africans who had acquired enough education

³⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IX, R. Anderson to Latrobe, Boston, July 11, 1838.

⁴⁰MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, November 20, 1838.

to become teachers. All these people were accorded the title "assistant missionary" by Wilson and, according to his instructions after the 1838 correspondence between his Board and the Maryland Society, were considered exempt from the militia. Doctor Thomas Savage of Mount Vaughan, the Episcopal mission, had adopted the same practice there. Russwurm relied upon Latrobe's account of the earlier probe into the matter and again sought to enforce the ordinance requiring military training of all persons resident in the colony except those sent out by mission boards specifically to operate in a purely religious capacity.⁴¹ Now Latrobe's oversight or neglect in not countermanding Anderson's reply was to become a nightmare for colonizationists.

A special committee of Managers reviewed Board records, studied Section 32 of the Ordinance for Temporary Government and reread correspondence between the Colonization Society and the mission officials. As before, it agreed that missionaries were exempt from militia duty but observed that the usual definition of missionary had always been non-colonists who were regularly ordained or licensed as ministers of the Gospel through appropriate religious channels and who were in the actual employment of some American or European missionary society. The committee recited other sections of the colony's laws which demanded obedience by all persons, even if only temporarily there, and required that all persons who wished to reside in the colony have permission of the Society or the agent. These were legal arguments supporting

⁴¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, June 24, 1841; Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, November 12, 1841.

Russwurm's policy. On the practical side, the committee cited the constant threat of assault or invasion by the hordes of barbarians surrounding the frail little colony as sufficient justification for demanding that every resident exert his utmost energy in its defense. Indeed, in time of attack, even the missionaries could hardly be expected not to take up arms to prevent the massacre of their wives and children.⁴²

Anderson now called attention to his July 11, 1838, letter to Latrobe which defined who were foreigners in the Maryland settlement and thus not liable for military duty. He noted that, by his Board's understanding of previous correspondence, members of their mission sent out from the United States, persons hired from other African colonies or from native tribes not under colonial jurisdiction, and boarding school pupils who came from tribes not subject to the colonial government were not subject to military obligations. Wilson and the other ABCFM missionaries at Cape Palmas operated on this assumption. Secretary Anderson argued further that the colony would receive greater advantage from the presence of missionaries and their assistants if they were considered by the natives as being totally separate from the colony than were they trained to increase its physical strength. He concluded that a policy forcing members of the mission staff to march with the military companies, with the possibility that they might at some time be obliged to engage in combat with the natives, would destroy

⁴²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 1, 1841.

their power to influence the Africans.⁴³ The implication of Anderson's protest was that the mission would render greater service to the colony if it stood apart as an impartial arbiter should conflicts between colonists and natives arise.

Latrobe pointed out, however, that the 1838 correspondence dealt only with persons then actually in the mission; it did not concern itself with two classes of people, native teachers and pupils, now in question. Moreover, Anderson's July 11 letter was his own construction of Latrobe's answers and was not justified by the terms used. The president of the Maryland Society argued that his previous statement, "'From missionaries who leave this country as such be they white or colored, and whose character in Africa is that of missionaries only, we require no military duty'" simply could not mean exemption, except at the agent's discretion, of other persons at the mission. He noted, furthermore, that the policy itself had been determined in the belief that the number of missionaries and others freed from military demands would be insignificant. Latrobe contended that exempting the persons now in question would amount to relegating to individuals unconnected with the Colonization Society the power to declare who should reside in the colony and be protected by its laws while not being liable to defend the community. As for Anderson's notion respecting the benefit of the mission establishments being recognized by the natives as distinct from the colonial administration, Latrobe countered that the Society valued the belief that the natives identified colonization with Christianity.

⁴³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, R. Anderson to Latrobe, Boston, November 3, 1841.

Since missionaries were in the group of first settlers at Cape Palmas, State Society officers found it difficult to take much stock in the argument of the mission cause's independent nature.⁴⁴

This firm Colonization Society reply brought a strong protest from the ABCFM's Prudential Committee. It questioned the wisdom of training Africans in the use of weapons and the conduct of war. Calling the effort compelling native helpers and pupils from independent tribes to perform military duty oppressive to the mission, the American Board asked not only for their exemption but for the release of missionaries and assistant missionaries, whether clergymen or laymen sent out from America, from the military obligation.⁴⁵ Society officers refused to concede on the issue of native teachers and pupils but did finally exempt white persons in actual mission service, provided their names were registered with them.⁴⁶

Meanwhile, the Episcopal missionaries at Maryland in Liberia were experiencing the same pressure from Governor Russwurm. Like other mission station personnel which worked almost exclusively with the indigenes, it faced the dilemma of whether or not to submit to the colonial laws respecting military training. Throughout former discussions between the ABCFM and the Maryland colonizationists, the Protestant Episcopal Mission Board in New York had assumed a spectator position,

⁴⁴MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to R. Anderson, Baltimore, November 23, 1841.

⁴⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, R. Anderson to Latrobe, Boston, December 9, 1841.

⁴⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, December 13, 1841.

perhaps because it regularly maintained the largest number of white missionaries at the Cape. Now, late in 1841, when the Board of Managers declared that only white missionaries and assistants from the United States registered with it would be freed from militia activities and requested the Episcopal Board to conform, additional opposition to the policy arose. The Protestant Episcopal Church's Foreign Committee declared that, in view of the religious character and objects of their mission station, it was essential that no person connected with its operations and in residence there appear under arms. It asked full exemption for its post personnel and for those under its care in the colony.⁴⁷ Since the Episcopal mission had not confined its education and hiring to natives not under colonial administration control as the ABCFM had, it was actually asking for greater leniency towards its pupils than were the Presbyterians.⁴⁸

The Board of Managers again insisted upon rigid compliance with colonial law and military liability for all save the class of white persons previously mentioned.⁴⁹ Its major consideration of the Episcopalian request focused on the native pupils of tribes within the colony's limits. Admitting that, by treaty, the indigenes had reserved the right of being subject only to their own laws and were thus not subject to military discipline, the Board contended that, when Africans

⁴⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, John A. Vaughan to Latrobe, New York, December 16, 1841.

⁴⁸Ibid., Vaughan to Latrobe, New York, December 28, 1841.

⁴⁹MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 4, 1842.

entered the mission schools, they in fact became residents of the colony, although not citizens, and hence were no longer amenable to the customs of their tribes. They consequently came under Section 32 of the Ordinance for Temporary Government. Moreover, in the deed for Cape Palmas, King Freeman and the other rulers had pledged, "'And we do hereby acknowledge ourselves as members of the Colony of Md. in Liberia, so far as to unite in common defence in case of war or foreign aggression."⁵⁰

Throughout 1842, the question of the Maryland Society's policy relative to military duties was bandied about in this country and in Africa. The Reverend John B. Pinney, an ordained Presbyterian minister now in American Colonization Society employ, warned the Marylanders that driving missionary establishments out of the colony would be fatal to its future. He declared, moreover, that current policy was so contrary to the usual custom for students, so opposed to the spirit of missions and so unnecessary for the colony's strength as to make it appear designed to force the removal of the mission stations.⁵¹ Ralph Gurley, on a visit to the northeast in the summer, reported both the ABCFM and the Protestant Episcopal Board anxious to restore harmony by an amicable settlement of their differences. He cautioned that, if the influence of all the missionary boards were thrown against colonization,

⁵⁰MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Vaughan, Baltimore, January 5, 1842.

⁵¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIII, J. B. Pinney to James Hall, Philadelphia, January 4, 1842.

it would be difficult to sustain the cause.⁵² But Latrobe refused to reopen the case, considering it pointless to call a special meeting of the Board to take up an issue which had already been decided by unanimous vote.

Although the Board stood firm in its decision, its new General Agent did not. Doctor James Hall, now in the full-time service of the Baltimore Society, dissented from his employers' views on one point: the requirement that native pupils in the mission schools do military duty. He could see no reason for compelling them to train for combat. Hall's assessment of the situation suggested several problems which needed to be worked out. He declared his belief that all trouble arising in Africa and that all complaints from persons on either side of the ocean originated in missionary aversion to submitting to the government of a colored man. On the other hand, Russwurm, sensitive to these feelings, was determined to carry out laws and regulations to the letter and maintained a reserve tending to prevent reconciliation.⁵³ Hall also attributed the lingering dispute to the principal men involved, especially Latrobe and Anderson.

I think both parties in error & both over rigid and inflexible. 'Tis nonsense to maintain the right or even to desire the native pupils to do military duty, & it ought not to be permitted that the missionaries import Cape Coast & Sierra Leone civilized men & claim for them exemption. . . . But what is decidedly wrong and unjust is the grounds that the missionaries have taken with regard to the character of the colonists, the Govt. of the colony and the tendency and effects of colonization.

⁵²Ibid., R. R. Gurley to James Hall, Boston, August 13, 1842.

⁵³MSSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, Hall to Gurley, Baltimore August 25, 1842.

They have sent home a Round Robin denouncing the whole scheme and defaming the character of our officers & the colonists.⁵⁴

Hall's comments are reminders of numerous other dissatisfactions the Maryland Society held against missionaries, especially Wilson at Fair Hope. During the first dispute over military responsibilities in 1839, Wilson had written his brother-in-law in Savannah that ever since the selection of a Negro as governor, the progress of colonization had steadily declined. He alleged that the colonists had become idle, vicious and turbulent. Charging Russwurm with mismanagement, Wilson now asserted that anything was preferable to colonization.⁵⁵

Puzzled by this sudden reversal of Wilson's attitude, Latrobe inquired of Anderson the meaning of the correspondence and protested the indiscretion of airing grievances in a manner likely to make them public.⁵⁶ To his dismay, Latrobe found that Anderson had received similar communications condemning affairs in the colony.⁵⁷ At about the same time, Latrobe came into possession of a letter from an Episcopal missionary, who, after a year's residence at Mount Vaughan, reaffirmed his faith in colonization, but charged that he had been deceived by reports concerning the soil. He claimed that it was

⁵⁴Ibid., Hall to Pinney, Baltimore, November 12, 1842.

⁵⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IX, N. J. Bayard to Easter, Savannah, July 10, 1838. Bayard quotes Wilson's letter of April 26, 1838.

⁵⁶MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to R. Anderson, Baltimore, September 3, 1838.

⁵⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IX, R. Anderson to Latrobe, Boston, September 21, 1838. Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Rufus Anderson, Baltimore, November 29, 1838.

"decidedly a poor soil when compared with that of our own country."⁵⁸
 These and other disparaging remarks respecting the colony prompted Latrobe to protest the breach of faith in communicating alleged abuses to persons other than his employers and the impropriety of the language used.⁵⁹

Wilson apologized for addressing critical letters to persons in the United States and took to corresponding more freely with Latrobe, whom he considered a personal friend as well as the Society's leading officer. He openly asserted his conviction that the colored people of the United States could never be raised to any considerable moral or intellectual worth unless they were colonized by themselves. Claiming that, among the American-founded colonies generally, there was a feeling of hatred and scorn for the inhabitants of Africa, Wilson held the opinion that the citizens of Maryland in Liberia wanted to drive the natives off the Cape. He also believed that the character of the Maryland colonists was such as to tempt them to engage in the slave trade in due course. His comments respecting Russwurm were now tempered and judicious, absolving him of any unkind feelings toward the indigenes.⁶⁰ Unfortunately the era of good will was brief, for, in two years' time, Wilson was again at the fore of a violent controversy.

⁵⁸MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IX, J. Payne to Easter, Mount Vaughan, Cape Palmas, July 6, 1838.

⁵⁹MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Vaughan, Baltimore, October 2, 1838.

⁶⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. X, Wilson to Latrobe, Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, January 15, 1839.

During the second crisis involving the military question, the missionary establishments generally had more white Americans in their service and the number of critical letters back home increased. The round robin which Hall complained of was signed by the agents of the various denominations and sent to their home boards. Reputedly asserting that many colonists died for lack of food, that bad morals prevailed, that nothing was cultivated and that the missions should be removed, its exact contents were not divulged to Latrobe, who sought a copy of the letter.⁶¹ Nevertheless, rumors, coupled with actual mission difficulties, were sufficient to deter voluntary contribution and cast a shadow over colonization.⁶²

Another complaint which the Colonization Society lodged against the missionaries was their continual meddling in colonial affairs. They were usually good sounding boards for disgruntled settlers and, without any encouragement whatsoever, the average ignorant immigrant could get the impression that the missionaries agreed with him. A frequent consequence was division in the community between those who sided with the disgruntled and the missionaries and such colonists as held opposite views. On other occasions, missionaries actively opposed colonial laws or procedures and incited recent arrivals to the point of riot. A good example was the case of James Thompson, a settler rumored guilty of improper conduct with several native women as well as with a

⁶¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIII, Gurley to Hall, Boston, September 20, 1842; Vaughan to Latrobe, New York, September 29, 1842.

⁶²MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, Hall to Russwurm, Baltimore, December 9, 1842.

young colonist living in his home. Doctor Thomas Savage, newly arrived in the colony, brought charges against him. When the civil judiciary, including Chief Magistrate Russwurm, acquitted the defendant for lack of evidence, Savage circulated a petition through the colony and stirred up great bitterness.⁶³

During the 1838 and 1841-42 episodes, the missionaries were especially contemptuous of the colonial administration and law. Not infrequently, they indulged in verbal attacks upon the colonists as well. In September, 1841, Russwurm informed Latrobe that "speeches have been uttered by the missionaries against the people, laws & government which could not be tolerated. . . ." ⁶⁴

A last slap from the Fair Hope missionaries came the following September. Wilson had already abandoned the station for a post at the mouth of the Gabon River and a Mr. Griswold was now in control at Cape Palmas. During the summer of 1842, some of King Freeman's people appropriated a considerable quantity of goods from the mission. Including bullocks, cloth, copper rods and other items, the loss was valued at about \$150, a substantial sum locally at that time. Instead of appealing to colonial authorities for redress, the missionaries bided their time, knowing that two American ships-of-war were due shortly. When the Vandalia, under command of Captain Ramsey, arrived in September, Griswold appealed to its officers to conduct a palaver

⁶³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VII, George McGill to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, December 25, 1837, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, December 27, 1837.

⁶⁴Ibid., Vol. XII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, September 22, 1841.

with King Freeman and force him to return or accord compensation for the stolen articles. The first officer, Lieutenant Ring, was sent ashore to settle the affair, and some vague agreement between Griswold and King Freeman was made.

The Vandalia then pulled anchor and visited along the coast to the south of Palmas for two weeks. When it returned, Griswold complained that King Freeman had reneged on the agreement and requested Captain Ramsey again to intervene. Lieutenant Ring was dispatched a second time to effect an amicable conclusion and he now demanded that King Freeman pay the amount asked by the mission or suffer the destruction of his towns. Two of the Chief's Headmen, temporarily employed aboard the Vandalia, were detained as hostages.

At this juncture, Governor Russwurm, finally cognizant of the proceedings, queried the Navy men as to their right to meddle in local affairs. Their justification was based upon the assertion that Griswold, an American citizen, was entitled to protection of his property. In spite of Russwurm's protest that the missionaries had never applied to the civil government for action, a fact which Captain Ramsey had learned in connection with the initial palaver, the first officer continued to negotiate. Finally both sides compromised on the restitution.⁶⁵

Latrobe considered Russwurm's anger and action perfectly justified, but held Captain Ramsey's lack of respect for colonial authorities to have been an unintentional offense. He advised the agent that the potential service of American armed vessels along the African coast

⁶⁵Ibid., Vol. XIII, Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, September 26, 1842.

dictated a policy of cultivating friendly relations with both the Navy Department in Washington and the officers of the ships sent to that coast.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, Latrobe addressed a mild protest to the Secretary of the Navy, Abel P. Upshur, and requested that officers be instructed to avoid similar interference in the future: "To aid a government at its request is one thing: to execute the law within its limits, against its will, at the request of angry strangers [the missionaries], is another."⁶⁷

Latrobe had, by now, lost any notion of leniency for the Presbyterian mission at Fair Hope. Reviewing the action of Griswold and the Vandalia officers, Latrobe sternly informed Secretary Anderson of the ABCFM that he could find no excuse for the conduct of those "messengers of God's mercy to the heathen." He issued an ultimatum to the American Board that it give its missionaries explicit instructions to conform to the laws of the colony and prevent the recurrence of such episodes or immediately to leave Maryland in Liberia.⁶⁸ This demand, coupled with the recommendation of Chancellor Wolworth to the ABCFM in September that its mission be removed from the Maryland Colony,⁶⁹ and the

⁶⁶MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, December 8, 1842.

⁶⁷Ibid., Latrobe to A. P. Upshur, Baltimore, December 21, 1842.

⁶⁸Ibid., Latrobe to R. Anderson, Baltimore, December 8, 1842.

⁶⁹The full report, as recorded from the New England Puritan, is in the Appendix to the Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1843).

financial difficulties of the Boston-based mission board,⁷⁰ settled the question. Fair Hope was gradually evacuated and, by early in 1844, had been abandoned with the consequent reversion of the area to the Colonization Society.⁷¹ However, the Episcopalian, Methodist and Baptist stations continued in operation.

These Protestant missions, all representing religious groups in the United States, now worked side by side with a new establishment opened by the Roman Catholic Church. In 1841, Father Patrick Kelly of St. Mary's College in Baltimore, at the direction of Bishop Kenrick, a noted Catholic theologian in Philadelphia, inquired of the Maryland Society whether it would allow the planting of a Catholic mission in its colony. Assured by Latrobe that the Society's resolution offering all religious denominations incentives to work at the Cape was still in effect, the Roman Church made plans for extending its labor to Catholic colonists in the Maryland settlement.⁷² Two Roman Catholic priests and a white lay-assistant sailed aboard the Harriet for Africa on December 20, 1841.

Father Kelly's request was the answer to a five-year-old warning by Ira Easter, whose tours in Southern Maryland induced him to advise the Board of Managers that success in gaining emigrants there depended

⁷⁰Joseph Tracy, History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (2nd ed. rev.; New York: M. W. Dodd, 1842), pp. 431-33.

⁷¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIV, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, June 26, 1843; Vol. XV, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, February 13, 1844.

⁷²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, letters submitted at a meeting of the Board of Managers, September 27, 1841.

upon securing cooperation from the numerous Roman Catholic clergy. He recognized that the priests were reluctant to encourage emigration or donations to colonization because Roman Catholic emigrants would have no spiritual leader if they removed to the settlement.⁷³ Now, in the fall of 1841, an agent was sent to the Southern Maryland counties to enlist the aid of the clergy in urging the departure of their Negro parishioners for Liberia. Unfortunately, the time before the Brig Harriet was to sail was so short that little could then be accomplished.⁷⁴ Only thirty emigrants accompanied the Roman Catholic missionaries that December and the number of Catholics among them cannot be determined.

A warm reception was accorded the three Catholic missionaries. They passed through the acclimation period with little difficulty and proceeded to launch operations upon nine building lots near the Presbyterians in East Harper. Intending to minister largely to the colonists, they preferred a location close to the town.⁷⁵

Although the Colonization Society officers, colonists and natives were generally pleased with this new Roman Catholic Church venture, the Protestant missionaries were not. A letter from a member of the Episcopal station appeared in The Southern Churchman, a periodical of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the southern United States, in August,

⁷³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. IV, Easter To Latrobe, St. Marys near Piney Point, June 18, 1836.

⁷⁴Ibid., Vol. XII, J. M. Roberts to Hall, St. Inigoes, St. Marys County, November 2, 1841; Roberts to Hall, Leonard Town, November 9, 1841.

⁷⁵Ibid., Vol. XIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, February 12, 1842, May 24, 1842.

1842. It complained, "'We have out here now two [sic] missionaries of the Pope come out directly from Protestant America & encouraged by the Protestant institution[,_] the Colonization Society of Md.'" James Hall, now General Agent, protested that the Maryland State Colonization Society was not a Protestant or even a religious organization, but a state group. He emphasized that Society officers were elected without regard to their religious persuasion or opinions, although, by coincidence, there were no Roman Catholics currently among them.

Hall defended the equality of opportunity granted the Catholic mission on the ground that a large portion of the Negro population, both slave and free, in lower Maryland's Western Shore were Catholic and unwilling to emigrate where there would be no place of worship. Roman Catholic planters, moreover, were hesitant to manumit their slaves when their destination was beyond the reach of religious instruction. Hall concluded, "These causes have proved heretofore a serious bar to the emigration from those counties and materially circumscribed the operations of the Society."⁷⁶ It was during this summer that the bitter round robin from missionaries denouncing everything in the colony reached the American, Presbyterian and Episcopal Boards. One must conclude that the arrival of the priests, with Colonization Society approbation, accounted partially for the attack.

Roman Catholic missionary efforts were undoubtedly hampered far more by other events along the West African Coast at about the time of their arrival than they were by prejudice of the other missions toward

⁷⁶MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, Hall to the Editor of The Southern Churchman, Baltimore, August 9, 1842.

them. From the commencement of the Maryland settlement, farsighted and aggressive Americans and colonists spoke of making the several-hundred-mile coast between Cape Palmas and Cape Mesurado one long expanse of American control. It was Maryland State Colonization Society policy to purchase or gain jurisdiction of land to the north and south of the colony as well as in the interior. Russwurm regularly reported on progress made in this. Many of his communications mentioned the presence of English traders along the coast toward Monrovia, but, in 1840, he became concerned lest a new colonization and scientific study group in Britain, the African Civilization Society, might establish a chain of settlements to the windward and leeward of the Cape. Russwurm was especially anxious that the Maryland settlement own Garroway and Fish-town, sites less than twenty miles above Harper. The latter, once the habitat of a leading English trader, the late Captain Spence, was noted for its fine harbor and bay.⁷⁷ But he received only moderate support for his plan thus to extend the colony's limits.⁷⁸

Early in 1842, in the same letter informing Latrobe of the safe arrival of the Harriet and the Catholic missionaries aboard, Russwurm reported a rumor that a French Squadron of three warships had visited Garroway and had purchased the surrounding country for a colony. It had also, Russwurm believed, acquired a small site near Garroway and had then passed on below Palmas to search for other locations suited

⁷⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, September 27, 1840.

⁷⁸MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, June 7, 1841.

for possible settlements.⁷⁹ The matter stood, without confirmation or disapproval, for more than a year, but the increased presence of French vessels along the coast and speculation respecting their intentions was inauspicious for the new operations of the Catholic mission.

Nevertheless, it was not until the following summer that Americans at home and colonists in Africa became truly alarmed at French activity. A French man-of-war stationed itself off Garroway and its crew marked out two sites for occupation, one for a stockade and the other for a town. Only some fifteen miles from the Cape, Garroway seemed a tragic loss to the American-founded colonies. Russwurm hurriedly purchased Captain Spence's deeds to Fishtown at a cost approximating three hundred dollars.⁸⁰ Latrobe, in an obvious play to halt French expansion, requested the American Navy Secretary, David Henshaw, to have the newly purchased harbor surveyed and charted by the African Squadron.⁸¹ Several months later, Commodore Matthew C. Perry, heading the American fleet off that coast, had this work done. The same Navy vessel which was dispatched to Fishtown to map the harbor participated in ceremonies raising the flag over the new acquisition by firing a twelve-gun salute.⁸²

⁷⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, February 12, 1842.

⁸⁰Ibid., Vol. XIV, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, June 26, 1843, July 31, 1843.

⁸¹MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to David Henshaw, Baltimore, October 7, 1843.

⁸²MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XV, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, February 13, 1844.

Perry's favorable impression of the American settlements⁸³ led to increased naval activity and to watchfulness in that part of the globe.

Concern about the fate of the coast between Capes Mesurado and Palmas not specifically owned by Americans was expressed on both sides of the Atlantic. Ralph Gurley, official spokesman for the American Colonization Society, argued that, unless the remaining territory were claimed, the French and the English would demand it. Unhappy that the French had a foothold at Garroway, Gurley was suspicious that the Catholic missionaries were somehow connected with it.⁸⁴ The idea that Roman agents in East Harper were linked with French activity along the coast was given greater credibility by the arrival of seven Catholic missionaries and three servants from France in December, 1843. Moreover, rumor had it that responsibility for the mission was to be transferred from the United States to a society in France.⁸⁵ The Liberia Herald, published in Monrovia, openly discussed relations between the Catholic missionaries at Palmas and French vessels off the coast. It reported, from information obtained through a supposedly reliable source, that the Catholic mission had authority to control one of the French men-of-war's movements. This weekly noted that one vessel did indeed constantly hover about the Cape for its protection and this

⁸³National Archives, Squadron Coast of Africa under Commodore M. C. Perry, April 10, 1843 to April 29, 1843, M. C. Perry to Henshaw, U. S. Frigate Macedonia, Monrovia, West Coast of Africa, January 4, 1844.

⁸⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIV, Gurley to Hall, Washington, August 25, 1843.

⁸⁵Ibid., Vol. XV, Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, January 12, 1844.

fact was termed mysterious and ominous. Implying that the priests might be in collusion with the natives, the paper recalled that, some time earlier, when the colonists and white Protestant missionaries had hourly expected a native assault, the Catholic missionaries had continued on excellent terms with the Africans.⁸⁶

Amid reports that the Catholic mission planned to make the Maryland settlement the center of its operations, but that the departed French priests were to be replaced with English-speaking ones and that Father Kelly had returned to the United States following a bitter dispute over payment to a colonist he had hired to work on construction of the mission, the Colonization Society's Board of Managers took up the issues.⁸⁷ Although it considered the governor fully empowered by the Ordinance for Temporary Government to prevent any unwanted persons from settling in the colony, it went a step further by adopting a resolution that no missionaries not responsible to some organized body in the United States were to be allowed to reside within the limits of Maryland territory.⁸⁸ Since allegiance of the Cape Palmas mission had been transferred to Bishop Barron, a French church leader, the new policy effectively prevented the return of non-American priests. Moreover, in consequence of Father Kelly's disruptive influence in the colony, American Catholic clergymen did not reapply for that field, French war

⁸⁶Liberia Herald, March 30, 1844, p. 3.

⁸⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XV, Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, January 12, 1844; Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, August 24, 1844.

⁸⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, November 13, 1844.

vessels nevertheless continued to visit Garroway five or six times a year. Although the site had supposedly been acquired to provide a coaling station, the French made no effort to develop it, their visits being merely inspection tours.⁸⁹

A contributing factor to the generally strained relations between colonizationists and missionaries and their respective boards was the former's touchiness respecting the latter's reports to American supporters. Sensitivity existed precisely because many of the charges against the colonists hit home. Reports of laziness among them, of uncivil treatment toward the natives, of immoral behavior in the community and of a host of other shortcomings were just as true now under the administration of a capable Negro governor as they had been earlier at the Monrovia settlements and during the infancy of Maryland in Liberia.

One of Governor Russwurm's first reports to his employers after taking over at Cape Palmas dealt with an agricultural situation which, with few exceptions, prevailed year after year:

As to the agriculture of the colony, the colonists generally have but little planted on their farms, as the season has been, so they say, a very poor one. . . . It requires but little cultivation, to demonstrate, that after having his house up, and his lands once under cultivation a man may maintain himself & family quite decently if he will only bestow a good portion of his labor on his farm himself, and not trust so much to native hirelings. . . . The colonists generally do not enter upon farming with that spirit & activity which we have been accustomed to witness in the U. S. There is a presentment beforehand in their minds, that a living cannot be made by it, & this increases every day, if they meet with the least discouragement. If the natives,

⁸⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XVI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, January 16, 1845.

who are fond of potatoes grub a few of their hills, or cattle happen to break into their enclosures, all is despair, and the labor of months is suffered to go to ruin.

Some allowance however must be made, as this is now the height of the dry season & all planting unless of cassadas, is almost in vain. The great demand for shingles, plank & scantling by the different missions, and the Agency, is also, I suppose the reason why the majority of the colonists are in the swamp almost daily.

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 . . . I know not an individual among them the colonists who labors one quarter part of his time on his lands.⁹⁰

At that time, early 1837, the colony possessed only four teams of oxen and most tilling was done with hoes. Russwurm secured some ploughs and yokes, attached them to the oxen, and ploughed about three acres of one public farm. It was a novel procedure to the natives and to many colonists as well, with the result that, forever afterwards, there was a great clamor in the colony for jacks and jennies. However, rather than using such work animals for agricultural purposes, the colonists generally put them to hauling timber from outlying woods.

Shortly after this, the visits of three warships, two American and one British, which bought large quantities of fresh produce and kept the women busy doing sailor laundry, paying in specie in both instances, encouraged many colonists to tackle their farm work with greater enthusiasm in hope of establishing regular commerce with passing ships.⁹¹ Their new resolves were, unfortunately, soon abandoned. The following harvest-season, the cry throughout the colony was of hard times. Russwurm stated that he had given out no garden seeds during the last planting because none had come recently from the United

⁹⁰Ibid., Vol. VI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, February 12, 1837.

⁹¹Ibid., George R. McGill to Latrobe, Harper, May 13, 1837.

States, but he had offered seed for peas, beans, corn, cotton and coffee. These were accepted and no more was heard from the recipients until they complained of scarcity. While sympathizing somewhat with the people, he concluded that nothing short of famine threat would drive them to agriculture. Russwurm noted that, the previous year, many colonists had made promises to be more enterprising, but, except for the Tubmans, who became renowned for their effort and success, little had been done.⁹²

The Agent was not alone in deploring the lack of industry among the colonists. Alexander Hance, returning to Cape Palmas early in 1838 after a visit to the United States, informed Latrobe that the situation in the colony was definitely less encouraging than when he had left it the year before. Food was scarce, even for the natives, and, since the colonists depended largely upon them, prices were whatever the Africans wanted to charge. Moreover, the natives had obtained so much tobacco in barter that they no longer accepted it as payment for provisions. Hance complained that prices had doubled during his absence.⁹³ A young colonist, O. A. Chambers, who taught school periodically, held that the settlers badly neglected their fields. The prospect of a cash payment for carpentry work had led them to turn their backs to farming. Like Russwurm, he was of the opinion that a little hardship would provide the proper antidote for such shortsightedness.⁹⁴

⁹²Ibid., Vol. VIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, April 26, 1838.

⁹³Ibid., Alexander Hance to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 7, 1838.

⁹⁴Ibid., Vol. IX, O. A. Chambers to Easter, Cape Palmas, July 10, 1838.

Sheer lack of food did actually turn many colonists back to tillage as their most worthwhile occupation. Acreage under cultivation was doubled the next season. A new species of potato, larger and more productive, was introduced from the public farm, and night guards were stationed throughout the colony to prevent the farms from being plundered by the natives.⁹⁵ The following spring was one of unusual plenty in the colony. To maintain settler interest in their farms, the colonial government offered prizes to the owners of farm lands in the best and most permanent state of cultivation. The highest premium, thirty dollars, went to Joshua Cornish, and the second award, twenty dollars, was shared by two other citizens.⁹⁶ A survey made late in 1839 showed a large variety of produce being grown. Corn, potatoes, okra, watermelons, cabbages, yams, tomatoes and many other vegetables and fruits were being cultivated on private farms. The Agency experimental station at Mount Tubman then embraced forty-one acres and that at Harper thirty-two.⁹⁷

The colonists not only displayed a marked aversion to cultivating their own land, but they sedulously avoided work on the public farms as well. Whereas the Colonization Society and its Agent considered these as a means of helping settlers work off their debts, providing food for colonists during periods of personal difficulty,

⁹⁵Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, November 1, 1838.

⁹⁶Ibid., Vol. XI, Report of the Committee on Agriculture to John Russwurm, Maryland in Liberia, January 1, 1840.

⁹⁷Ibid., Agricultural Survey of Maryland in Liberia, January 17, 1840.

punishing law breakers, and experimenting with crops likely to prove suitable for that climate, the citizens generally ignored it. They seldom expressed interest in meeting their obligations. They expected hand-outs from the Agency store during hard times and seldom took notice of the progress of the various plants which the Governor watched so closely for indications of success.

The item in which most hope was placed was cotton. The first attempt at its cultivation with seeds sent from the United States was a complete failure. Russwurm conjectured that the seed must have been defective or that, perhaps, it had been damaged by sea water en route.⁹⁸ A second trial with American seeds was likewise unsuccessful and Russwurm concluded that only African seed, yielding an inferior grade of cotton, could ever be used. Although the plants springing up from African seeds grew well, their pods were often ruined by small boring insects.⁹⁹ Russwurm then turned to sugar as a potential export crop. This venture, too, was never more than moderately successful and colonial authorities then laid more stress upon coffee growing. However, unless small trees were planted, the harvesting of coffee beans was a long-term project. Two trees which Russwurm planted on the public farm took some two and a half years to blossom. He later established a part of the farm as a nursery for nurturing coffee seeds into young plants for distribution among the colonists. Within two years, four thousand

⁹⁸Ibid., Vol. VI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, February 12, 1837.

⁹⁹Ibid., Vol. IX, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, November 1, 1838.

coffee trees had been set out, half of them on the public farm.¹⁰⁰

An important factor in the colony's agricultural backwardness was the poor ratio between male and female colonists. Although, at first, as with most new communities, the imbalance had been the other way, as the colony matured, the number of able-bodied men decreased in proportion to the number of dependent women and children. Early in his administration, Governor Russwurm complained of the women with children who arrived in the colony unaccompanied by husbands. He queried how they could be expected to be self-supporting after the initial six months. He pleaded, "We want men; we want families with a suitable head. Your colony is not strong enough yet, to receive any but able bodied men, without a great expense to the Society."¹⁰¹ His advice, alas, went unheeded. The next expedition, which left Baltimore in May, 1838, brought very few men to the colony. Russwurm again protested, warning the Colonization Society that, unless it wished the settlement overrun with female paupers and orphans, it must correct such imbalance.¹⁰²

One can only speculate at the reasons for appreciably more female volunteers than male. A prominent factor, undoubtedly, would be the slaveowners' calculation of the relative worth of male and female labor. To manumit a slavewoman with children possibly relieved the owner of

¹⁰⁰Ibid., Vol. IX, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, January 18, 1840 and June 10, 1840; Vol. XIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 7, 1842.

¹⁰¹Ibid., Vol. VIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, April 26, 1838.

¹⁰²Ibid., Vol. IX, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, July 7, 1838.

financial liability while, at the same time, soothing his conscience. Moreover, a male slave given his freedom had many more opportunities for employment at home than did women and thus had less incentive to move to a far-off land where his future was more doubtful than if he remained in the United States.

An interesting observation by Samuel Ford McGill, the Colonial Physician, suggests an additional explanation for the mounting redundancy of females. In his annual report covering colonial births and deaths, he noted that, from November, 1839 to November, 1840, there were seventeen babies born to the colonists. Of these, thirteen were female and four male. He reported further that, from his experience, this disproportion in favor of female children was generally true in Africa, especially among the natives.¹⁰³

Occasionally there arrived at Cape Palmas an expedition which consisted of almost unmanageable immigrants. One such gang came aboard the Niobe, which embarked from Baltimore in November, 1837, with eighty-five blacks. Upon landing in the colony, for the first two weeks, before fever brought them low, the greater part of them acted like madmen. The women abandoned their modesty and some of the men did likewise. Russwurm declared that "they were a scandal to our quiet town. . . ." In the first two months, they caused more trouble than all the rest of the citizens combined. Besides their general loose morality, many of them demanded the best food available, so much so that the Governor remarked that one would have thought them brought up

¹⁰³Ibid., Vol. XII, S. F. McGill to Latrobe, Harper, April 9, 1841.

in a parlor.¹⁰⁴ For years afterward, the Niobe affair was a subject of reproachful, but interesting, comment.

An imperfection characteristic of most colonists was their contemptuous attitude toward the natives. The prejudice against and hatred of the Africans was such that Russwurm predicted a war with the extermination of one party unless the Maryland citizenry tempered its bias. The farmers, whose lands were most exposed to the natives and who were generally also the most ignorant, proved the neighboring tribes' most vehement enemies. Although a majority of them could neither read nor write, they developed a propensity for interpreting the colony's laws, but, in any palaver with natives, they sought to settle points at issue with firearms rather than through legal means which would provide peaceful conclusion.¹⁰⁵ Latrobe, deploring colonial feelings towards the indigenes, cautioned that only prejudice, great moderation and sagacity on the part of the Agent and the leading citizens could offset the prevailing sentiment. He praised Russwurm for his judicious demeanor and encouraged him to continue his gentle, but firm, course as arbiter between the two groups.¹⁰⁶

When the Maryland colonizationists established their colony at Palmas, they made much of the settlement's agricultural basis, contrasting it with the American Colonization Society's Monrovia. Most of the

¹⁰⁴Ibid., Vol. VIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, April 26, 1838.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., Vol. XII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, September 22, 1841.

¹⁰⁶MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, December 18, 1841.

latter's deficiencies were attributed to the development of trade and the consequent neglect of agriculture. With experience, however, came greater understanding of the need for combined agrarian and commercial enterprise at the Cape. The real problem was not to preserve the farmer's innocence but, by keeping him from exclusive native trade, to foster a wise balance between the two sources of livelihood. The 1838 famine revived the idea of the colony possessing a boat which would enable civil authorities to seek food from a larger number of tribes and reduce their dependence upon the local Africans. Russwurm suggested the purchase of a small coaster of ten or twelve tons with a light draft which could be used to visit nearby points where food was more abundant than at the Cape.¹⁰⁷ Later that year, the Snetter incident, which brought the colony to the brink of a native war, impressed Russwurm, as it had Hall before him, with the importance of being less dependent upon the Palmas Africans. Moreover, placement of a light-weight cannon in the boat could deter native riots.¹⁰⁸

At the very time Russwurm was re-introducing the subject of a colony boat, the Colonization Society at home was seeking means of cutting its debt. The Managers began to look at colonial trade as a potential source of profit, but acknowledged that formal separation of the Society's political and commercial functions was necessary to preserve

¹⁰⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, April 28, 1838.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., Vol. IX, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, August 6, 1838.

its image.¹⁰⁹ Domestic problems delayed action, but Russwurm was issued a standing order to keep all commerce in Agency hands.¹¹⁰ Unfortunately, the missionaries in the settlement were already competing with the Society store. They replenished their stock by every vessel which called, whereas Russwurm had to depend upon the two or three yearly voyages from Baltimore. The missionaries consequently had better goods, which they could purchase with specie from home, and avoided dealing with the Agency store, while the colonists were forbidden to trade with passing merchants.¹¹¹ To improve Russwurm's position vis-à-vis the missionaries, he was authorized to spend up to two thousand dollars a year for articles from the visiting traders, thus giving him a wider range of items to offer purchasers. But no further action was taken by the Maryland group to foster the colony's commercial development.¹¹² As debts at home compelled the Society to reduce its commitments, Russwurm turned to bartering palm oil in exchange for trade goods.

In the spring of 1840, Russwurm, bitten by the bug accompanying a few successful business ventures, purchased in his official capacity a small craft of some six tons. It could carry only sixteen barrels of palm oil and he soon became dissatisfied with its capacity as he dreamed of profits which could be realized for the colony with a large schooner.

¹⁰⁹MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, March 26, 1838.

¹¹⁰Ibid., Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, May 7, 1838.

¹¹¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, April 28, 1838.

¹¹²MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, November 20, 1838.

He urged Latrobe not to abandon the idea of a commercial agency, for the palm oil trade was steadily increasing. Moreover, the death of Captain Spence, whose factory lay ten miles to the windward, left a vacuum which Russwurm wished to fill. He argued, "I see no obstacle in the way but the want of an efficient Agent and funds: money is made daily in the Palm Oil trade, and why should not the Society come in for snacks/?_7"¹¹³

The following winter, he was able to acquire a forty-ton vessel from the Spence estate. Naming the schooner the Latrobe, he first had to send it to Monrovia for what he estimated would be two hundred dollars worth of repairs.¹¹⁴ The work done there was, unfortunately, so poor that it had to be done over again at Harper by carpenters who knew nothing of shipbuilding. Russwurm discovered, moreover, that he lacked a sufficient number of men to sail both the Latrobe and the Doctor, as he called the smaller boat. He consequently sold the Doctor to two colonists for 1140 gallons of palm oil on a credit of six months. Without a master for the Latrobe, he felt obligated to sell it as well.¹¹⁵

In the short time that the colony owned one or both of the bottoms, business ventures varied in success. Other visitors to the coast recognized, as did Russwurm, the money to be made in palm oil and

¹¹³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, June 10, 1840.

¹¹⁴Ibid., Vol. XII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Agency House, Cape Palmas, March 12, 1841.

¹¹⁵Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, September 22, 1841.

and camwood. But both were in abundant supply and export prices were soon driven down, making the business less lucrative. Moreover, other traders had an advantage over Russwurm in securing palm oil and camwood in that they could offer rum and other items of wider appeal than what the Governor had at his disposal.¹¹⁶ During this brief span, the colony enjoyed unprecedented prosperity and peace, with the colonists experiencing success on their farms and living in relative harmony with the natives. But all in all, while it was a sound idea, vessel ownership at that particular time was not especially beneficial to the colony. The Managers, preoccupied at home with trying to keep the colonization movement alive and avoiding the necessity of transferring the colony to some other authority, watched the ups and downs of colonial trade with scarcely an idea of how to develop the settlement's commercial potential. It was at this time, the fall of 1840, that Society officials hired Doctor James Hall as their general agent in Baltimore. Engaged successfully in trade along the African coast since the close of his service in Maryland colony in 1836, he was commonly regarded as the one man capable of redeeming colonization.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶Ibid., May 31, 1841.

¹¹⁷MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 12, 1840.

CHAPTER VI

EMERGING COLONIAL INDEPENDENCE

The underlying theme of the Maryland Society's administration of its colony in the 1840's was the gradual lessening of ties binding it to the founding institution. Ordinances and laws were increasingly designed to force the settlement to attain greater self-sufficiency and mounting responsibility. Not only were the colonists conditioned to expect greater self-government; colonizationists back home found the Society's Annual Reports speaking increasingly of the colony's future. Thus, for instance, in 1842, supporters were told, "The Board believe that the colony in a few years will be wholly independent of aid from this country,--capable to defray the cost of its civil list--military defences, and internal improvements. . . ."¹

The impetus for steps in the direction of autonomy actually came from sources outside Society control. By 1840, many Americans were sufficiently irritated at Great Britain over a variety of grievances to threaten war. At issue were: the Maine boundary line, control of the Oregon country, and the right of British

¹Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers to the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1842), p. 11.

cruisers to search American vessels off the West African coast for slaves. The Board of Managers, fearing hostilities, adopted "A Declaratory Ordinance, touching the sovereignty of Maryland in Liberia," clarifying the relationship between Society and colony. Claiming that the colonial government was as legitimate, sovereign and independent as any other in the world, the Board designated it free of all authority not provided for in its 1833 constitution. The residents were represented as owing allegiance to that administration and not to the United States or any other nation.²

To supporters of the Society at home, the Board explained its reasons for the new ordinance:

The Colony is not the property of a corporation created by Maryland, or of citizens of the State, and, therefore, cannot be seized and held in the event of a war, to which the United States might be party, as property of a belligerent. The nationality of the Colony depends upon the occupancy of the soil by the organized community for which it and the eminent domain was purchased from the aboriginal inhabitants. The agency of the Maryland State Colonization Society in its affairs is not a matter to affect its character in the eyes of the rest of the world. It is well known that the United States, the nation from which its people emigrated, lay no claim to it; and the rest of the world can only know it as the germ of a nation struggling into existence under circumstances entitling it to the sympathies of all mankind.³

The fear which produced this declaration was that, in any war between Britain and America, the West African settlements would

²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, February 2, 1841.

³Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1845), p. 9.

be seized by the British under pretext that they were American colonies. Latrobe believed that the British were anxious to acquire as much of that coast as possible in order to multiply markets for their manufactures. Society action was designed to serve notice of the neutral character of all the American-founded enclaves.⁴

Fortunately, these several Anglo-American disputes were all settled amicably. The Declaratory Ordinance, nevertheless, was the beginning of the nationhood process. As already seen, Governor Russwurm, highly esteemed by his employers, was repeatedly sustained by them in his controversies with both missionaries and colonists. He was not infrequently asked for advice in formulating policies and establishing the colony's practices. His generally judicious and tactful handling of questions, as well as his even-natured administration, won approbation from most colonists, from visitors along the coast, and from colonizationists at home who were anxious for the success of a Negro governor.

The increasing population at Maryland in Liberia, the growing number of vessels putting in at Cape Palmas, and mission station activities, with resultant enlarged responsibility of dealing with them, made it imperative that the governor be given greater authority and discretion. The trip between Baltimore and Africa was still about a six weeks' sail either direction. Experience taught both Russwurm and the Board of Managers that the long interval between the initiation of a conflict in the colony, such as the interpretation

⁴MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, John Latrobe to T. S. Alexander, Esq., State Colonization Rooms, April 24, 1841.

of laws regarding military duty for missionaries, and the settlement of the disagreement by discussion among interested parties at home regularly intensified antagonism between the parties in Africa. Moreover, the nature of many of the disputes suggested that the missionaries, at least, viewed Russwurm's position lightly.

To underscore its faith in the work of a Negro governor to give him more control over emigrants and others entering the colony, and to put the latter a little closer to eventual independence, the Board of Managers, in January 1843, adopted "An Ordinance for the Better Maintenance of the Authority of the Government of Maryland in Liberia." All white persons over fourteen years of age, save those connected with visiting military or commercial vessels not remaining at Cape Palmas over ten days, were ordered to register with the Colonial Secretary and to sign a pledge of allegiance to the constitution and the colony's laws. They were to promise, moreover, to conduct themselves "respectfully towards the said Government, and peaceably towards the citizens and inhabitants of said territory." Violators of the new law were subject to arrest and then banishment from the colony by the first available ship. All arriving colored persons, excepting children under fourteen, who expected to remain at the settlement more than a month, were required to register that intention with the Colonial Secretary and to subscribe to local laws. Failure to do so would result in deportation. The cost of removing either class of law

breaker was to come from the seizure and auctioning of his property.⁵ The new ordinance strengthened the governor's hand in applying other laws. It was the first major step in according the colony political independence.

Financial embarrassment at home and the possibility that, at any time, the colony might be thrown upon its own resources, necessitated the gradual extension of economic independence as well. Early in Russwurm's administration, he was urged to economize where possible. Latrobe, endeavoring to keep the Society solvent, reminded the Agent that the United States was peopled by emigrants under circumstances far less favorable than those then attending the colonizing of Maryland in Liberia. The Pilgrims had no one at home to pay their officials and to send supplies.⁶ The first efforts at building economic independence were those connected with the development of an export staple. Cotton, coffee and sugar all failed in turn to materialize as money-making crops. Handling palm oil and camwood was undependable. Nevertheless, trade in a number of agricultural products did bring small incomes to many of the colonists, and missionaries paid for the citizens' labor with manufactured articles brought from home or purchased from visiting ships with coin.

⁵MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 24, 1843.

⁶MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to John Russwurm, Baltimore, November 21, 1839.

In reality, it was commercial activity by the missionary establishments which initiated moves in the colony toward economic autonomy. As the most profitable immediate source of livelihood, the missions were desirable employers. Their need for plank and other building supplies plus their wide assortment of trade articles often induced colonists to abandon serious effort on their farms for hacking down trees and hauling them from the jungle. Payment for such work was, however, a sore point. Missionaries, covering the colonists' labor with trade items, set higher prices upon their goods than did the Agency store about which the colonists complained chronically. In July, 1841, the colony's Governor and Council, prompted by a citizen petition, passed an act restricting trade within the settlement. With certain exceptions, only citizens were thereafter to be allowed to buy, sell or exchange articles as a business or in return for labor rendered. Missionaries were authorized to barter trade goods with the natives for provisions, to pay the salaries of persons connected with their establishments in goods or provisions sent out from the United States, and to receive from the colonists goods or money in payment of mission services.⁷

The missionaries naturally protested, contending that the legislation deprived them of the right of paying colonists in goods. Governor Russwurm denied that they had any such a right: "If the Society with small means, can barely keep her head above

⁷Copy of the Act in MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, Rev. John A. Vaughan to Latrobe, New York, December 16, 1841.

water, & support the poor & sick--make roads & defray 100 other incidental expenses, can it be reasonable for any other Society to claim equal rights in their colony?"⁸ The Board of Managers, about to give serious considerations to permanent commercial regulations, vetoed the recent legislation. Noting that the citizens could remedy the undesirable payment system by refusing to work for any person with whom mutually agreeable terms could not be arranged, the Board considered the new measures as a hindrance to the establishment of more comprehensive codes. An anchorage duty for ships visiting Cape Palmas was, however, allowed to remain in force.⁹

Nearly two years elapsed before the Board adopted a revenue ordinance. Latrobe, advising George W. Dobbins, a Society Manager now chairing an ad hoc committee to propose additional policies for colonial administration, gave top priority to the institution of a tariff system. He held that the colony, already nine years old, should begin contributing towards the payment of its own civil list and its operating expenses. While little money would be produced at the outset, revenues would increase with the settlement's growth. In lieu of the anchorage fee, Latrobe proposed a lighthouse duty based upon the tonnage of ships entering the harbor. It was an opportune time to create such a duty since a lighthouse had just been erected off the Cape. Recognizing that the Society's

⁸Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, Cape Palmas, September 22, 1841.

⁹MSSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, December 13, 1841.

original policy of keeping the colony's trade in its own hands had been violated by several storekeepers and traders at Palmas, Latrobe thought it better to legalize their operations than endeavoring to break them up. He recommended in consequence that a rather high license fee be established for merchants dealing at the Cape.¹⁰

The Dobbins Committee recommendations were almost a duplication of Latrobe's views. Declaring that the Society should aim at the erection of a free and independent nation, living under the doctrines of the Christian faith and financially self-dependent, Dobbins' group likened the colony's growth to that of a person undergoing the stress of maturity from infancy to adulthood. It reiterated Latrobe's belief that the time had come for the colonists to stand upon their own feet. The easiest method of teaching them how to accept responsibility for their own welfare was the imposition of light import duties. The Committee suggested that a uniform ten per cent ad valorem rate be established for all goods landed in the colony. Since the prices of goods were at least one hundred per cent higher in Africa than at their points of origin, the ad valorem rate would actually be only a five per cent one. Recommendations concerning licensing fees were aimed at discouraging colonists from becoming traders rather than agriculturalists. For the lighthouse duty, a rate of eight cents per

¹⁰MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to George W. Dobbins, Baltimore, October 7, 1843.

ton on vessels stopping at the Cape was recommended.¹¹

The outcome of Latrobe's advice and the Dobbins Committee study was "An Ordinance for the Support of Government in the Colony of Maryland in Liberia, and for Other Purposes." It provided for the appointment by the governor of a revenue collector whose compensation would be a commission of from two to five per cent of the money he accumulated in carrying out the law. Excepting men-of-war, all vessels were to be registered by their masters within twenty-four hours after anchoring at the Cape. The lighthouse duty, the ten per cent tax on the invoice prices of goods imported, save for the property of immigrants from the United States and supplies sent out by the Colonization Society, and substantial license fees for persons trading in the colony were all adopted. The Revenue Collector was given broad powers to enforce the regulations and to impose stiff fines for attempted evasions of the ordinance. The Governor was directed to erect a Customs House and, with the Council, to work out regulations which might be found necessary to enforce the law. The Court of Monthly Sessions was given jurisdiction over most of the ordinance.¹² Unfortunately, only armed might could realistically enforce the decrees and everyone knew that the colony lacked sufficient strength to do so.

James Hall, transmitting news of the tariff to Russwurm,

¹¹MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, November 2, 1843.

¹²Ibid.

admitted personal doubt that it would be altogether suitable or permanent. Unable to suggest a better means of raising revenue, the General Agent conceded that it would, at least, form the basis for a beneficial system of raising money for government use.¹³

While the Board in Baltimore was pondering the colonial tariff question, the Governor and Council were drawing up their own proposals. Early in February 1844, before the revenue ordinance had been sent to Russwurm, the colonial government recommended that a sales tax of one per cent be collected on all foreign merchandise sold in the settlement. Annual license fees of \$21 and \$10.20 were to be exacted from importers and retailers, respectively. The anchorage duties were to remain the same.¹⁴ The low rates reflected Russwurm's opinion that the colonists were too poor and foreign and domestic trade too trifling to bear higher charges.¹⁵

Receipt in the colony of the Board's revenue ordinance initiated a wave of protest. Russwurm reiterated his belief that the area's commerce was so inconsiderable that it needed every encouragement possible to induce trading vessels to stop while sailing along the coast. He contended, moreover, that the Collector could never know if he were levying the correct amounts upon goods, for it was a practice of sea captains to carry two and even three

¹³MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, James Hall to Russwurm, Baltimore, February 22, 1844.

¹⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XV, Extract from the Minutes of the Agent and Council, [Harper], February 12, 1844.

¹⁵Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, February 13, 1844.

different invoices for the same goods. Both the ten per cent ad valorem and the eight cent per ton lighthouse duty were assailed as being detrimental to the welfare of the colonists to whom the additional cost would be passed. The Governor, admitting doubt as to the kind of money to be received in payment for duties, asked for specific instructions in this matter.¹⁶

The Managers were plainly irked by the colonial attitude. They contended, first, that the excise tax recommended by the citizens would be difficult to administer and would constitute a fruitful avenue for trouble, whereas the import tax was simple to apply. The Board was also annoyed that the colonists should protest the ten per cent ad valorem rate. Latrobe, writing for his colleagues, noted that it actually would add only \$2.50 to a set of clothing sold for \$50 in Africa, since the standard one hundred per cent markup on goods would reduce the true ad valorem rate to five per cent. He asked, "Are not freedom and their present rights worth this much to the colonists?" As for the complaint that masters submitted false invoices, the Board averred that such dishonesty could not hurt the colonists, for, the lower the invoices, the lower the ultimate cost of items. Russwurm was directed to use his own discretion in receiving duties payments.¹⁷

To show its flexible nature, however, the Board, in November, 1844, suspended operation of the Revenue Ordinance until

¹⁶Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, August 24, 1844.

¹⁷MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, November 12, 1844.

January 1, 1850, and set up a schedule for gradually increasing the rates. Until January 1, 1847, the ad valorem duty was to be 5 per cent and from that date until January 1, 1850, 7½ per cent. The lighthouse duty was reduced from eight cents per ton to four, with the colonial administration given authority to raise it at any time.¹⁸ The following summer, both the Governor and the Colonial Physician reported that the revenue laws were working tolerably well. Both complained, however, that a better system of payment was necessary. Gold specie and camwood were the only means of paying the duties. Palm oil, the sole commodity which most of the citizens possessed for purchasing goods, was rejected because of its overabundance at that time. Obviously, trade was curtailed, for visiting merchants no more wanted palm oil than did the Cape government. Russwurm suggested that the colony now needed a paper currency redeemable in gold and camwood for circulation.¹⁹

The revised law was just as unpopular as the original legislation and the majority of the colonists opposed it.²⁰ Even more disconcerting was the lack of consensus in the colony regarding its application. Some traders, taking into consideration the one hundred per cent markup, insisted that the five per cent ad valorem duty set by the Board meant that the collector received but 2½

¹⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, November 13, 1844.

¹⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XVI, Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, June 9, 1845; Samuel F. McGill to Hall, Harper, June 8, 1845.

²⁰Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, March 7, 1845.

per cent on gross sales. While Russwurm staunchly defended his employers' injunction against such an excise duty, he found that nine-tenths of the masters refused to provide the invoice price of their goods. For two months, no duties were collected at all, and Russwurm finally ordered his collector to demand a fixed sum for each of the many trade articles entering the colony. For example, every one hundred pounds of gunpowder carried with it a duty of fifty cents and every new gun was subject to a tax of ten cents. Once more Russwurm appealed to the Board at home to remedy the situation. He suggested that a fixed duty equivalent to about five per cent ad valorem placed upon staples would be the only means of restoring peace in the colony.²¹

Perhaps more detrimental than the inability to apply the revised customs laws was the schism in the colonial government emerging over proper procedures to settle the matter. Samuel Ford McGill, the Colonial Physician, protested, first to the Governor and then to Latrobe, against the establishment of a fixed valuation on commodities generally sold at the Cape and an arbitrary assessment on other items. He argued that the duties now far exceeded what they would be by the computation provided for in the law and that the new method was contrary to the spirit and intention of that measure. McGill claimed that the law had not been given a fair trial. He defended the shipmasters' reluctance to produce invoices on the ground that their refusal

²¹Ibid., Vol. XVII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, May 13, 1846.

represented fear that the contents would become publically known.

McGill was personally interested in the issue because of recent new responsibilities thrown upon him. His father, George McGill, had died a short time before, leaving his son the administrator of an estate consisting entirely of his business. The colonists' poverty precluded the sale of his merchandise at reasonable prices and necessitated the continuence of the enterprise until creditors could be paid, the widow endowed and the large number of dependent heirs provided with small bequests. Once the administrator straightened out the complications of his father's affairs, he turned the business over to a younger brother who maintained and extended it. Doctor McGill contended that successful operation of the family-owned business gave employment to numerous persons who would otherwise be dependent upon him for support. He was complaining upon the ground that the illegal extraction of a single dollar was an injury to him. By staunchly declaring in private to Governor Russwurm that the latter's proceedings were illegal and unjust, he incurred Russwurm's everlasting displeasure. McGill resolved that, since the Governor viewed him as a leader of the disaffected citizenry, he would mind his own affairs and let the Agent work out problems by himself.²²

Taking up the painful problem rending the colony, the Society, in November, 1846, came out with a second revision of the

²²Ibid., S. F. McGill to Latrobe, Harper, September 6, 1846; McGill to Hall, Harper, December 17, 1847.

original revenue law passed three years before. Concurring fully with Russwurm's views, the Board now imposed specific duties amounting to about five per cent of their value upon a wide range of articles and gave the colonial agent and Council authority to establish rates on items not enumerated in the new schedule. As before, the belongings of arriving immigrants and the cargo sent by the Colonization Society were exempt.²³ Russwurm was praised for adhering to the Board's wishes in his refusal to permit the establishment of an excise duty.²⁴ With the promulgation of this third revenue decree, colonial clamor over this matter died down. A petition about to be sent the Board was rescinded²⁵ and the citizenry turned its attention to another object of irritation, medical care.

Heretofore, all colonists had received free medical services and medicines without restriction from the time they had arrived in Africa. In November, 1846, the Board decided upon a measure in the health realm designed further to promote economic self-dependency in the settlement. It declared that, henceforth, new immigrants would receive gratuitous services only during the first year of their residence at the Cape. All other persons who could afford to pay were now obliged to become private patients of the colonial physicians, of whom there were now two, McGill and

²³MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, November 28, 1846.

²⁴MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, November 30, 1846.

²⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XVIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, January 23, 1847.

another young man, Demsey Fletcher, who had been trained in the United States under McGill's late mentor, Doctor Edward E. Phelps. To obtain free advice and medicine, older settlers must now secure orders from their select men or governor.²⁶ Not surprisingly, new furor raged through the colony. Russwurm dismissed it lightly and urged the Board to ignore such protests, for, he said, the people had been made children so long that they were spoiled.²⁷ Demsey Fletcher, new on the job, likewise reported the immature reaction toward the measure. With the advice of several leading men in the community, he had most medicines priced at ten cents a dose and the physician's fee at from five to seventy-five cents per visit, according to the financial circumstances of the patient. On an average, the ailing citizens got the medicine at a quarter its cost, yet they circulated a petition which declared that such prices would impoverish them.²⁸

Unfortunately and unwittingly, the timing of the medical issue was inauspicious. During 1846, unprecedented illness afflicted man and beast. Nearly all the livestock perished from distemper and mortality among the colonists and the natives was higher than at any previous period of the settlement's history.²⁹ The summer of 1847

²⁶MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, November 30, 1846.

²⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XVIII, Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, Marcy 1, 1847.

²⁸Ibid., Demsey R. Fletcher to [the Board of Managers], Harper, March 3, 1847.

²⁹Ibid., Vol. XVII, S. F. McGill to Latrobe, Harper, July 12, 1846; Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, July 11, 1846.

saw a repetition of great sickness at the Cape. Fletcher estimated that almost three-fourths of the colonists were seriously affected, although the mortality was slight. He attributed the difference in the number of deaths to a deficiency of medicine the previous year. He diligently visited from home to home, supplying medicine without any hope of compensation. The general scarcity of provisions in the settlement at that time prompted him to beg the Board for an arrangement whereby the colonists, whom he characterized as positively too poor to pay for medicine, could receive free treatment.³⁰ The Board took no action. The following spring, McGill, returning after a visit to the United States, complained that he, too, was unable to get the colonists to pay a cent for medicines or professional services.³¹ This state of affairs continued indefinitely.

The development of a respected colonial judiciary which would become the court of last appeal, heretofore the Board of Managers, was a third major effort of the Society during the 40's. The inhabitants of Maryland in Liberia had always exhibited an interest in the Constitution and the Ordinance for Temporary Government. In fact, their propensity for scanning the documents and announcing their own interpretations of the laws had frequently resulted in some consternation and dissatisfaction among both colonists and natives. Periodically, the Managers in Baltimore received requests

³⁰Ibid., Vol. XVIII, Fletcher to [the Board of Managers] Harper, Cape Palmas, October 5, 1847.

³¹Ibid., S. F. McGill to Hall, Cape Palmas, March 28, 1848.

from self-styled legal experts for law books with which to bolster their reputation. Consequently, Governor Russwurm began asking for commentaries, such as Blackstone's, in order to contend with those who would resort to the authority of the written page to override his opinion. The whole idea was anathema to Latrobe. From the time, late in 1833, when he wrote the first legal instruments for the proposed Maryland settlement, he had avoided superimposing laws and precedents of other nations and ages. His correspondence is full of candid observations upon the uselessness of expecting the settlers to abide by the common law of Great Britain and the United States. The codes which Doctor Hall carried with him to Africa were intended to be, for the time being, the law of the land, excluding all other. Now, almost ten years after the founding of the colony, Latrobe reminded the Governor of the original purpose of his work. Commenting that the codes of all free governments contained certain great principles respecting rights of individuals and of property, Latrobe urged Russwurm to apply those principles already given the colony. If additional legal rules were necessary, then the judges and court should establish them on the basis of what appeared workable in the colony. Latrobe warned that permitting the colonists to be guided by Blackstone would be a sad mistake.³²

By the Ordinance for Temporary Government, the governor and two justices of the peace were to comprise the Court of Weekly

³²MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, November 4, 1843, April 24, 1846.

Sessions. All major civil and criminal cases fell within their jurisdiction. But experience showed that unpopular decisions such as those in the Snetter affair and the revenue controversy diminished the colonists' respect, not only for the men as judges, but of the governor as the Society's paid administrator. Fully aware of this phenomenon, Russwurm requested to be relieved of his responsibility as a presiding judge, holding that governors ought never to sit in that capacity if there were qualified individuals in the colony for these posts.³³

In May, 1847, the Board of Managers voted to separate the office of Judge of the Court of Monthly Sessions from that of governor. Hugh Davey Evans, a Baltimore attorney, was assigned the task of preparing an ordinance on the subject.³⁴ By it, the post of Chief Justice was created and the judicial duties of the governor were transferred to the incumbent of that post. He was to be appointed by the Colonization Society and was to hold office so long as he was on good behavior. The Chief Justice was to preside, not only over the court sessions held every four weeks, but also over a newly created Orphans Court which received jurisdiction in all matters pertaining to administrators, guardians and the assignees of insolvent debtors. Since there was then no properly qualified individual to fill this important new key position,

³³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XVIII, Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, March 1, 1847.

³⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, May 18, 1847.

the ordinance was suspended until one could be found.³⁵

During preparation of the ordinance, Evans and the Board debated upon the selection of the Chief Justice. Deciding that no one presently at the Cape was suitable, they chose a Baltimorean, William Cassell. Although he possessed no legal training, he was well-known for his integrity and common sense. Evans discussed the character and principles of the new system with Cassell and was fully satisfied that, though unlettered in the law, Cassell was a better appointment than certain experienced men in the colony who were also known as rascals.³⁶ In May, 1848, Cassell, who had gone to Africa first in 1833 to help found the Maryland colony but had returned home after his wife's death, arrived at Palmas and successfully passed the acclimating period. In November, he received formal appointment as the colony's Chief Justice.³⁷

Among the numerous reasons why the Maryland Society began loosening the ties with the colony in the 1840's was the increased attention which the United States Navy was paying to Africa. When the numerous colonization groups at length convinced the Van Buren administration of the wisdom in dispatching more than an occasional vessel to the

³⁵Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia; with an Appendix of Precedents (2nd ed.; Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1847), pp. 148-51.

³⁶MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. III, Hall to Russwurm, Baltimore, February 1, 1848; Letters, Vol. XVIII, S. F. McGill to Hall, Cape Palmas, March 28, 1848.

³⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XVIII, William Cassell to Hall, Cape Palmas, May 5, 1848; Cassell to Latrobe, Harper, November 23, 1848.

coast, the Navy began to take that command more seriously. For years before this, complaints respecting the use of the American flag and forged papers by assorted foreign slavers to avoid search by British cruisers and periodic claims that the British, in their zeal to end the infamous traffic in blacks, had infringed upon the rights of American merchants doing legitimate business along the coast, had created tension between Britain and the United States. Finally, in August, 1842, the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, originally known as the Treaty of Washington, was negotiated. Resolving a number of the serious issues between the two nations, several articles dealt with mutual efforts to suppress the slave trade. Each nation agreed to prepare, equip and maintain in service on the coast of Africa a sufficient and adequate squadron carrying not less than eighty guns to enforce already existing laws against what had, for years, been an international crime.

Americans interested in Africa favored the presence of their navy off the western coast. Matthew C. Perry, commodore of the African Squadron from April, 1843 until April, 1845, was impressed with the continent's legitimate trade potential and lamented that, thus far, the Americans had not assumed a leading role in developing it. He held that the value of legal African commerce was far greater than commonly believed since traders netted huge profits by exchanging goods of interior quality for commodities such as gold

³⁸United States, Treaties and other International Acts of the United States of America, Vol. IV, ed. Hunter Miller (6 vols.; Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1934), 369.

dust, ivory and timber which brought high prices in European and American markets. Perry attributed the pre-eminent position enjoyed by British and French captains to the more frequent appearance of their men-of-war off the west coast. He expected his small fleet of three ships to provide the same favorable circumstances for the heretofore unprotected American traders operating in the area.³⁹

The first task of the recently enlarged American African Squadron was the punishment of the natives at Berrily and Sinoe for the massacre of the master and crew of the Mary Carver, a vessel out of Boston, and the murder of a mate aboard the Edward Barley. But Perry soon found that, in most cases in which natives purportedly committed some outrage against American and other vessels, the Africans had been at least as much sinned against as sinning. To Secretary Upshur, Perry confided that home folk heard only one side of the story. What they did not know was that visiting captains commonly mistreated the natives, firing into towns and fishing boats and creating other mischief. The Mary Carver episode was a genuine case of native assault upon a well-stocked ship but, in the death of the Edward Barley mate at Sinoe, the American had initiated the quarrel.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, aside from punishing the

³⁹National Archives, African Squadron Letters: Cruise of Matthew C. Perry, April 10, 1843 to April 29, 1845, Perry to Upshur, U. S. Ship Saratoga, Porto Grande, September 5, 1843; Perry to David Henshaw, U. S. Frigate, Macedonia at sea, January 29, 1844.

⁴⁰Ibid., Perry to Upshur, U. S. Ship Saratoga, Porto Grande, September 5, 1843.

natives at Berrily, Perry proposed to "proceed as far south as provisions will allow, touching at all slave & trading places, with a double view of intimidating the natives and conciliating those who are inclined to be friendly, [sic] for this reason I have thought it advisable to keep the three ships together for a time."⁴¹

Perry's arrival upon the African scene and provisions of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty which gave assurance that regular Navy patrol between the American-founded settlements would continue through the foreseeable future prompted Russwurm's happy acclaim that a new era had opened for the colony. He noted a strikingly new vigor in the citizenry and hoped for an all-around improved situation.⁴² His remarks were an understatement for, only two months previously, arrival of the Squadron probably saved the Maryland colony from near-extinction.

In November, 1843, King Freeman, the difficult but usually placable chieftain closest to Harper, called together all the Kings and Headmen from Fishtown, on the windward, to the Cavally River, on the leeward, for a palaver ostensibly to settle old problems bearing upon their Grebo country. A fortnight later, representatives converged upon Russwurm for a trade palaver. At issue was the desire of the natives substantially to raise

⁴¹Ibid., Perry to Henshaw, U. S. Frigate Macedonia, Mesurado Roads, November 22, 1843.

⁴²MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XV, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, January 12, 1844.

current prices on rice and palm oil. Russwurm's refusal to meet their demands brought an embargo on all trade between the two parties and a non-intercourse order by Freeman against any African working for, siding or assisting the colonists. Russwurm instructed all citizens to arm themselves and to be prepared for an attack by combined native forces from miles around.

He notified the King that the non-intercourse order was equivalent to a declaration of war. The situation remained tense for several days and then Commodore Perry's squadron, visiting the various settlements on its way to Berrily, unexpectedly appeared upon the horizon. After firing a thirteen-gun salute, Perry staged a palaver with the Grebos. Impressing upon the natives that they could ask what prices they pleased for their produce, but that there must be no further embargo and non-intercourse measures, the Commodore cautioned them not to be so foolish as again to create a threatening situation.⁴³

Samuel Ford McGill, more certain than Russwurm that an all-out Grebo war against the colony was inevitable before the Squadron's arrival, informed Latrobe:

We feel assured that their timely arrival has alone saved us from a cruel and perhaps protracted war with the Grebo Tribe. We had made every preparation for it in the best manner that our means would admit, and would doubtless have triumphed in the end, but from the manner in which our colonist[s] are scattered and exposed without stockades or fortifications we must have sustained great loss both of life and property. The Squadron remained here

⁴³Ibid., Vol. XIV, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, December 23, 1843.

several days [,] promptly offered us assistance, and finally settled our difficulties. . . . We trust it will prove but the introduction to a more extended and continuous protection of our colonies on this coast.⁴⁴

Although the colony was saved from attack, Perry's cannon salute had the unexpected result of initiating inter-tribal war. Some bush natives, hearing the firing, supposed that hostilities had opened. A party of some forty armed men appeared at Mount Tubman several hours later, evidently on the way to plunder Cape Town, King Freeman's residence. For refusing to lay down their arms as they passed the colony's stockade, they were fired upon by the colonists and two men killed. The King acted as mediator for Russwurm and, although he prevented retaliation by the bush people, war broke out between the Grahways and the Half Cavallys who, besides having long-standing grievances between them, disagreed over Freeman's proceedings. Strife between these two interior groups continued, off and on, for five years, sometimes impeding Russwurm's travel inland and often interfering with trade.⁴⁵

Perry, having settled one controversy and inadvertently begun another, proceeded on down the coast to Berrily, forty-odd miles below Cape Palmas. He there executed several of the men connected with the Mary Carver murders and ransacking, and burned five native

⁴⁴Ibid., Vol. XV, S. R. McGill to Latrobe, Harper, January 13, 1844.

⁴⁵Ibid., Vol. XIV, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, December 23, 1843; Vol. XVI, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, March 7, 1845; Vol. XVIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 26, 1849.

towns.⁴⁶ His tour of all the American-established colonies left him with a favorable impression of their goals and actual accomplishments. He noted that, at all settlements along the coast, regardless of the nation backing them, the citizens were more inclined to commerce and small trade than to agricultural pursuits. He concluded that the experiment of establishing free colored people from the United States upon the African coast had succeeded beyond the expectations of the most optimistic colonizationists. Characterizing Joseph J. Roberts, the new Negro governor of Liberia, and Russwurm as intelligent and valuable men, Perry put them forth as proof that blacks were capable of self-government.⁴⁷ Colonization Society officers in Baltimore were already of that conviction; the expectation that the United States Navy would afford a protective wing over the colony merely provided justification for steps already taken to place the settlement upon its own footing and the impetus to give it even a greater degree of independence.

The actions of the Maryland Society's Managers in extending to the colony greater political, economic and judicial authority and responsibility unfortunately failed to call forth greater efforts from the colonists to prove themselves worthy of this additional trust. Except following periods of famine, the colonists

⁴⁶Ibid., Vol. XIV, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, December 23, 1843.

⁴⁷National Archives, African Squadron Letters, op. cit., Perry to Henshaw, U. S. Frigate Macedonia, Monrovia, January 4, 1844.

persisted in their aversion to agricultural enterprise. They remained chronic complainers who made life thoroughly miserable for Governor Russwurm and seldom hesitated to protest over his head to the Baltimore Board. A typical petition of grievances was drawn up in October, 1844. A chief point of contention was the number of citizens employed by the government. The residents complained that no more than a third of them could work for the Agency and that the soil was too poor to support the rest of them. Moreover, even when they did have produce to market, there was seldom anyone to purchase it. They insisted that they had tried to cultivate the soil to the best of their ability, but that they could not grow enough to feed and clothe themselves. Charging that the Colonization Society had the responsibility of ameliorating their suffering, the petitioners asked, "What would be the state of your flourishing country today if it hadnt [sic]been for the labor of the colored man[?]" Asserting, in addition, that the inducements offered upon emigration were deceiving, they queried, "What is liberty without bread or something in place of it[?].--its a very distressing & grievous [sic]situation to place a parcel of people in a poor desolate land far from the land which gave us birth & say to us it is the land of our forefathers. Had we being [sic]sent to the land of our forefathers with what we have earn[ed] for many of you Gentlemen[,] only small sum of it or a part of it[,] we would [be] better able to contend with deprivation, & suffering of this country. . . ."48

⁴⁸Ibid., Vol. XVI, A Petition to the Md. St. Col. Society, West Africa, Cape Palmas, October 24, 1844.

Russwurm's explanation to the Board, deploring the colonists' attitude, noted that individuals who had lived in the community for as many as ten years expected employment from the Society just as much as the newcomers. The older residents, in fact, considered that they had been deprived of their rights if they were not accorded government employment. He did corroborate the petitioners' assertion that visiting vessels remained in port for such a short time that the inhabitants had little chance to supply them with fresh produce or to do their laundry. Russwurm concluded, "We begin almost to despair with such colonists as the majority of ours are--depending wholly on what the society can do for them."⁴⁹

Nearly five years later, a more comprehensive petition, again accompanied by Russwurm's reply, reached the Board. On the face of it, the contents appeared markedly different from the earlier one, but, underlying the colonists' requests, was the same preference for non-agricultural work. First, the citizenry requested cancellation of more than \$1,100 debt incurred by their recent construction of a new treasury office and jail. It asked, secondly, that the annual license fees for importers and retailers be reduced. Terming the charges exorbitant and a chief impediment to their welfare, the petitioners claimed that they suffered from the consequent monopoly of trade enjoyed by a few. They likewise believed that increased trade, hence added revenues, would counteract the decreased sum coming from less expensive licenses. The third

⁴⁹Ibid., Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, October 27, 1844.

subject concerned their paper currency. Claiming that it presently was of no use and of but little value, the inhabitants asked for a new issue based upon permanent articles such as palm oil, ivory or camwood. They argued that the existing currency was worth less than when it had been issued and that it was inadequate for keeping a family fed and clothed.⁵⁰ Joshua Stewart, newly elected Vice-agent, held that the licenses were so high and the Society's paper money of so little value that anyone wishing to enter into business had to assume risks which few could afford.⁵¹

As usual, some of the complaints were justified, but most were not. The Agent and Council had voted to construct the two new buildings at the colony's expense. When costs exceeded estimates and Russwurm used Society funds to cover the balance, the citizens accused the Agent of running the settlement into debt without consulting them. Their request for cancellation of the \$1,100 debt reflected an unwillingness to assume even partial responsibility for their own welfare and, at the next election, they turned out of office every man connected with it. The colonists' request that licenses be reduced to \$20 and \$10, respectively, from the Society's annual rate of \$100 and \$25, expressed their desire to participate in business ventures. Russwurm lamented

⁵⁰Ibid., Vol. XVIII, The Citizens of Md. in Liberia, West Africa, to the Hon. Bd. of Mgrs. of the Md. State Col. Soc., [Harper], April, 1849.

⁵¹Ibid., Joshua H. Stewart to Hall, Cape Palmas, April 28, 1849.

that he was at his wit's end to devise further steps to infuse the colonists with more of an agricultural spirit. Insisting that they could raise rice if they tried and noting that the few families which devoted most of their time to farming made out better than the rest, the Governor stated his belief that "the wrong ideas which they imbibe about 'liberty' is a hindrance to their engaging vigorously in any undertaking in which patience and perserverence are necessary."⁵²

Russwurm scarcely noted the currency issue for, when he had suggested in 1841 that a little specie be sent out in order to replace paper, the Board had informed him that it could provide no better currency system than that existing. He had eventually come to believe that the imperfections of the existing system were preferable to no currency at all. He now felt completely indifferent to the matter and was willing for leading colonists to try their hand at introducing a better method.⁵³

The Board of Managers, studying this latest petition closely, stood firm for the time being on the repayment of the debt, but agreed to submit the license and currency matters to a referendum at the next colonial election. If the colonists, in a clear majority, voted against existing rates, the Governor and Council were to set up new reduced fees. If the citizens voted against the currency,

⁵²Ibid., Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 26, 1849.

⁵³Ibid., Vol. XII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, September 22, 1841; Vol. XVIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 17, 1849.

Russwurm was to cease issuing it and to redeem it as it was paid into the Agency store.

Aside from these specific instructions, Latrobe directed Russwurm to begin circumscribing Society operations. Relief and employment were to be curtailed as much as possible. The Governor was advised further that it was time for the colonists to stand alone. The Board, in fact, took their latest petition as evidence of the citizens' ability to be more self-supporting and, since it had yielded on two issues, it now wished to limit its operations. Speaking for the Board, Latrobe stated that it desired in this respect to imitate the American Colonization Society which, having granted total independence to Liberia in 1847, now did little more than forward emigrants there.⁵⁴

The Board's conciliatory reply wilted the colonists' sturdy protest and put them into a state of remorse. Russwurm noted that the managerial answer sadly divided their ranks. Samuel Ford McGill, grown arrogant with success and wealth, reported that there was a general backing out on the part of the sixty-six signers: "The blockheads seem to imagine that they have acted criminally in signing it. 'Tis impossible for them to stand up and boldly request what they deem to be for their benefit without apprehensions of the disapprobation of the Board. It is perhaps well enough in this instance as their complaints were childish. It is not likely that

⁵⁴MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, July 31, 1849.

you will hear any more of the petition."⁵⁵ Contrary to McGill's opinion, the Board did hear of it again, but this time the penitent citizens confessed that they had signed it hastily and imprudently. Applauding the Managers' wisdom, the colonists now requested that their earlier petition be ignored.⁵⁶

Education in Maryland in Liberia was a haphazard affair from the time the settlement had been established. By the Ordinance for Temporary Government, all children "of a fit age" were to attend public schools until they could read, write and "cast accounts." Other sections of the law made a fair degree of education essential for participation in colonial government. For example, to be a juryman required good repute and the ability to read and write. Incidentally, school teachers and other semi-public and government officials were automatically exempted from jury duty.⁵⁷ Until 1835, when the colony was laid out and somewhat built up, not much was done by way of attaining the educational goals. The first school which the colonists' children attended was run principally for native children by Mrs. J. Leighton Wilson at Fair Hope. Another one, chiefly for immigrant children, was opened in Harper by Mrs. James Thompson, a citizen's wife. Late

⁵⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XVIII, S. F. McGill to Hall, Cape Palmas, October 20, 1849; Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, November 19, 1849.

⁵⁶Ibid., Vol. XIX, Petition of Citizens to the Board of Managers, Harper, January 14, 1850.

⁵⁷"An Ordinance for the Temporary Government," Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia; with an Appendix of Precedents (2nd ed.; Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1847), Sections 29 and 31.

in 1835, a Margaret McAlister opened a third school in the settlement.

Miss McAlister, a white woman and a member of a Methodist Church in Baltimore, applied to the Board of Managers, to sail aboard the Harmony in June, 1835, for the purpose of devoting her life to the education of colonist and native children at the Cape. She expected her school to be supported by contributions from sympathetic Christians in Maryland. Upon this basis, the Board agreed to provide her free passage.⁵⁸ James Hall found that she unhappily possessed few of the necessities called for by her new life and had no means of obtaining them. Although her work was to be a voluntary one in no way connected with the Society, she had to be furnished supplies from the Agency Store. She lived briefly with the Wilsons and then in a room rented for her by Hall. Her presence in the colony caused even more consternation when it developed that she was totally unable to teach anything. She could scarcely read, and then only the printed word, was unable to spell correctly words of only one syllable, could not write script and did not even know the alphabet.⁵⁹ Moreover, she was too ill to conduct classes from the outset and died in less than a year. The Board later learned that she had volunteered for African service after her physician suggested that new environment

⁵⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. II, Meeting of the Board of Managers, June 23, 1835.

⁵⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. III, Hall to Latrobe, Harper, Liberia, August 26, 1835.

as the only hope for the restoration of her already delicate health. Wilson, in a confidential letter to Latrobe, urged the Board to prevent any unprotected white woman from coming to the colony again. Such, he said, were the difficulties encountered in the colony that a woman had her influence contravened in ways and by means which neither she nor her friends would ever anticipate.⁶⁰

In an effort to make good its promise of education to the immigrant children, the Society finally appealed to Maryland women to form female colonization auxiliaries which would raise the several hundred dollars per annum needed for colonial schools. The Society even envisioned the founding of a college at Cape Palmas after the women had supported the educational system for a few years.⁶¹ The consequence was the founding in 1837 of the Ladies' Society for the Promotion of Education in Africa. A Baltimore group, it agreed to employ a qualified teacher to take charge of the proposed stone school house at the Cape. The salary was to be \$300 per annum and, in addition, the teacher was to receive a grant of \$200 the first year for the purchase of appropriate personal belongings. The money was raised principally from the congregations of city churches and from life memberships in the new organization. The Ladies' Society engaged Benjamin Alleyne,

⁶⁰Ibid., Vol. IV, J. L. Wilson to Latrobe, Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, June 25, 1836.

⁶¹Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1837), p. 14.

a West Indian, and his wife,⁶² and they sailed aboard the Brig Niobe late in 1837. The Alleynes successfully acclimated themselves to the coast but were disappointed to find that the promised school was not yet under construction. Governor Russwurm furnished them a vacant house on a lot in Harper and Alleyne converted it into a temporary school. Unfortunately the space was so limited that only thirty or thirty-five "Schollars" could be enrolled.⁶³ The following February, 1839, after successfully operating his school nine months, Alleyne died of African fever, which, of course, was usually malaria. His widow, considering herself unqualified to continue her husband's work, moved to Fair Hope to assist the Wilsons, and a few of Alleyne's students were transferred there.⁶⁴

Alleyne's successor was George R. McGill, the Baltimorean who had emigrated to Monrovia in 1827 and then to Harper in 1834 and who was Samuel Ford McGill's father. He began his work in the new schoolhouse on January 1, 1841. He taught all the usual subjects to forty-five students and, with additional space and help, could have admitted another twenty for instruction.⁶⁵ His

⁶²MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. VII, Report of the Executive Committee [of the Ladies' Society] to the Board of Managers, [Baltimore], November 21, 1837.

⁶³Ibid., Vol. IX, Benjamin Alleyne to Easter, Cape Palmas, July 10, 1838.

⁶⁴Ibid., Vol. X, Wilson to Miss Ann Turnbull, Fair Hope, Cape Palmas, February 18, 1839.

⁶⁵Ibid., Vol. XII, George R. McGill to the Board of Managers, Ladies Academy, Cape Palmas, September 24, 1841.

fairly successful teaching career came to an abrupt end in 1843 when he was expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church for some improper conduct. The Colonization Society thereupon withdrew its recommendation of him and he was summarily dismissed.⁶⁶ The Ladies' Society now became dormant, teachers were not regularly hired to staff the colony's one official school, and missionaries largely took over the educational function.⁶⁷

A subject which greatly concerned the Board of Managers, especially as it granted the colony greater rights, was citizen morality. Theoretically sending only applicants of industry and good character to the colony, the Society considered its laws and its emphasis upon missionary effort sufficient encouragement for the continuation of exemplary conduct. Such behavior never characterized many of the colonists and, as they grew in number, vice and crime increased. Moreover, the longer the colonists lived in Africa, the less they were restrained by the admonitions of their old masters "to walk in the way of the Lord." The presence of barbarous peoples in and around the settlement contributed materially to a loosening of civilized inhibitions.

One of the first indications of a general lowering of colonist morals was the Thompson case in 1837. Although acquitted for lack

⁶⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, August 29, 1843.

⁶⁷Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, September 6, 1848; Letters, Vol. XVI, Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, July 28, 1845; Vol. XVIII, J. Payne to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, November 22, 1848.

of evidence of charges that he seduced colonial and native girls, he was popularly considered guilty. Two years later, Governor Russwurm lamented that several instances of bastardy had recently occurred and that some law was needed to stop this evil.⁶⁸ Colonists frequently struck up liasons with native females. Few went so far as did George McGill who, in 1843, married such a woman.

From the emphasis upon continuing abstinence principles in its Annual Reports, the Board appeared more interested in the liquor question than in other deviations from the straight and narrow path. In 1846, letters from the settlement began divulging actions taken by the Agent and Council against persons breaking the abstinence vow. Two men who had been trading in ardent spirits were brought to trial on three counts and fined a hundred dollars in each case.⁶⁹ In December, 1847, Samuel Ford McGill complained that W. A. Prout, a tippler, had been reappointed the Colonial Secretary by Russwurm. McGill contended that retaining Prout was hardly consistent with the temperance ideals activating founders of the colony.⁷⁰ There is, in fact, evidence that persons in higher administrative eschelons than Prout were likewise enjoying spirits.

In 1848, Russwurm made a brief trip to the United States. His health had been failing for several years and, on several occasions,

⁶⁸MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. X, Russwurm to Latrobe, Harper, June 24, 1839.

⁶⁹Ibid., Vol. XVII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, July 11, 1846.

⁷⁰Ibid., Vol. XVIII, S. F. McGill to Hall, Harper, December 17, 1847.

hope had been lost for his recovery. Wanting to visit the homeland, he was granted a leave of absence, with full pay and free passage, Doctor McGill being appointed Acting Governor.⁷¹ Russwurm, who had known Hall from his previous visits and residence on the African coast, seems to have developed a rapport with Hall during his stay in Baltimore. The Governor's first communication back to the United States following his return to Africa requested the General Agent to send him a variety of alcoholic beverages. In a letter marked "private," Russwurm expressed a desire for cheap wine and brandy for the medical department, ten boxes of good claret and twenty boxes of ale for his cupboard.⁷² Correspondence in the Society's archives suggests that this request was more than met by the good doctor.

The only event of interest occurring during Russwurm's absence from the colony was talk among the citizens of the Governor's administration. Joshua H. Stewart, a prominent and vociferous man, took the opportunity to protest the length of Russwurm's appointment. Claiming that the inhabitants had long desired a change in leadership, Stewart demanded to know whether the Board of Managers contemplated keeping the colony under one man for life. Denying any incompetency on Russwurm's part, Stewart asserted that, after twelve years, any man would lose all sympathy for those he governed

⁷¹MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 7, 1848.

⁷²MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XVIII, Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, November 22, 1848.

and would inevitably become a petty tyrant. He argued that such a long term in office violated the rules of republicanism and he affected a fear that the colony might next have a king over it. Doctor McGill also came under attack. Reporting the rumor that the latter would be the next governor, Stewart warned the Board that such action would not sit well with the colonists because they considered him too young and too closely related to Russwurm's administration.⁷³ In fact, McGill was almost forty--he had served as Colonial Physician for nearly a decade. He was, however, Russwurm's brother-in-law and, although so divergent were their opinions on colonial direction that the two scarcely spoke to each other, their differences did not overcome the colonists' suspicion of nepotism.

The uncertainties of life were soon to remove the chief object of complaint. Russwurm's health underwent steady deterioration after his return from the United States and he died on June 9, 1851. McGill, the Assistant Agent for the preceding two years, took over until instructions could be received from Baltimore. He had already purchased a home in Monrovia, planned to move there with his family, and had no desire to fill the vacancy.⁷⁴

In many respects, Russwurm's death closed one era and marked the beginning of another. Under his administration, a colony of former American slaves achieved a large degree of self-government.

⁷³Ibid., Stewart to ?, Cape Palmas, June 12, 1848.

⁷⁴Ibid., Vol. XIX, S. F. McGill to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, July 11, 1851.

A Negro leader nudged unwilling compatriots through the intricacies of legal, political and economic development. A black man was shown capable of handling the difficulties imposed by like-skinned natives and white missionaries. For all his skill, however, things were far from perfect. Nine months before he died, Russwurm complained that the existing generation of colonists was still too unenlightened to accomplish much; better things would come only from their children.⁷⁵ McGill, at the same time, complained that the colony was at a dead standstill. Noting that the people were unfit to carry out any plan on their own, he insisted that the Governor would have to suggest something afresh to move the settlement from its state of torpidity.⁷⁶

In September, 1851, McGill summed up the state of Maryland in Liberia in this fashion:

This Colony has increased its numbers only since you [Hall] governed it but I really cannot discover any material increase in intelligence, respectability or self dependence. The governor must still originate every enterprise, must instruct every one, and perform every thing, there are none from whom he can seek reliable council or advice; if he is successful, he gets no thanks, if he fails through inadequate means or assistance he is d_____ d_____.⁷ Ignorance, ingratitude, and malevolence meet him at every point and renders his life miserable.

Ninety out of every hundred of our people are paupers, and would be contented as such during their lives if the Society would give [in]. . . .⁷⁷

Despite McGill's gloominess respecting the citizens, Russwurm

⁷⁵Ibid., Russwurm to Hall, Cape Palmas, September 16, 1850.

⁷⁶Ibid., S. F. McGill to Hall, Cape Palmas, September 15, 1850.

⁷⁷Ibid., S. F. McGill to Hall, Harper, September 18, 1851.

left a tangible legacy in the form of territorial expansion. Whereas Doctor Hall had given the Agent a handful of paper agreements signifying some vague control over vast interior areas, Russwurm had, during his fifteen years of stewardship, visited far and wide, adding validity to the Society's claims. Although the colonial government still had little voice in inland affairs and could not stop the inter-tribal warfare which had but recently been renewed, it had succeeded in purchasing the coastline from Grand Cess to the River Pedro, a length of 130 miles. The colonial population numbered between 900 and 1,000, while the indigenous population in the immediate area of the Cape was estimated at 100,000.⁷⁸

These were Russwurm's achievements and shortcomings. His passing marked the close of the colony's age of innocence. He had laid sure foundations for a new chapter in the colony's history. By coincidence, Russwurm's death came just at the time when the Maryland legislature's twenty-year appropriation was running out. Colonizationists were already marshalling facts and figures by which to win approval for a continuation of state grants. The major topic under discussion in Africa was the settlement's future. The citizens were already divided into groups, some of which favored merger with the new Republic of Liberia and others which stood for independent nationhood. On both sides of the Atlantic, then, issues of major consequence to the colony must soon be decided. Russwurm

⁷⁸"Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society," Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s., VI, No. 9 (February, 1852), 130.

had pushed his people ahead, as Moses, to whom the black governor occasionally likened himself, had driven the Israelites, and in the crucial year, 1851, he bowed out.

CHAPTER VII

ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN HOME SUPPORT, 1840-1850

The death of Ira Easter, the Home Agent in January, 1840, and the Society officials' realization that at least \$12,000 would be needed to meet debts and new expenses resulted in a careful reappraisal of organizational activities. It was at this juncture that the paid employees were reduced from four to two, resulting in a significant lowering of salary expenditures. Governor Russwurm's civil list was cut and other colonial expenses were lowered. No emigrants were sent to the colony. Aside from these negative measures, the Board of Managers undertook positive efforts to bolster its lagging position. It called upon Maryland clergymen to take up a Fourth of July collection for colonization. The results, apparently, were as meagre as they had been in previous years. The Society held a public meeting in Baltimore on May 29, but when Henry Clay was prevented by illness from being the featured guest, the affair was of little consequence to the Society's prestige or funds. The idea of holding a September fair was dropped because of impending state and presidential elections.

Indeed, much of the Society's failure to arouse public interest during 1840 can be attributed to the keen attention paid politics and the depression. The Democratic national convention, held in Baltimore in May, renominated President Martin Van Buren as its candidate against

the Whig William Henry Harrison. John Latrobe complained that the absorption of men's minds with money and politics made it more difficult than at any time he could remember to get contributions for colonization.¹ He warned Russwurm later that, until the state election in October and the presidential election in November were both over, nothing could get the public attention: "Drums, banners and transparencies make night hideous and forbid all meetings but political ones--Even the Theatre is closed and 'till after the Election' every thing is at a stand."² The 1840 contest was one of the most heated and animated in United States history, with Van Buren being characterized by opponents as an aristocratic sissy and Harrison pictured as a lover of the simple virtues close to the common man's heart. The latter's election and subsequent death brought a Vice-President to the presidency for the first time in history. Unfortunately, John Tyler lacked ability to meet the domestic crises of the day and his administration was a rather stagnant one.

While the Colonization Society treaded water financially, it sought to engage a general agent to operate its affairs in this country and in Africa. Doctor James Hall, then pursuing private business along the west coast, was its first choice. After several months of negotiation and consideration of his own affairs, Hall accepted the post for an annual salary of \$1,000, annual leaves during July and August, and

¹MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, John Latrobe to John Russwurm, Baltimore, August 1, 1840.

²Ibid., Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, October 6, 1840.

permission to continue trading on his own account.³ He assumed his duties early in 1841 and his early connection with the Society and his years in Africa made him highly effective. He stood second only to the American Colonization Society's Ralph Gurley as an authority on the colonization movement. The prestige Hall brought to the Maryland Society was undoubtedly important in the Society's subsequent triumph in averting bankruptcy and in dealing with opposition forces in the state.

The re-invigorated organization's first task was to publicize the continued existence and its efforts to send more blacks to Africa, while still maintaining Maryland in Liberia. John Kennard, stationed in the Baltimore office since Easter's death, now resumed his earlier role as Society travelling agent to raise cash. Touring around the head of the Bay and then down the Eastern Shore, Kennard found that, while audiences varied in size and interest, the amount of money raised at such gatherings was fairly even--scarcely a cent! He reported from Chestertown that the collection of funds was almost out of question in that section of the state. He was distressed to learn that many persons he met considered the Society a troublesome begging concern.⁴ Besides seeking contributions, Kennard's other duty was to publicize the forthcoming colonization convention and to aid auxiliaries in the selection of their delegates.

³MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meetings of the Board of Managers, September 12, 1840, and January 15, 1841.

⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, John Kennard to James Hall, Harve de Grace, February 4, 1841; Chestertown, February 17, 1841; Cambridge, March 15, 1841.

The idea of holding a state-wide colonization convention seems to have originated with Hall. At the Society's annual meeting in Annapolis on January 28, 1841, the assembled resolved to hold such a gathering in Baltimore on the first Thursday of June.⁵ The attendance goal was thirty delegates from each county. In a circular to the public the Society pointed out that, excluding Baltimore City, Maryland's white population had diminished in the past ten years while there had been an increase of seventeen per cent in the free Negro population. Including Baltimore City, white citizens had increased but eight and a half per cent. It noted, further, that the black population's character was changing from predominantly slave to free. Predicting that the traditional harmonious relations between the races would cease as the whites, bolstered by arriving European immigrants, pre-empted the labor market, the broadside argued that black removal was inevitable and that colonization was the only means of facilitating his transfer without conflict.⁶

To Baltimore citizens, the Society distributed flyers with even more dire warnings of the black's impending fate. Insisting that two distinct races of free men co-existing within the same territory was utterly impossible and contrary to history, it posed two alternatives: intermarriage with equality of political rights, or oppression, rebellion, bloodshed and the final forcible expulsion of the weaker race. Either eventuality was ruled as undesirable and, again, colonization was offered as a rational, peaceful solution to the problem.⁷

⁵MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, February 2, 1841.

⁶Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 13, 1841. ⁷Ibid.

The hope was to raise \$10,000 at the convention to cancel liabilities, to meet current expenses and to cover solicitation costs in seeking contributions for building a vessel which would ply between Baltimore and Cape Palmas regularly.⁸ The other object of the meeting was to consider the merits of African colonization, not yet generally accepted as a workable solution, and its beneficial effect upon the state's white and colored populations.

While the delegates were to be whites, Hall thought it politic to solicit an expression of sentiment from Baltimore's free black community. Addressing the Reverend William Walkins, a well-known local pastor, he suggested that "it might not be unadvisable for the more intelligent of the coloured population in behalf of the whole to memorialize said convention upon the subject. . . ." The candor of Hall's letter suggests his naïvete with regard to Baltimore Negroes. Walkins' reply was a gracious refusal:

I am seriously of the opinion that colonizationists, in general, are so hostile to our remaining in the land of our birth^[,] so intent upon the prosecution of their scheme, that the "stating definitely" of our "view and sentiments relative thereto" would be regarded by them of secondary importance. Should we in memorializing proposed convention declare in favor of colonization, it would doubtless be a source of gratification to the members; on the other hand, should we gratuitously or unnecessarily express our disapprobation of that scheme prejudice would in all probability become more virulent and an increased impetus be given to persecution and proscription.

The gentlemen who originated the call of the convention and those who have so promptly responded to it, believing that our existence in Maryland is an evil of fearful magnitude^[,] an evil which must be removed are doubtless, prepared to propose and carry out so far as an overruling Providence will permit them, such measures as they think

⁸Ibid.

best calculated to accomplish their object. Being thus impressed, I cannot perceive the propriety of our acting, at this time, in accordance with your suggestion. . . .⁹

The convention met June 3 and 4 at the Methodist Church on Light Street. More than two hundred delegates were registered, though not all were in attendance. Aside from Baltimore which listed 69, Harford and Washington Counties, with 30 and 32 delegates respectively, sent the largest number of representatives, while Somerset and Worcester Counties had none present. A communication from the Board of Managers was read to the assembled group and a committee consisting of a delegate from each county represented and Baltimore itself was appointed to consider it. The following resolutions submitted by this group were adopted by the convention before its adjournment: (1) removal of the free colored people and manumitted slaves to Africa, with their consent, was a legitimate object of the colonization system, (2) "The idea that the coloured people will ever obtain social and political equality in this State is wild and mischevius. . . .", (3) if the colored population remained in Maryland in the hope of enjoying equal social and political rights with the whites, they would inevitably, in time, be forcibly removed, (4) the continuing support of the colony was a sacred and binding obligation, (5) the establishment of direct commercial intercourse between Baltimore and Cape Palmas was a matter of the utmost importance and should be quickly arranged, and (6) to keep the

⁹MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, William Walkins to Hall, Baltimore, May 24, 1841.

interest in colonization alive, auxiliary associations should be formed in every neighborhood of the state.¹⁰

Rather than creating genuine interest in colonization or improving the state of funds, the convention made the position of whites and Negroes more rigid. Even before the Baltimore meeting, an intended delegate from Hagerstown suggested that the Colonization Society canvass the Register of Wills in the various counties as to the enforcement of laws affecting manumitted slaves. He found that, in Washington County, the number of newly freed Negroes allowed to remain in the state without permits from the Orphan's Court far exceeded the number which complied with the law in this respect.¹¹ Hall thereupon proceeded to contact county officials and, in every case, found either total neglect of the law or so little attention to it that it might as well not exist. Evidence confirmed Latrobe's earlier assertion that manumitted slaves frequently remained unnoticed in the community, keeping the fact of their freedom as quiet as possible and relying upon their own insignificance for exemption from the law.¹²

Reports from about the state in the months following the convention told of increased opposition among whites toward the free colored population. John Roberts, rehired as a travelling agent, wrote from Charles County that the whites were unanimous in demanding the forced

¹⁰Maryland Colonization Journal, n. s. I, No. 1 (June 15, 1841), 15.

¹¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, Daniel Wiesel to Latrobe, Hagerstown, May 24, 1841.

¹²MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to William Coad, Baltimore, January 12, 1841.

removal of all free Negroes.¹³ James Hall, the Society's foremost recipient of correspondence from throughout the state, concluded that the whites were determined to order blacks out of the state and that Africa offered the most favorable opening for the victims of this more militant attitude.¹⁴

The Negro population lamentably exhibited at least as much reluctance to African emigration as it had previously. The same reports which spoke of heightened white determination on that score frequently noted the uselessness of endeavoring to persuade the blacks to move. John Kennard, for example, complained that it was almost of no avail to free slaves by will to go to Liberia, since it was in the interest of the heirs, to whom they reverted as bondsmen if they failed to depart, to discourage emigration.¹⁵ John Roberts, visiting Southern Maryland, which was heavily Roman Catholic, relayed the prevailing opinion that the priests had lost their influence among the blacks by selling all their own slaves to the number of two or three hundred into the South. Area blacks told him that they would no more believe the priests than they would him, an accused kidnapper.¹⁶

Another event detrimental to colonization and reflecting the hardened white attitude was a Slaveholders' Convention held in Annapolis

¹³MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, John M. Roberts to Hall, Pikawaxam, Charles Co., September 27, 1841.

¹⁴MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, Hall to Russwurm, Baltimore, December 15, 1841.

¹⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, Kennard to Hall, Bladensburg, November 9, 1841.

¹⁶Ibid., Roberts to Hall, Leonard Town, November 23, 1841.

January 12-14, 1842. In the month or so preceding the gathering citizens, by election district, met to appoint delegates, a surprising number of whom had attended the colonization convention the previous June. The groups not infrequently formed auxiliary colonization societies and expressed approval of the earlier convention's resolutions. When the slaveholders convened at the Maryland capitol, half of the organization's officers, including the president and two vice-presidents, turned out to be colonizationists. The actual extent of harm done by the apparent close affiliation between the colonization cause and slaveholder interests cannot be determined, but, for months after, the colonization movement was stigmatized.

The Slaveholders' Convention drew up and presented a twenty-five point memorial to the Maryland legislature. These called for laws to prevent manumission by will, the prohibition of grants of freedom save upon condition of instant transportation outside the United States at manumitter expense. Other propositions called for more stringent laws and the prohibition of additional free Negroes moving into the state.¹⁷ Actually, despite the Colonization Society officers' and members' abhorrence of the convention, many of the slaveholders' goals corresponded with their own aims. The Society later sought to disassociate itself from the January proceedings, but, at the same time, to capitalize on the assertion that they substantiated white unity behind the colonization movement. This was actually a rather dubious inference, for the slaveholders made no pronouncement respecting Maryland in Liberia and one

¹⁷Niles' National Register, 5th Ser., XI, No. 23 (February 5, 1842), 356-58.

delegate was reported publicly to have criticized the cause and to have charged that each emigrant transported had cost the state five thousand dollars.¹⁸

The Slaveholders' Convention memorial was referred to the House of Delegates' Committee on the Coloured Population, of whose five members four represented Southern Maryland counties. The bill which it framed incorporated many of the slaveholders' suggestions and had four objectives: (1) to prevent the escape of slaves from their owners, (2) to make the free Negroes of the state industrious, thus eliminating idleness which bred crime, (3) to halt the increase of free Negroes within the state, and (4) to make penalties sufficiently severe to deter criminal activity. The committee deplored the situation existing in a large portion of the state where slaves were so successfully escaping from their owners that labor demand and value of cultivated lands were both seriously affected.¹⁹ The committee bill passed the House by a 40 to 31 vote but, by the time it came up for consideration in the Senate, public sentiment had come to demand its defeat.

On the one hand, colonizationists, fearing that further agitation would only hard both the white and colored populations, sought merely to have laws passed in previous years enforced. This, they believed, would be sufficient protection to slaveowners and would impose adequate restraining upon the free blacks, Abolitionists, theoretically

¹⁸MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIII, Kennard to Latrobe, Anne Arundale [sic]Co., January 29, 1842.

¹⁹Maryland, Maryland Public Documents (December Session, 1841), Report of the Committee on the Colored [sic] Population, February 9, 1842.

antipathetic to colonization views, argued that the bill would inflict new evils upon the state. Public meetings were held in numerous cities and counties, memorials opposing the pending legislation descended upon Annapolis and the upper house finally defeated the measure by more than a two-thirds majority.²⁰

Although the colonizationists--and abolitionists--had their way with this particular bill, in the 1840's the Maryland legislature was generally less amenable to their wishes and more inquiring into their activities. The annual reports of the Colonization Fund Managers were generally brief, uncritical and purely factual. The Committee on the Coloured Population frequently requested detailed answers to lists of questions submitted to the Society. The replies generally gave information such as the numbers of manumissions, emigrants, and manumitted slaves sent out of the state since 1831 as well as opinions on the operation of laws bearing on the colored population.²¹

Increasingly, in the 40's, the entire county delegation to the legislature formed itself into a Select Committee of the House to recommend more restrictive legislation for the colored population. Early in 1844, representatives from Charles County asked for the removal of all free blacks from that southern area although the 1840 census showed only 819 such persons residing there. The number of slaves, however, was

²⁰James M. Wright, The Free Negro in Maryland, 1634-1860 ("Studies in History, Economics & Public Law," Vol. XCVII, No. 3; New York: Columbia University, 1921), pp. 302-303.

²¹For two examples, see MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Coad, Baltimore, January 12, 1841, and Latrobe to the Honorable the House of Delegates, Baltimore, January 13, 1846.

over nine thousand and, combined, the two classes of Negroes far outnumbered the six thousand whites.²² The petitioners addressed themselves to the problem of free blacks, declaring that their presence materially affected the moral, political and fiscal interests of the state. The Charles County delegation asserted, moreover, that free Negroes should be removed from the entire state since their presence was an unmitigated evil and their condition could nowhere be worse than in Maryland. Finally, quoting letters and reports from Maryland in Liberia, it held that colony to be the fitting and proper place for settling the free colored population.²³ No recommendations as to effecting this transfer of residence were, however, made.

Two years later, Charles County delegates again raised the issue. They were now far less approving of colonization, which had obviously had little effect in reducing the Negro population, and were more insistent upon driving free blacks from the state:

There are strong objections entertained against their removal for force, on the grounds of humanity, while some believe that to do so would be unconstitutional. This committee assume the position and believe it correct, that it would be the fullness of humanity to transport them without their consent, and that the State has a perfect right to dispose of them as she may think best, for their and her own interests. This last position is clear. It is by many believed, they are freemen by virtue of the constitution, and for this reason no forcible action could be had against them, except by a change of that instrument. This is a dangerous doctrine and if it were permitted to prevail and impress itself upon public opinion, it would result in the most

²²1840 Maryland census printed in the Maryland Colonization Journal, n. s. I, No. 1 (June 15, 1841), 10.

²³Maryland, Maryland Public Documents (December Session, 1843-44), Report from the Select Committee, to whom was referred the Subject of the Removal of the Free Colored Population from Charles County, January 24, 1844.

dangerous consequences. It would firmly fasten them upon us, beyond the hope of ever obtaining relief from any source. Indeed for a manifest reason, it would endanger the institution of slavery.

Thus the institution of slavery is a constitutional right and that of the free negro is a legal right, and in a conflict the latter must yield to the former, and the idle existence of the free negro is doing an injury to the slave, the constitutional property of the master.²⁴

In an effort to muster scientific evidence for its demands, the Select Committee presented Maryland census returns for the previous half century demonstrating that the free Negro population was increasing far more rapidly than the white one and projected the relative positions of the two groups fifty years and one hundred years hence. It concluded that, whereas the whites numbered 317,717 and the free blacks 62,020 in 1840, a century later, in 1940, Maryland would have 517,717 whites and 3,869,280 free Negroes. The outcome of such a situation, averred its members, would be the elimination of the white laborer throughout the state and the emergency of a society composed of white landholders and of free Negroes who would do the work, gradually accumulate property, and eventually drive out the white citizens--a reversal of the 1840 situation.

As for colonization, the Select Committee labelled it an experiment which had not yet proved the Negro's capacity for self-government and improvement. It concluded, "Considering their rapid increase and the doubtful experiment of the colony in Africa, it is important we

²⁴Maryland, Maryland Public Documents (December Session, 1845), Report of the Select Committee, consisting of the Delegates of Charles Co., Relative to the Removal of the Free People of Color of Charles County, January 28, 1846.

should expel them from our State as soon as possible. This African variety have remained for thousands of years in no higher condition of improvement than [to conquer lower animals, construct settled habitations, practice a rude agriculture and manufacture some articles of clothing or ornament], although in the enjoyment of natural advantages which have enabled other nations to rise to the highest condition of greatness." As before, however, it offered no suggestion as to where the expelled Negroes were to find refuge.²⁵

The legislature was naturally aware of the race problem in the state but declined to act upon either of the two Charles County petitions, in part, no doubt, because of the dearth of constructive ideas in them but, more important, because of the lack of a new home for the free Negroes. The upshot, then, of the various proposals considered by Maryland lawmakers in the 1840's was a great deal of discussion but no action. Attempts in the House of Delegates to repeal the colonization tax on account of the smallness of apparent results were successively defeated in the Senate where such staunch colonizationists as Colonel Thomas Emory, himself a substantial slaveholder, squashed them.²⁶

One of the recommendations of the June, 1841, colonization convention was the establishment of regular commercial contact with Maryland in Liberia. The following February, the Board of Managers made plans for a public meeting affording them the opportunity of explaining their aims in order to stir up interest and to gain funds. Society

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XV, Roberts to Hall, Annapolis, February 2, 1844; Vol. XVIII, N. B. Worthington to Hall, Annapolis, January 10, 1847.

officers were implored to solicit subscriptions from Baltimore citizens for the proposed Liberia Packet.²⁷ Agent Kennard, travelling on the Eastern Shore, concluded that the Slaveholders' Convention had stirred up enough colonization opposition to make collection for the Packet impolitic at that time and, in fact, was unable to get anything for it.²⁸ Nor was he more successful in other parts of the state and the Packet idea was, perforce, abandoned.

The effort to open commercial operations between Baltimore and Cape Palmas was renewed in 1845. "A respectable and intelligent coloured man" of Baltimore, never named, began a movement to form a company and to buy or build a vessel for trade with Africa. The concern was to be owned mainly by Negroes, but Doctor James Hall agreed to be their agent in conducting the business.²⁹ The Maryland Society and the American Colonization group combined in guaranteeing passengers and freight sufficient to yield four thousand dollars a year.³⁰ To protect shareholders, the enterprise was incorporated by the Maryland legislature as the Chesapeake and Liberia Trading Company in February, 1845. William Crane, James Hall and John Latrobe, all white Baltimore colonizationists, it should be noted, were authorized to accept subscriptions

²⁷MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, February 12, 1842.

²⁸MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIII, Kennard to Hall, Chestertown, March 18, 1842.

²⁹Maryland Colonization Journal, n. s. II, No. 22 (April, 1845), 337.

³⁰MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 20, 1845; Letters, Vol. XVI, William McLain to Hall, Washington City, March 25, 1845.

to the capital stock, which was to consist of no more than a thousand shares priced at one hundred dollars each.³¹

The plan was to construct a vessel of 2,500 to 3,000 barrels capacity, furnished especially for carrying emigrants. A colored crew from the United States and Liberia was to man the ship and, in the future, to officer it as well. Two voyages a year from Baltimore and Norfolk to Monrovia and Cape Palmas were projected.³² For adult passengers, the steerage fee was to be \$30 per person, including meals, and cabin passage, \$100. Ordinary freight was to cost \$1.50 a barrel. Homebound rates were to be generally lower to encourage the trade.³³

Although the Liberia Packet was to be a predominantly Negro concern, only forty of the two hundred shares initially offered were taken up by blacks in this country and Liberia and, of them, ten were bought by Governor Russwurm. The newly constructed Baltimore vessel was found to exceed the capacity specified in the contract and cost \$19,500. She was capable of carrying 2,000 barrels of cargo in her lower hold and 132 passengers could travel in comfort. The maiden trip began in Baltimore on December 3, 1846, with 5 cabin passengers, 26 adult steerage ones, 12 children and a full load of cargo. Returning by way of the Cape de Verdes, it added 5,000 bushels of salt and 14 United States seamen to the 8 cabin passengers and Liberian cargo already aboard. The round-trip was made in the good time of four months and five days. In

³¹Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1844), Chapter 195.

³²Maryland Colonization Journal, n. s. II, No. 22 (April, 1845), 338.

³³Ibid., n. s. IV, No. 5 (November, 1847), 72, 74.

the fall of 1847, the Packet made a second journey out, this time taking a full cargo of merchandise and eighty emigrants. At the company's first annual meeting in November, 1847, the directors voted a dividend of six dollars a share, or six per cent interest on the investment.³⁴

The venture continued a financial success through several years. At times, the company owned more than one vessel and not infrequently James Hall, the genius behind the scheme, sent bottoms to Europe to participate in that market or chartered ships to take advantage of especially tempting opportunities to add to company profits. An occasional ship was lost and, in 1852, after six years' operation, the firm dissolved itself when it found itself without vessels. In some respects, the Liberia Packet venture fell short of its goals. Negroes never owned more than a small percentage of the stock. Only occasionally could colored officers be found for the ships, although colored crews normally manned them. For various reasons, basically Hall's exuberance in squeezing in as many trips a year as possible, the Packet never sailed on a regular schedule. Also, a vein of skepticism ran through the company's last report--vague anxiety that the undertaking be wound up while it was still operating in the black. The loss of the barque, Ralph Cross, the line's last vessel, although fully insured, seemed a warning that the company's luck had run out. The undertaking was, in reality, a profitable one, with an average annual cash dividend of ten per cent being paid. While the Society had the advantage of employing the Company as agents for its operations, it did give up the services of

³⁴Ibid., pp. 73-76.

its outstanding employee, James Hall, to insure the venture's success. But, by 1852, the opportunity to liquidate while still solvent was too inviting to resist.³⁵

While the Colonization Society endeavored to pay debts, to maintain the colony, to stave off attacks in the Maryland legislature, and to open trade with Africa, the central object of its existence, the emigration of free Negroes, seemed a secondary concern. Agents traversing the state, particularly the Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland, largely despaired of convincing either free blacks or potential slave colonists that their future lay in Africa. In the entire decade of the 40's, only 287 settlers left Baltimore for the colony and 142 of them sailed aboard the Globe in December, 1842, after the state's political climate seemed to preclude any improvement in Negro conditions.

The Maryland Colonization Journal, now under the energetic editorship of Doctor Hall, queried, "Why Don't the Coloured People Go to Africa." It suggested that the universal opposition must be founded upon more than an attachment to one's birthplace, to ignorance and indolence, or to the hope that social and political equality with whites was attainable. The January, 1847, issue declared:

We confess we believe the main cause to have existed in the conduct, or rather language of the colonizationists themselves, exciting the pride of the more intelligent and influential of the coloured people.

The very ground work of African colonization, from first to last, both among its slavery and anti-slavery supporters, has been, that equality, political or social, between the African and Caucasian race can never exist on this continent,

³⁵Ibid., n. s. VI, No. 18 (November, 1852), 274-77.

that the lesser, of course the weaker race, must serve or flee. This doctrine, however kindly or judiciously announced, must always to the one party be extremely unpalatable, but when reiterated and enlarged upon by excited declaimers, with a free application of epithets, not the most flattering to the coloured people, its only effect is to steel their hearts against all that can promise them or their posterity nationality or worldly good. . . .

The pride then of the coloured man, his pride, inspired by the very first declaratory outset of the colonizationist, the very basis on which the whole fabric rests, is the true cause of his not emigrating to Liberia.

The article concluded that the colonizationists would have to await the gradual erosion of that opposition and the slow acceptance by the Negro of the correctness of colonization principles.³⁶ In actuality, the cure seemed unequal to the illness.

While the tone of colonizationist arguments undoubtedly incensed some colored people, by far the greatest hostility to the cause came from abolitionists, white and blacks. From the beginning of the Society's active existence in 1831, these worthies seized every opportunity to belittle and to question its efforts. Colonizationists were pictured as being in league with slaveholders in order artificially to elevate the value of bondsmen. Prospective settlers were visited and were artfully informed that a painful death in the wilds of Africa would be their lot should they sail. One of the most prevalent practices was slyly to assure emigrating citizens that they would end up slaves in Georgia. Another common technique was to spread rumors that previous emigrants had met sad fates of one kind or another. The general ignorance and superstition of the colored population made it an easy target of detractors.

³⁶Ibid., n. s. III, No. 19 (January, 1847), 290-291.

Abolitionists frequently published their views on colonization. Probably the earliest tract assailing the Maryland cause was published by the fiery William Lloyd Garrison in 1834. Entitled The Maryland Scheme of Expatriation Examined, the pamphlet printed in full the acts relating to free Negroes and slaves passed by the state legislature in March, 1832. Garrison analyzed the laws section by section, adding pungent criticisms in footnotes. He charged that, while Americans boasted of theirs as the land of the free, there was actually not another civilized nation on earth which had so many slaves or which tolerated so cruel and debasing a servile regime.³⁷

The usual stance of the Colonization Society was stony silence. Privately, officers and employees deplored attacks and activities, but they seldom did the abolitionists the honor of open reply. In the late 1840's, as emigration stagnated and abolitionists became more adamant, the Colonization Journal took to answering charges against Society operations. It also began challenging abolitionists openly by reprinting their denunciations and refuting them point by point.³⁸ The Society took the unusual step in 1847 of publishing the proceedings of the 1830 libel trial against Garrison.

In November, 1829, Garrison and Benjamin Lundy, co-publishers of a Baltimore paper entitled the Genius of Universal Emancipation, had accused a Newburyport, Massachusetts, man, Francis Todd, of engaging in

³⁷William Lloyd Garrison, The Maryland Scheme of Expatriation Examined (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834), passim.

³⁸See Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. III, No. 21 (March, 1847), 321-24, and n.s. IV, No. 23 (May, 1849), 361-67.

the slave trade between Baltimore and New Orleans. Todd had sued Garrison, whose initial was affixed to the newspaper account, for slander, and the jury had found him guilty. Now, in 1847, Garrison was the well-known editor of the Liberator and occasionally alluded to this suit as persecution by slaveholders. The Colonization Society collected the documents, including affidavits that most, of not all, of the jurors opposed slavery, and published the compilation in pamphlet form.³⁹

Abolitionist agitation not only dissuaded Negroes from emigrating, but discouraged slaveholders from manumitting their servants for passage to the settlement. While some owners, it is true, cared little or nothing for their people's welfare, many had tender feelings and looked upon their slaves almost as members of the family. Correspondence between master and servant frequently continued for years until death severed the relationship. The Society archives contain numerous inquiries from former owners who did not keep personal contact with released slaves as to their health and fortune. Likewise, colonists regularly besieged newly arriving immigrants for word of home and master and sent verbal greetings back to the United States with returning citizens or visitors.

For slaveholders who wished the best for their bondsmen, unfavorable reports caused them to hesitate before consigning the unfortunates to a speedy end in Africa. Even if the owners themselves did not believe the fantastic rumors, it took a hard heart to insist that the

³⁹Maryland State Colonization Society, Proceedings Against William Lloyd Garrison For a Libel (Baltimore: William Woody, 1847).

reluctant blacks be off. Apart from abolitionist tales, admitted shortcomings of the colony were enough to dismay kindly disposed masters. Famine and suffering reported in abundance seemed a high price to pay for liberty and self-government. Controversies with missionaries and criticisms aired in religious periodicals caused still more men to adopt a skeptical attitude towards the whole colonization business.

Not only did slaveholders pause in freeing their hands for emigration because of the bad publicity from Liberia--contributors and potential givers became hesitant to support the cause. Such persons generally were city or town dwellers without any bondsmen to free. They were frequently women inspired by the desire to educate and convert the heathen tribesmen dwelling in and around the colony. Reports that colonists treated the Africans like slaves and had a detrimental effect upon them alarmed many a well disposed humanitarian. Missionary complaints undoubtedly affected the giving element of the community more than they influenced prospective slave benefactors. Whereas voluntary contributions from 1831 to the close of 1840 totalled \$15,682, they had reached only \$29,102 at the end of 1851, indicating a substantially lower rate of giving in the latter period.⁴⁰

The Society's chief source of livelihood, the colonization tax, received frequent abuse in the 1840's. Although the lower chamber of the Maryland legislature failed repeatedly in attempting to get a bill repealing the tax past the Senate, the Delegates were, in fact,

⁴⁰Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1841), p. 13; "Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society," Maryland Colonization Journal, n. s. VI, No. 9 (February, 1852), 132.

representing their constituents quite faithfully. Society agents found a great deal of opposition to voluntary gifts because payment of the annual grant seemed sufficient support of the cause.⁴¹ They also encountered, especially among the well-to-do citizens most affected, decided opposition to the annual levy. John M. Roberts, touring the Eastern Shore, discovered that the more wealthy citizens could tell him to a dime how much their counties paid year by year. The prevailing opinion was that they were not in the least benefitted by the system.⁴² In central Maryland, around Westminster and Frederick, Roberts found the citizenry even more adamant about the tax. The universal cry was that the law ought to be repealed and that the Negroes could go to the Devil.⁴³ A few years later, an agent visiting Southern Maryland, bewailed the local attitude toward colonization. He was frequently told that the number of colonists was so small and that the blacks were so hostile as to render the movement an impractical scheme, causing them to pour out their money like water but to no avail.⁴⁴

A final reason why Maryland Negroes declined to emigrate can be found in the fact that their situation was reasonably tolerable. Despite Charles County lawmaker allegations, the condition of free Negroes and slaves was actually not deplorable if one discounts political and

⁴¹MSS, Letters, Vol. XII, Kennard to Hall, Cambridge, March 15, 1841; Kennard to Latrobe, Baltimore Co., June 10, 1841.

⁴²Ibid., Vol. XIII, Roberts to Hall, Near Salisbury, August 6, 1842.

⁴³Ibid., Vol. XIV, Roberts to Hall, Frederick City, May 23, 1843.

⁴⁴Ibid., Vol. XVIII, John W. Wells to Hall, Leonard Town, May 25, 1849.

and social inequality. There is an abundance of evidence, much already cited, demonstrating that free Negroes had considerable liberty and found ready employment. That colonizationists recognized these as reasons for the dearth of volunteers can be seen in a message from James Hall to Governor Russwurm. Written in April, 1843, after a particularly contrary legislative session, the letter expressed ambivalence at the Society's success in defeating a capitation tax on the free colored people. Hall wrote, "I am happy to be able to inform you that it the proposed bill⁷ was laid on the table and of course killed. Yet I hardly know why I say I am glad that such is the conclusion of the matter, for I really believe that any course that would induce them or force them if you please to leave this country would be truly advantageous to them."⁴⁵ Colonizationists also learned that, in good times, when harvests were abundant, Negroes lent deaf ears to anything about Africa, considering that they were doing well enough in Maryland itself.⁴⁶

The efforts to break Negro lethargy and hostility to the idea of returning to their forebearers' home encompassed a wide range of techniques. By the 40's, attitudes and opinions were fairly well fixed either in favor of colonization or, more often, opposed to it. One of the more successful methods of obtaining emigrants was to select at least one colonist annually to return to Maryland, to visit his old home and to travel with the Society agent to other parts of the state.

⁴⁵MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, Hall to Russwurm, Baltimore, April 7, 1843.

⁴⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIV, A. C. Thompson to Hall, Cambridge, October 31, 1843.

Throughout the body's history probably more volunteers were secured in this manner than in any other, although results were generally modest. Joshua Cornish, from near Frederick, was one of the first men brought back. He had gone to the colony in 1837 and, four years later, after several colonizationists, including his former master, had interceded, he was given permission to visit the United States at Society expense. His trip dispelled friends' beliefs that his letters had been forged and that his real destination had been Georgia, but he was so discouraged that they did not accept what he said about the colony that he wished never to visit his old home again. Nonetheless, colonizationists thought that men like Joshua, who were too ignorant to be disbelieved, were the best cure for apathy, and credited him with securing the thirty-two blacks who went back with him.⁴⁷ In succeeding years, settlers regularly visited throughout the state, but never after December, 1842, when the Globe took the large group of 142, did more than forty-five sail at one time.

A more formal attempt at increasing the number of emigrants was an indirect means. The Maryland Colonization Journal was to be sent to all persons who donated as little as a dollar a year, but, in reality, it seems to have kept going to any individual who had ever made a contribution of any kind whether he continued to give or not. Part of the reasoning behind such an inefficient business procedure could have been the speculation that unsolicited Journals would maintain the readers'

⁴⁷Ibid., Vol. XII, George Winthrop to [Hall], East New Market, September 30, 1841; William Newton to Hall, Hicksborough, November 25, 1841; Vol. XV, Thompson to Hall, Cambridge, May 16, 1844.

interests enough to give again. Also, to check pledges against payments and this year's contribution against last year's was a tedious task. Hall, the General Agent, had so many other duties to perform and so little clerical help that close scrutiny of subscriber lists was unfeasible. The consequence was that, by 1847, a survey of postmasters revealed that few citizens would take the Colonization Journal from the post office.⁴⁸ The subscriber list was then cut back to known patrons.

Throughout the Society's active existence, the foremost means of publicizing its program and aims was the work of travelling agents. In the tradition of Finley and McKenney, other men traversed the state, except for Western Maryland which had too few Negroes and too sparse a white population to make the effort seem worthwhile, soliciting funds and recruiting emigrants. Their careers followed a consistent pattern. Usually unassigned ministers, they began their tours enthusiastically and sent optimistic initial reports back to Baltimore. They then became discouraged and ill and talked of resigning. They frequently quarreled with the Board of Managers over salaries. Whereas, at first, the Board frequently paid a straight salary, travelling expenses, and a commission on collections over a certain sum, it soon found that agents seldom brought in even as much as the agreed-upon payment. The Managers then set salaries at a certain percentage of the contributions raised and said nothing about expenses. John Kennard, who served the Society nearly six years, resigned when the new policy was adopted because he considered it impossible for an agent to make a living on

⁴⁸Ibid., Vol. XVIII, letters from various postmasters, October, 1847.

the commission basis.⁴⁹ He was certainly correct so far as he was concerned and it was probably his personal experience which led the Board to change its system. A review of his financial accounts shows that his salary and travelling expenses came to \$7,332 for the six years, but that he actually took in only \$2,120, with another \$4,212 pledged and of doubtful consequence to the Society. Even if all pledges were collected, an utter impossibility, he would still have cost the Society a thousand dollars more than he produced.⁵⁰ Successive agents were, with few exceptions, no more adept at raising funds than Kennard and generally lasted only a year or so each.

The scarcity of emigrants did not mean that the Society resorted to taking all applicants. Continuing a policy of some selectivity, the Society refused, for example, to accept convicts. Early in 1843, the Maryland legislature considered a resolution to deport criminals to the colony. Latrobe protested vehemently that, to make Cape Palmas another Botany Bay, the British penal colony in Australia, would do irreparable harm to the colonists and lessen the attractiveness of the African settlement for prospective emigrants. He concluded that jail birds were hardly likely to contribute to the colony that measure of brotherhood necessary for its survival.⁵¹

⁴⁹Ibid., Vol. XII, Kennard to Latrobe, Baltimore County, June 10, 1841.

⁵⁰MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Kennard, Baltimore, May 25, 1842.

⁵¹Ibid., Latrobe to Dr. Graves, n. p., n. d. [1843].

A few years later, the Board turned down the application of Thomas Cooper, in the Baltimore City prison for purchasing a few barrels under false pretenses, who volunteered to emigrate to Africa with his wife if the Society would secure his release. The young couple professed a great desire to become colonists and the Board was sympathetic to their petition but, after considering all the circumstances, decided that it would be inexpedient and establish a bad precedent to receive them.⁵²

The decade of the 1840's witnessed, then, a generally moribund colonization movement. The Society got out of debt only by curtailing its activities at home and in the colony enough to accumulate a surplus from the annual \$10,000 state appropriation. Less than three hundred Negroes, not all of them Marylanders and by no means all headed for Cape Palmas, departed from Baltimore. With decreasing strength, colonizationists averted legislation detrimental to the cause. Maryland lawmakers were successful, however, in 1850 in passing a measure contrary to Society goals.

"An Act to repeal all laws prohibiting the Introduction of Slaves into this State" lifted restrictions on the importation of slaves by Maryland citizens and eliminated the per capita tax formerly levied on newly arriving bondsmen.⁵³ While not a significant source of revenue,

⁵²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, December 1, 1846; Letters, Vol. XVII, J. J. Walcott to Latrobe, Baltimore, November 28, 1846; Henry Cooper to Board of Directors of the Colonization Society, Baltimore, December 1, 1846.

⁵³Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1849), Chapter 165.

the tax had amounted to more than \$12,000 since 1832.⁵⁴ Its recipient, the Colonization Society, was in such financial straits that every penny had been jealously sought. Aside from the prospective monetary loss, the Society considered the bill opposed in principle to its aims. It had worked for nearly twenty years to reduce the number of slave and free Negroes in the state. It had fought off periodic attacks and had used every means it considered judicious to persuade the colored population to choose Africa as a new home. Now its efforts were to be subverted by the abandonment of a concept basic to its operations. Added to Society officers' consternation was their knowledge that the \$200,000 appropriation would soon run out. They could only wonder if this long-dependable source of income, too, would be cut off. Nonetheless, the Board of Managers adopted resolutions reasserting its faith in colonization, its satisfaction with the colony, and pledging continued efforts to sustain the cause.⁵⁵ Although it did not convene again for nearly a year, affording some indication of administration energy, a few men such as President Latrobe and Agent Hall began a state-wide campaign to publicize the Society's achievements. With an eye on 1852, they realized that only a strong demonstration of public confidence would save colonization. To produce that support was their immediate objective; to secure a renewal of the state appropriation was their long-range hope.

⁵⁴"Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society," Maryland Colonization Journal, n. s. VI, No. 9 (February, 1852), 132.

⁵⁵MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 4, 1850.

CHAPTER VIII

DOMESTIC OPERATIONS, 1850-1857

The comparatively dormant condition of the Maryland Colonization Society in the 1840's eliminated liabilities and kept the colony alive, but hardly inspired much interest at home. With the exception of certain high points such as the Colonization Convention in 1841, the Globe sailing in 1842 and the Liberia Packet matter in the last part of the decade, the state's citizens could scarcely have been much aware of the Society's activities.

The large group of prominent Baltimoreans who had founded the organization in 1831 and had actively participated in its early years had dwindled until, by 1850, only a few men directed the movement. Hugh Davey Evans, William Fell Giles, Frederick W. Brune and John Latrobe, well-established attorneys, Thomas Wilson, a prominent merchant, and Charles Howard, civic leader, were at the front of the organization. Many of the original founders, including George Hoffman, Doctor Samuel Baker, Peter Hoffman, Solomon Etting, Luke Tiernan and John Hoffman had all passed from the scene. Others such as Moses Sheppard and Judge Nicholas Brice were elderly and no longer active.

The one man who provided administrative continuity was the general agent, James Hall. While Latrobe developed a lucrative

practice which brought him recognition as a masterful railroad and patent attorney, Hall initiated reforms, suggested Society projects, directed the travelling agents, advised Russwurm, outfitted expeditions and pinched pennies. He seldom took a vacation, although illness at times restricted his services. Whereas Latrobe was titular head of the Maryland colonization movement, Hall was its actual dean, and, in 1851 and 1852, it was largely Latrobe's name and Hall's work which accomplished renewal of the state grant.

The first task in securing this continuation was to wage a campaign of publicity demonstrating colonization's effectiveness and its indispensibility. Taking a more aggressive role, the Society began early in 1850 to cultivate Maryland lawmakers and to spread news of its operations beyond state boundaries. The Annual Report that spring was mailed to the Governor and the Treasurer as well as to each member of Maryland's two-house legislature. Five copies were sent to the historical society and to the governor of every other state in the nation.¹

A wider audience which, it was hoped, would indirectly influence the legislative process was reached by the Maryland Colonization Journal. Although the periodical now went only to actual contributors among the general citizenry, it was still sent gratuitously to such community voices as pastors. A major obstacle for the Society to overcome was the imputation that colonization, having

¹MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 18, 1850.

accomplished little, was no longer of interest to Maryland's two races or to other Americans either, for the most part. The Journal assured readers that a rapid change was taking place among the free colored people. It attributed the shift to one of two things: either the abandonment of abolitionist opposition or a loss of that influence over people of color. Not presuming to know which was the correct explanation, the paper concluded,

The State's interest requires, that, at the moment when its agency can be potent, it should not be withdrawn. It is useless, and it would be humiliating, to afford to the unfriends of Colonization, even a pretence for triumph; ---and, that this would be given by the abandonment of the Colony at Cape Palmas, when a further support, for a few years, would give it rank among the nations, and by the withdrawal of aid to the emigrants, now, for the first time, willing to become its people, is as plain as the sun in the Heavens.²

The Colonization Journal quoted papers from around the state to substantiate its assertion that the population was calling for continuation of state aid. The Unionist of Cumberland advised its readers to study the Society's proposals, for a more laudable cause could not be brought to their attention. An Upper Marlboro paper, the Planter, although annoyed that the Society took the official stand that slavery was an evil, nonetheless supported renewal of the state subscription:

We believe African slavery to be a blessing, and this reflection upon ourselves and our fathers, is badly calculated to enlist us. . . . Notwithstanding this reproach, we are in favor of Colonization for our free blacks. We would send them away because they are no advantage to us or

²Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. VI, No. 8 (January, 1852), 113-14.

to themselves while here. As to our slaves, we would keep them as they are. Hence, we cannot be expected to advocate any measures for their diminution or removal.

Another Southern Maryland publication, the Port Tobacco Times, called the African colonization scheme the most practical and humane plan yet devised for the benefit of the black race in the United States: "It is the child of Maryland and claims her protection---at least for a little while longer. We hope, then, that this matter will receive the most favorable consideration of the Legislature." Other papers, including the Baltimore American and the Frederick Examiner, were quoted as favoring the suggested legislation.³

The extent of the exaggerated claims and the unrealistic appraisals, largely generated by the Baltimore colonizers themselves, can be seen by examining Society records. In February, 1852, full statistics for twenty years' work were published in the Colonization Journal to demonstrate Society accomplishments. The Board of Managers abandoned humility in praising the establishment of the Society in 1831:

There was wisdom and humanity in what the state of Maryland did, as well as great political forecast. In 1831, few persons deemed that slavery, as a topic of national interest, would cause the excitement, which has, until recently, prevailed over the length and breadth of the country. Few persons then anticipated a foreign immigration, amounting to half a million a year, and coming at once into active competition for bread with the free colored people, who had for years been filling stations to which they seemed to have a prescriptive right, and from so many of which we have since seen them excluded.

But those, who then had the interests of the State in their keeping, seem to have had a clear perception of coming evil days,---and the Legislature of that period

³Ibid., pp. 115-16.

provided against them well and carefully, humanely and honorably. . . . Avowing the policy of Colonization, abolitionism was kept down; and while other States were disturbed and excited, the people of Maryland enjoyed a total exemption from all agitation in regard to it. They have been affected neither by the jealous apprehensions of the South, nor the blind fanaticism of the North.

An audit of funds received and spent and a listing of the number of emigrants sent to Liberia tell a far less glowing tale.

The total amount of money received by the Society from 1831 to January 1, 1852, was \$317,049.18, broken down as follows:

State appropriation	\$186,922.16
1827 state grant (belated)	930.00
State Colonization tax	12,851.85
Contributions	29,102.77
Profit and Loss	76,369.03
Other sources	<u>10,873.37</u>
	\$317,049.18

The profit and loss item largely represented colonial trade earnings.

Costs attending the gathering and preparation of prospective colonists were \$117,536.08.

Expeditions	\$ 69,466.45
Collecting and outfitting emigrants	9,038.20
Supporting emigrants six months in Africa and longer, if necessary	<u>39,031.43</u>
Total cost of collection, outfitting, transportation and support	\$117,536.08
African expenses amounted to nearly \$150,000:	
Purchase of territory, erection of buildings, public improvements, civil list	\$133,876.25
Vessels and boats trading on the coast	10,821.97
Education of immigrants in the Public Schools	<u>5,216.26</u>
Total expenditures in Africa	\$149,914.48

Home expenses recorded were:

Office outlay, including rental of room in the Baltimore Post Office	\$42,048.13
Printing of <u>Colonization Journal</u> and other publications for general distribution	5,050.49
Stock held by the Society in the Liberia Packet	<u>2,500.00</u>
Total home expenses	\$49,598.62

To recapitulate:

Total receipts from all sources	\$317,049.18
Total expenses of collection, outfitting, transportation and support of newcomers	\$117,536.08
Total expenditures in Africa	149,914.48
Total home expenses	<u>49,598.62</u>
	\$317,049.18 ⁴

Emigrants sent by the Society to Liberia totalled 1049, of whom 934 came from Maryland, 35 from Virginia and 80 from Georgia.⁵

The Board emphasized that African outlays represented the largest sum and that land had to be acquired, buildings and fortifications erected and a government organized before a single immigrant could be received. It argued further that African expenditures had gradually diminished since the founding of the colony and predicted the disappearance of this financial imbalance in the near future. Another point stressed was that the state appropriation would have been inadequate by itself to accomplish what had been done with the organization's added resources. The Board noted that Society contributions had paid

⁴"Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society," Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. VI, No. 9 (February, 1852), 132-33.

⁵Ibid., p. 142.

home expenses and were sufficient, in addition, to cover many African costs. It concluded that the connection between the state and the Society had enabled the former to execute a plan which the 1832 appropriation by itself could never have effected.⁶

A more difficult task was to convince Maryland legislators that their original appropriation must be renewed in order to reap the real rewards of the first grant. Forecasting independence for Maryland in Liberia within a few years, the Board of Managers argued that the continuing emigration resting substantially upon state assistance would hasten that day when outside aid would no longer be necessary. A growing population would increase coastal trade and yield greater revenues from import and lighthouse duties. Also, the more people, the greater the internal revenue from licenses and other sources. The Board pledged that, if the state continued aid to the colony "a little longer," its namesakes and offspring would become self-paying and independent. To drop the project, however, would be looked upon by enemies as Maryland's defection and their triumph and would even impugn the wisdom of the legislators who had supported the movement over the years.⁷

A delicate issue which was kept as secret as possible in the period before the legislature met was the fact that the question of independence was a burning issue in the colony. The American Colonization Society's decision to grant its Monrovia settlement

⁶Ibid., pp. 133-34.

⁷Ibid., pp. 135-37.

control of its own destinies in 1847 and Russwurm's absence in the United States the following year had launched greater political discussion at Cape Palmas. Maryland colonists began to agitate for altered status and, before long, they were divided into factions advocating different remedies. Most citizens wished a severance of Society ties. Many favored affiliation with the Liberian Republic but were divided as to whether it should be a federative arrangement or incorporation as a county. Others pushed for the establishment of the Maryland commonwealth as a republic. Society officers favored independence and later federation with the Republic, but expected such political change to require some time, with power and institutions being gradually transferred to the authority of the residents.

The point which they stressed to Russwurm and, after his death in 1851, to Samuel Ford McGill, was that steps toward independence should be initiated but that county annexation should be ruled out because the state appropriation certainly would never be renewed if Maryland in Liberia were submerged within the Republic. The colonial officers were given permission to study plans for independence from the Society but, so far as people at home, and particularly the lawmakers, were concerned, they were to be led to believe that no change in relations between colony and Society was contemplated.⁸

⁸MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, John Latrobe to John Russwurm, Baltimore, July 17, 1851; Latrobe to Samuel Ford McGill, Baltimore, October, 1851.

The most important body within the Maryland legislature to convince of the Society's merits was the House of Delegates' Committee on the Coloured Population. Well supplied with information from the Colonization Society and influenced by its officers sent to Annapolis to lobby for a new appropriation bill, the Committee issued a favorable report and called for continuing aid. It cited census figures for preceding decades and emphasized the dire predictions respecting the colored population outstripping the white. Declaring its belief that the two races could not permanently live side by side, it claimed that no place on the American continent was suitable as a Negro refuge. Africa, where the white man could not live, was presented as the only place in the world fulfilling the blacks' need for a home. Voicing the opinion that free Negroes were beginning to realize that they must eventually emigrate, the Committee suggested that to "stop now, when the object to be accomplished under the act of 1831, is on the eve of completion, would be to deny the policy of a legislation which circumstances show to have been most wise and just."

To colonization opponents deriding the small number of emigrants actually sent to Africa, the Delegates replied:

The true standard [by which to estimate the success of colonization] is the condition and capacity of the colony, in view of the purposes for which it was established. Does it afford a safe and comfortable home, in a congenial climate, to which the free people of color may emigrate when circumstances shall make it their interest to do so presently, at the expense of the State and others--hereafter, as commerce grows up between the two countries; at their own expense, as German and Irish

emigrants now come to America? If this question can be satisfactorily answered, and the Committee believe that it can be, the Society has done all that could be reasonably required of it, and has fulfilled, so far, the purpose of its existence.⁹

The bill which the Committee recommended passed the General Assembly in May, 1852, and ten thousand dollars annually was thus again made available to the Colonization Society for the space of six years. The one restriction imposed was that such public funds could benefit only Negroes who had been Maryland residents for five years preceding their application. The legislature did reserve the right to repeal the appropriation at any time.¹⁰ The dearth of comment upon the action suggests lack of both opposition and interest in the whole matter of colonization. Latrobe was naturally pleased with the renewal and believed that the grant would be continued many years longer, if necessary.¹¹

Aside from securing the State's beneficence, the Society's central aim in the 1850's was to enroll emigrants. Editorializing in the Maryland Colonization Journal, Hall declared that men obviously were Liberia's biggest need: "give but Liberia these [men], and all other things shall be added unto her. We say this has been the great want of Liberia; but never the sine qua non,

⁹Maryland, Maryland Public Documents (January Session, 1852), Report of the Committee on the Colored [sic] Population to the House of Delegates, April 19, 1852.

¹⁰Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1852), Chapter 202.

¹¹MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Rev. Joseph Tracy, Baltimore, May 29, 1852.

until now."¹² Actually, the Society had not enjoyed the services of a successful travelling agent since John Roberts' five years before. In April, 1850, the Managers appointed the Reverend John Seys to fill that post. Seys was a white man but had been born and reared in the West Indies. He had established the Methodist Episcopal mission at Cape Mesurado after two earlier failures by others and had labored there successfully for years.¹³ James Hall considered him to have done more for colonization in the United States, more for Africa, the colonists and indigenes than all other missionaries put together.¹⁴ Confident that Seys would attract emigrants and funds, the former being the more important, the Society generously granted him a salary of \$1,000 annually plus a ten per cent commission on all collections over a thousand dollars, agreed to pay his travelling expenses while engaged as its agent, and met the cost of moving his family from Connecticut where he then had a pastorate.¹⁵

The rosy expectations centering around Seys' appointment were fully realized. In his first two and a half years, he sent out from Baltimore 192 emigrants, two-thirds the total number that had gone out in the preceding decade. None the less, Seys was

¹²Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. V, No. 12 (May, 1850), 185.

¹³Ibid., n.s. V, No. 11 (April, 1850), 184.

¹⁴MSCS MSS, Agent's Books, Vol. II, James Hall to Ralph Gurley, Baltimore, September 30, 1843.

¹⁵MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 4, 1850.

personally discouraged with results. Visiting Charles County, for example, he found that he could get neither money nor emigrants there and concluded that the area would always be a sterile field for colonization.¹⁶ In Frederick, he found a falling off of interest in Africa.¹⁷ To keep him in its employ, the Board agreed to pay him an extra \$2 per person embarking from Maryland for Cape Palmas¹⁸ but in three remaining years of service, Seys could persuade only 102 persons to emigrate.¹⁹

Early in 1856, he resigned his position in Maryland to accept a corresponding one with the American Colonization Society in Ohio, where two sons had settled. Soon after, he accompanied an expedition sent by the parent group to establish an interior settlement in the Liberian Republic.²⁰ From then on, his path did not cross that of the Marylanders.

Seys' record was actually an impressive one. In less than six years, he recruiting 294 Marylanders for Liberia. His salary, commission, bounty and travelling expenses totalled only \$6,875

¹⁶MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIX, John Seys to Hall, n.p. [Charles County], n.d. [April, 1851].

¹⁷Ibid., Seys to Hall, Frederick City, June 5, 1851.

¹⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Board of Managers January 4, 1853.

¹⁹"Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society," Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s., VIII, No. 9 (February, 1856), 135.

²⁰MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XXII, Seys to Hall, Baltimore, December 24, 1855; William McLain to Hall, March 22, 1856; Gurley to Hall, March 24, 1856.

and his collections totalled \$12,276, a sizable increase in the annual rate over the previous years. Net proceeds for the Society were thus in excess of \$5,000.²¹ Such unaccustomed surplus funds added to the treasury constituted a great boon.

In 1854 and 1855, the Society received applications from several slave-owners in Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee requesting that their servants be transplanted to Africa.²² Under Maryland law, state funds could not be employed to transport such non-residents. The Society could, however, use its own funds, which it did. In December, 1854, the Brig General Pierce carried 53 Georgia and 9 Tennessee blacks to Africa. The Cora took 20 from Virginia and 8 from Tennessee in May, 1855.²³ Actually, transporting these individuals cost more than \$5,600²⁴ and, if one adds the expense of their six-months' upkeep, it is obvious that the Society was spending some state money in the process. Appropriation overseers protested the expenditure of Maryland money for out-of-state slaves,²⁵ but the fact that almost all had settled at Cape Palmas served to alleviate their qualms.

²¹MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 18, 1856.

²²Ibid., Meetings of the Board of Managers, October 18, 1854, and April 30, 1855.

²³MSCS MSS, Letter Press Books, Vol. I, Hall to Charles Howard, Baltimore, November 19, 1856.

²⁴"Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society," Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. VIII, No. 9 (February, 1856), 137.

²⁵MSCS MSS, Letter Press Books, Vol. I, Hall to McLain, Baltimore, March 10/12, 1855.

Seys' success strengthened Society officers' belief that they had only to canvass the state adequately to acquire new colonists and voluntary funds. They of course realized that the current state appropriation would expire in another two years and that a further renewal depended upon signs of active colonization interest in the state coupled with a steady flow of Negroes to Africa. The best means of stepping up both support and emigration was thought to be the appointment of two agents as Seys' replacement. The state was consequently divided into two districts, the Eastern and the Western Shores and Baltimore City was divided north and south along Charles Street. Each man was to receive \$1,000 annually plus travelling expenses, all exclusively from his own collections. A ten per cent commission on receipts over a thousand dollars and \$2 per emigrant bounty were also provided for.²⁶ The individuals selected were the Reverend Philip D. Lipscomb and the Reverend Jeremiah W. Cullum, both of the Methodist Episcopal Church's Baltimore Annual Conference. Lipscomb was assigned the Western Shore with Baltimore from the west side of Charles Street and Cullum the Eastern Shore plus Baltimore east side of Charles.²⁷

Evidence respecting their activities is almost non-existent. Correspondence from them is negligible and their reports are merely accounts of money collected and their expenses, without commentary.

²⁶MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 18, 1856; Letter Press Books, Vol. I, Hall to Rev. E. J. Way, Baltimore, March 10, 1856.

²⁷MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 11, 1856.

For the period April 1, 1856, to February 28, 1858, Lipscomb raised \$3,869, of which \$2,303 went for salary and expenses, leaving a balance of \$1,566 for the Society. Cullum at the same time took in \$3,347, claimed \$2,252 for himself and left the Society with \$1,095.²⁸ Records covering Maryland emigrants after 1857 are incomplete because the colony in that year was annexed to the Liberian Republic as Maryland County and the Society thereafter sent out its few emigrants under American Colonization Society auspices. From June, 1856, to November, 1857, only 38 Maryland Negroes embarked for Africa and 1858 figures could hardly have been much different.²⁹ The Managers consequently decided that the number of emigrants recruited, the central goal of their operations, was too small to warrant retention of both agents, and Cullum was subsequently released.³⁰

The general fusing of Maryland operations with those of the parent society in the 50's signified a number of changes. Over the years, the bitter strife accompanying the first expeditions and the decision to found a separate colony at Cape Palmas had been mollified as the Washington board's predictions on costs and difficulties were borne out. During the 40's, increasing opposition

²⁸Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, March 2, 1858.

²⁹"Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society," Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. IX, No. 8 (January, 1858), 119.

³⁰MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 31, 1859.

to colonization throughout the country, endless missionary controversies and establishment of the Liberia Packet brought the two groups into closer harmony and some cooperation. The mutual woes of operating colonies with typically indolent and dependent populations created an empathy between the two groups' officers. Perhaps the most important factor in the growth of amity was, however, the selection of John Latrobe as the American Colonization Society president early in 1853.

Head of the Maryland movement since 1837, Latrobe now succeeded the late Henry Clay in the national cause. He was much more of a figurehead in the new position than he had been in Baltimore where, time permitting, he had given close scrutiny to the colonizing activities being directed from state headquarters. Assumption of the new post coincided with Latrobe's rise to new eminence as an attorney of international repute, affording him even less time for Maryland colonization projects. Not long after this, he made a trip to Russia and successfully represented his clients in a claim against Czar Alexander II for a railroad constructed between St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Even as the Washington society was considering Clay's successor, it raised an issue all the more delicate because of attendant circumstances. Late in 1852, the American Colonization Society presented two bills to the Maryland Board for emigrants from that state who had been taken to Africa under parent group auspices. One statement requested payment of \$3,780, or \$30 each, for 126 Marylanders transported to Monrovia. The other sought \$660 for 22 transported to Cape Palmas. How long-standing these debts were, or when the

colonists had been conveyed to the settlements, cannot be ascertained from Society archives, but the national group sought immediate payment in order to meet pressing obligations.³¹

At the next Board meeting in January, 1853, Latrobe submitted the two claims, stating that he had been totally ignorant of them until the week before. Noting that his name had been mentioned in the newspapers in connection with the American Colonization Society vacancy, he deduced that there was a tieup between the approaching election and presentation of the bills. Nonetheless, he thought that the matter should be settled on its own merits before the new national executive officer was selected. The Managers thereupon voted to reject the \$3,780 claimed for the transportation of Maryland emigrants to Liberia, but to pay the \$660 for colonists landed at Palmas.³² The action is indicative of the Maryland group's continuing resolve to employ its funds solely for the improvement of its own colony even if its president were to be denied the honor of leading the national colonization movement.

Despite the Maryland Board's action, Latrobe was elected to the national office and resigned his local position for it.³³ Charles Howard, a founder of the rejuvenated state society back in 1831, was unanimously chosen to fill Latrobe's place. A

³¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIX, McLain to Hall, Washington City, December 28, 1852.

³²MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 4, 1853.

³³Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, February 8, 1853.

general reshuffling of officers occurred, reflecting more accurately the Society's active membership. William Fell Giles, for example, moved from Recording to Corresponding Secretary, and Frederick W. Brune replaced him in the former role.³⁴ The Society seems to have been fairly dormant during 1853 notwithstanding its new leadership and guaranteed state funds. No meeting of the Managers is recorded between March 22, 1853 and January 7, 1854. Seys' luck in assembling Maryland emigrants ran out at about the same time so that the Society finally dispatched ex-slaves from other states to the Cape.

In the years following Latrobe's departure from the Maryland in Liberia administration, the colonization movement within its home state became increasingly dependent upon the national organization for inspiration. Greater cooperation is demonstrated by the national society's action in sending forty-one emigrants to Cape Palmas aboard the Elvira Owen in June, 1856.³⁵

Further coordination between the two societies is seen in the effort to build and pay for a vessel to replace the Liberia Packet. The American Colonization Society had begun such a movement in 1854 and had added pledges of \$15,000 from Maine sympathizers who expected to build the ship in Bath and \$5,000 from the Maryland Society to its own guarantee of an equal amount. The

³⁴Ibid., Meetings of the Board of Managers, February 15, 1853 and March 22, 1853.

³⁵MSSCS MSS, Letter Press Books, Vol. II, Hall to Howard, Baltimore, November 19, 1856.

expected cost of the clipper, coppered and fitted for passengers, was, however, \$36,000.³⁶

At this juncture, a prospective benefactor appeared on the horizon. Some time in 1854, a John Stevens of Trappe, in Talbot County, Maryland, read that the Washington organization was considering buying a suitable ship to convey colonists to Africa. In September, 1855, through his fellow Eastern Shoreman, John Bozman Kerr, a prominent politician and Chargé d'Affaires to the Republic of Nicaragua during the Fillmore Administration then practicing law in Baltimore, Stevens tendered a generous contribution to Latrobe for the project.³⁷

In the ensuing months, Stevens received so many conflicting reports respecting the proposed vessel that he almost abandoned the notion of according financial assistance. John Seys, acquainted with the offer through Kerr, informed Stevens that the Washington board had relinquished all intention of building or purchasing a steamer but wished instead to follow Hall's plan of constructing a fast clipper.³⁸ Stevens was in a quandry respecting how to participate in the enterprise and three months elapsed before he investigated further. From Seys' letter, he had gotten the idea

³⁶Ibid., Vol. I, Hall to John Stevens, Baltimore, January 2, 1856; Stevens Donation Correspondence and Proceedings, Hall to Stevens, Baltimore, January 3, 1856.

³⁷MSCS MSS, Stevens Donation, Stevens to John Bozman Kerr, [Trappe, Talbot Co.], n.d. [September, 1855].

³⁸Ibid., Seys to Stevens, Baltimore, September 26, 1855.

that Maryland colonizers meant to carry out the scheme and now contacted their travelling agent.³⁹ Thus Hall came to learn of Stevens' interest and, with characteristic aggressiveness and efficiency, set about to secure the donation. Seeming indifference was replaced with energetic steps to assure the potential benefactor that his support would be heartily welcome.

Rather than urging that the gift be given to the Maryland Society, as Stevens was then considering, Hall now suggested that Stevens return to his first notion of assisting the national cause. Hall argued that Maryland emigrants and freight were not sufficient to warrant a vessel being assigned exclusively to it. He held that the most desirable and economical procedure would be to transport emigrants from several states together.⁴⁰ Latrobe, writing as American Colonization Society president, advised Stevens not to contribute several thousand dollars, as originally intended, to the proposed Maine-built sailing ship but, rather to contribute sufficient money to cover the costs of a second one. His own vanity is revealed in this advice through casting doubt that "Gurley's ship" would ever be built and confessing that he would like to be able to say that a Maryland citizen had himself donated a vessel to the national society.⁴¹ A month later, reiterating his doubt

³⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XXII, Stevens to Seys, Trappe, Talbot Co., December 22, 1855.

⁴⁰MSCS MSS, Letter Press Books, Vol. I, Hall to Stevens, Baltimore, January 2, 1856.

⁴¹MSCS MSS, Stevens Donation, Latrobe to Stevens, Baltimore, January 2, 1856.

that the Maine project would ever succeed, Latrobe appealed to the wavering potential donor to make the ship John Stevens possible.⁴²

Latrobe's salesmanship succeeded. Stevens offered the Washington group two mortgages and a bond held by him, together worth somewhat over thirty-five thousand dollars. A Philadelphia firm, White, Stevens and Company, of which the donor's brother was a partner, owed the bond, valued at \$25,000 and interest since November 1, 1855. Daniel Lloyd, a prominent Talbot County man, was indebted to Stevens for nearly \$5,000, with the lien on a large property near Easton. General Tench Tilghman, son of the famed Continental Army officer by the same name, owed Stevens \$4,000 and interest thereon from January 1, 1856. A valuable farm near Oxford, where the general lived, had been given as collateral for the loan and, although fallen due four years previously, Stevens had been content to receive interest on the principal. About to travel to Baltimore for medical attention and apparently impressed by the uncertainties of life, Stevens gave specific information on these claims and stipulated that a committee be appointed to receive the funds and construct the ship. He wanted the Baltimore clipper to be named the Mary Caroline Stevens for his surviving daughter.⁴³ His brother, upon the benefactor's subsequent death

⁴²Ibid., Latrobe to Stevens, Baltimore, February 4, 1856.

⁴³Ibid., Stevens to Latrobe, Trappe, Talbot Co., Maryland, February 12, 1856.

that spring, at first insisted that it be christened The John Stevens of Maryland,⁴⁴ but yielded when the daughter declined changing her father's request.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, as Latrobe had predicted, it proved impossible to raise sufficient money to construct the Maine vessel, and the American Colonization Society turned its whole energies to the Stevens project. A trust fund was established for management of the gift and Hall, Elisha Whittlesey, who was a Washington attorney and government employee, and Latrobe were placed in charge.⁴⁶ They set about to garner the money and build the ship. White, Stevens and Company promptly paid its loan, which, with interest, totalled \$25,750.⁴⁷ But both Lloyd and Tilghman pleaded inability to pay their debts immediately. The former proved the more cooperative of the two, agreeing to pay half his obligation on July 1 and the remaining three months later.⁴⁸ Records show that the trustees received in cash on January 22, 1859, \$5,502.98 on Lloyd's judgments. Whether legal action in his case was necessary is not known but, in the Tilghman instance, the gentleman argued that,

⁴⁴Ibid., Latrobe to Elisha Whittlesey, Baltimore, May 3, 1856.

⁴⁵Ibid., James Stevens to Latrobe, Trappe, Talbot Co., Maryland, May 17, 1856.

⁴⁶Ibid., Latrobe to John Stevens, Baltimore, February 19, 1856.

⁴⁷Ibid., Latrobe to Whittlesey, Baltimore, May 3, 1856.

⁴⁸Ibid., Latrobe to General Tench Tilghman, Baltimore, May 3, 1856.

although he could not forthwith raise the mortgage amount, he could earn it sooner than it could be collected through court proceedings.⁴⁹ Latrobe feared that it would be necessary to foreclose on Tilghman's farm⁵⁰ but the general undertook to pay the debt by October 1.⁵¹ In actuality, he paid \$2,000 cash on December 4, 1856; \$1,125.50 on February 19, 1858; \$217.50 interest upon remaining principal on October 5, 1861; and the final amount of \$1,333.27 in May, 1836.⁵²

Contracting for construction of the vessel was relatively easy. The best offer came from John J. Abrahams, a Baltimore ship builder of high repute. For thirty-five dollars a ton, he agreed to lay down a clipper 140 feet long with a hold 19 feet deep and a 32-foot beam. It was to be built with the best white oak, locust and cedar top timbers, and October 1 was set as the completion date for carpentry.⁵³ The total cost of the Mary Caroline Stevens, including water tanks and all fixtures for emigrants, amounted to \$43,612. The tanks, valued at \$1,200, were donated by Frederick W. Brune. A member of the Maryland Board of Managers, Thomas Wilson, furnished the ship with an expensive library.⁵⁴ Having

⁴⁹Ibid., Tilghman to Latrobe, Oxford, April 22, 1856.

⁵⁰Ibid., Latrobe to Whittlesey, Baltimore, May 22, 1856.

⁵¹Ibid., Tilghman to Latrobe, Easton, May 16, 1856.

⁵²Ibid., see the accounts on the various dates.

⁵³Ibid., Meetings of trustees, April 18 and May 16, 1856.

⁵⁴Ibid., Hall to Latrobe and Whittlesey, Baltimore, December 4, 1856.

a capacity of 713 tons, it could carry some 225 emigrants.

On November 25, 1856, dignitaries from the national colonization movement as well as from northern state societies gathered at Fell's Point in Baltimore to inspect the vessel and to witness its launching.⁵⁵ It carried 217 colonists on the maiden voyage the following week, but only one came from Baltimore. The rest were sent by the parent body and represented numerous northern and southern states.⁵⁶ James Hall, granted leave of absence on full salary, led the expedition and returned to Africa to visit the Liberian Republic and to examine affairs in the Maryland commonwealth. His arrival on the West African coast early in 1857 was of immense importance to the American settlements and to that we shall return.

Construction of the Mary Caroline Stevens cost more than \$6,000 in excess of Stevens' donation even had it all been available immediately. But only \$29,250 had been obtained by December 1, 1856, leaving a deficit of \$14,000. To fill the gap, the Maryland Society loaned fellow Washington colonizationists who, officially, were the ship's backers, \$5,000 and its own credit on the books of the defunct Chesapeake and Liberia Trading Company. Altogether, the loan amounted to \$8,750, to be repaid as Maryland emigrants

⁵⁵Baltimore American quoted in the Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. VIII, No. 18 (November, 1856), 273-74.

⁵⁶Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. VIII, No. 19 (December, 1856), 290.

and freight went out aboard the clipper.⁵⁷ The Maryland Society actually could not afford to lend the money and scarcely could hope ever to use up the loan in the manner designated. The first two voyages of the M. C. Stevens, as the trim little ship was known, were very profitable, but, within a few years, it became a liability for want of sufficient emigrants. From 1861 through 1864, a mere 169 sailed,⁵⁸ reflecting the unsettled conditions attending the American Civil War. The Stevens Donation trustees at length sold the craft in 1864 for \$30,000 and invested the money in United States securities. They purchased another ship several years later for \$22,000, gave the American Colonization Society full control of it and paid the remaining money over to the parent treasury.⁵⁹

The Maryland Society's financial position failed to improve as the decade advanced. Aside from Seys' collections which partially covered costs of sending out-of-state emigrants to Cape Palmas, the \$10,000 annual state gift was the Marylanders' only resource. Late in 1856 before he left for Africa, Hall, as general agent, reviewed the organization's finances for its president, Charles Howard. Expenses for office rent and supplies, printing and local salaries ran \$2,000 yearly and the civil list at Cape

⁵⁷MSCS MSS, Stevens Donation, Hall to Latrobe and Whittlesey, Baltimore, December 4, 1856; Records, Meeting of the Board of Managers, April 11, 1856.

⁵⁸Philip J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 251.

⁵⁹MSCS MSS, Stevens Donation, Hall to Latrobe, October 24, 1864; Report of the Treasurer to the Trustees, Washington, January 15, 1867.

Palmas, with two additional years of responsibility anticipated, totalled the same. The Society had \$4,000 banked. The \$5,000 loan to the parent society, although designed to serve Maryland needs, was of little consequence since few Maryland emigrants could be obtained. Because of this lamentable situation, the colonizationists had not collected the 1856 state appropriation. Casting up accounts, Hall found that liabilities far exceeded assets and advised that the Society should either declare bankruptcy or draw a part of the state fund.⁶⁰

It did neither. Both the 1856 and 1857 appropriations remained in the state treasury. At the end of the latter year, liabilities stood at \$4,551.⁶¹ The only sure source of income was the state and, by now, the Board of Managers was either too scrupulous or too wary to use grants unless Maryland blacks were actually removed. Moreover, the second state grant ran out at the end of 1857. The Board, ever hopeful that free and slave Negroes would choose Africa as their new home, prevailed upon the General Assembly to renew the appropriation for one last time early in 1858. Maryland in Liberia had, by then, become an integral part of the Liberian Republic, but the Board pointed out that the dissolution of political relations with the colony did not affect its power in reference to emigrants. It asked for an appropriation solely

⁶⁰MSCS MSS, Letter Press Books, Vol. II, Hall to Howard, Baltimore, November 19, 1856.

⁶¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XXIV, Estimate of liabilities of the Society to 1st January 1858.

covering emigrant transportation costs, their upkeep for six months, the maintenance of a Baltimore office from which to disseminate information, and the salary of an agent in Africa to oversee the distribution of Society provisions.⁶²

The legislature's last favor to the Maryland colonization movement was a four-year appropriation continuation. In March, 1858, it allotted the Society \$5,000 annually and a per capita allowance not to exceed \$5,000 in any year. For each emancipated slave or free Negro over ten years old removed to Africa, the Society was to receive \$70; for all others, the contribution was \$35 per head.⁶³ Thereafter, the Society gradually sank into unredemnable moribundity. It fared no better than did the parent organization during the War Between the States and, in fact, did not re-emerge following the conflict. Its debts were fully met through a combination of state money and miscellaneous receipts and eventually, in the late 1860's, what little money remained was used to establish a James Hall School Fund in aid of Liberian education. The officers seem to have maintained their confidence in colonization to the end and, although disappointed at the dearth of emigrants, experienced keen satisfaction in the establishment of a true home for Maryland's Negro population.

⁶²"Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society," Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. IX, No. 8 (January, 1858), 117-19.

⁶³Maryland, Laws of Maryland (1858), Chapter 425.

CHAPTER IX

MARYLAND IN LIBERIA: ACHIEVEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE AND INCORPORATION WITHIN THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Seldom did the colonists at Cape Palmas originate government policy or procedure. Most of their ideas and requests were initiated by events at Monrovia. For example, in the 1840's when they clamored for new revenue laws, they were inspired by the recent passage of similar legislation in the parent colony. When the American Colonization Society ordered its charges to declare independence in 1847, a new political relationship with the Maryland Society became the cry of its wards also.

As early as April, 1849, Governor Russwurm detected a feeling favorable toward annexation to the Republic of Liberia among the Maryland immigrants.¹ The following spring, Demsey Fletcher, the Colonial Physician, reported the opposite attitude. Applauding two recent visits by President Joseph Jenkins Roberts of the Liberian Republic, he noted that while Monrovia were eager for the Maryland colony to join them, his fellow countrymen, like himself, considered such a move premature.² The differing analysis

¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XVIII, John Russwurm to John Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 17, 1849.

²Ibid., Vol. XIX, Demsey R. Fletcher to ?, Harper, Cape Palmas, March 29, 1850.

expressed by these two colonial officials foretold the division about to rent the settlement.

A significant factor in the citizens' advancing political consciousness was the presence among them of agitators. Some, like Joshua Stewart, the Vice-Agent, had personal motives for advocating the union of the Palmas group with the Republic. Stewart was interested in furthering his political career and had been the instigator of a recent petition to the Maryland Board respecting colonial indebtedness, licensing costs and currency. He had also, during Russwurm's visit to the United States in 1848, protested the length of the Governor's appointment. In general, he embodied the complaints and dissatisfactions animating some citizens and relished his position as their spokesman. Stewart was the first man to call a public meeting in the colony for the purpose of spreading his annexation views. At that time, during 1850, the majority opposed the idea, still believing that a continuing connection with Maryland colonizationists would be more beneficial than an alliance with Monrovia.³

Another firebrand advocating annexation was Boston J. Drayton, a Baptist missionary. Little is known about him except that he arrived at the Cape in 1849 and immediately engaged in political activities. After a few months, Russwurm complained that Drayton had scarcely begun his mission work and wondered if the sponsoring

³Ibid., Joshua H. Stewart to James Hall, Harper, September 23, 1851.

board would not assign him something to do.⁴ Drayton, evidently a Negro, never entered fully into his religious duties and eventually achieved the settlement's highest political office. His motives for advocating annexation also seem selfish, as were Stewart's, and both men were the unnamed objects of Russwurm's critical remarks about individuals leaving their business undone in order to run from one end of the colony to the other unsettling the minds of the poorer class with half-truths.⁵

While the presence of a new republic along the west African coast and the efforts of a few agitators began the drive within the Maryland colony for a new political status, Russwurm's death in June, 1851, forced citizens to think more constructively about their future. For some time, the Governor had been the dissidents' scapegoat and on at least one occasion some met to devise a plan for deposing him.⁶ His death eliminated him as the target of their frustrations and also invited change in the governmental structure. In the few months after his death, however, the citizens almost came to civil war as they tried to decide what that new political form should be.

The only point that Cape Palmas inhabitants agreed upon was their dislike of the Acting Governor, Samuel Ford McGill. As

⁴Ibid., Vol. XVIII, Russwurm to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 17, 1849.

⁵Ibid., Vol. XIX, Russwurm to Hall, Harper, March, 1851.

⁶Ibid., Boston J. Drayton to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 10, 1851.

the former Colonial Physician and, during Russwurm's absence from Harper, the Assistant Agent in charge of affairs, McGill had earned the disfavor of many fellow citizens. He not infrequently displayed vanity and contemptuousness toward them. Although a part-time medical officer, he seldom practiced his profession and spent most of his time building up a lucrative trade along the coast. The success of that operation, in fact, caused a great deal of jealousy among his compatriots. Moreover, he was Russwurm's brother-in-law and inextricably associated with the late Governor's policy.

Sick of the colonists' grumblings and aware of his own unpopularity, McGill had made plans to move with his family to a newly purchased home in Monrovia when the Governor's death forced him to take over. He insisted that he had no ambition for the post, a claim substantiated by later events, but he could not convince the citizens otherwise.⁷ They held a public meeting the week following Russwurm's death to petition the Maryland Board not to appoint McGill the new governor.⁸ Individual citizens expressed a similar desire to the Board.⁹ Interestingly, they now lauded Russwurm as a statesman, philanthropist and Christian

⁷Ibid., Samuel Ford McGill to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, July 11, 1851.

⁸Ibid., Citizens of Cape Palmas to Maryland Board of the Colonization Society, [June 18, 1851].

⁹Ibid., W. A. Prout to Latrobe, Harper, July 16, 1851; Stewart to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, July, 1851.

whose equal could scarcely be found.¹⁰

In July, the colonists came almost to bloodshed over the Commonwealth's future. A party of men arranged to celebrate the Republic's fourth anniversary with a dinner. Ten days before it was scheduled, rumors spread that Monrovia's flag would be raised over the gathering. On July 26, the appointed day, the annexationists and guests assembled for the dinner, while the bulk of the remaining inhabitants congregated at the meeting place to interrupt the festivities. McGill, alert to a possible riot, had assigned the sheriff and several assistants responsibility for lowering the Liberian flag were it raised and preventing a tumult, but they were to allow the diners their commemoration of the Republic's holiday. His action prevented a severe clash and the merrymakers escaped none the worse for the abusive language heaped upon them.¹¹ The thwarted opponents adjourned, however, to draw up a protest against the dinner, the attempted flying of an alien flag (which seems never to have been made) and the meddling of colored missionaries in the settlement's political affairs.¹²

The clear division of opinion among the citizenry resulted in a number of public meetings, with subsequent petitions and

¹⁰Ibid., Committee from Colony to the Board of Managers, [Cape Palmas], August 2, 1851.

¹¹Ibid., McGill to Latrobe, Harper, September 16, 1851.

¹²Ibid., Petition from colony to Agent and Council, Harper, [August, 1851].

letters to the Baltimore Board. Joshua Stewart and Boston J. Drayton were leaders of the annexation movement, Drayton being behind the anniversary celebration. Stewart claimed that the intelligent part of the community, though small, favored union with the Republic as a county. In his opinion, ultimate merging was inevitable and he asked the Board to give its views on the colony's future political status. He reported that the people wanted to know also what the Board would do thereafter for the indigent, whether the civil list would continue to be salaried by the Board and what other help they could expect from the United States.¹³

Drayton, analyzing problems attendant alternate possibilities, argued that the Maryland settlement was too backward and too weak to be accepted into the Republic as a confederated state. The educational and general intelligence level was insufficient, he asserted, to produce men capable of representing them in a Liberian general assembly. The Republic, moreover, was so much farther advanced agriculturally and so much more economically stable that she would not allow the sister settlement to enter on equal terms with the existing parts. He argued further that the colony's dependency deterred prospective colonists from settling at the Cape whereas they would gladly leave their Maryland homes were their destination a portion of the Republic. Like Stewart, Drayton called

¹³Ibid., Stewart to Hall, Harper, September 23, 1851.

on the Board to state its position.¹⁴

Citizens favoring submersion within the Republic finally drew up a twelve-point address to the Maryland Managers in September, 1851. Their arguments for county annexation were as follows: (1) it would give the settlement the needed strength to clear the coast of encroaching trade vessels, (2) these vessels would be forced to pay anchorage and lighthouse dues when lying in the Palmas harbor, (3) emigration to the Cape would be more popular in the United States, (4) foreign merchants would have more confidence in business ventures, (5) more friendly intercourse would take place with the Republic, (6) agricultural efforts would be stimulated by closing the public farm, (7) the legal system would be enlarged so as to include courts of appeal, (8) a general spirit of industry would be fostered, (9) opportunities for higher educational training would result, (10) the Republic itself would suffer for want of the Maryland colony, (11) the Republic's greater attractiveness was daily depriving the Marylanders of trade, emigrants and leadership, and (12) a reciprocal and free trade with the Republic would enable the Palmas inhabitants to exchange their produce to a greater advantage.¹⁵ Many of these arguments were, of course, redundant and not a few illogical. Initially circulated in July, the petition

¹⁴Ibid., Drayton to Latrobe, East Harper, September 25, 1851.

¹⁵Ibid., Petition of Annexationists, Cape Palmas, September 25, 1851.

had the support of only fifteen citizens.

By the county annexationists' own admission, therefore, they were decidedly in the minority of public opinion. While few residents were positively against some connection with Monrovia, there was little unanimity as to what the arrangement should be. Most people appeared unable to suggest some viable political system. They wanted freedom from Society restraints, some said in order to wage war against the natives,¹⁶ but they realized that they could not stand by themselves. One old colonist probably expressed better than any the feeling prevailing among his neighbors. Insisting that the Republic would not accept the Marylanders, the gentleman concluded that they thought of the Society as their father: when it wished for the colonists to take other steps, it would advise them, as children, the path to tread.¹⁷

One citizen who opposed independence altogether was Anthony Wood, an elected official and militia leader. Condemning missionaries like Drayton for striving to create confusion rather than preaching the Gospel and blaming McGill for being at the bottom of the annexation drive because of personal interests at Monrovia, Wood contended that the citizens wanted to remain as they were. Unique among the various petitioners, he called attention to

¹⁶Ibid., Drayton to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, April 10, 1851.

¹⁷Ibid., John E. Moulton to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, September 22, 1851.

Section 42 of the colony's constitution:

Be it enacted and ordained, That so soon as there shall be five thousand male inhabitants in the territory in Africa, governed by the state society, upon giving proof thereof to the agent, they shall receive authority, with time, and place appointed, to elect representatives to represent them in a general assembly; provided, that for every five hundred male inhabitants there shall be one representative, and so on progressively; . . .¹⁸

In his opinion, the constitution already stipulated and provided for the day when independence should be theirs. He asked that the Board settle the only question remaining: who the new governor was to be. Lamenting that none of his color in the colony was qualified for such an authoritative position, Wood called upon the Society to appoint a white administrator. He asserted that a man like John Seys, then the Maryland group's travelling agent, would be welcome in their midst. But, should the Society officers have their sights set upon another Negro leader, only W. A. Prout was equal to that trust.¹⁹

Prout himself had as yet formed no firm opinion regarding the colony's political future. He believed that county annexation would greatly alter local government and, with a slight exaggeration, claimed "it can hardly be expected that a people who have been used to providing laws for every rising exigency

¹⁸Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia; with an Appendix of Precedents (2d ed.; Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1847), Section 42.

¹⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIX, Anthony Wood to Latrobe, Harper, September 24, 1851.

for 17 years, would be willing to sacrifice such power, unless compelled by some pressing emergency." By implication, he favored annexation as a state, which would allow both legislative and representative government in the community.²⁰

The Acting Agent, McGill, during all the clamor, held the reigns of power from a sense of responsibility rather than from choice. Speaking of new newly selected house in Monrovia, he commented that he had labored hard in collecting around him many home comforts and that he had not the remotest idea of changing the situation by staying on permanently at Harper. He believed that the Maryland colony's position on the Liberian border automatically sealed her fate. In one form or another, Palmas would unite with the larger neighbor. Several reconnaissance tours to Monrovia as well as information supplied by relatives there convinced McGill, however, that the Republic would never accept the Maryland colony as a state and probably would resist even county annexation unless an emergency existed. The short of it was that Palmas had nothing to offer any union. The former American population was sparse, the people were economically dependent upon outside aid and they were generally an indolent, quarrelsome bunch.²¹

McGill's recommendation to his employers called for the

²⁰Ibid., W. A. Prout to Latrobe, Harper, September 23, 1851.

²¹Ibid., McGill to Latrobe, Harper, September 25, 1851.

granting of independence and immediate annexation to the Republic as its fourth county. The latter could be achieved, he thought, by diplomacy and pressure. Once the Maryland community was in the Republic, it could exert its influence to convert the counties into states with a federal plan or to divide the nation into districts of two counties each. In this way the Palmas representatives would increase their voice in the general government.²²

At this juncture, the long sought opinion from Society officers arrived. Writing to Russwurm (whose death was not yet known at home) for them, Latrobe noted that the distinction "Republic," enjoyed by those residing at Monrovia, was detrimental to the "colony" with its less favorable connotations. Although the Managers were uncertain what ultimate shape the Harper government should take, they agreed that the colonists should have an independence which would make them nominally what they had been actually--a free republic. The principal change would be the election of a few officials instead of their appointment, as in the past. The next step would be confederation with Monrovia and establishment of procedures for mutual defense and other governmental functions. Conceding that this change would necessitate discussions both in the United States and Africa, Latrobe emphasized that as yet little more could be done than to suggest the idea to Palmas inhabitants, giving it currency as the plan to be carried out.

²²Ibid., McGill to Hall, Harper, September 18, 1851.

Russwurm was instructed to publicize Board wishes:

It may be said to those around you--Something to this Effect, "The Maryland Col. Society beleive /sic/ that the time has come, in view of its effect upon your prosperity, as regards population and reputation, that Maryland in Liberia should proclaim itself a free Republic,--confederating like the old colonies of Great Britain in America, with the existing Republic of Liberia, and looking forward one day, to our Union and as a general government of the United Republics of Africa---That the State Society are engaged in maturing all measures proper to that end, that, when it is accomplished, it may be done in the best manner,--and that, in the mean while, the colonists should look upon it as a thing shortly to be done, and accustom themselves to the consideration of it. That in view of the aid to be yet hoped for from Maryland here, it is proper that the measure should provide for close relations on the two sides of the Atlantic, but that they would be the relations of a treaty and not of a dependence."

Privately, Russwurm was advised that Board members opposed county annexation because the unique Maryland interest would be paralyzed and chances of receiving further state appropriations doomed. It would be, moreover, an abandonment of the independent state action scheme which secured initial public funds. Further, the Board feared that the colonists would be offended if they were handed over as a dependency to the older settlement. The Governor was enjoined a second time to work for independence and confederation.²³ By the same conveyance, McGill, thought to have already resettled in Monrovia, received a similar expression of Society sentiment.²⁴

²³MSCS MSS, Latrobe Letter Books, Vol. II, Latrobe to Russwurm, Baltimore, July 17, 1851.

²⁴Ibid., Latrobe to McGill, Baltimore, July 18, 1851.

The Board's message to Maryland colonists had to be broadcast by McGill, of course. In view of his unpopularity and known affinity for Monrovia, his duty of proclaiming Society wishes was unpropitious for their acceptance. At first, the colonists refused to believe that the statement had not originated with McGill. Finally, they came to accept it as emanating from one or two Managers and a number of meetings were called to frame a response to the Society.²⁵

In the months following the Board's proclamation, the citizenry divided itself according to four different opinions respecting the colony's future. One party, considered by McGill to include the most worthless and idle, opposed any change of government and considered the communication the work of the president alone. A second segment of the community, comprising the majority, favored independence and confederation. A third faction, though advocating the end of the Society's political authority, considered submergence into the Republic indispensable for the citizens' welfare. The fourth and smallest division preferred absolute self-determination--withdrawal from Society control and complete autonomy. The Acting Agent declared that the last group consisted principally of office holders and political aspirants who saw the development of a self-governing state their best chance for prominence. Perhaps reflecting his own bias, McGill claimed that the third alternative held support from the most intelligent sector,

²⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XIX, McGill to Hall, Harper, December 15, 1851.

but believed an alliance of groups two and three, encompassing about three-fourths of the population, could effect a suitable political arrangement.²⁶

The person who now eclipsed Stewart and Drayton as spokesman for a new political arrangement was W. A. Prout, long-time resident and Colonial Secretary. Apparently a reasonable and moderate man, widely respected except by some few colonists who abhorred his violation of the no-drinking covenant, Prout submitted a twenty-page memorandum to his fellow citizens respecting independence. Accepting the Board of Managers' opinion that republicanism and confederation were the wisest steps for Palmas, the official analyzed community achievements and deficiencies and made specific proposals for the establishment of a self-sufficient state. He said nothing about the colony's future relationship with Monrovia, however. Considering the dearth of constructive ideas and the general helplessness displayed by most residents, Prout's letter is a remarkable document.

He asserted, to begin with, that the three essentials for independent government were agriculture, manufacturing and commerce. Agricultural improvements, he charged, were not what they ought to be in spite of the fertile soil. The neglect of this basic enterprise retarded the development of manufacture and of commerce. Prout proclaimed, "If we were an agricultural people, we would be a manufacturing one" and urged the farmers to concentrate

²⁶Ibid., McGill to Latrobe, Harper, January 6, [1852]

on cultivation of products which could be made into household items and on such export crops as cotton and coffee which would entice legitimate traders into the harbor. He foretold both economic growth and an enhanced treasury, should residents concentrate on agricultural products.

The colony's new government was to be republican in form with a governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of the treasury, secretary of state, and munitions inspector, all elected by majority vote of the citizens. The legislature suggested was a two-house body consisting of a senate and a house of representatives, the former to have two members and the latter four. The judiciary would be headed by a chief justice, with four associate judges and four justices of the peace. Prout recommended that the top justice be appointed by the executive, in consultation with the legislature, receive a fixed salary and be subject to removal only for malfeasance in office.

An important problem which Prout next attacked was that of money. Setting salaries of executive officers at \$1,975 annually, of judicial members at \$156. and compensation for members of the legislature at \$504., a total of \$2,635 for the civil list, he did not attempt to guess expenditures for the colonial boat, for printing, internal improvement, public welfare and a wide variety of miscellaneous items. To raise the required revenue, however, he suggested a number of sources: (1) rigid channeling of all trade, except that of the Society's agent and missionaries,

through resident citizens at Cape Palmas, (2) conclude treaties with native tribes in colony's jurisdiction for payment of delinquent accounts, (3) allow trade in ardent spirits and levy a duty of twenty cents per gallon, (4) place a duty of eight per cent on all foreign sales not already tagged with specific rates, (5) establish an annual tax of ninety cents per one hundred dollars' value on all real and fixed property owned by citizens, (6) place an annual penalty of seventy-five cents per acre on citizens owning wild and uncultivated lands on which they made no improvements, (7) require an annual poll tax of two dollars per adult male who was not a free-holder, (8) levy an annual tax of three dollars on all vessels based at the Cape, (9) open a government store to import foreign goods, serve as a wholesale and retail outlet and trade with the indigenes, and (10) for the colony's immediate financial needs, contract for a loan of four thousand dollars annually with the Maryland Society or through it with American merchants, the loan to come in the form of tobacco and gunpowder for trading purposes and to be repaid in installments as the new republic earned profits. He expected these sources to produce enough revenue to support all governmental functions.

Having set down his ideas for erecting a viable governmental structure, Prout then enumerated questions concerning Society property and jurisdiction which had to be resolved before a republic could be declared. First, he asked, how much territory will the Society hand over to the new nation? What disposition will

be made of public buildings such as schoolhouses and offices?
 Will the Society reclaim the coasting boat it supplied the colony?
 Are the cannon and war materials to be deeded the new government?
 How will the medical department function and what is to become
 of the colony's invalid and indigent citizens? Can we depend upon
 Society support for education? In what way will negotiations with
 the African chiefs for Garroway territory be settled? Will the
 Society cancel Commonwealth and individual debts and liabilities?²⁷

Only a man of ability and experience could have drawn up such a comprehensive survey. As important as his systematic approach, however, was the fact that Prout was popular with the citizenry and, consequently, became leader of the independence drive. A public meeting of colonists held in November, 1851, endorsed the Colonial Secretary's views and incorporated them in an address to the Maryland Board. The petitioners emphasized that it was the Society officers who were pushing them into a new political stage, the implication being that the Society would have to make generous concessions for the acquiescence:

They [the colonists] are willing to try it, and doubt not of its happy effects upon the Community at large, Should they find in you, Gentlemen, a conformity to their wishes as to the means from which it is calculated that a tolerable support can be given to the government. . . .

The steps we are now taking, grow out of a proclamation from your acting Agent, showing, it is said, the intent of the Board. In considering the

²⁷Ibid., Prout to Chairman [of public meeting] and Fellow Citizens, [Harper], November 10, 1851.

matter of this proclamation, the first idea suggested to our minds, was, how is this government to be supported?

The only revenue source that citizens seemed to have had doubts about was the liquor duty, hence their effort to rationalize it. Defending the proposal as the outgrowth of "urgent and overruling circumstances," they claimed that "the toleration of liquor as an article of trade, will evidently have the effect of developing the resources of the country, by opening the avenues now closed to the inhabitants of distant regions of the interior and cause an influx of trade to the Colony." The implication was that since the colony was being thrown on its own, at Board wishes, it should be allowed to engage in the only trade sure to guarantee the income necessary for self-sufficiency.²⁸

Prout himself defended the liquor proposition upon the basis that a grog-shop, always well-stocked, had been in operation nearby in a native town for the past eight months. Supported by "a gentleman of note, and of whose name you Latrobe would blush, were I to inform you," the store enabled colonists to purchase as much liquor as they pleased. Trade in ardent spirits had, in fact, spread to the interior and business was so lucrative that already another such establishment had been erected. Predicting that, at the present rate, the law prohibiting traffic and sale of alcoholic beverages would become inoperative, Prout recommended that the government channel the trade in a manner advantageous to

²⁸Ibid., Petition of colonists to Board of Managers, Harper, November 15, 1851.

its treasury. An excise tax would bring the desired result.²⁹

The memorialists also expressed their opinion on the proper status of the Maryland colony once it achieved independence from the Society. Dismissing McGill's views as "not in coincidence with those of the people," they claimed that everyone else favored confederacy with the Republic. They believed further that an objective inquiry at Monrovia would disprove the Acting Agent's contention respecting state annexation.

Prout was the author of the views expressed in the petition, but the committee chosen by the colonists to approach the Maryland Board consisted of other community leaders well-known in Baltimore. Two of them, Joshua Stewart and Anthony Wood, had abandoned their original positions once Board wishes were known and now espoused Prout's plan of action. Two additional notables were William Cassell, Chief Justice, and Demsey F. Fletcher, Colonial Physician.³⁰

McGill, remaining as much in the background as possible, was generally skeptical of the new turn of affairs. He felt little goodwill toward Prout and considered colonists gullible in accepting his leadership. The Acting Agent reported that secret features of the plan provided for Prout to be the secretary of

²⁹Ibid., Prout to Latrobe, Harper, January 6, 1852.

³⁰Ibid., Petition of colonists to Board of Managers, Harper, November 15, 1851.

the treasury and Cassell the governor in the new administration.³¹

Reiterating his belief that the Liberian Republic would not accept the Palmas settlement as a confederated state because the candidate's liabilities far outweighed her assets, McGill insisted that,

The Independence of Md. in Liberia being once declared, annexation to the Republic must be effected, otherwise it would be useless to disturb the present relations existing between this Colony and the Society. The simple fact of this being pronounced an Independent Republic, would not be sufficient to change the current now setting towards the old Colony, but would have the sad effect to deprive this people of the support they now enjoy.

The different counties of the Republic, one and all are opposed to the proposed confederation. All anxiety on the subject of our relations with the Republic rests with us, the Liberians have no particular desire for our annexation even as a County.³²

The only utterance coming from Monrovia at this time appears to have been an editorial in the Liberia Herald. Reporting rumors that Cape Palmas residents would soon seek admittance to the Republic, the weekly declared that every Liberian long since knew the inevitability of this step. It noted that citizens were prepared to look favorably upon the forthcoming petition if it suggested honorable arrangements "in consonance with the present organization of our government."³³ This would preclude, of course, anything other than county annexation.

³¹Ibid., McGill to Hall, Harper, December 15, 1851.

³²Ibid., McGill to Latrobe, January 6, [1852].

³³Liberia Herald, n.s. II, No. 7 (November 6, 1851), 3.

For the Cape Palmas colonists, discussion of their political future and relationship with the Maryland Society soon dried up. The example of the Republic had initiated interest; Stewart and Drayton had unsuccessfully sought to advance their ambitions with the county annexation scheme; the Maryland Board's communication had brought discussion to a white heat and enabled a colony official to enlist support among fellow citizens for a far-reaching proposal. But, after the residents submitted their petition to home headquarters, they heard no more for months. A private correspondence ensued between Latrobe and McGill which made the former appear indeed the author of the Board's recommendations, as one colonial faction already believed. In every instance, Latrobe insisted upon independence and confederation and his intransigence frustrated McGill so that the latter became increasingly emphatic in his request for release from colonial duties. Although the Board, in October, 1851, appointed a committee of three attorneys--Hugh Davey Evans, Frederick W. Brune and Charles Howard--to consider the colony's future,³⁴ nothing more was done until the following July when the accumulated letters and memorials were laid before the group.³⁵ The first response to the colonists' views was finally written in November, 1852. The study committee concluded that Palmas residents were indeed sincere in their desire for changed relations between

³⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. III, Meeting of the Board of Managers, October 21, 1851.

³⁵Ibid., Vol. IV, Meeting of the Board of Managers, July 27, 1852.

colony and Society. Agreeing that such a need did exist, the members lamented that it could not be postponed until population and economic development gave the colony greater self-sufficiency. But, the gain in prestige achieved at Monrovia by creation of a republic now induced the bulk of emigrants coming from the United States to settle there. Until Palmas could likewise present itself as an autonomous state, it could never expect that immigration necessary for its future greatness. As for the colony's relationship with the Republic once ties with the Maryland Society were officially severed, the committee agreed that state federation was the most suitable arrangement but decided to leave that step with the citizenry, "trusting that the same providence which has . . . so manifestly extended his beneficent [sic] protection to the great enterprize of African Colonization, will continue to watch over and bless it."

Carefully studying the proceedings between the American Colonization Society and Liberia before independence was declared in 1847, the Maryland committee decided that it could do no better than to follow that example. The one modification recommended was that the civil list should be subsidized four years after the new government was organized.³⁶ The Board thereupon resolved to instruct the colonists to conduct a plebiscite upon the question of a separate and independent government. If the decision was affirmative, the citizens were to call a convention for the framing of a new constitution,

³⁶Ibid., Meeting of the Board of Managers, November 20, 1852.

modeled after the Republic's, and two commissioners were to be selected to represent the colony at subsequent negotiations in Baltimore.³⁷

Relaying Society views to McGill, still Acting Agent, Latrobe stressed that circumstances forced the colony to accept independence. Preceding the forthcoming poll, citizens were to be disabused of the notion that the state appropriation's recent renewal meant that things would go on in the old way another six years. Thereafter, state monies would be used solely for transporting emigrants to Palmas, provisioning them the usual six months and maintaining a colonization office in Baltimore. The Society's contribution toward the civil list would come from voluntary sources. Prout's recommendations for the new government and the citizenry's support of them were taken by the Board as indication that the inhabitants possessed sufficient ability to stand alone. Society officers suggested that once independence was agreed upon and a convention had drafted a constitution, it should be submitted to the Board for review. The joint effort would combine the colonists' practical experience with Society members' political and legal sagacity, producing a better instrument than either party alone could create.

There were several points on the recent petition, however, that McGill was to clarify with the citizenry. The Board opposed the suggestion that all foreigners--persons not Cape Palmas citizens--

³⁷Ibid.

be excluded from trade. While it might be feasible to prohibit white persons from business, to keep out all traders would be contrary to world experience. If wealthy Monroviaans, for example, established commercial stations at the Cape, everyone residing there would benefit. Society officers also opposed the proposition that all community trade be channeled through the government office, the treasury. Without explanation, the Maryland Board cast the idea aside as pernicious. The third matter on which the Society could not resist comment was Prout's advocacy of liquor traffic. Noting that Maine and Massachusetts had recently adopted prohibition, the Managers announced their firm opposition to any plan which would freely admit spirits to the Cape.³⁸

Arrival of Board instructions coincided with a revived interest in the colony respecting political independence. The citizens, about to declare freedom from the Society unilaterally, had just petitioned the Governor and Council to call an election for choosing delegates to a constitutional convention. Society commands extricated the colonial government from an embarrassing position and enabled it to comply with wishes in Baltimore and Harper.³⁹

The polls were opened at 6 a.m. on January 31, 1853, and by nightfall, 122 colonists registered approval of independence. Although no opposition ballots were cast, some few voters favoring

³⁸Ibid., letter of Board of Managers to McGill, Baltimore, November 20, 1852.

³⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XX, McGill to Latrobe, Harper, January 28, 1853.

the status quo remained home.⁴⁰ In February, another election was held to select nine delegates for the convention. The colonists' attitude was one of haste. McGill concluded that having finally decided to stand on their own, the citizens now wanted to complete the action before they had time for repentance.⁴¹ Representatives chosen were prominent citizens already well-known to Society officers in Baltimore: W. A. Prout, William Cassell, Boston Drayton, Joseph Gibson and Anthony Wood, among them. The two commissioners elected to present the proposed constitution to the Board were Prout and Cassell.⁴²

By the end of March, the new constitution and Bill of Rights had been drafted and had received citizen approval. In reality, these documents were minor mutations of the original ordinances sent out with Doctor Hall twenty years before. One section, however, was stricken from the proposed Bill of Rights--the rum clause. Forwarding a copy of the tentative laws, McGill urged the Board to stand firm against legal liquor traffic. He believed that the new government would be even more imperiled were that commodity allowed freely in the settlement.⁴³

The Board of Managers was equally opposed to exclusion of that no-alcohol rule from the statutes. Claiming that "this

⁴⁰Ibid., Stewart to Latrobe, Harper, February 6, 1853.

⁴¹Ibid., McGill to Latrobe, Harper, February 9, 1853.

⁴²Ibid., McGill to Latrobe, Harper, February 15, 1853.

⁴³Ibid., McGill to Hall, Harper, June 30, 1853.

provision the Society have believed, has tended to promote in the Colony, good order, morality & religion," the Managers asked the citizens to reconsider their action. Recounting efforts in various states of this country to check the use and sale of liquor because of the growing conviction that intemperance was the parent of crime and misery, the Board admitted that the people of Maryland in Liberia were free to adopt whatever laws they deemed wise. But, the officers added, toleration of intoxicants was imprudent.⁴⁴ Upon the Board's advice, the citizens took up the subject of ardent spirits again. After a period of heated debate, they voted 90-3 in favor of excluding that trade article and instructed the convention to re-insert the prohibitory clause in the constitution.⁴⁵

Establishing the new government's basic laws was only a small part of the work necessary to sever the political relationship between Society and colony. Such issues as the disposition of Society buildings and property, continuation of education, public welfare and employment, settlement of private and corporate indebtedness, and reception of new immigrants had to be resolved. In preparation for their trip to the United States, the two commissioners, Prout and Cassell, set down their views on these questions. They expected the territory already settled by colonists to be placed under the jurisdiction of the new government and for

⁴⁴MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Board of Managers, January 27, 1854.

⁴⁵MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XXI, McGill to Howard, Harper, May 13, 1854.

reserves for future immigrants to be held by the Society. All public buildings but the government house and a warehouse were to be retained by the Maryland colonizationists. The representatives believed that all military equipment should revert to the new administration, that Society medical aid should be continued to the indigent, that the Maryland Board should build additional receptacles for newly arriving colonists as well as continuing six months support, and that all debts due the Society by the Commonwealth should be cancelled. Prout and Cassell declined giving opinions on the future of the public farms and the employment thereby provided the destitute, on the disposition of colonists' individual debts with the Society and on support for education.⁴⁶

Early in January, 1854, the commissioners arrived in Baltimore. For six weeks, conferences between the two parties were held to hammer out an amicable arrangement. On February 14, they signed the Articles of Agreement which, if ratified within twelve months by the new government, were to be binding on both bodies. The terms were as follows:

- 1) The Society agrees to cede all public lands within the colony to the people and government, upon condition that
 - a) future immigrants shall be allowed, out of unoccupied or unsold land, a ten-acre farm lot or a one-quarter acre town lot in any new settlement, or a ten-acre

⁴⁶Ibid., Vol. XX, Document received from Messrs. Prout and Cassell, commissioners from the colony, referred to in connection with questions respecting the commonwealth's future, n.p., n.d. [considered by Board of Managers, January 14, 1854].

- farm lot in the present settlement and a one-eighth acre town lot; when public lands are sold, alternate lots, farms, sections and square miles shall be left as reserves for new arrivals;
- b) all sales of public lands shall be at public auction to the highest bidder; parcels unsold in this manner shall be sold privately at a set minimum price;
 - c) tracts reserved for immigrants may, with the Society's consent, be exchanged for others of equal value, or sold, with proceeds going to the benefit of education;
 - d) the new government shall appropriate at least ten per cent of proceeds from sale of public lands to schools or educational purposes;
 - e) the Society retains the right of locating future immigrants in any of the present townships or in any new one;
 - f) the establishment of new settlements is to be agreed upon jointly by the Society and the Maryland republic;
 - g) lands retained by the Society for immigrants shall be tax-exempt;
 - h) Maryland in Liberia consents to allow the Society a maximum one hundred acres from public lands, still uncommitted to any use, for the settlement of recaptured Africans, should the American Government determine to relocate them at Cape Palmas;
 - i) the Society shall retain the public store and adjoining

wharf, the existing receptacle for new colonists and one-half the public farm; in all future settlements, the Society shall receive a lot suitable for accommodation of newcomers; Society property and improvements shall be tax-exempt.

- 2) The Society has the privilege of landing duty-free all supplies and provisions necessary for the welfare of new colonists; vessels chartered by the Society and carrying out emigrants shall be exempt from lighthouse and anchorage fees.
- 3) Recaptured Africans will be admitted into Maryland in Liberia should the United States Government wish to send them there and provide their support.
- 4) The Society cedes to Maryland in Liberia the government house and public offices, forts and all munitions and the new warehouse, but retains all other property not specifically transferred.
- 5) Immigrants hereafter sent to Palmas by the Society shall be eligible for citizenship upon the same terms as earlier colonists.
- 6) Should the Maryland State Colonization Society at any future time merge with another such group or should its duties be assumed by state-appointed agents, all provisions of the present agreement shall continue mutually binding.
- 7) These articles may hereafter be altered at any time by

the mutual agreement of the respective parties.

- 8) After the new government is organized and the agreement ratified, the republic shall receive a deed confirming, conveying and vesting in it title in fee simple to all said lands, subject only to conditions and reservations already stated.⁴⁷

A number of important questions were left undecided. The Society made no commitment concerning a subsidy for the civil list, aid to education, medical attention, public employment and welfare, and settlement of all indebtedness. These matters, the Board informed McGill, were purposefully left out of the agreement in order that they could be decided at some later date without the restrictive clauses imposed by a legal document. The Managers believed that it was wise to leave broad policy areas unbound by pledge or promise, explicit or implicit.⁴⁸

The commissioners, Prout and Cassell, arrived back at the Cape in May. On the 15th, the constitutional convention reconvened to adopt laws, organize the government and provide for popular elections. Prout missed the first three days' proceedings, having celebrated his return home with a drinking spree. Reporting that the man's best friends despaired of his ever becoming sober,

⁴⁷MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, Articles of Agreement, February 14, 1854.

⁴⁸Ibid., Harper to McGill, Baltimore, February 18, 1854; Report of Committee on the colony, meeting of the Board of Managers, January 27, 1854.

McGill judged that Cassell now had the best chance of being elected governor.⁴⁹ Plans for the new government were soon completed and elections held. On June 8, 1854, the republic, Maryland in Liberia, was proclaimed and officials inaugurated.

The governor of the newly independent state was William A. Prout, Cassell having been disqualified because of a constitutional provision requiring the Chief Executive to have lived in the settlement six years preceding his term of office. Boston J. Drayton became the lieutenant governor and leader of the Senate. Cassell retained his non-elected position as Chief Justice and Thomas Mason was appointed secretary of state. Four senators and five delegates represented the citizens in the two-house legislature. The following day, June 9, continuing the custom of the country, the Governor was presented to the neighboring native chiefs. They received a generous dash consisting of three barrels gunpowder, six hundred pounds tobacco, two dozen knives, two boxes pipes, six dozen plates and a quantity of cloth.⁵⁰ In July, the Senate ratified the Articles of Agreement submitted by the commissioners.⁵¹

Soon after the inauguration and launching of the small state, McGill took up his long-postponed residence at Monrovia. His

⁴⁹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XXI, McGill to Hall, Harper, May 17, 1854.

⁵⁰Ibid., McGill to Hall, Monrovia, June 17, 1854.

⁵¹Ibid., An Act Ratifying the Treaty Agreed to by Commissioners on the Part of the State of Maryland in Liberia and the Maryland State Colonization Society, passed by the Senate July 11, 1854.

place as the Society's representative was taken by Joseph T. Gibson, then connected with one of the mission stations at the Cape. McGill handed over to him property and buildings appraised at \$4,928 and an inventory of merchandise estimated at more than \$14,000 in value. Gibson's duties were to superintend the settlement of new immigrants, keep Society possessions in good repair and judiciously represent his employers in any controversy over the terms of agreement.⁵²

In the years immediately following independence, Maryland in Liberia took a course not much unlike that in the period preceding its new status. The Maryland Society continued to pay the civil list, provide medicines for all needy citizens, pay half the cost of building homes for new settlers, and grant charity to particularly worthy cases. Gibson was not infrequently given almost contradictory instructions, for, on the one hand, he was to help the community become self-sufficient, while, on the other, he was repeatedly warned that the Society could no longer take care of everything and everybody.⁵³ The Agent complained that things were dull and money scarce.⁵⁴ Debts owed the Society by individual citizens were ignored and considered by many as cancelled now that

⁵²Ibid., Receipt for Property, Harper, June 1, 1854; letter of instructions, McGill to Joseph T. Gibson, n.p., n.,. [June, 1854].

⁵³MSCS MSS, Letter Press Books, Vol. I, Hall to Gibson, Baltimore, October 28, 1855.

⁵⁴MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XXII, Gibson to Hall, Harper, August 22, 1855.

their own republic governed them.⁵⁵

Prout's administration was neither inspiring nor bold. Agriculture proceeded at its usual snail's pace and the Governor's only suggestion for its encouragement was the levying of a tax on uncultivated fields. Exports remained at their same low level. With scarcity of goods and money, little was imported either, hence the government's chief outside source of revenue was of small consequence. Few improvements and no sales of public lands were made.⁵⁶

The only subjects of much interest in the settlement were the frequent native wars to the interior and the citizenry's desire to remove native towns still existing in their midst. Conflicts between different tribes were not only obstacles to trade but also delicate problems in which the Maryland citizens had to exercise caution not to provoke attack upon themselves.

One such controversy, raging two years along the Cavally River, a route regularly travelled upcountry for rice and palm oil, was settled late in 1853 by Commodore Isaac Mayo, heading the African Squadron.⁵⁷ A few months later, with the Squadron still off the coast, the Cape residents wanted to wage war with the Poor River people who had overrun some Society territory. Only McGill's

⁵⁵Ibid., Gibson to Hall, Harper, March 26, 1856.

⁵⁶"Governor Prout and His Messages," Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. VIII, No. 7 (December, 1855), 98-103.

⁵⁷MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XX, McGill to Hall, Harper, September 10, 1853.

cool appraisal of the danger prevented the attempted punishment.⁵⁸ This generally bellicose attitude became increasingly prevalent after Cape Palmas declared its independence. Quick to anger, the colonists paid little heed to their precarious existence. A deficiency of stable leaders who could dissuade them from rash action and the presence of men who did more inciting than pacifying was soon to bring the infant republic close to doom.

Interference with commercial intercourse was one annoyance the surrounding indigenes meted the citizens from 1834 when the colony was founded. The interspersing of native towns through the settlement, however, became more onerous as immigrants increased and more territory was surveyed and inhabited. Although some native groups sold their plots to the Society and others gradually moved farther from the Maryland community, many remained firmly planted and let the immigrants crowd close in on them. As the former American residents prepared for self-government and negotiated land agreements with the Maryland Board, they became even more aware of the desirability of evicting nearby Africans. Opposed to any change of habitat and mindful of rights granted them by the original deeds, the Cape Palmas natives finally appealed to John Latrobe to honor those agreements. On the eve of the colony's independence, Chiefs and Headmen protested that the colonists wanted to take their land by force. Complaining that they had already given up most of it, the Africans wished to retain at least

⁵⁸Ibid., McGill to Hall, Harper, January 10, 1854.

their towns.⁵⁹ Hearing nothing from Latrobe, the Cape Palmas natives gradually evacuated.⁶⁰ They would not respond, however, to feelers regarding the sale of the towns. Although many moved across the colony's boundary, the tribe retained its towns as a refuge should it be menaced by unfriendly bands. Governor Prout, while unhappy at his neighbors' obstinency, at least understood their reasoning and made no move to force the issue.⁶¹

Within a short time, however, conflict among surrounding tribes brought the colonists almost to civil war. The Poor River people remained in control of territory owned by the Maryland republic which the Grahways had been living on. This was an issue unresolved since the end of McGill's administration and although he had prevented war between the citizens and the usurpers, the battle raged between the Poor River people and the Grahways. The economic barriers resulting finally induced Prout to attempt reconciliation between the combatants. But, to get the Poor River tribe to the palaver, Prout considered it necessary to take several men hostage. The opportunity soon presented itself when a delegation of three arrived in Harper bearing a bullock, the standard peace symbol. They were arrested and held, pending the palaver. The following day, a large band of citizens, led by the militia,

⁵⁹Ibid., Vol. XXI, Gov. SouBol and Semile Belle and Headmen to Latrobe, Cape Palmas, May 12, 1854.

⁶⁰Ibid., Prout to Hall, Harper, July 13, 1854.

⁶¹Ibid., Vol. XXII, Prout to Hall, Harper, August 14, 1855.

appeared at Prout's door and demanded his resignation. Alarmed that bloodshed might follow if he resisted, Prout stepped down.⁶²

The foregoing events are agreed upon by all eyewitnesses. Prout, defending his actions as constitutional, contended that the mob was led by the settlement's chronic grumblers and others who had been filled with rum and wines by leaders such as Cassell and Drayton, and that the participants were armed with cudgels, pistols and knives.⁶³ Anthony Wood agreed that liquor had been used to sway colonists in the rebellion and deplored the fact that a majority of citizens gloried in violation of the constitution. He was particularly critical of Boston Drayton, a Baptist minister, who openly encouraged mutiny.⁶⁴

On the other hand, Joseph Gibson, the Society's paid Agent, charged that Prout's constant drunkenness had made him unpopular many months before his removal from office. The immediate impetus, however, had come when the Governor, in a state of intoxication, had imprisoned the peaceable natives.⁶⁵ Drayton, who took over when Prout was deposed, claimed that this drastic action had been taken only when the Chief Executive's policy put in jeopardy the lives of colonists out cultivating fields near the Poor River territory and threatened the nation's existence, since the Palmas

⁶²Ibid., Prout to Hall, Harper, March 20, 1856.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., Anthony Wood to Hall, Harper, March 24, 1856.

⁶⁵Ibid., Gibson to Hall, Harper, March 26, 1856.

tribe, living on the Cape, was allied with the transgressors. He charged, further, that it was a common occurrence to see Prout, while governor, sprawled in the street drunk. Relaying events surrounding the man's removal from office, Drayton stated that Prout, during his eighteen months tenure, had lost the people's confidence by his administration of affairs. Two-thirds of the qualified voters had asked for his resignation and he had complied. Drayton called it a "revolution of moral suasion."⁶⁶

As lieutenant governor, Drayton ran the community from December, 1855 until June, 1856, when the regular biennial election was scheduled. By the constitution, the governor's place and half the four Senate seats were to be contested at two-year intervals. Drayton decreed, however, that all Senate positions be refilled. Running at the head of a party known to favor county annexation, Drayton was elected governor and his supporters replaced all four Senate incumbents. Prout, living in retirement at Harper, considered it strange that there were no complaints about the unconstitutional procedure. He noted that even the deposed Senators seemed ignorant of their prerogatives. The ex-Governor conceded, however, that a civil war or uprising would be altogether fatal to the settlement. The natives had taken a great deal of interest in the strife and their soldiers were armed with guns and knives, apparently in anticipation of attack from the colonists.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Ibid., Vol. XXIII, Boston Drayton to Howard, Harper, October 21, 1856.

⁶⁷Ibid., Vol. XXII, Prout to Hall, Harper, June 24, 1856.

At home, Maryland colonizationists were aghast at the turn of events in their former colony. Admitting that the Society no longer had the right to interfere with political concerns, Charles Howard chided the citizens for their hasty, mob-like movements. Acknowledging that in some cases such measures might be justifiable Howard claimed that more often than not, however, greater evils resulted from the illegal effort to redress grievances than from the ills themselves. Warning the inhabitants that rash and inconsiderate conduct would cut them off from the blessing of Providence, the Society president urged them further to return to a strict adherence of the temperance principle.⁶⁸

Privately, James Hall, at least, seems to have had ambivalent feelings respecting Prout's dismissal. Rejecting Demsey Fletcher's request for a shipment of alcoholic beverages, Hall advised him to give up drinking. Prout, the General Agent remarked, had disgraced the colony sufficiently on this count and he was glad that the people had taken the matter in hand constitutionally or otherwise.⁶⁹ To Agent Gibson, however, Hall commented that while Prout's discharge was undoubtedly desirable, it was better to endure a drunken governor for years than once to allow the masses to defy the constitution. Hall urged Gibson thereafter to defend the side of law and order.⁷⁰

⁶⁸MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, letter from Howard to the People of Maryland in Liberia, Baltimore, July 29, 1856; read at a meeting of the Board of Managers, December 28, 1856.

⁶⁹MSCS MSS, Letter Press Books, Vol. I, Hall to Fletcher, Baltimore, May 17, 1856.

⁷⁰Ibid., Vol. II, Hall to Gibson, Baltimore, August 1, 1856.

Hall's reply to Prout was an indignant protest that the ex-Governor should be so bold as to blame the political chaos on drunkenness among the people when his own intemperance had been the concern of citizens, missionaries, naval officers and nearly everyone else who had recently visited the tiny nation.⁷¹

In the year after Prout's removal from office, the Maryland republic experienced general tranquility. Farmers attended their fields with the usual nonchalance. Other citizens quietly engaged in their several occupations. The General Assembly gave some attention to gaining diplomatic recognition from Britain and France and recommended that the Chief Executive "purchase, build, or accept the donation of a vessel to be employed in the Revenue service." The object of the latter was to improve the nation's financial position, but, with no resources of its own for such a ship, the administration called upon Society beneficence. Subsequent events, however, were to preclude that action even had Maryland colonizationists possessed the means of contributing the desired schooner. Governor Drayton reported the citizens determined to avoid any repetition of past unconstitutional conduct. As late as October, 1856, he voiced gratitude that the republic was at peace with surrounding tribes, although native war still raged upcountry.⁷²

A few months later, however, the peace of the Maryland settlement was ended by events which nearly brought its total destruction.

⁷¹Ibid., Hall to Prout, Baltimore, August 1, 1856.

⁷²MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XXIII, Drayton to Howard, Harper, October 21, 1856.

The Cape Palmas tribe living amidst the settlement and the Grahway peoples inhabiting towns along the beach became the victims of the colonists' wrath. Annoyances and misunderstandings accumulating more than twenty years became the basis for a declaration of war on those nearest indigenes.

On December 12, 1856, government officials in Harper received word that natives in several neighboring towns planned an armed attack upon the settlement during the night. The community was put in a state of defense and several days later the Cape Palmas King and Headmen were summoned to confess their intentions. Acknowledging that they had been armed, the native leaders insisted that they themselves had expected to be attacked by the colonists; their military preparations had been only defensive in nature. Governor Drayton and his advisers none the less considered the Africans the potential aggressors. The palaver was ended.⁷³

During the following week, the Palmas people, seeking vengeance for past injuries, engaged in skirmishes with a number of outlying tribal groups. Drayton attempted to intervene. Commissioners sent to mediate among the warring forces barely escaped with their lives, giving the Governor reason to believe that the Palmas and Grahway, by now allied against their native neighbors, were actually forming a broad front against the American-founded community.⁷⁴

⁷³Ibid., Gibson to Hall, Harper, December 30, 1856.

⁷⁴Ibid., Drayton to Howard, Harper, December 30, 1857 [sic].

On December 20, martial law was declared. In an emotional and almost unintelligible message, Drayton called for unity:

I invoke all good and patriotic citizens to promote the majesty of the republic, to aid the supremacy of the law, the dignity of the state, in the decisivness [sic] by rendering obedience to seek a remedy for series of evils, . . . prepared for any emergency the appeal to arms if essential to testify our attachment to the state, to repulse and resent if needed savage insults, [to our] national pride.⁷⁵

Two days later, the Chief Executive called for a conference with the Palmas King and Headmen, intending to force a treaty upon them. He proposed that in exchange for the large native towns on the Cape, all insults and outrages would be pardoned. When they refused to concede, Drayton decided that,

The Government had been trifled with long enough and I beleived [sic] the time was come when it was necessary for the Government to maintain its dignity among this heathenish and rebellious people; and if there was any strength in the Government, to bring its strong arm to bear in this direction - and quickly check this strong current of insubordination and conspiracy.⁷⁶

Consequently, on the night of December 22, Drayton ordered bombardment of the native towns close to Harper. The inhabitants fled without much fight but as they reached the outlying districts, they burned some colonist homes and the Mount Vaughan mission. Several individuals on each side were killed or wounded. The next few nights small native parties attacked unprotected sections of the community, robbing and burning deserted homes. On December 25,

⁷⁵Ibid., A Proclamation [to the citizens of the Republic of Maryland in Liberia], Harper, December 20, 1857 [sic].

⁷⁶Ibid., Drayton to Howard, Harper, December 30, 1857 [sic].

in alliance with nearly two hundred Rock Town and Fishtown natives, a 60-man militia attacked the Grahways who lived on the beach below the Cape. Four towns were burned to ashes and about thirty tribesmen killed. The Maryland settlement's loss was negligible.⁷⁷

Drayton's military success in these two ventures prompted him to assure the Baltimore Board that the aborigines had finally been taught to respect the government's authority. He noted that friendly tribes were coming in from all directions to express their amity and that hostile tribes were seeking peace because they could not cope with the community's arms. He concluded that, unfortunately, many colonist families were destitute as a consequence of the native retaliation and in need of American philanthropy.⁷⁸

Word of hostilities between the government and natives at Cape Palmas reached Monrovia on January 6, 1857. Samuel Ford McGill, familiar with the tension that had always existed between the colonists and bordering tribes and dubious that the settlement would long survive without foreign assistance, embarked the next day for Harper. Arriving there on the 10th, he found only 125 fit soldiers. Although each had a musket, a fourth were not servicable. There were only six cannon. The government had run out of some ammunition and owned but small quantities of other shot. There was no food surplus in the settlement and the treasury was empty. Once hostilities had broken out, the citizens themselves had run rampant

⁷⁷Ibid., and Gibson to Hall, Harper, December 30, 1856.

⁷⁸Ibid., Drayton to Howard, Harper, December 30, 1857 [sic].

through the farms of their more industrious neighbors, feasting upon or destroying agricultural products which, if carefully used, could have fed the entire population two or three months. The soldiers had slaughtered all unprotected stock on the Cape, regardless of ownership, and women and children, with a few male escorts, daily raided outlying cassada fields belonging to the Cape Palmas people.

Meanwhile, the homeless natives, including about 800 fighting men, had camped about four miles to the interior of the Maryland frontier. Though destitute, they lacked gunpowder to attack their aggressors, the colonists.

Peace moves had not progressed far for want of faith in the Drayton administration. As early as December 29, the natives sent a neutral agent to Harper to arrange a reconciliation. The Governor requested that Headmen from both tribes confer with him respecting a treaty. Promised safe conduct, two chiefs appeared before Drayton on January 2. Rather than participating in a negotiated peace, they were presented a three-point ultimatum: (1) the Grahways, numbering in all about three thousand, were to transplant themselves at Bereby, some sixty miles from Palmas, (2) the Cape Palmas people were to settle across the Cavally River, and (3) both removals were to be accomplished within one week. To ensure compliance, the two kings were held hostage. Their insistence that they possessed no means of transporting their people from the Cape vicinity, that they lacked provisions for the journey and that they had no assurance

that other tribes would allow them to settle at Bereby and the Cavally River had no effect.⁷⁹

When the native chieftains could get no compromise from Drayton, they appealed to McGill to intercede on their behalf. He sought to dissuade the Governor from aggressive measures, but succeeded only in delaying an attack. Finally, on January 19, an expedition of sixty immigrants and two hundred Rock Town allies marched to the enemy's encampment on Sheppard Lake. In the ensuing battle the Americans boarded three canoes in order to storm the barricade on one side of the lake, while the Rock Town supporters covered them from the beach. One canoe carrying twenty-six men and a cannon overturned, with complete loss of life and property. Only the Rock Town troops kept the remaining forces from being wiped out. In fact, the panic and confusion accompanying the Marylanders' retreat were such that the whole settlement could have easily been wiped out had the beleaguered Africans continued the battle. Altogether the colonists lost two cannon, all drums and musical instruments, three large canoes and a quantity of ammunition, muskets and bayonets.⁸⁰

Undaunted by the loss of men, military equipment and private property accompanying his efforts to force the Palmas and Grahway peoples from Cape vicinity, Drayton was determined to dislodge them from their position along Sheppard Lake. He estimated that his

⁷⁹Ibid., McGill to Howard, Harper, January 27, 1857.

⁸⁰Ibid.

present troops were competent to hold off any offensive action, but he needed supplies and men if he were to storm the enemy stronghold again. He appealed to President Stephen A. Benson of the Liberian Republic for a loan of 200 round shot, 100 pounds buckshot, musket balls, 300 pounds of powder and 30 muskets. Drayton also solicited volunteer corps from Monrovia and an occasional visit from the Liberian Government's schooner while the unsettled state of affairs continued.⁸¹

At this point, Doctor James Hall, on the maiden voyage of the Mary Caroline Stevens, arrived in Monrovia. Hearing of events at Cape Palmas from Mrs. Russwurm, who had left about mid-January, Hall was sickened. Two days later, February 5, McGill returned from the Maryland community with news of the recent engagement at Sheppard Lake. He reported the colony under martial law and with enough provisions to last but a few weeks. The triumphant natives had hemmed in the settlement and were picking off any man so foolish as to leave Harper in search of food.⁸²

Drayton's plea to the Republic came at an inopportune time for it to render assistance. Just the year before, the Monrovia government had been forced to conclude a native war at Sinou, between Capes Mesurado and Palmas, leaving the public finances at a low state. Realizing the Liberian Legislature's inability to help the Marylanders, Hall offered a Society loan of up to \$10,000

⁸¹Ibid., Drayton to S. A. Benson, Harper, January 26, 1857.

⁸²Ibid., Hall to Howard, Monrovia, February 3, 1857. This letter covers events from February 3 to the 10th.

to be used in outfitting a military expedition. He stipulated, however, that the money was to be accepted entirely unconditionally, in no way contingent upon the annexation of Harper to the Liberian Republic.⁸³ To this Benson agreed, claiming that the Republic would want unification of the two states only by the voluntary action of that government or a majority of the people.⁸⁴

President Benson sent a message to the Legislature informing it of the tendered money and urging immediate action to assist the sister state, whose citizens, like they, had emigrated from the same country and with the same object in view--the establishment of an asylum on the African continent for the oppressed black race and the moral and intellectual improvement of the aborigines.⁸⁵ Considering that the Maryland immigrants were the aggressors and had replied to native pleas for conciliation with the threat of their extermination, Benson's remarks were exceptionally charitable.

On February 7, the Legislature authorized the President to form a voluntary militia for the war at Harper. Each recruit was to receive two months' pay in advance, a premium of one town lot and a hundred acres of farm land in return for his services throughout the hostilities. Benson was permitted, further, to negotiate a \$10,000 loan for the military campaign, upon condition that the Government of Maryland in Liberia reimburse the Republic. The

⁸³Ibid., Hall to Benson, Monrovia, February 4, 1857.

⁸⁴Ibid., Benson to Hall, Monrovia, February 6, 1857.

⁸⁵Ibid., Benson to Senate and House of Representatives, Executive Department, Monrovia, February 4, 1857.

lawmakers agreed to give the sister state a quantity of war material such as buckshot, gunpowder and muskets and to dispatch an armed government vessel to Harper for whatever beneficial purposes it could serve.⁸⁶

In the next few days, Monrovia was bustling with preparations for the trip. More than a hundred volunteers were obtained. Hall gathered supplies such as food and clothing for the destitute colonists as well as trade items such as tobacco with which to secure rice and cassada from friendly natives.⁸⁷ The Mary Caroline Stevens embarked from Monrovia on February 11, anchoring at Cape Palmas on the 16th. Hall noted, erroneously, that it was the twenty-third anniversary of his first arrival there aboard the Ann.

En route, Joseph J. Roberts, commander of the forces, had drawn up terms of cooperation with the Marylanders. Two basic propositions were that the Palmas government would be responsible for the expenses incurred by the Republic in furnishing aid and that peace talks rather than military offensives were their major objective. He found, however, that Drayton, although civil enough, would neither object nor consent to the proposals. The Governor, instead, appointed seven commissioners, including Hall, to decide upon the continuation of the war. This was additional evidence of Drayton's unfitness for office.

⁸⁶Ibid., Act of the Legislature of Republic of Liberia, Monrovia, February 7, 1857.

⁸⁷Ibid., Hall to Howard, Monrovia, February 3, 1857.

Hall concluded that his presence could be of no value other than inducing the natives to try bargaining again. He persuaded Drayton to release the two old chiefs and a young boy held since early January and sent with the boy a message to Yellow Will, an original party to the sale of the Cape, that General Roberts could be trusted in any palaver. Hall expressed his wish for peace and sent a present to the King. Two hours after the released natives left Harper, the sound of cannon from the Grebo camp announced their favorable reception of Hall's communication. Convinced that he had done everything within his power to restore peace, Hall left Cape Palmas on February 21. Three days after he reached Monrovia, the English man-of-war, Heckla, returned with Roberts and the troops and with word that the war had been settled. Measures had also been taken for the immediate annexation of the settlement to the Republic as a county.⁸⁸

The principal terms of the peace treaty between the government of Maryland in Liberia and the Cape Palmas and Grahway tribes, collectively known as the Grebo people, were as follows: (1) the Cape Palmas people will settle at a new interior position along the Hoffman River, (2) the colonists will pay them a thousand dollars in trade articles for the towns formerly occupied on the Cape, (3) the Palmas and Grahway tribes will pay for the burning of Mount Vaughan, will return the cannon and drums lost in the lake and will allow free trade throughout the territory, (4) the Palmas

⁸⁸Ibid., Hall to Howard, Ship M. C. Stevens, April 4, 1857.

and Grahway natives will consider this settlement with the colonists as conclusion of all disputes with other parties as well, and (5) the Grahway, Palmas and River Cavally people will not plunder any shipwrecked vessel along the beach or engage in the slave trade. Other provisions covered peaceful arbitration of disputes among parties in the Cape vicinity and promised safety to Cape Palmas people traversing colonist lands.⁸⁹

County annexation was officially applied for after the Maryland colonists unanimously voted their consent to the suggestion and chose three commissioners to draw up conditions for the new political status. The resulting petition contained the following proposals: (1) the State of Maryland in Liberia shall be known as the County of Cape Palmas, (2) the County shall have two senators and three representatives in the Legislature, (3) stipulations entered into between the colony and the Maryland State Colonization Society in February, 1854, shall remain unimpaired, and (4) all contracts and claims now existing shall be equally binding as if no change had taken place in the government. The commissioners estimated the number of Americo-Liberian inhabitants at 900 and aboriginal population at 60,000. Annual revenues were listed at \$1,800, while the current liabilities, mostly incurred during the native war, were \$3,000. Total government assets were placed at \$10,000. Interestingly, the commissioners, including

⁸⁹"Treaty of Peace Between the Government of Maryland in Liberia and the Grebo People," Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. VIII, No. 24 (May, 1857), 374-75.

Drayton, dissolved their government and ceded the public domain and jurisdiction over all property to the Republic at the same time that they submitted their petition for county annexation.⁹⁰

The Liberian Legislature convened in an extra session on April 6 to consider the sister state's future. Upon Benson's initiative, the name recommended was County of Maryland instead of County of Cape Palmas. By Act of April, 1857, Maryland County was made the fourth territorial division of the Liberian Republic. Although the Legislature agreed that the Marylanders should have the two senators stipulated for each county by the Liberian Constitution, it would not alter that document in order to allow Cape Palmas to have more than one representative in the lower house. More delegates could be elected only as increased population in Maryland County enabled it to meet prerequisites for additional legislators. Accordingly, Anthony Wood and Thomas Fuller were elected Senators and John Bowen, Representative. President Benson re-appointed Joseph Gibson superintendent of the Maryland State Colonization Society's property and chose Drayton to be the Judge of the Quarterly Court. Most minor elected officials were retained.⁹¹

Monrovia assumed responsibility for all claims against the Cape Palmas government, including the \$5,000 expense connected with the native war. Later it asked the Maryland Board to release the

⁹⁰"Petition for and Terms of County Annexation of Maryland in Liberia to the Republic," Maryland Colonization Journal, n.s. VIII, No. 24 (May, 1857), 375-77.

⁹¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XXIII, Benson to Hall, Monrovia, July 4, 1857.

Republic from that loan.⁹² Aware that Maryland County would continue a financial drain upon the central government for some years to come, Society officers voted to cancel the debt.⁹³

⁹²Ibid., Vol. XXIV, Benson to Howard, Monrovia, August 21, 1857.

⁹³MSCS MSS, Records, Vol. IV, Meeting of the Board of Managers March 2, 1858.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

Restoration of peace and incorporation within the Republic of Liberia had beneficial effects upon the Maryland settlers. The threat of complete annihilation by peoples formerly considered inferior in every respect impressed the citizens sufficiently to override petty differences among them. The folly of Drayton's rash, imprudent acts enhanced the memory of Russwurm, Prout and Cassell, now deceased, who, for all their faults, had at least preserved friendly relations with neighboring tribes and encouraged agricultural development.

Though Palmas citizens still occasionally spoke contemptibly of the indigenes, turbulences which had so frequently in past years interrupted community life were now absent. The removal of the large native towns from the Cape eliminated much of the day-by-day friction that often ended in violence. Africans and colonists no longer had to traverse each other's property en route to their fields and the immigrants' residences were now contiguous. Turning their attention to cultivation, the citizens had more acreage planted in June, 1857, than at any earlier time in colony history.¹

¹MSCS MSS, Letters, Vol. XXIII, J. T. Gibson to James Hall, Harper, June 3, 1857.

The great need of the Maryland territory, however, was immigrants, especially men.² Repeatedly the Society's African Agent, Joseph T. Gibson, asked for large expeditions of suitable males. As often, he expressed regret that they did not arrive.³ The reason, of course, was the detrimental publicity accorded Cape Palmas by the native war. Whereas Maryland colonizationists had found it difficult to procure emigrants before 1857, thereafter they discovered it impossible.⁴ Even American Colonization Society efforts to populate that southern Liberian point were to no avail because prospective colonists had a choice of settlements. Palmas, by virtue of its misfortunes, was the least desirable destination.

Hereafter the history of the American-founded settlements upon the African west coast merge. Maryland colonizationists ceased to have particular interest in the colony once it was annexed and no longer a separate entity. Like most Americans of the day, they became immersed in events leading to the War Between the States and, as noted, that conflict ended the Society's active existence. What efforts were made in later years to recruit emigrants and funds for colonization were done on behalf of the national movement, of which John Latrobe remained the president.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., Vol. XXIV, Gibson to Hall, Harper, August 14, 1857 and July 14, 1858.

⁴MCS MSS, Letter Press Books, Vol. II, Hall to Gibson, Baltimore, October 31, 1857.

Visitors to Cape Palmas in later years made interesting comments upon its progress. Charles W. Thomas, serving as chaplain to the American African Squadron from 1856 to 1858, spent most of that time aboard the Jamestown off the African coast. Touring Palmas after its annexation, Thomas was highly complimentary. The cultivation, cleanliness and industry evident in the settlement surpassed that exhibited at Monrovia, he thought. But, remarking generally about Liberia, he concluded:

The great obstacle to improvement among all the transplanted people on the coast, has been the idea, brought with them from America, that, when they reached Africa, they should become ladies and gentlemen, doctors, lawyers and senators, merchants, and so on, at once; and, oh delectable vision! all without work. Experience . . . has tried to enlighten them on this subject, and, by hard knocks, has succeeded in several instances; but there are some hopeless scholars left yet, who, intent upon realizing their dreams are going through the motions; and I verily believe that, often against the testimony of their stomachs and backs, many have almost persuaded themselves that they are all they expected to be--rich, grand, wise and great. But our hope is in the next generation; and that hope is not without some rational basis.⁵

Alexander M. Cowan, for many years travelling agent for the Kentucky Colonization Society, visited Liberia late in 1857 and touched at all points along the coast. Walking from one end of the Cape Palmas settlement to the other, Cowan saw everywhere evidence of the late war. He did not doubt that it had been wrong, destroying years of effort and bringing great suffering to the colonists. He was surprised, however, to find that citizens, despite their financial embarrassment, still felt

⁵Charles W. Thomas, Adventures and Observations on the West Coast of Africa, and its Islands (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860), pp. 183-86.

above such work as carrying cord wood and paid native women to bring it to their door. Naming the Maryland Society's fostering care as the reason for the colony's general listlessness, Cowan went on to charge that Liberia was still sustained by foreign labor. American Colonization Society funds and money expended by various American mission boards, he argued, supported colonists and filled the treasury with indirectly procured revenue. Cowan insisted that Liberia had to introduce a profitable agricultural system, raise livestock and levy a property tax before it could be considered truly independent. He was especially critical of the Republic's native policy--or lack of it. Noting that laws clarified the relationship between colonist and native, Cowan deplored the withholding of civil privileges from the latter and concluded that there was no feeling of common brotherhood toward them. In spite of his many criticisms, Cowan advised his readers that he still had not the least doubt but that Liberia was the best home for America's blacks.⁶

Some forty years later, Mary H. Kingsley of the famed English family, in her West African Studies, had some pungent observations regarding Sierra Leone and Liberia, both creations of English and American philanthropists. Concluding that they made a "direful mess of the affair from a practical standpoint," she asserted that they should have confined their attention to talking, "a thing they were naturally great on, and left the so-called restoration of the African to his native soil alone." Her opposition to the colonization scheme was two-fold: those

⁶Alexander M. Cowan, Liberia, As I Found It, in 1858 (Frankfort, Kentucky: A. G. Hodges, 1858), pp. 113-84.

Negroes returned were not wanted in West Africa and the immigrants, having lost the immunity of their ancestors, often fell victim to malaria. Miss Kingsley contended that there were sufficient Africans to develop their continent without importation of colonists from England, Canada or the United States. Deploring the excessive death rate among arriving colonists, the explorer concluded that it would have been better to let them use their energies in developing tropical regions of America and to "leave the undisturbed stock of Africa to develop on its own."⁷ With respect to Cape Palmas, her comments on the mortality rate are erroneous, of course.

Generally, however, the observations of these three visitors contain great truth. The Maryland settlement, consisting of nearly a thousand souls in 1857, could not stand alone after twenty-odd years of tutelage and expense. It produced not one genuine leader. Russwurm was an educated mulatto whose American background and Monrovia newspaper experience served him well while Governor of Maryland in Liberia. Cassell had been chosen and trained specifically for a top colonial office but had not lived in Africa long enough even to qualify for the presidency of the Maryland republic in 1854. Prout, elected to that position, came closest to being a product of the colony, but then, he was deposed for drunkenness and inept administration. Drayton was a Baptist missionary come to the colony only in 1849.

The costs attendant the Maryland scheme far surpassed visible results. By the end of 1857, the Maryland Society had expended nearly

⁷Mary H. Kingsley, West African Studies (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1899), pp. 52-54.

a half million dollars in recruiting emigrants and supporting the Palmas community. Given every advantage money could buy, that spark of industry and enterprise necessary for greatness could not be fanned. Most colonists resisted all efforts to create a flourishing settlement of which their benefactors could be proud. The tendency of the ex-American slaves to look down upon the natives and to enslave them was indicative of their slovenly ways.

Although Society officers maintained a cheerful countenance whenever the colonization subject was raised, they must have wondered at their past proceedings and decisions. In actuality, they should never have fostered independent state action, for it splintered the national colonization movement without corresponding greater success. To insist that the Washington-based society and the Maryland group were not rivals is nonsense. While the Marylanders staged some remarkable coups in obtaining emigrants--the Tubmans of Georgia being the best example--going it alone was far more detrimental to Maryland success than to parent society activity.

The founding of a separate colony more than two hundred miles down the coast from Monrovia was also a mistake. It would have been difficult enough to accomplish the feat with the resources and experience of the American Colonization Society, but to break with that group and to boast of superior planning and methods detracted from the purer motives of colonization. As state action at home reduced the movement's potency, so the existence of two independent colonies in Africa was divisive also. Latrobe should have taken the advice he offered George McGill back in 1832--he should have worked at making the first settlement

a success before attempting a second. Had a new colony remained imperative, then it should have been founded under the auspices of the parent board.

None the less, these otherwise practical Baltimore business and professional men seem to have looked upon the intangible elements of the enterprise as sufficient reward for their energies. Their pride in the establishment of a Negro republic and their part in giving Maryland blacks an opportunity to return to their ancestral home somehow compensated for the unimpressive statistics. If the results of Maryland colonization were meagre, the outbreak of the Civil War at least sustained supporters in their contention that free and slave populations could not co-exist.

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