2005

A transnational vision: John H. B. Latrobe and Maryland's African colonization movement.

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A Transnational Vision: John H. B. Latrobe and Maryland's African Colonization Movement.

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Dissertation submitted to the College of Arts and Sciences
At West Virginia University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
History

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2005

Keywords: John H. B. Latrobe, Colonization, Maryland State Colonization Society, Liberia

UMI Number: 3306709

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ABSTRACT

A Transnational Vision: John H. B. Latrobe and Maryland's African Colonization Movement.

Eugene S. Van Sickle

The transnational vision of John H. B. Latrobe, the central figure in this study, was one that sought to tie America's efforts to overcome the problem of slavery to the future of the West Coast of Africa. The vehicle for his ideas was African colonization, a prominent, long-enduring movement that began in Antebellum America. Latrobe participated in and directed the African colonization efforts of the Maryland State Colonization Society for much of that organization's existence. The colonization efforts of the Maryland society differed in many ways from the national effort, an aspect this study illustrates. Essentially, Latrobe believed that colonization was the answer to questions raised in Antebellum America about slavery and emancipation, American expansion, industrialization, and the place of the United States in a wider transatlantic community. This study examines the contributions Latrobe made to this movement, how colonization fit in the context of ideas such as republicanism, the debate over slavery and emancipation, and what he envisioned as the final result for both the United States and Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In most research projects the author cannot claim every ounce of credit due when it is completed. This one is no different. Many people have contributed directly, for example by reading drafts, while others have made contributions much more difficult to assess. Though everyone who assisted me in this project cannot be mentioned by name, his or her contributions were much appreciated. There are a few, however, that I would like to thank individually. I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee—Dr. Mary Lou Lustig, Dr. Jason Parker, Dr. Robert Maxon, and Dr. Amos Beyan for their comments that improved my dissertation. Also, I want to extend my deepest thanks to my advisor (and committee chair), Dr. Ken Fones-Wolf, who tirelessly guided my research and read numerous drafts of the dissertation. More generally I would like to thank the staff of West Virginia University's Charles C. Wise Library for aiding me in the search for primary source materials used in the study. Further, the Maryland Historical Society contributed much to this work. The staff of the historical society went to extraordinary lengths to accommodate my research at a time in the middle of renovating the building and facilities that house its collections. Finally, I would like to thank my family, my wife Angela, and children Ryan and Emily. Without their support and sacrifices, this would not have been possible. Responsibility for errors, omissions and the like, of course, rests upon the shoulders of the author. Enjoy.

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Introduction

Late in December of 1816, a group of prominent white Americans met in Washington, D. C. to decide the fate of free blacks in the United States. The American Colonization Society resulted from that early winter meeting. While not the first time such discussions took place, this meeting eventually resulted in the colonization of nearly twelve thousand people in Africa. These settlers formed the basis of the modern nation of Liberia. As one of America's earliest national movements, the efforts of antebellum white Americans to promote African colonization generated an extensive historiography. Such studies show that colonization drew support from a wide variety of people, including proslavery racists as well as abolitionists. Scholars thus disagree over whether the essence of colonization was either proslavery, abolitionist or humanitarian. Colonization was just that complex. Attempts at generalizations about the movement; however, obscure important differences in the visions of colonization supporters. Between 1831 and 1853, the Maryland State Colonization Society (MSCS) and one of its most prominent members, John H. B. Latrobe, promoted a unique vision for colonization, one that differed from the national organization. Latrobe also encouraged other states to follow a similar program in the antebellum years. Through an analysis of Latrobe's early nineteenth century experiences, this study seeks to provide a new interpretation of Maryland's West African colonization scheme, placing Maryland's movement in the broader context of America's emerging sectional conflict leading up to the Civil War. In addition, it will illuminate the role of one of the most overlooked yet influential of the colonizationists. The study will trace John H. B. Latrobe's role in Maryland's colonization efforts by looking at three phases of his life in the movement.

Latrobe shared some of the goals of the American Colonization Society (ACS), yet desired a different future for the United States and Africa, one that the Maryland society worked to implement. The society attempted to realize these goals through its own colony, dubbed Maryland in Liberia. On the surface, the vision for Maryland in Liberia appeared inconsistent with Latrobe's professional career in the United States. Latrobe envisioned a vibrant, commercial and industrial free labor society for the United States while promoting a Jeffersonian yeoman ideal in Maryland's Liberian colony. Taken together, however, his goals for Maryland in Liberia expressed a unified vision that would make Africa a valuable part of a larger transatlantic community. Latrobe's colonization plans also represented a potential solution for the growing sectional conflict in American society as pressure to end slavery created strong North-South tensions. Latrobe hoped to reduce this schism by gradually removing both free African-Americans and slaves from the United States. He further hoped that by doing so, the subject of slavery could be removed from national politics and tensions eased between the North and South.[1]

By studying Latrobe and his involvement in the MSCS, it is possible not only to see his influence on the movement but also how colonization emerged out of the complex social, political and economic fabric of antebellum America. The plan that the MSCS tried to implement reflected such changes and offered a means to reduce the tensions growing out of sectional conflict in Maryland between northern industrialists and southern slave interests. Further, a study of this topic illuminates an overlooked aspect of colonization. Latrobe developed a distinct plan reflecting his vision, one that had potentially significant ramifications

[1]*African Colonization: An Address Delivered by John H. B. Latrobe, President of the American Colonization Society at the Anniversary Meeting of the Massachusetts Colonization Society, May 25, 1853* (Baltimore: John D. Toy, 1853), 7. *Microfilm Edition of the Papers of the Maryland State Colonization Society* [microform]. *A Collection of the Maryland Historical Society*, (Philadelphia: Rhestoric Publications, Inc., c1970), reel 31, XIII.

for Africa and the United States. Latrobe tried to develop a model based on his understanding of how nineteenth century Marylanders coped with dramatic changes that were leading towards the destruction of the Union. At the same time, a study of Latrobe's vision demonstrates how one important leader blended the industrial and humanitarian aspects of colonization into a transatlantic plan that attempted to benefit both Africa and the United States.

The rapidly changing social and economic situations of such Upper South states as Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri called for a moderate approach, but as this study will show, moderate policies were ineffective in dealing with social, economic, and political tensions caused by industrialization. Thus, Maryland colonizationists sided with those seeking a way to end slavery. This course of action, combined with emigration by blacks, Latrobe thought, would alleviate the growing tensions in America. However, one should not assume that Maryland's colonization movement under Latrobe's guidance had any sympathy with the policies of abolitionists. Instead, colonization, as seen by Latrobe, was a distinct movement reflecting his belief that two free races could not coexist in a republic.

Surprisingly, very few have studied the MSCS, despite its importance to Maryland and its connections with the state government. The most recognized history of Maryland's colonization society and movement comes from Penelope Campbell who wrote her study in the late 1960s. Campbell's *Maryland in Africa* recognized that colonizationists made different appeals to northerners and southerners to get support. Campbell also acknowledges John Latrobe's significance in the Maryland movement, but she does not focus on his role or vision, something this study will do.[2] Moreover, my study will provide a new interpretation, suggesting that the impetus for Maryland's colonization program grew out of the sectional conflict in American

[2] Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society*, 1831-1857 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 9, 21.

society. It was Latrobe's fear of this conflict that led him to formulate the plan of colonizing Maryland's black population in Africa. Furthermore, my study will show how Latrobe symbolized the changing of the guard in Maryland after the 1812 war, thus making his contribution to the MSCS even more significant.

My study will also correct some assessments made about the Grebo, the indigenous Africans living where the Maryland colonists settled. In short, Campbell uncritically accepts the claims of Maryland officials that the Grebo wanted Maryland colonists to settle so they could learn English and obtain American goods.[3] Such an assessment fails to recognize that the Grebo had long established trading connections; some already spoke English and others had English names before the Maryland colonists arrived on the coast. Campbell also makes negative assertions about the colonists themselves, describing them as a quarrelsome bunch whose tendency "to look down upon the Africans and enslave them was indicative of their slovenly ways and haughty spirit."[4] Such assessments of the colonists and Africans ignore the conflicting cultural values held by each group. It further ignores the heritage of the settlers. The colonists had adopted American culture and many behaved as cultural imperialists as they imposed American political, social and economic institutions on Africans in Liberia.[5] In addition, the colonists who went to Maryland in Liberia had been selected carefully by the society. Consequently, the colonists often reflected the views and policies that the society and Latrobe hoped to implement in Africa.

My study will also explore the economic and commercial aspects that the MSCS intertwined with its colonization efforts. Campbell suggests commercial trade could not develop

[3] Ibid., 74-5.

[4] Ibid., 85, 241.

[5] See Amos Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State: A Historical Perspective, 1822-1900* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989).

due to the MSCS's financial difficulties at home. Research for this study suggests that commerce was a critical element of the MSCS plan from the beginning and that there was considerable economic activity between Maryland in Liberia and the United States. Latrobe's own background convinced him that commercial development was the key to any successful colonization effort. Further, Latrobe's records suggest that Baltimore merchants and shipping companies did at least a half-million dollars worth of business with the colony during its twenty-three years before being annexed to Liberia, and the MSCS Papers contain volumes of data on economic activity in the colony and for the society, much of which Latrobe either encouraged or initiated.[6]

Another difference in interpretation involves the process of the colony's independence. While Campbell covers Latrobe's effort to grant the colony independence in the wake of the other colonies in 1847, she does not explore why he insisted that Maryland in Liberia not join the rest of the colonies. My research indicates he did this in the hopes that the colony would become the foundation of numerous independent states eventually making up a confederacy in Africa that would resemble the United States. Finally, her conclusion that colonization efforts were of no consequence in affecting slavery and that the financial aid the state legislature gave the MSCS was motivated by slave interests in the state is problematic and simplistic.[7] It does not recognize nor account for the complexity of Maryland's tilting of economic and political power towards industrial Baltimore and away from slave interests. The MSCS program, as led by John Latrobe, represented an effort to reconcile slave and free labor interests in the state and avoid war, but not to strengthen slavery.

[6] Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 149.

[7] Ibid., 242.

Another study by Jane Jackson Martin analyzes the missionary aspects of Maryland's colonization effort. Latrobe recognized that this missionary character was important to the society, and he helped attach the MSCS program to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). Unfortunately, the presence of the missionaries led to numerous conflicts between mission employees and settlers. The independence given the missionaries by the MSCS to carry out their work in the colony caused considerable tension with Maryland in Liberia's administration as missionaries often asked the United States Navy for assistance in their conflicts with the Grebo. The missionaries' accusations about the settlers' treatment of the Grebo also forced the board of the MSCS to define the status of the missions within the colony. Difficulties between the settlers and missionaries at Fair Hope (a mission station) eventually led those missionaries to leave the colony in 1842.[8]

This study relies on several rich collections of primary documents. The research utilized the vast collection of letters and economic records in the MSCS Papers to examine John Latrobe's role in the society, his goals and those of the MSCS, and the colony Maryland in Liberia. John Latrobe was a prolific writer, and this study also relies on his published works as well as his personal letters and journals, which his family donated to the Maryland Historical Society after his death in 1891. Last, but certainly not least, my research included important ACS records like the *African Repository* and minutes from ACS annual meetings, microfilm copies of which are housed at the Library of Congress.

This dissertation moves back and forth between the United States and Africa, exploring how events and controversies on one continent ultimately had implications for the other. The first two chapters sketch the political, social, and cultural roots of colonization, particularly as

[8] Jane Jackson Martin, "The Dual Legacy: Government Authority and Missionary Influence Among the Glebo of Eastern Liberia, 1843-1910." (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1968).

they shaped the ideology of John Latrobe. This earliest phase of his life illustrates how the revolutionary generation influenced Latrobe in his youth. Chapter one begins with a discussion of early colonization efforts and an examination of why colonization appealed to such a large number of white Americans, including Marylanders, and why Latrobe worked within the movement for much of his life. Critical to colonization's appeal was the way in which men like Latrobe understood and clung to republican ideals in the early national period. For Latrobe, republicanism and slavery were ultimately incompatible, but he also believed that the coexistence of two races in a republican system was equally impossible. One solution to these problems was colonization. Chapter one concludes with the formation of the ACS and its Maryland auxiliary. Chapter two examines the reasons, events and changes in the colonization movement during its first decade of operation that led Marylanders to form their own independent state society. This chapter also explores the shift in political power in Maryland toward the northern part of the state, which was key to the development and support of the MSCS. Chapter two further marks the end of Latrobe's youth and the maturity of his own notions about republicanism and the ways in which subjects such as slavery should be dealt.

Combined, chapters three and four mark the second phase of Latrobe's career as a colonizationist in Maryland. They also define the Maryland plan, its differences from the American Colonization Society, and the founding of Maryland's own colony in Africa. Chapter three explores Latrobe's vision for the movement and what it meant for both the United States and Africa. This vision helps highlight the tensions emerging in the 1830s within Maryland and the nation over slavery, as well as how Latrobe's plan sought to relieve them. Chapter four is a closer examination of the founding of the colony in Africa and its first ten years, which demonstrates Latrobe's influence over Maryland in Liberia. An analysis of the problems the

colony faced begins the evolution of Latrobe's ideas. Unanticipated consequences and problems forced Latrobe to alter his policies in the colony and sacrifice some of his goals to keep the colony from completely faltering.

Chapter five examines the politics of colonization in the United States during the 1830s as the abolitionist movement grew in prominence. This marks the third phase of Maryland colonization. This chapter also discusses how Latrobe's plans fit within the controversy over slavery and the uproar caused by the gag rule. Another issue addressed by Latrobe during this period was the effort to reunite the colonization movement in response to national crises. Chapter six shifts between the United States and Africa to show how Latrobe reacted to problems on both continents, and how these difficulties influenced his policies in each realm. The growing sectional tensions after 1845 forced Latrobe to adapt his program in ways that he had not anticipated, further illustrating his flexibility and willingness to compromise in order to achieve his ultimate goal of removing African Americans from the United States.

Chapter seven examines the last five years of Latrobe's role in the Maryland colonization effort. Liberia's independence from the ACS in 1847 accelerated his plans for the Maryland colony. Early in the second decade of the colony's existence the colony was on the verge of extinction. Latrobe made significant contributions to its continuance, as did unexpected supporters. The final question he faced, however, was whether Maryland in Liberia would join Liberia or become its own independent republic. Latrobe felt that if Maryland in Liberia joined the older settlements all that he had done would have been lost. Latrobe hoped that the colonies would interact and cooperate as the British colonies of North America had done in the eighteenth century. If successful, Latrobe's broader vision for America and Africa would be fulfilled. If unsuccessful, saving the American republic would most likely fail. The push to make the colony

independent, combined with domestic crises in the United States also healed the divisions in the colonization movement as the American republic appeared in danger of tearing itself apart. Ultimately, the little colony of Maryland in Liberia followed the path Latrobe wished while he moved to the national scene. Maryland in Liberia became a new nation in 1854, but it faced a grim and short future.

My study makes several contributions. First it adds a new interpretation to the colonization historiography. Colonization was a distinct movement in Maryland that defies such simple labels as "humanitarian" or "proslavery." Influenced by the changing social, economic and political fabric of antebellum America, Latrobe sought to reconcile this new social order with nineteenth century American republicanism to form what he thought was a viable plan to resolve sectional conflict and preserve the Union in a form that many white Americans accepted. Furthermore, this study focuses on Latrobe's involvement in colonization and the founding of Liberia, something others have overlooked. Finally, my study adds to the understanding of antebellum American history by showing how Maryland was a "middle-ground" between slavery and freedom. In short, Maryland was a microcosm of the national struggles over slavery and industrialization, which eventually led to the Civil War.

Chapter One: "Some are Politically Dangerous"

In December of 1816, several prominent, white Americans gathered near Washington D.C. to discuss the subject of African colonization. At the end of their deliberations, they formed a new national organization, the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States or the American Colonization Society. To some Americans, the ACS was a reform-minded society like other organizations created during the second decade of the nineteenth century. The ACS proposed to change American society by removing free black Americans from the United States. From its very beginning, the ACS drew its support from all sections of the Union, even though the reasons for that support varied greatly.[1] Nevertheless, there were unifying factors that allowed those with opposing interests to cooperate in the early years of the society's existence.

This chapter examines the appeal of the ACS in its early years by focusing on one of the most prominent colonizationists in the movement, John H. B. Latrobe. As part of the generation

[1] Amos J. Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State, 1822-1900*. (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991); Clarence C. Clendenan, *Americans in Black Africa*. (Stanford University Press, 1964); Alex Crummel, *The Future of Africa*. (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969); Early Lee Fox, *The American Colonization Society, 1817*-1840 in Johns Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science, Vol. XXXVII (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1919); Yekutiel Gershoni, *Black Colonialism: The Americo-Liberian Scramble for the Hinterland*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985); Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787-1863*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975); Tom W. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth Century Liberia*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); James Wesley Smith, *Sojourners in Search of Freedom: The Settlement of Liberia by Black Americans*. (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987); Phil J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); Amos J. Beyan, "The American Background of Recurrent Themes in the Political History of Liberia." Liberian Studies Journal. 19.1:20; "The American Colonization Society and the Origin of Undemocratic Institutions in Liberia in Historical Perspective." Liberian Studies Journal. 14.2:140; Frankie Hutton, "Economic Considerations in the American Colonization Society's Early Effort to Emigrate Free Blacks to Liberia, 1816-1836." Journal of Negro History. 68, Issue 4 (Autumn, 1983), 376-389; Eli. Seifman, "The Passing of the American Colonization Society." Liberian Studies Journal. Vol. 2, no, 1 (1969): 1-8; David M. Streifford, "The American Colonization Society: An Application of Republican Ideology to Early Antebellum Reform." Journal of Southern History. 45, No. 2 (May 1979): 201-220. Amos J. Beyan, "The American Colonization Society and the Formation of Political, Economic, and Religious Institutions in Liberia, 1822-1900." (Ph. D. diss., West Virginia University, 1985); Eric Burin, "The Peculiar Solution: The American Colonization Society and Antislavery Sentiment in the South, 1820-1860." (Ph. D. diss., University Of Illinois at Urbana-Champagne, 1998).

born after the American Revolution, Latrobe grappled with the same questions that the founders of the ACS did: could slavery end peacefully, and what was to be the final fate of black Americans? While he struggled with these issues, Latrobe also brought a different perspective to the subject, one that envisioned an alternate future for both the United States and Africa. His perspective drew on the ideas of leading men from the American Revolution, to which he combined the reality of an emerging market economy to create a different colonization plan that benefited both the American and African continents.

On the evening of December 21, 1816, John H. B. Latrobe was a teenage boy riding his horse, named Codger, into Georgetown on an errand for his mother, Mary. Although not yet fourteen, Latrobe typically performed such duties, illustrating considerable responsibility on the part of the young man. Nevertheless, he was still a curious teen apt to investigate seemingly irregular occurrences. His curiosity drew him to a church near the Rock Creek Bridge north of town. Since churches often doubled as meeting places, and as it was not an evening for a regular service, Latrobe stopped. There he observed Francis Scott Key speaking about the possibility of establishing a colony of African American settlers on the West African coast. This sight did not strike him as unusual because Latrobe already knew this famous American. But at the moment, Latrobe was both unclear about and uninterested in the subject of Key's impassioned speech. Yet, that seemingly insignificant and coincidental observation by Latrobe turned out to be his first contact with the ACS and the idea of settling African Americans outside the boundaries of the United States. Within a decade, Latrobe was also involved in the movement as well as the organization founded at that meeting, contributing seventy years of his life to the cause of African colonization. He was also to be the longest serving president of the ACS, a post he held

after serving as the chief executive of one of its most influential state organizations, the Maryland State Colonization Society (MSCS).[2]

John Hazlehurst Boneval Latrobe was the first son born to Benjamin Henry Latrobe and his second wife, Mary Elizabeth Hazlehurst, on May 4, 1803 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Benjamin Latrobe, long revered for his talent as an architect and engineer, migrated from England to the United States in 1795 and soon after married Mary Hazlehurst. The Latrobe family lived in Philadelphia until Benjamin won the contract from the Jefferson administration to complete the Capitol, forcing a move to Washington.[3] The connections Benjamin made through his profession, combined with the influence of the Hazlehurst family, placed John in an atmosphere and society that fostered the formative ideals and values, particularly those held by early republicans like Thomas Jefferson, that he later applied to his professional life and to colonization.[4] John Latrobe was delivered into a social class that required intellectual cultivation through a classical education. His heritage included a grandfather who was a partner of financial mogul Robert Morris; in addition, his father moved in elite circles, associating and building friendships with doctors, Supreme Court justices, and American presidents. The younger Latrobe's education and social connections thus fostered cultural conservatism. His father's profession, however, also created an interest in technological innovation. Benjamin Latrobe hoped that his son's interest in technology would grow into a career as an architect and engineer.[5] The result of these influences, the belief in republicanism and technological progress,

[2] John E. Semmes, *The Life and Times of John H. B. Latrobe, 1803 to 1891*, (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1917), 61.

[3] Ibid., 10.

[4] Ibid., 1.

[5] Ibid., 62.

led John Latrobe to synthesize the two, which allowed him to flourish in Baltimore's growing democratic society.[6]

In 1807, the Latrobe family moved to Washington, D.C. John Latrobe recalled fondly the years that his family lived in Washington, in what he referred to as the Navy Yard house. Here he found the social climate both agreeable and intellectually stimulating. In those days, he remembered, "Mr. Madison was a frequent visitor," as were Chief Justice John Marshall; Mr. Foster, the British minister; Mr. Serrurier, The French minister; Madame Dashkoff, the wife of the Russian minister; and Robert Fulton, inventor of the steamboat.[7] In 1811, the young John Latrobe moved with his family from their home near the navy yard to the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue, midway between the White House and the Capitol. It was there that Latrobe met some of the most powerful political figures in the country, men such as Francis Scott Key and Henry Clay. Later in his life, he recounted playing with the children of Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, and recalled frequent visits from Madame Bonaparte, formerly Elizabeth Patterson of Baltimore, and once the wife of Jerome Bonaparte of France. Madame Bonaparte's father was William Patterson, a wealthy Baltimore merchant and one of the founders of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, John Latrobe's future employer. These early contacts proved to be of vital importance to Latrobe when he reached adulthood. Key and Clay were both founding members of the ACS, but not the only ones involved in the movement familiar to John Latrobe in his youth. He also knew well Mr. and Mrs. James Madison, Bushrod Washington, and Robert Goodloe Harper, all of whom sought to preserve the American republic through colonization. These people introduced him to the subject of colonization.[8]

[6] Ibid., 4-53.

[7] Ibid., 24.

[8] Ibid., 38-45.

Through the contacts his family made in Washington, Latrobe learned of colonization and the organization formed to carry out the program. Latrobe was also impressed with the diversity of colonization's advocates. African colonization drew wide and varied support when the ACS formed. Many Americans considered the ACS a reform-oriented society much like other organizations formed during the second decade of the nineteenth century because the ACS proposed to ease racial hostility by ridding the United States of free black Americans. This goal allowed the ACS to draw support from all sections of the Union, whether for or against slavery. Unfortunately, historians have used this fact to label the movement rather than searching for unifying themes that led such varied interests to join together in the cause. The movement, as described by historian Matthew Mellon, exemplified the white "attitude toward racial integration."[9] Mellon does not fully explain exactly what the attitude was, but most white Americans in fact feared integration, which they saw as a step toward amalgamation. Thus racism and slavery contributed to the desire to remove black Americans. But so too did the republican values espoused by men like Francis Scott Key, Bushrod Washington, Henry Clay, and Robert G. Harper, all of whom Latrobe knew from his youth.

To understand the colonization movement and the attitude prevailing among such men in 1816, one must examine the origins of colonization in the context of the American Revolution and ideas such as republicanism, both of which affected the development of the early republic. The impact of such ideological forces, in short, led many white Americans to perceive the existence of slavery as a social crisis that threatened the very existence of the republic. In this context, it becomes clear why African colonization became one of the first national movements

[9] Matthew T. Mellon, *Early American Views on Negro Slavery From the Letters and Papers of the Founders of the Republic* (New York: Bergman Publishers, 1969), viii; Don B. Kates, "Abolition, Deportation, Integration: Attitudes Toward Slavery in the Early Republic," Journal of Negro History Vol. LIII, No. 1 (January, 1968), 37.

in America. An examination of the impact of such factors also illuminates the reasons Latrobe became so active in African colonization.

The American Revolution did more than liberate the thirteen British colonies of North America. The revolution was partly the culmination of Enlightenment political philosophy and republican principles. However, the doctrines of the revolution placed Americans in a dilemma owing to the existence of slavery, an institution contradicting the ideals put forth in justifying rebellion against Great Britain. Complicating the picture even more was the status of free African Americans, who were denied full social and political rights in the United States. Thomas Jefferson's assertion in the *Declaration of Independence* "that all men are created equal" coincided with an increased antislavery sentiment. Abolitionists argued that the existence of slavery undermined the basic republican principles of liberty espoused during and after the war. They further suggested that slavery eroded the moral foundation of the new republic. Apparently, many Americans agreed, especially those in Maryland and Virginia where Latrobe grew up, as state legislatures relaxed manumission laws near the end of the 1780s.[10] But this created another problem. In Philadelphia, for example, free African Americans petitioned Congress for equal rights and nationwide emancipation so that they could enjoy the rights and privileges of citizens put forth in the Constitution.[11] Abolitionist sentiments and the pro-active efforts of free African Americans soon revealed the fear among white Americans that a rapidly increasing free black population threatened the republic and their hold on political power. The problem came in part from the liberal emancipation laws of the post-revolution period. The Maryland House of Delegates responded to such fears by passing repressive legislation against

[10] Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: The New Press, 1974), 24-33; Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 28.

[11] Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free: The Roots of Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 152.

antislavery activists while tightening manumission regulations hoping to slow the increase of the free African American population. By 1790, other states began requiring the removal of emancipated slaves beyond their boundaries.[12] Plans to repatriate black Americans coincided with these changes in the law as well.

In his *Notes on the State of Virginia* published in 1787, Thomas Jefferson put forth his ideas for removing African Americans. Though he did not necessarily plan to send them to Africa, Jefferson proposed a scheme of gradual emancipation whereby slaves learned various skills, according to their abilities, at public expense before removing them from the country.[13] He was not alone in advocating the virtues of colonization; in 1785 William Thornton, another of Benjamin Latrobe's friends, sought to colonize a number of West Indian slaves he inherited.[14] As a Quaker, Thornton's fellow believers opposed slavery and encouraged abolition by members of the faith. Thornton devised one of the first colonization plans, allowing his slaves to earn their freedom. He planned to establish a colony in Africa where his slaves would work for a period of years until they earned enough to purchase their freedom. In many ways the plan resembled indentured servitude.[15] However, in a letter to Henry Clay written after the first meeting of the ACS, Thornton revealed another reason for pushing such a course of action. Free African Americans had to be removed because he doubted that they could "ever be treated with an equality in a Country where many of their Colour were still held in Slavery." Morally, this posed a dilemma for Thornton as his republican feelings told him that treating free blacks with

[12] Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 81.

[13] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* edited by Frank Shuffelton (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 144.

[14] Semmes, *The Life and Times*, 9.

[15] Philip J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 5-6.

equality while slavery persisted was "politically dangerous."[16] Thus, for Thornton, colonization was the only answer to this moral, social, and political dilemma. One of Maryland's delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 agreed with this assessment. Luther Martin served as the Attorney General of Maryland after the Constitutional Convention and Latrobe dealt with him in court after he became a lawyer in 1825. Martin stated that slavery was "inconsistent with the *genius* of *republicanism* and has a tendency to *destroy* those *principals* on which it is *supported*, as it *lessens* the *sense* of *equal rights* of *mankind*, and habituates us to *tyranny* and *oppression*."[17] What both men referred to was the danger seen in having two races in a republic where the status of one race was blurred between free and slave. This, they believed, prevented the homogeneous population essential to a republican form of government.

More emancipation and colonization plans emerged in the 1790s as Americans sought a solution to the problem of slavery and the presence of two free races in one nation. Fernando Fairfax, a Virginian, proposed that the United States government establish a colony for African Americans outside North America. Exactly where depended on the proposal. Canada or one of the Caribbean islands seemed most reasonable. Regardless of the location, Fairfax believed the plan absolutely necessary to prevent intermarriage between blacks and whites. While many shared his attitude, Fairfax's plan received criticism for its harshness and draconian tendencies as it completely deprived free African Americans of any rights whatsoever.[18] Fairfax defended his proposal as necessary to counter the prevailing belief that colonization was financially impractical. By purposely depriving free blacks of all rights, they would emigrate of their own

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[16] James F. Hopkins, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay* Vol. 2, The Rising Statesman 1815-1820 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), Letter from William Thornton, Dec. 25, 1816, 266.

[17] Quoted in Gary B. Nash, *Race and Revolution*, (Madison: Madison House, 1990), 19.

[18] Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831-1857* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 5; Nash, *Race and Revolution*, 146-150.

accord using their own money. Still, such a position was tenuous given revolutionary sentiments about individual liberty.[19]

In the North, colonization plans developed as well. A pair of ministers, Reverend Samuel Hopkins and Dr. Ezra Stiles, collaborated in the early 1790s to send black Americans to Africa as missionaries. While emigration for such purposes was strictly voluntary, the missionary impulse encouraged few African Americans to migrate to Africa. Like Jefferson, Hopkins believed that education was vital to the plan's success and he began educating free African Americans for missionary work in Africa; he even arranged for two volunteers to attend Princeton College.[20] To his dismay, Hopkins met heavy opposition, much of which came from his fellow ministers who thought African Americans unworthy of education and incapable of missionary work. Such opposition was ironic as numerous denominations as well as clergymen strongly supported later efforts at colonization in both the North and South. Nevertheless, such hostility toward African Americans, especially in the North, stemmed from what Don Kates described as the "necessary result of limited opportunity for observation."[21] Kates argued that survival in a slave society required African Americans to feign ignorance, stupidity, or laziness, which consequently fueled attitudes like that demonstrated by Rev. Hopkins' fellow ministers. As such, the primary obstacles to colonization in the eighteenth century were the prejudice against improving African Americans through education, the financial costs necessary to transport such a large population to Africa and a lack of unity among the early supporters of the cause.

[19] Nash, *Race and Revolution*, 146-150.

[20] Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 4-5.

[21] Kates, "Abolition, Deportation, Integration," 37

By 1800, more white Americans looked to colonization as a feasible plan. The rapid increase of free African Americans in states like Maryland and Virginia, the Gabriel Prosser Rebellion of 1800, and the Haitian revolution fueled white fears that a racial war was coming. The Prosser conspiracy, which included the planned abduction of Governor James Monroe, led the legislature of Virginia to request that Monroe petition President Thomas Jefferson for federal assistance in colonizing Virginia's free black population.[22] Jefferson hesitated because he believed the Constitution prohibited the federal government from directly aiding the colonization of Americans on other continents. Yet, his consideration of the petition was another indication of the struggle to define the status of free blacks, an unwanted but undeniably American population in the early republic. He ordered the United States foreign minister in London to begin negotiations with the Sierra Leone Company, the controlling body of England's colony and the precedent for American efforts on the western coast of Africa. He further instructed the American representative to "induce them to receive such of these people as might be colonized thither."[23] The minister reported that the Sierra Leone Company wanted no part of the American plan, doubtless disappointing both Monroe and Jefferson. Similar negotiations with European powers holding colonies in South America failed as well.[24]

Further complicating the issue of African colonization were events in Haiti, which caused American slaveholders much concern in 1804. Prosser rebels had hoped for aid from Haiti once their revolt began, but more importantly, Haiti stood as a shining example that blacks were capable of independence. Haitian independence made it even more difficult to suggest that

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[22] Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free*, 10.

[23] *The Annual Reports of the American Colonization Society for Colonizing the free people of Colour of the United States* vols. 1-10, 1818-1827 (Washington, D. C.: 1818-1910, reprint New York: Negro University Press, 1969), Vol. 1, Letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Lynd, 7; *Thomas Jefferson Writings* ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984), 1485-1487.

[24] *Annual Reports of the ACS*, vol. 1, 6-7.

blacks were incapable of self-government, making some Americans question the denial of political rights to free African Americans in the United States, a topic both Luther Martin and William Thornton alluded to in their arguments. The Haitian Revolution also seemed "a fire bell in the night," to quote Jefferson, because it was a racial war. As such, fear of rebellions in the southern states increased, facilitating a greater interest in colonization.

While many supported the cause, colonization efforts remained frustrated in the early nineteenth century due to doubts about the constitutionality of federal support for such schemes. Jefferson previously expressed this concern. Henry Clay joined Jefferson when it came to the rights of property, clearly accepting the contention that slaves were a real form of property protected by the law.[25] In order for the federal government to aid colonization, they would first have to address the constitutional protection of property. Jefferson wrote that federal assistance in colonization would require "a liberal construction" and then "an amendment of the constitution, the whole length necessary" before Congress could act on the subject.[26] This was a clear indication that slavery was protected by the Constitution in the mind of at least some of the founders. The second obstruction to the scheme involved the financial logistics of transporting thousands of African Americans to a colony. Many, including Jefferson, saw no practical way of financing the removal of a free population numbering nearly 200,000 and a slave population of more than one million.[27] In response to these problems, white Americans formulated new plans to colonize African Americans that joined white fears with republicanism to gain support for the project.

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[25] Hopkins, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay* Vol. 2, The Rising Statesman 1815-1820 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), "Motions and Speech at Meeting of American Colonization Society," January 1, 1818, 420-2; *Jefferson Writings*, Thomas Jefferson to Jared Sparks, February 4, 1824, 1487.

[26] *Jefferson Writings*, Thomas Jefferson to Jared Sparks, February 4, 1824, 1487.

[27] J. D. B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853), ix.

Jeffersonian thinkers believed that there were preconditions necessary for the existence of a republic, namely, "that republican government required a body of free, independent, property-owning citizens."[28] To Jefferson, one needed property to be truly independent. But equally important, many Americans in the early nineteenth century believed that a successful republic depended on a homogeneous group of citizens. Otherwise, political unity was not possible. The presence of free blacks threatened that unity because they generally lacked the preconditions necessary for citizenship as defined by Jeffersonians.[29] Feeling that free African Americans threatened political harmony, however, did not necessarily mean slavery could not exist in a republic. Many reconciled republicanism with the existence of slavery. After all, pro-slavery republicans could point to history: Had not slavery existed in Rome's Republic? Yet as the antislavery impulse grew in America, emancipated slaves threatened the republic in two key ways. One was the perceived danger of unleashing a million slaves, something Jefferson in particular feared because he distrusted free, propertyless workers dependent on the exchange of labor for money. Second, caution came from Europe's own experience with the poor. Jeffersonians believed that former slaves could quickly become the idle poor, and many Americans assumed that such a class would turn to crime, preying on property holders. Still another historical analogy played into this equation. Adam Ferguson, an Enlightenment thinker read by men like Jefferson, argued that the Roman Republic fell in part because emancipated slaves became "the weight of that dreg, which, in great and prosperous cities, ever sinks, by the tendency of vice and misconduct to the lowest condition."[30] On the other hand, Robert Goodloe

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[28] Edmund Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox," 121-145, in *How Did American Slavery Begin?* Ed., Edward Countryman (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 124.

[29] Saillant, "The American Enlightenment in Africa: Jefferson's Colonizationism and Black Virginians' Migration to Liberia, 1776-1840." In Eighteenth Century Studies 31.3 (1998): 265-7.

[30] Quoted in Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom," 125.

Harper, one of the founders of the ACS, explained that the characterization of freed African Americans, as "idle and useless, and too often vicious and mischievous" was in part the result of slavery.[31] Ultimately, the question Americans could not answer easily was what to do with African Americans. The effort of these Americans to resolve this very issue affected Latrobe's generation, emerging as leaders in the 1820s.

Most white Americans familiar with ancient history also knew well that the difference between the United States and Greece or Rome was the rigidity of race-based slavery. The fact that most Roman slaves were the same race as their oppressors made it easy to manumit them, but even more applicable was the fact that ancient slavery had not been so closely associated with one specific racial group. Jefferson acknowledged, as did Robert G. Harper, that emancipation in the United States was not a one-step process primarily due to the negative feelings many whites held toward blacks.[32] The existence of another free race in a republic, it was argued, divided the citizenry into parties.[33] This was a key point advocated by supporters of the Jeffersonian republican ideal. What scared Americans such as Jefferson most was the potential for conflicting parties resulting from the presence of two free races, especially if both had political rights. Denying political rights to free people, even if not white, contradicted much of what Americans used to justify their independence. Furthermore, a republic simply could not exist with two free races because it was assumed that one would ultimately subordinate the other

[31] "A Letter from General Robert Goodloe Harper, of Maryland, to Elias B. Caldwell, ESQ. Secretary of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour, in the United States, with their own consent." Baltimore: 1818, 6, 8-10.

[32] Jefferson, *Notes*, 145-151; Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 187; Mellon, *Early American Views*, 101-104.

[33] Saillant, "The American Enlightenment," 265-7.

or worse yet, exterminate the other in a race war. The Haitian Revolution provided an example of what might occur.[34]

Racism thus complicated the American dilemma. Not only did one race already subordinate the other, but also many white Americans openly admitted what Jefferson wrote about slavery—that the institution had ingrained "deep-rooted prejudices" that made a race war inevitable. The prejudices held by white Americans meant that the most probable means of ending racial oppression was amalgamation, and few would accept an integrated society whether in the North or the South. On this subject, Robert G. Harper also expressed an opinion representative of many white Americans. Harper recognized that free blacks were "condemned to a state of hopeless inferiority and degradation, by their colour; which is an indelible mark of their origin and former condition, and establishes an impassible barrier between them and the whites." Harper added that the barrier was "closed forever, by our habits and our feelings, which perhaps it would be more correct to call our prejudices, or a mixture of both." Such feelings "make us recoil with horror from the idea of an intimate union with the free blacks, and preclude the possibility of such a state of equality between them and us, as alone could make us one people."[35] The potential solutions, therefore, to the race problem in America were unacceptable politically to men like Harper. Another course had to be found to preserve the republic as envisioned by the founders.

Interestingly, the attitude displayed toward African Americans did not apply to all non-white components of America's population. Some whites differentiated between American

[34] Mellon, *Early American Views*, 101.

[35] "A Letter fro Gen. Robert Goodloe Harper, of Maryland, to Elias B. Caldwell, ESQ. Secretary of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour, in the United States, with their own consent. Baltimore: 1818, 6.

Indians and black Americans.[36] When it came to American Indians, the elusive and seemingly contradictory Jefferson entertained a different position. Like African Americans, Indians had no future in the United States as the "other." However, amalgamation and assimilation of North America's native population, which was unacceptable regarding African Americans, was the destiny of Indians. Jefferson expressed his thoughts that the future of American Indians was the inevitable "citizenship and amalgamation with whites" who would eventually cover the whole continent.[37] While even this belief had faded by the end of the bloody conflict known as the War of 1812, the status of disparate ethnic groups had changed and republicanism required a different program as a new generation came to power. Those non-white groups unwilling to adopt white ways or seen by whites as being unassimilable had to be removed.[38] Andrew Jackson would remove many American Indians beyond areas of white settlement by forcing them west of the Mississippi River. Though the process began before1815, resettlement intensified after the War of 1812 and Jackson finished Indian removal in the eastern United States by the 1830s.[39] As for African Americans, white Americans turned to colonization.

Racial homogeneity remained a key element for a republican society. White Americans in the southern states wrote more about the social and political consequences of emancipation than the potential economic impact. In the early nineteenth century, many slaveholders wished to free their bond-persons while others feared injuring their communities by releasing their

[36] Mellon, *Early American Views*, 104.

[37] Quoted in Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 17, 78.

[38] Berlin, *Slaves without* Masters, 187; Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*, 338.

[39] Robert V. Remini's *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002) offers an excellent narrative of Jackson's role in pushing Southeastern American Indians west of the Mississippi.

chattels.[40] The first president of the ACS, Bushrod Washington, admitted as much in his address to the society at its first annual meeting. At the time, Washington was a Supreme Court justice, a slaveholder, and a close friend of Benjamin Latrobe. In this address, Washington intimated that slaveholders, at least those who considered slavery an evil, would gladly take advantage of "the opportunity, which this settlement will afford him of emancipating his slaves without injury to his country."[41] John Latrobe readily received such ideas from Washington who associated with Latrobe's father during their years in Washington, D.C.[42] Other Americans did as well; nearly half of those African Americans who went to Africa during the antebellum period were emancipated slaves.

Colonizationists readily admitted that slavery itself contradicted "the primary principles" of republican government and stood "in direct opposition to all the acknowledged and boasted maxims in which is laid the foundation of our political institutions."[43] The problems facing slaveholders as identified by Washington was what to do with slaves after emancipation. In southern states like Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina for example, this was a serious issue due to the size of the slave population. In Maryland, slaves made up twenty-nine percent of the total population in 1810, while in South Carolina they composed forty-seven percent of the total population. Virginia was between these two with slaves making up forty percent of its total population.[44] Few thought that freemen could remain peaceful indefinitely without the exercise

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[40] Peter Kent Opper, "The Mind of the White Participant in the African Colonization Movement, 1816-1840." (Ph.D. Diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1972), 24.

[41] *Annual Reports of the ACS*, Vol. 1, 2.

[42] Semmes, *The Life and Times*, 9.

[43] *Annual Reports of the ACS*, Vol. 7 (1824), Appendix E, "*Annual Reports of the ACS*, Vol. Review of Reports of the Colonization Society first published in the *Christian Spectator*," 90.

[44] J. D. B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853), ix.

of political rights, and that once African Americans gained their freedom, demands for political equality were sure to follow. Free blacks in northern states had already proved this point by petitioning Congress for equal rights under the Constitution. Republican theorists feared such an outcome because African Americans would immediately affect political power in states where free blacks and slaves made up a large portion of the population, and they assumed that the resulting factions would destroy the republic.

ACS member and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Henry Clay, accurately diagnosed this as the key problem when he admonished northern abolitionists. Clay defended slavery as an institution protected by the Constitution and subject to state control only. The states could free their slaves. However, the crucial question of "emancipation in the farming states," said Clay "is one whose solution depends upon the relative numbers of the two races, in any given state."[45] Free blacks were "peculiarly situated," neither enjoying "the immunities of freemen, nor subject to the incapacities of slaves" yet partaking in "the qualities of both."[46] This was why they were perceived as a threat to the republic by those in the South if allowed to remain and exercise equal rights. Almost all slaves lived in the southern states, and by 1820 they numbered over one and a half million. In some counties of Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, slaves were the majority of the population. If freed, they could potentially seize power in the local governments through the exercise of political rights. One writer defending the ACS from abolitionists stated that slavery continued out of the "necessity, which requires us to submit to existing evils, rather than substitute, by their removal, others of a more serious and destructive

[45] Calvin Colton, ed., *The Works of Henry Clay in Ten Volumes, Federal Edition Comprising His Life, Correspondence, and Speeches* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 216.

[46] James F. Hopkins, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay*, Vol. 2, 263.

character."[47] This became a common argument in the defense of slavery as well as in favor of colonization. If Americans had to choose between slavery and two free races in the republic, many saw free blacks as the more serious threat, which was one reason so many opposed emancipation.

By 1817, both Maryland and Virginia had large free African American populations and Latrobe spent most of his life in the Chesapeake region. As such, he understood these arguments well. Whites in those states knew that keeping this portion of their population in Clay's legal limbo violated the very principles that they had upheld since the revolution.[48] Historian David Streifford described the status of free African Americans as "the antithesis of the independent, republican citizen."[49] If whites in the Upper South recognized that free blacks could not forever remain in such a status, neither fully free nor fully slaves, then they must be given rights or expelled from the country. This problem was compounded by the possibility of swelling that portion of the population with emancipated slaves.

Such was the milieu of contacts, ideas, and events that shaped Latrobe's youth before he moved to Baltimore in 1817. These early connections and the atmosphere John enjoyed on Pennsylvania Avenue continued in the family's new home. Yet Baltimore was a vastly different city, and Latrobe's synthesis of republican conservatism and increasing democracy enabled him to enjoy great success. In Baltimore, Latrobe mingled with the likes of the Carrolls of Carrolton, the Pattersons, and, most important for John Latrobe, the family of General Robert Goodloe Harper. Harper had been a Congressman from South Carolina before moving to Maryland after he married the daughter of Charles Carroll. He then established a successful legal practice in

[47] *African Repository*, Vol. III. March 1827. No. 1, 16.

[48] Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 190.

[49] Streifford, "The American Colonization Society," 207.

Baltimore. Latrobe's friendship with the Harpers turned out to be life-long as he and Harper's son, Charles Carroll Harper, learned the legal profession together under the General. It was under Harper's tutelage that Latrobe's interest in colonization developed.

John Latrobe left Baltimore in January of 1818 to study engineering as a cadet at West Point. Benjamin Latrobe wanted his son to develop his skills as an engineer and the United States Military Academy was an ideal place. John excelled at his training in the academy, consistently scoring in the top of his class in every subject. Unfortunately, his career in the army was cut short; Latrobe never graduated due to his father's premature death in 1821. Benjamin Latrobe died from malaria while working on a project in New Orleans. This left the family in dire straights financially, especially given the lifestyle their social position demanded. The situation of the family was all the more tenuous as John, the oldest of all the children, was only eighteen. Thus, he left the academy early to help support his mother and siblings by apprenticing himself to Robert G. Harper. In January of 1822, Latrobe began his training to become a lawyer. Two years and four months later John Latrobe was admitted to the bar at the ripe old age of twenty-one.[50]

John Latrobe soon distinguished himself in the field of law and as a leading citizen of Baltimore. By 1825 he had won a number of cases in the city court and joined several organizations, including the local chapter of the Masons, the Delphian Club, and been made chairman of the Baltimore auxiliary of the ACS. His reputation continued to grow until the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company hired him as one of its lead legal advisors in 1828. In 1832 he became a director and lead counsel for the Union Bank in Baltimore, a post he held until 1837. Latrobe's affiliation with such enterprises would also later shape his vision for the United

[50] Semmes, *The Life and Times*, 92-107.

States, which he applied to colonization as well. Thus, Latrobe's early life was instrumental formulating many of the ideas he later implemented in the African colonization movement.[51]

Latrobe's return to Baltimore was a turning point in his life in other ways too. Baltimore had been a republican stronghold since its incorporation as a city in 1796. The fact that republicans dominated Baltimore's governing bodies and its economic growth gave the city both an interest in national matters and a conservative flavor. Furthermore, Baltimore's development flourished through industrialization and the emergence of the market economy, which made the city grow rapidly, but it also remained vulnerable to economic depressions. This was most evident after the War of 1812.[52] Baltimore's political economy synthesized existing republican values and an emerging market economy creating a new sociopolitical culture when Latrobe arrived. Historian Gary Browne has argued that this "sociopolitical framework" growing out of Baltimore's cultural conservatism allowed new men like John Latrobe and Charles C. Harper to gain power in the state.[53]

General Harper illustrated the current attitude of most white Americans regarding not only slavery but also on the question of the fate of African Americans in the United States. He recognized that many differences existed between slavery and free societies and instilled them in Latrobe during his apprenticeship. John Latrobe later applied these beliefs to colonization. General Harper traveled the states making many observations that led him to support colonization when the ACS formed. His observations exemplified nineteenth century republicanism while expressing a clear desire to continue toward a free labor, industrialized

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[51] Latrobe, *Diaries*, September 1, 1824; September 10, 1824; October 19, 1824; Semmes, *The Life and Times*, 92-107, 143, 399.

[52] Gary L. Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation, 1789-1861*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 42-3.

[53] Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation*, 69.

society.[54] Clearly, abolishing slavery had political, economic, and social consequences for the United States, but Harper and those like him believed that continuing the system did as well. Harper plainly asserted his contention that, in states where slavery did not exist, none could fail "to be struck with the vast difference…in the general diffusion of wealth and comfort; in public and private improvements; in the education manners and mode of life, among the middle and labouring classes; in the face of the country; in roads bridges and inns; in schools and churches; in the general advancement of improvement and prosperity there is no comparison." The change, maintained Harper, was evident "the instant you cross the line, which separates the country where there are slaves, from that where there are none." [55] In fact, this division existed in Maryland as clearly as any place in America. The northern and western counties seemed to be flourishing without slavery while those in southern Maryland were in decline. This reality provided a powerful argument, which found its way into the convictions of John Latrobe when he became a leader in the colonization movement.

To further illustrate his point, Harper used his home state of Maryland as an example, comparing a western county, Frederick, where slavery was not wide spread, to a southern county, Charles, where slavery was the dominant labor system.[56] The change in population of these two regions illustrated the point Harper sought to make to his fellow citizens about areas where slavery predominated. The city of Baltimore, with its strong connection to the west, only magnified the differences. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Baltimore and Western Maryland were the fastest growing areas in the state, whereas southern Maryland, where slavery thrived, was losing population. While declining soil production accounted for some of

[54] "A Letter from General Robert Goodloe Harper," 12.

[55] "A Letter from General Robert Goodloe Harper," 12-13.

[56] "A Letter from General Robert Goodloe Harper," 13.

the population loss in Charles County as planters moved west, the presence of slavery explained much as well. From 1810 to 1820, the population of Western Maryland grew by 10,986 or nine percent. The population of the city of Baltimore grew by 27,155 or forty-three percent in the same period. Southern Maryland, as a region, experienced a population loss of nearly five thousand, or five percent.[57] Two sets of numbers are particularly striking in each region. In both Western Maryland and Baltimore, the slave populations grew by just 658 (3 percent) and 713 (16 percent) respectively. Comparatively, Southern Maryland saw a loss of more than three thousand slaves and two thousand free blacks. Where free blacks moved to is difficult to ascertain, but one can almost certainly assume that many of the slaves found their way into the Deep South. The data on the white population is perhaps more telling and supportive of Harper's arguments. Both Western Maryland and Baltimore saw double-digit growth in their respective white populations with Baltimore seeing an increase of thirty-nine percent in a ten-year period. The southern counties of Maryland saw its white population barely grow at only 1.8 percent in ten years.[58] Critical to the growth of Maryland's northern and western counties was immigration. Clearly, white immigrants coming into the state, a large number of whom were of German ancestry, chose areas where slavery and the plantation complex were less important economically and politically.

Yet compared to other states, slave states were not growing nearly as rapidly as Free states. New York, for example, was well behind Virginia in total population in 1790 and nearly even with Maryland. By 1820, when the push for colonization and the debate over slavery first intensified, New York had surpassed Virginia, the South's most populous state. In thirty years,

[57] Whitman H. Ridgway, *Community Leadership in Maryland, 1790*-1840, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 210-212; DeBow, *The Seventh Census*, 218-225.

[58] Ridgway, *Community Leadership in Maryland*, 210-212; DeBow, *The Seventh Census*, 218-225.

New York's population grew from 340,120 to 1,372,812 while Virginia grew from 748,308 to 1,065,379.[59] Furthermore, by 1820 Pennsylvania's population was less than 15,000 behind Virginia. The ramifications of these statistics were significant in antebellum America, especially when it came to the fate of slavery and national politics. The populations of New York and Pennsylvania in 1820 approximately equaled that of Georgia, Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia combined. One Marylander brought this to the attention of his fellow citizens indicating the real significance of how slavery affected the growth of America's population. He asserted that "[i]n the first Congress," Maryland "had six out of 65" members, but in 1820 only "nine out of 215." Unless slavery ended, that trend would continue with serious consequences for the South.[60]

The problems associated with slavery and economic development were not the only ones that weighed on the minds of men like Harper. Where would free blacks fit in American society? Most accepted that amalgamation was not a solution. Thus, the push for colonization became national in 1816. Through colonization slavery could be eliminated safely, but more importantly, the final disposition of blacks in American society would be laid to rest without harming the republic or causing further conflict. The benefits multiplied for the South as immigrants would then come after slavery disappeared. Latrobe matured during the debates over such issues. Robert Harper guided Latrobe in such matters and as John later acknowledged, "General Harper made it a point to introduce me to all his friends, and in that way I became acquainted, sooner than I might otherwise have done, with leading men in Baltimore," allowing him access to the political structure and leadership roles.[61] The teachings of the revolutionary

[59] DeBow, *The Seventh Census*, ix.

[60] *African Repository*, Vol. III. April, 1827. No. 2, 50.

[61] Semmes, *The Life and Times*, 139.

generation and the connections provided to Latrobe as a young man proved valuable in making him a man of influence in Maryland. As a result, the issues that concerned the revolutionary generation also became those, which most concerned Latrobe.

Slavery, fear of large masses of newly freed people, and an emerging republican democracy combined to give birth to the American Colonization Society and the movement it led. Espoused by some of the most prominent men of the nineteenth century, Latrobe adopted many of the arguments in favor of colonization while seeing the first cracks in the republic, which emerged from the controversy over Missouri in 1819. While the heated debate over whether or not Missouri would be free or slave was eventually calmed by the Compromise of 1820, Latrobe recognized that the issue of slavery would not stay buried long. Under the guidance of General Harper, John Latrobe threw his support into the movement as the one and only solution that could solve all the problems Americans feared emancipation would cause while ending the biggest reason for sectional conflict in the United States, slavery. The expansion of the 1820s, however, cemented his vision for America ultimately leading him on a different path than the one blazed by his early mentors.

Chapter Two: "The Only True and Efficient Plan"

By the time John Latrobe joined the colonization movement the ACS had already faced and survived its first major crisis. Slavery in Missouri elevated the tensions between the North and the South, but also forced the ACS to define more clearly its position and goals. The Missouri controversy only served to reinforce the beliefs Latrobe internalized from his mentors that two free races could not exist together. However, support for and against slavery and colonization was not so simplistic. Eventually, the colonization movement faced a rigid division among its supporters in the different sections of the United States, directly due to the emerging conflict over slavery. As the two sides engaged in the conflict, Latrobe worked himself into roles of increasing responsibility in colonization during the 1820s believing that it was the only plan that could end the debate. By 1831, when sectional conflicts over slavery exploded at the ACS' annual meeting, Latrobe was ready to assume a new leadership role in Maryland's colonization efforts. The ACS auxiliary in Maryland declared its independence from the national society in Washington to pursue a program that better addressed the concerns of Marylanders. This chapter examines Latrobe's growing importance and his role in the emergence of Maryland's colonization efforts, which sought to avoid the conflict over slavery and solve the problems arising out of the debate over the institution's future.[1]

The formation of the ACS reflected the republican concerns that many Americans had regarding the future of slavery and African Americans in the United States. The organization drew support from throughout the nation. Its list of eminent members—including Henry Clay

[1] MS 1677 John H. B. Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society), entry November 27, 1833.

(Kentucky), John Eager Howard (Maryland), Francis Scott Key (Maryland), William Phillips (Massachusetts), John Randolph (Virginia), and Richard Rush (Pennsylvania)—illustrated colonization's national appeal. More significant, however, was the fact that all were prominent figures in American politics. Their connections and influence no doubt gave weight to their request for assistance from the national government in establishing a colony in Africa.[2] State legislatures joined in requesting this assistance. Maryland was one such state that strongly supported colonization. Demonstrating its support, the Maryland House of Delegates passed a resolution on January 26, 1818 directing the Governor to:

> communicate to the President of the United States, and to our Senators and Representatives in Congress, the opinion of this General Assembly, that a wise and provident policy suggests the expediency, on the part of our national government, of procuring, through negotiation, by cession or purchase, a tract of country on the western coast of Africa for the colonization of the free people of colour of the United States.[3]

Such a request seems indicative of motivations beyond racism, particularly because they chose to focus initially on the free black population. Latrobe concluded as much himself when he stated that no movement of any sort "existed without motives of various kinds being involved—some high, some low."[4] Despite such overt support from elected government officials, the petition to Congress failed to materialize in any direct pecuniary aid, in part because of challenges to the legality of such proposals.

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[2] P.J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 29-30.

[3] *The Annual Reports of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States*, Vol. 8 (New York: Negro Universities Press, reprint 1969, original 1818-1910, Washington, DC), 8th Annual Report, 39.

[4] Quoted in John E. Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803-1891*, (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1917), 168.

Jefferson, as noted in the last chapter, believed that the Constitution must be changed before Congress gained the authority to act on colonization. John Latrobe felt this way as well, stating that the constitutions of both the United States and Maryland prohibited government sponsored colonization. Nevertheless, some indirect aid was forthcoming from the national government when Congress passed the Slave Trade Act of 1819, which appropriated $100,000 of federal money to repatriate African slaves captured on the high seas by the U.S. Navy. President Monroe, who supported colonization, used this act to assist the ACS in establishing its first colony in Africa in 1822. Yet even this limited action by the president was a bold move, as not all of his cabinet members supported the interpretation. Secretary of State John Q. Adams, however, was first among those who rejected the colonization plan and Monroe's interpretation of the 1819 act on constitutional grounds.[5] Nevertheless, Monroe interpreted the slave trade act in a way that benefited colonization and stationed a government official in the colony. When General Harper and John Latrobe drew a map of the Liberian coast they decided to honor President Monroe for his assistance by naming the capital of the new settlement Monrovia.[6]

The debate about constitutionality continued even after Adams succeeded Monroe in the nation's highest office. Many of the early objections stemmed from constitutional scruples regarding property as they suspected that any legislation regarding the free black population would eventually encompass the portion held as chattels. Most accepted that the Constitution recognized slaves as a form of protected property. One supporter of government aid argued in a written debate with an opponent of colonization that the removal of African Americans was constitutional because it contributed to "the common defense and general welfare" of the United

[5] Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 52.

[6] Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and His Times*, 141-2.

States. Therefore, Congress had the power to assist the ACS.[7] Still many southerners feared the ultimate outcome of the effort. Would colonizationists seek to end slavery? If so, would slaveholders be compensated? Such questions became more important to ACS members as tensions over slavery escalated after 1819 when Missouri applied for statehood and the abolition movement became more active in the North.

By 1819, Missouri contained a significant slave population and it was assumed, at least by southerners, that slavery would be permitted in the new state. In 1810, there were just over 3,000 slaves in the Missouri territory. By 1820, that number had grown to over 10,000.[8] The entry of Missouri as a free or slave state was a critical issue in several ways. Southern states were consistently losing seats in Congress because of the North's rapidly growing population. But in 1819 the number of free and slave states were equal, maintaining a political balance in the U.S. Senate. Missouri threatened to tip the balance in favor of one or the other in the Senate while either bringing the House of Representatives closer to equity or pushing the balance more in favor of the North. For most southern slaveholders this equated to certain abolition.

The stakes were high and the ACS had to define its position within this debate, as did Latrobe and the Maryland colonization effort. Many felt that the course chosen by the ACS on this subject would ultimately decide if the movement was to succeed. Some recognized that the indirect impact of colonization would be to lessen the political power of the South, at least in the short term. If the ACS pursued colonization for the purposes of emancipation or the complete abolition of slavery, it would be advocating the loss of a population that, while prohibited from

[7] *The African Repository*, Vol. III, March, 1827. No. 1, 10.

[8] J. D. B. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853), ix.

enjoying the political benefits of citizenship, nonetheless counted as three-fifths of a citizen for the purposes of national representation. As such, colonization could significantly affect the power of the South at the national level.[9] Colonizationists argued this would only temporarily affect the South as white immigration would rise and swell the ranks of the working class as the black population fell.[10] Nevertheless, the stakes were high enough to cause conflict. The Missouri controversy escalated even further when New York's James Tallmadge introduced an amendment to Missouri's statehood prohibiting slavery in the state and furthermore, slowly emancipating those slaves already residing there. A compromise ended the controversy by bringing Maine into the Union with Missouri thus maintaining the balance between the free and slave states nationally. Although a compromise was successfully achieved this time, the underlying issues remained, rising to the surface again in the 1830s.

The Missouri controversy had a lasting impact on the ACS because it intensified opposition to the movement in both the North and South. It remained most popular in the border states of Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky. One colonizationist defended the society seven years after the conclusion of the compromise, but acknowledged the impact the controversy had on the ACS. The subject of slavery was "indeed, to be deplored," but cannot be mentioned in the South without initiating "feelings which all men must find unpleasant, and which, unhappily, the best men are not always without." Continuing, the author plainly asserted, that the "fatal Missouri question has so irritated this sensibility, that it has not yet recovered its healthy tone."[11] Some northerners, on the other hand, suggested that colonization was yet another scheme to

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[9] Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 177.

[10] James F. Hopkins, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay,* Ashland Edition. Vol. 2, 1815-1820, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), Henry Clay to James Monroe, September 22, 1817, 384.

[11] *The African Repository*, Vol. III, July, 1827. No. 6, 179.

strengthen the bonds of slavery in the southern states. The Missouri controversy sparked the feelings in men that caused division and they carried these feelings into the colonization movement, forcing the ACS to declare its position relative to the fate of slavery. Many felt that colonization would only strengthen or end slavery. There was no middle ground or room to straddle the fence after 1820. The battle lines were forming.

The membership of the ACS partly explains the stance taken on slavery, especially as many of the society's members held slaves. Because slavery emerged as such a divisive issue in 1819 and remained one afterwards, many colonizationists resigned themselves not to discuss the subject. Henry Clay instructed members early and frequently in the history of the ACS on the need to avoid "the question of emancipation" because of its effects on men's feelings.[12] Clay, himself a slaveholder, repeated this often because many slaveholders supported the organization as well as northerners who wanted to abolish or confine slavery to the states in which it already existed. Avoiding the issue of emancipation reduced opportunities for conflict while maintaining the vital private financial donations that the ACS depended on for its operation. Other than church collections, individual supporters were the largest source of funding. Clay recognized the varied membership of the organization in 1818 when he said that colonization appealed to the Christian as well as the "philanthropist; the statesman who looks only to the safety and happiness of his own country; in short, all good men will find motives for engaging their co-operation or their wishes in behalf of the Society."[13] Others in the ACS expressed similar opinions. One member said that "[i]t has ever been the desire of this Institution to conciliate the favour and support of the whole American nation. To the people of the North it has endeavored to exhibit

[12] Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 28.

[13] Hopkins, *The Papers of Henry Clay*, Vol. 2, 421.

itself as most humane and disinterested [in slavery], and to those of the South, as utterly opposed to any measures which might infringe upon the rights of property or disturb the peace of society."[14] Unfortunately, the ACS position led only to conflict among its supporters. It was inconsistent with opinions held by Maryland colonizationists like Latrobe, and they acted accordingly in 1831 when the movement finally splintered over the issue of slavery.

While the ACS did offer something to all these interests, the ACS members nevertheless chose to focus their efforts on removing free blacks. This clearly reflected the recognition that slaves were a constitutionally protected form of property. Moreover, the institution of slavery was not subject to federal control, but instead fell to the states. In addition, members believed that by concentrating on free blacks, the movement would be more appealing in the North. To that end, the ACS publicly announced that the organization would not interfere "with the legal rights and obligations of slavery," on the one hand, nor perpetuate "its existence within the limits of the country."[15] Such resolutions were designed specifically to "conciliate, by every method consistent with the promulgation of the truth, the favour and aid of the whole American people. The assumption of a *common ground* by this Society…has been deemed by us its peculiar recommendation."[16] Ironically, the attempts of the ACS to enter a course of action that appealed to the largest and widest possible base of support exposed its weakness and led to attacks from opposition groups, mainly free African Americans and abolitionists. Eventually, this led to a formal break in the movement.

[14] *The African Repository*, Vol. I. October 1825. No. VIII, 255.

[15] *The African Repository*, Vol. 1. January 1826. No XI, 335.

[16] *The African Repository*, Vol. 1. February 1826. No. XII, 380.

Although opposition slowly increased during the 1820s, Marylanders like Latrobe continued to support colonization as the best solution to the whole debate over slavery. Marylanders organized one of the first auxiliary societies of the ACS in 1817, and the state legislature also lent assistance to the movement. Yet Latrobe, who by 1825 had completed his training and become a member of the bar, used his influence to bring other organizations to support the cause. For example, in 1825, he joined the Baltimore lodge of the Masons. Within a year, Latrobe, Richard Stewart, and Charles Carroll Harper convinced Baltimore's Masons to support colonization as directed by the ACS. Furthermore, the three formed a committee to correspond with other Masons in the state "on this important subject" in an effort to multiply the support and financial resources for the cause.[17]

Despite the efforts of Latrobe and his fellow colonizationists in Maryland, the ACS and colonization were losing support by 1827. The loss of support stemmed from a number of factors. The slow pace at which colonists left the United States for Africa disillusioned many supporters. So too did the repeated reports of difficulties in Liberia, particularly the high death rate among colonists who died from, more often than not, diseases. Near constant fighting with indigenous peoples also contributed to the cool reception of the subject. Further, these factors hindered the recruiting of colonists. More detrimental though for the movement was the increasing opposition from free African Americans and abolitionists in the North, men such as Benjamin Lundy and William Lloyd Garrison. Free African Americans in Philadelphia denounced the scheme for a number of reasons almost immediately after hearing of the formation of the ACS. Their opposition only increased following rumors of what happened to

[17] *The African Repository*, Vol. II. July 1826. No. V, 154-5; Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and His Time*, 143.

the settlers of Liberia in the 1820s. One of the more alarming rumors was that colonists were returned to slavery.[18] Furthermore, because the ACS sought only free African Americans who would volunteer for colonization critics charged the organization with strengthening the institution of slavery in the United States by removing its strongest opponents. James Forten, a prominent black Philadelphian, condemned the ACS in a letter to William Lloyd Garrison, claiming it was "as dark as death and [without] one redeeming virtue in it."[19] Forten's arguments helped persuade Garrison to leave the movement and condemn it as well. Garrison had spent some time as a printer in Baltimore, Maryland and was even jailed for his outspoken opposition to slavery. Garrison expressed his disillusionment with colonization in 1832 in his *Thoughts on African Colonization*. Garrison described the ACS as "the most compendious and best adapted scheme to uphold the slave system that human ingenuity can invent."[20] While this was a very serious charge against the colonization movement, it did not halt the effort, particularly in border-states such as Maryland where the contradictions between freedom and slavery were the most apparent.

Maryland colonizationists noticed that African colonization had lost some of its momentum in the state as early as 1827. This was particularly true of Latrobe who became chairman of the Baltimore colonization committee for the ACS that year. Nevertheless, in that year two things happened in Maryland that ensured the colonization auxiliary would still exist when the movement split in 1831. No doubt, the first had much to do with Robert G. Harper's

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[18] Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 32.

[19] C. Peter Ripley, ed., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, Vol. III, The United States, 1830-1846, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 98.

[20] William Lloyd Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization*, edited by William Loren Katz, (New York: Arno Press and *The New York Times*, 1968), i, 11-12.

son and Latrobe's friend, Charles C. Harper. Seeking an elected office in 1826, Harper urged colonization on his fellow citizens as the plan best able to stop what he saw as "a mockery of freedom," when emancipated slaves became freemen separated from whites and without the full privileges of citizenship.[21] This was nowhere more apparent than in Maryland, which had the largest free black population in the United States. The state legislature, while still sympathetic to the cause, responded to such requests and approved an annual appropriation of $1,000 for the ACS, provided that the funds were applied specifically to removing African Americans from Maryland.[22] This was a significant step in reviving colonization, which many saw as stagnating in Maryland. The second event surrounded the reorganization of the Maryland auxiliary in the fall of 1827. John Latrobe, Charles C. Harper, and Roger B. Taney led the charge to accelerate colonization by more efficiently recruiting colonists and collecting donations in Maryland. In the short term, their efforts paid off. The sailing of the brig Doris from Baltimore in November of 1827 highlighted their renewed efforts. One hundred and five colonists boarded the Doris; sixty-six were former slaves. In addition sixty-five of the new settlers were from Maryland, primarily Baltimore and Anne Arundel County.[23] These events seemed to breathe new life into colonization and create new momentum going into 1828. It was in 1828 that John Latrobe truly began asserting himself as a young leader in the movement foreshadowing his vision for African Americans, Africa, and the United States.

At the annual meeting of the ACS in January of 1828, John Latrobe proposed a resolution that reflected his desire to address the problems within the movement while advancing the cause

[21] *The African Repository*, Vol. II. August 1826. No. VI, 3-5.

[22] *The African Repository*, Vol. III. April, 1827. No. 2, 61-62.

[23] *The African Repository*, Vol. III. November, 1827. No. 9, 283.

of colonization throughout the United States. For the ACS to keep support in America it had to demonstrate substantive progress in removing free African Americans while maintaining the growth of the colony in Africa. Simply stated, if Americans did not see that the ACS was meeting its objectives, then support would fall. This was, in fact, happening. Up to 1827, the ACS had settled a scant 802 colonists, some of who were recaptured Africans intercepted at sea by the United States Navy.[24] This concerned many, including Latrobe, due to the rapid increase in the free black population. Excepting European immigration, this was the fastest growing segment of America's population. At the rate that ACS efforts up to 1828 had progressed, the number of African Americans removed from the United States did not make a noticeable dent in the overall black population, thus some whites saw colonization as a failure.

This, argued Latrobe, could be reversed if the ACS expanded the number of settlements on Africa's western coast. Specifically, Latrobe urged the members present to pursue the purchase of two areas, Cape Palmas and an island called Bulama. His reasons for doing so were twofold. First, "by possessing Cape Palmas, we would hold the commercial key of all the South Coast of Africa, and the countries immediately in the interior" that would, "like Monrovia, soon become the resort of the surrounding nations." From such settlements, a "great and prosperous trade would be the consequence; and the facilities of gain would soon fill the new settlement with industrious inhabitants."[25] Latrobe suggested this because he believed that economic development would assist the colonization effort financially, and that it would also attract

[24] The figures cited here are compiled from Tom W. Shick, "A Quantitative Analysis of Liberian Colonization From 1820 to 1843 With Special Reference to Mortality," Journal of African History, XII, I (1971), 41.

[25] *The African Repository*, Vol. III. January 1828. No. 11, 327.

prospective settlers seeking better economic opportunities than those available in the United States. Latrobe counted on the economic draw of the colonies to fuel emigration.

The second reason for his proposal directly addressed the rate of immigration, which he hoped would increase with the establishment of more settlements. Furthermore, his method of increasing the number of settlements reflected what he saw as a goal of the ACS in America—social order. Latrobe argued that the success of colonization not only depended on some association with commerce but the capacity of the colonies to receive new immigrants. This capacity rested on the ability of the colonies to produce their own sustenance, the availability of vacant land, employment opportunities, and property rights. Latrobe's inclinations reflected his immersion in Jeffersonian republican values. Such values, he argued, would preserve order and prevent settlers from becoming the destitute poor, which Americans like him feared because of the potential for social chaos. Success would be measured through the increasing numbers of African Americans leaving for Africa.[26]

Despite Maryland colonizationists' attempts to make the movement more efficient, conflict within the ACS continued among opposing interests. As Latrobe reflected a few years later, he concluded that the ACS was "distracted within itself." The distraction caused by the debate over slavery inhibited the progress many expected of the organization and no action was taken on Latrobe's proposal.[27] Frankly, the movement was stagnant due to division between northerners and southerners over the goals of colonization and its role in ending slavery. As such, the ACS, according to its secretary Ralph R. Gurley, was as "unexceptionable as was its

[26] *The African Repository*, Vol. III. January, 1828. No. 11, 330; *The Annual Reports of the American Society*, "Eleventh Annual Report, (1828)," 7-12.

[27] Latrobe Diaries, November 27, 1833.

purpose, adapted to conciliate the citizens both of the south and north, it met, at its commencement, the views of neither." He continued saying that the South regarded colonization "as disguised in character and dangerous in tendency, seeking to effect a speedy and general emancipation; while those of the north had little confidence in its benevolence, and thought it designed rather to perpetuate than remove the system of slavery."[28] As a result, colonization could do neither and fell victim to the America's divisiveness on the issue of slavery.

Illustrating how some southerners viewed colonization were proslavery advocates like Thomas R. Dew of Virginia and James Blair of South Carolina. Dew argued that the ACS's focus on free African Americans would only drive the price of slaves higher. This, in turn, would renew the slave trade. Colonization, as far as Dew was concerned, was a "stupendous piece of folly."[29] While such arguments did persuade some, the expansion of slavery into the western frontier did as much to raise prices as any other scheme would have done. Furthermore, most southerners saw free African Americans as the instigators of slave rebellions. As such, one would think removing them would appeal to slaveholders. This was not necessarily the case as James Blair condemned colonization as the first step in abolishing the institution of slavery. This seems much more convincing than Dew's argument because removing free African Americans would eliminate one of the objections slaveholders used to justify their determination not to emancipate slaves. Several state emancipation laws illustrated a "not in my backyard" mentality too by requiring all freed slaves to leave the state. Yet other issues plagued the logic of such reasoning. Upper South colonizationists wanted to rid their states of slavery because they saw the institution as prohibitive to white immigration and the progress that northern states seemed to

[28] *The African Repository*, Vol. III. December, 1827. No. 10, 291.

[29] Quoted in Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 182.

be enjoying. At the same time, however, if colonization targeted slavery destruction as its ultimate aim, it further eroded the South's political power since slaves counted as three-fifths of a person for Congressional representation. Once southerners realized this, they began to interpret colonization as another arm of abolition, as well as an attack on their way of life.[30]

These arguments could not be ignored for long, nor could the ACS conciliate the two interests. Francis Scott Key addressed both sides at the January 1828 annual meeting. Key suggested that it was impractical to ignore the debate over slavery as the ACS had tried to do in the past. It was a simple fact, Key argued, "that the subject of slavery, in some way or other, will come into [the] thoughts, feelings, and plans of men situated as we are." There was no escaping the subject because slavery did exist in America. Clearly, Key intended to highlight the ACS' common appeal while recognizing that consequent attempts to reconcile opposing groups on the question of slavery was unrealistic. Instead, he suggested that colonizationists "act discreetly—with a just regard to the rights and feelings of others," and opposition to the cause would be best overcome "with patience, and…the fruits that a favouring Providence, to which we look, may enable us to present from our labours." Just as Latrobe had suggested, Key's point was that removing African Americans, whether free or slave, would best mute any opposition from abolitionists and slaveholders alike.[31]

Unfortunately, for Key, most were unwilling to wait, particularly given the rapid increase of free blacks in states like Maryland and Virginia. Furthermore, the efforts of ACS officials to occupy a middle ground on slavery in the 1820s, despite opposition from increasingly militant groups, served only to slow the progress of the movement. Northern abolitionists, led by the

[30] Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 177, 184.

[31] *The African Repository*, Vol. III. February, 1828. No. 12, 354-356.

likes of William Lloyd Garrison, abandoned colonization as a means of ending slavery, choosing more direct and immediate methods rather than the gradual plans proposed under the program. Southerners, particularly in Deep South states such as South Carolina, became more defensive and denounced the ACS and colonizationists in the Border States as traitors.[32] As the positions taken in the North and South became more rigid, colonization became more difficult. The strongest support for the movement remained in the border states of Maryland and Virginia. Unable to reconcile the two opposing sides within the movement, a dispute finally erupted at the ACS annual meeting in 1831. The members of the ACS had reached an impasse, which both allowed and motivated John Latrobe and his fellow colonizationists in Maryland to diverge from the national organization to pursue their own agenda, one that resolved these conflicts by removing the plan from national debate and politics.

The colonization movement was stagnating in Maryland in 1831 despite the reorganization of the ACS auxiliary and increasing legislative support. However, it was the January 1831 meeting that tipped the scales in favor of Maryland forming an independent state colonization society and eventually breaking from the ACS completely. John Latrobe recounted that meeting to Courtlandt Van Rensellaer, who had inquired about Maryland's actions. In explaining his and other colonizationists' actions, Latrobe stated that the ACS had publicly mooted the debate over slavery for years, but "the explosion came at last" from the "discussions of the last winter in Washington." Specifically what discussions he meant, Latrobe did not relate, possibly due to the fact that the new organization in Maryland was still trying to cooperate with the national society. What is clear about the events in January of 1831 is that supporters of

[32] William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion, Volume I Secessionists at Bay, 1776*-1854, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 160-161, 274-275; Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 145-147.

colonization were becoming impatient and many, including Latrobe, were unhappy with the speed at which the ACS colonized African Americans in Liberia. Tensions were heating up and endangering the republic. Furthermore, some on each side of the slavery issue were pressing for colonization to take a more definitive stand. Would colonization end slavery or not? Rather than wait for the ACS to decide this issue, Latrobe and his fellow Marylanders, specifically Moses Sheppard, took action themselves.[33]

Feeling that colonization under the ACS had failed at the "object for which they had originally united," Latrobe "suggested the appointment of a committee in Baltimore to take charge of the interests of the society there."[34] With the assistance of a well-recognized colonizationist, Robert S. Finley, Latrobe addressed a meeting on February 21, 1831 in Baltimore. The meeting revived colonization in Maryland through a new, independent state colonization society. The formation of the Maryland State Colonization Society, or MSCS, changed the course of colonization in the state and the nation. Further, it reflected the outlook of Latrobe that America's future was one in which slavery did not exist.

Unlike the national society, the Maryland society, from the beginning, chose to seek an end to slavery through colonization. After the initial meeting in February of 1831, Latrobe, Peter Hoffman, and Dr. Samuel Baker were elected by the other attendees to draw up a constitution for the MSCS. Latrobe saw fit to make "the extirpation of slavery in Maryland…as the peculiar object of their labors."[35] The resolutions he proposed continued arguing that the end of slavery

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[33] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Corresponding Secretary's Books, reel 16, John Latrobe to Courtlandt Van Rensellaer, July 10, 1832; Minutes, reel 1, May 4, 1831.

[34] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1, May 4, 1831; Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and His Times*, 143.

[35] 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*, (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1885), 13, 21.

"can best be accomplished, under existing circumstances, by advocating and assisting the cause of colonization."[36] With such objectives in mind, the committee submitted the constitution of the Maryland society to the other members who unanimously approved it. The easy confirmation grew out of the attitudes that men like Latrobe held toward slavery. Many colonizationists in Maryland felt slavery hindered the economic growth of America—its true destiny. Economic growth figured prominently in the course adopted by Latrobe and the MSCS board members all of whom were businessmen, a fact which he believed prejudiced the clergy against assisting the organization at its founding because they were excluded from leadership positions in the society. This fact did, however, greatly affect the direction of MSCS policy after it founded the colony of Maryland in Liberia in 1834.[37] These men also considered slavery's impact on white workers, especially in light of Baltimore's large African American population, when adopting a new course of action.

The consideration of white workers in their actions, however, was not completely altruistic. One study suggests that Baltimore's business owners acted against slavery and in favor of free labor because there was no clear advantage to using slave labor. David and Richard McKim experimented with both labor systems at their Baltimore based chemical works in the 1820s. Using both wage and slave laborers, David McKim determined that slave labor was at best equal to free labor in productivity; that slaves took just as many sick days as wage workers, and finally that the use of slaves in manufacturing increased production only when extra incentives such as overtime pay were offered to them. Naturally, slaves then used the extra money to eventually purchase their freedom. The study of the McKims and their chemical works

[36] Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 21.

[37] Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 21.

did show, however, that even though using slave laborers entailed the initial cost of purchase as well as the expense of food, clothing and shelter, slave labor cost less annually than using free workers, but it was no more productive. Furthermore, slave laborers apparently did not suit their needs as they phased out most of their slave workers in favor of wage labor by the early 1830s.[38] James Raymond of Frederick, Maryland reached similar conclusions in an essay he wrote in 1827. Raymond, in comparing free and slave labor, argued that freemen were more productive because they supported themselves. The conclusion was that self-supporting free workers ultimately advanced the interests of the property or business owner because free workers aspired to improve their own economic security through increased productivity.[39] Slaves gained little from maximizing their productivity. Consequently, at least some businessmen began to believe that ending slavery might serve their economic interests.

Economic interest only partly explains the Maryland colonizationists' activities though, as these men considered themselves philanthropists too. Several members were involved in organizations designed to promote the public good as well as humanity. Latrobe, for one, insisted that the MSCS pursue a plan of action reflecting this fact. After all, as he explained in a letter to Dr. James Hall, a fellow colonizationist and the future governor of Maryland's colony, "we are dealing now, also, in human life, and in human happiness, and our feelings and motives should be as pure as our experiments are important."[40] Colonization would benefit all those who emigrated by giving them what they could not expect to gain in the United States.

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[38] T. Stephen Whitman, "Industrial Slavery at the Margin: The Maryland Chemical Works," in The Journal of Southern History Vol. 59, Issue 1 (Feb., 1993), 31-62.

[39] *African Repository*, Vol. III. June 1827, No. 4, 99.

[40] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Corresponding Secretary's Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Dr. James Hall, October 11, 1832.

While Marylanders hoped to end slavery through colonization in the spring of 1831, they did not believe their actions were inconsistent with the national movement nor did it warrant a complete separation from the society in Washington.[41] Maryland colonizationists were embarking on a plan of independent state action, but the society's leadership sought to cooperate with the ACS in removing black Americans. Another reason Latrobe and the others supporting the movement in Maryland acted as they did in 1831 was due to the slow pace of removal of emigrants from the state. Years earlier the state legislature contributed state funds to the cause, but the ACS failed to collect the allocation because it never removed the required number of black Marylanders. Furthermore, Latrobe noted in his account of the affair between Maryland and the ACS that Baltimoreans raised nearly $3,000 for colonization in addition to the state appropriation in 1829. Unfortunately for Maryland colonizationists, those who contributed the money later reacted with some hostility toward the movement, as they believed that the number of African Americans the ACS took from the state was not proportionate to their contributions. As such, Latrobe stated, "all interest in colonization seemed to die out for the time."[42] The primary purpose behind Marylanders' bold move in 1831 was to more effectively carry out colonization within the state. It was the perceived lack of progress then that weighed most heavily on the minds of Baltimoreans like Latrobe.

The MSCS members determined as early as March of 1831 that they would work toward the faster removal of Maryland's black population and they planned an expedition to leave Baltimore in June of that year. The plan of concentrated state action would, they thought, put Maryland on the path to becoming a free state and establish the model for ridding the South of

[41] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. May 4, 1831; Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 3-4.

[42] Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 11-12.

slavery. The managers of the MSCS assumed that their colonists would go to the Liberian colonies controlled by the ACS from the very beginning regardless of any rift with the national organization. Yet the actions of the MSCS suggest that all was not well between the national society and its Maryland auxiliary. The board directed Secretary Latrobe to first seek written permission from the ACS for its emigrants to reside at Monrovia, and then to ask that the ACS guarantee the same legal rights and privileges to the colonists that the ACS settlers received. The parent board, as Latrobe later acknowledged, disapproved of the course of action Maryland colonizationists took because it curtailed the ACS's ability to collect donations and emigrants from a state in which the movement previously enjoyed strong support. As colonization was strongest in the Chesapeake region, the loss of funds in particular had potentially devastating consequences for the ACS.[43]

The discord between Maryland colonizationists and the board of the ACS prompted quick responses from both organizations in an effort to close the divide. The desire to present a united front led to a meeting between committees representing each body, with Latrobe representing the MSCS. After that meeting Latrobe presented a set of resolutions from the ACS managers to the governing body of the MSCS on March 26, 1831. The resolutions illustrated the ACS's acceptance of the Maryland society's autonomy within the borders of Maryland, but made it clear that they still considered the Maryland society an auxiliary body. Furthermore, the ACS all but demanded that Maryland colonizationists surrender any and all funds collected by them, and finally, that it would determine not only when and from where emigrants left the United States, but how many would leave Baltimore.[44] The response from MSCS members, while not

[43] Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 13-14.

[44] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. March 26, 1831.

belligerent, indicated their determination to be a financially autonomous body within Maryland. Money was crucial to the goals of the MSCS. Toward that end, the MSCS was willing only to make periodic reports about its finances to the ACS and to reimburse the ACS only for expenses it incurred in transporting Maryland's emigrants to Liberia. Under no conditions, however, would Marylanders continue to blindly release funds to the ACS.[45]

Before adjourning the meeting, the MSCS committee made one final statement. Any attempt by the ACS to gain the funds rightly belonging to the Maryland society would end colonization in Maryland. Leading the MSCS committee, Latrobe asserted that if "control of the funds or any part thereof is required by the Parent Society_: if, indeed, the unrestricted management of the funds is in any way interfered with not only does the constitution of this Society become impossible of accomplishment, and the Society necessarily and of consequence dissolved;_ but the principles that united its members will cease to exist." Latrobe and the rest of the committee felt that "the past justifies this anticipation," a clear reference to what had happened in 1829. Ultimately, ACS demands for control of MSCS monies, the committee argued would "vitally injure the great cause in which the parent society is engaged, and by preventing the success of the scheme in Maryland destroy the most striking and irresistible argument in favour of the practicability of African colonization."[46] Latrobe in particular saw this course of action as necessary because of the growing sectional rift between the North and South. Maryland's actions could alleviate the tensions that tore open the ACS meeting in January. Thus, the MSCS and independent state action was the best hope for saving the movement and the Union.

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[45] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. March 26, 1831.

[46] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. March 26, 1831.

Unable to resolve the dispute with the ACS in March, the MSCS continued implementing its plans, which included sending an expedition of emigrants to Liberia in June of 1831. The ACS welcomed the settlers but requested that the MSCS pay twenty dollars for each emigrant transported to the colony. The board of managers directed that the committee representing the MSCS take up the matter and report to the members in May. At its May meeting, the MSCS appointed committee reported its findings, which showed the influence of John Latrobe. The committee once again noted its willingness to reimburse the full costs incurred by the parent society in transporting Maryland emigrants to Liberia, but that a twenty-dollar fee per emigrant demanded by the ACS was nothing more than a tax. Latrobe drew on arguments reminiscent of the American Revolution, stating to MSCS members that "Your Committee consider the tax in question to be unjust."[47] The report suggested that the constitution of the ACS did not directly give or imply the power of the board of managers to tax its auxiliaries. As such, the ACS had no right to demand anything from the MSCS except that which was necessary to cover the legitimate expenses incurred in settling Maryland's colonists. To Latrobe, the ACS was attempting to control the entire movement. That day, however, was past. "The Maryland State Colonization Society was organized when, after the experience of fifteen years, it became satisfied that the course which it has now taken was the only one that was left to it and that to look to the Parent Society acting from Maine to Florida to remove the free people of color of Maryland, was to look for the performance of an impossibility." The actions of the ACS proved only "that the principle upon which the State Society was established was wholly disapproved by the Society in Washington."[48]

[47] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. May 4, 1831.

[48] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. May 4, 1831.

As the months passed from spring into summer, the vision of Maryland colonizationists and the importance of the movement to Baltimoreans in particular, became clearer. The committee on which Latrobe served advocated independent state action as:

> the only true and efficient plan for securing the final success of African Colonization…because the citizens of each state will contribute in proportion to the immediate benefit that is to be derived from such contributions, or where the contributions, or the contributors, are from a non Slave holding State, or one from which no Emigrants can be sent they will be increased by the admitted & exercised right of the contributors to direct the manner of their immediate application; and it is in the amount of such voluntary contributions that the cause must for a very long time at least rely for success.[49]

The events in the colonization movement since January of 1831 showed Latrobe, at least, that the ACS could not continue to reconcile the differences over slavery in the cause. Certainly, sectional jealousies were rising and Marylanders, on the border between the two, felt this increasing tension. Continuing this line of argument, the MSCS members concluded that both northerners and southerners were equally zealous in their support of colonization, just for different reasons. The difficulty the ACS faced in dealing with both would end through state action because each state could pursue "its own peculiar motives upon the subject and that sectional jealousy which is now daily exhibiting itself to impede the progress of the Society, would at once, cease to exist."[50] State action would work because it would allow local motives to further the movement. Latrobe recognized the reality of the movement and that the honest motives of colonizationists were both high and low in nature. Nevertheless, state action would minimize the opportunity for conflict. Latrobe thought that unless this happened, colonization would fail, and if colonization failed, the American republic was in peril. As it stood in May,

[49] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. May 4, 1831.

[50] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. May 4, 1831.

then, the impasse between the MSCS and ACS seemed irreconcilable until events late in the summer drastically changed the minds of many white Americans, particularly in the South. This change also gave the MSCS the means to carry out its agenda without interference from the parent society.

In August of 1831, Southampton, Virginia experienced a devastating revolt led by the slave Nat Turner. Characterized as a slave preacher, Turner began a slave rebellion on August 21, 1831 that lasted five days and killed at least fifty-one white men, women, and children before being suppressed. Whites responded immediately by rounding up and executing several of Turner's accomplices. Turner was himself captured weeks later and hung.[51] The white backlash spread quickly as southerners moved to prevent future rebellions and alleviate the fears Turner's Rebellion exposed. Latrobe admitted that the "Southampton Massacre had created a great excitement," which ultimately helped colonization efforts in Maryland.[52]

The rebellion of August 1831 caused a surge in emigration to Liberia, so much that the ACS could not carry all who applied for passage to its colony. Capitalizing on the momentum created by Turner's Rebellion, ACS secretary Ralph Gurley issued a call to action and unity from the state auxiliary societies. He addressed all Americans regarding the "crisis deeply momentous to the colonization of free people of colour in Africa…Recent events have presented these points in their true lights, and an almost universal conviction now presents, that, without the most strenuous efforts, the late afflicting scenes, flagrant + calamitous as they are, will be followed by

[51] Alison Goodyear Freehling, *Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Robert D. Marcus and David Burner, eds., *America Firsthand*, 5th edition, Vol. 1 (Boston: Bedford/ St. Martins, 2001), 202-203; Stephen B. Oates, *The Fires of Jubilee: Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion*. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1975).

[52] Latrobe Diaries, November 27, 1833; Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and His Times*, 145.

evils still more appalling."[53] The ACS literally had more free blacks asking to go to Liberia than it could send despite arranging for expeditions to sail from New York, Baltimore, Norfolk, and New Orleans.

The realities of the rebellion and the plea for cooperation from the ACS affected its relationship with the Maryland society. Turner's Rebellion temporarily closed the schism between the MSCS and the ACS. In the spring of 1831 a compromise could not be reached on the issue of how much compensation the Maryland society should pay the ACS for removing Maryland's emigrants. Turner's Rebellion, too close to home, changed this as the MSCS agreed to reimburse the parent society for the costs associated with colonizing its settlers. The amount was to be determined by the man on the spot, the colonial agent in Liberia. This compromise was only temporary, however, as the fall expedition, which left Baltimore in October of 1831, proved far costlier than the MSCS anticipated. The MSCS sent thirty-one emigrants out on the Orion, which cost the society $3,200.[54] In their zealousness, the MSCS booked the vessel prematurely and had to pay several months worth of fees because the colonists were not ready when the society chartered the ship. At more than $100 per emigrant, the original proposal of twenty dollars per colonist looked much better, but it was too late. The second key impact of Turner's revolt was the passage of legislative acts in several states, including Maryland. Many states responded to the massacre with new, stricter laws prohibiting the emancipation of slaves without their removal, bans on the importation of slaves into states and other similar laws.

[53] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. Address from the ACS, November 17, 1831.

[54] The ship was delayed in sailing for several months, which the society paid $550 a month to hold. Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 14; Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831-1857*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 28-29.

However, Maryland went farther than most other states by endorsing colonization to a degree unmatched by any other state.[55]

The rebellion spurred Maryland legislators to incorporate the MSCS in 1832. Delegate Brawner of Charles County proposed the legislation endorsing MSCS efforts to remove free African Americans in the state and then end slavery, a bold move considering that he hailed from a county with one of the larger slave populations.[56] Latrobe and other colonizationists lobbied for this as well. Maryland's legislature endorsed the colonization society and established a fund of $200,000 for its use in removing the state's black population. John Latrobe drew up the charter and by-laws for the incorporation of the MSCS passed by the legislature during its December 1831 session. The law went into effect March 14, 1832.[57]

This proved a critical juncture for Maryland colonizationists as their organization was deeply in debt after the October expedition of the Orion. The appropriation of $200,000, spread over ten years, provided a significant degree of financial independence for the MSCS. The act also contained provisions regulating the transportation of slaves into the state; their movement in the state, and the wish of the legislature that the society removes all slaves freed after the law went into effect. Most important, though, was the condition that the Board of Managers for the state fund be members of the MSCS. This gave the MSCS a significant degree of influence over

[55] *Act of Incorporation and By-Laws of the Maryland State Colonization Society: together with The Act of the General Assembly of Maryland, entitled An Act Relating to the People of Color in This State; to which are added The Constitution and Ordinances of Maryland In Liberia*,(Baltimore: J. D. Toy, 1834); Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 30-34.

[56] The population of Charles County was such that blacks outnumbered whites nearly two to one. DeBow, *The Seventh Census of the United* State, 220.

[57] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. March 24, 1832; Latrobe Diaries, November 27, 1833; *African Repository*, Vol. VIII. March, 1832. No. 1, 25-27.

how the funds would be allocated by the state.[58] Members anticipated that this would ensure the success of Maryland's colonization efforts. Latrobe expressed his sentiments on the state's zeal at a public meeting held April 30, 1832 by the board of the MSCS in an "Address of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society to the People of Maryland." He stated:

> the end to be accomplished by colonization has become the device of humanity, the prayer of the Christian, and the hope of the Patriot. In a word, the scheme stands now wholly divested of the doubt and misgiving which once impeded its progress…all that is required to ensure its complete success is an effort in its behalf that shall be commensurate with its importance. The Legislature of Maryland upon this subject has marked a new epoch in her history; and teems with consequences of the deepest importance, not only to herself, but to the whole Southern section of this country.[59]

Latrobe made two things clear in the address: first, the problems experienced by the ACS would no longer delay or stop Maryland's colonization efforts; and second, that the ultimate objective was ridding the South of slavery one state at a time in a peaceful, gradual way.

In spite of the strong position the MSCS took in 1832, the organization was not yet ready to abandon the national society. The relationship between the two societies had been strained since Maryland colonizationists reorganized and claimed their financial independence in 1831. Yet, there remained some level of cooperation as the two came to an agreement of $30 for each emigrant taken from Maryland.[60] The sailing of the Lafayette from Baltimore on December 9, 1832 was arranged under these terms. This, however, would be the only expedition in which the two societies cooperated under the agreement. The Lafayette left Baltimore with 150 emigrants; 147 were from Maryland. Seventeen were slaves freed on condition that they migrate to Liberia,

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[58] *Act of Incorporation.*

[59] *MSCS Papers*, Minutes, reel 1. March 24, 1832.

[60] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. Ralph Gurley to C.C. Harper, April 24, 1832.

as mandated by the legislature in December of 1831. All arrived safely in Liberia except one child who died en route, but the news reported to the MSCS board once reaching the colony was less than encouraging.[61]

A number of colonists wrote Latrobe about the Lafayette emigrants. The mixed reports about how the settlers were treated by the ACS agent caused considerable distress for the MSCS members. A former resident of Baltimore who had moved to Liberia in 1827, George R. McGill, informed Latrobe in July of 1832 that few of the emigrants were well. He further accused Governor Joseph Mechlin of starving the colonists, confirming the suspicions of Latrobe about how Maryland's emigrants were treated by ACS officials. Furthermore, McGill described Monrovia as an "infertile Red Gravelly Mountain."[62] Clearly, he was not satisfied with the colony under the administration of the ACS and did not believe that the newest arrivals would fare well there either. Incensed by this news, Latrobe and Charles C. Harper insisted that the board of managers of the ACS begin an investigation and also wrote the governor of the colony demanding an explanation of the charges the settlers made against him. Such reports, as Charles Harper pointed out "are such as to have I fear, a most injurious effect, whether true or false, upon the cause of Colonization, and perhaps even to necessitate a pause in the operations of this Board."[63] The reports of Maryland's settlers carried considerable influence when it came to recruiting emigrants, a fact both Latrobe and Harper had in mind when taking action.

A number of other colonists wrote to the board members of the MSCS after their arrival. Only one of those who wrote to the MSCS between February and April consistently stated that

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[61] *African Repository*, Vol. VIII. January, 1833. No. 11, 348.

[62] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. George R. McGill to John Latrobe, July 12, 1832.

[63] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, State Managers Book, reel 17. Charles Harper to Ralph R. Gurley, April 9, 1833.

all was well. Jacob W. Prout, ironically a special agent for the MSCS, wrote that the immigrants were well on at least three occasions during that time span. Not all felt as Prout did, however, and one must suspect that his role as the leader of the Lafayette colonists biased the accounts he sent to Baltimore.[64] Another immigrant from Snow Hill, Maryland sent word through the MSCS to his former master about Liberia. Identified only as W. Dennis, the settler complained that the provisions Governor Mechlin distributed to the colonists were barely enough to survive on, but he did feel that "this country presents great prospects for laboring men." Clearly, Dennis thought the opportunities available to him in the colony better than those he left behind in Maryland and worth temporary suffering.[65] Not all forgave so easily. Six of the MSCS colonists joined to write the MSCS immediately after arriving in Liberia. While they acknowledged their safe arrival, they were "very much disappointed in [their] expectations…as soon as we got up here [Caldwell, one of the ACS settlements] our provisions were cut short by the citizens of Monrovia." They continued that their rations consisted of rotten meat and fish, accusing the governor of keeping "our good provisions that came out in the Ship. We all wish ourselves back again." The men who authored the letter levied more charges too regarding the older settlers, describing their behavior as roguishness, which the Captain of the Lafayette confirmed on his return to Baltimore.[66]

The Maryland society wasted little time before acting on these reports. In addition to the concerns raised by the letters from the Lafayette colonists, members of the MSCS grew

[64] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. Jacob W. Prout to John Latrobe, February 23, 1833; March 2, 1833; April 6, 1833.

[65] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. W. Dennis to George Jackson, June 22, 1833.

[66] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. Edward Pembleton, et al. to Moses Sheppard, February 5, 1833.

concerned about the mortality rate in Liberia too. In May of 1832 a Dr. Henderson issued a report on mortality in the colony for the ACS. The author assessed the rate of death among immigrants at one in six. He recommended that colonists should leave in November in order to give themselves the best chance of survival as they would arrive well before the worst tropical weather began.[67] Maryland colonizationists knew the dangers of their efforts and the potential lethalness of the Liberian climate. But if the ACS agent compounded the problems, action needed to be taken. The managers of the MSCS, Latrobe, Charles C. Harper, and society President Moses Sheppard immediately began their own investigation. Latrobe and Sheppard both journeyed to Washington to meet with the board of the ACS about the treatment of Maryland's colonists, specifically the most recent arrivals. Latrobe noted in his private journal that to the ACS managers, "it was not a business concern…from this Board Mr. Sheppard and I agreed there was no hope of amelioration of the condition of things in Africa for some time."[68] Latrobe described the meeting as bitter, which led him and Sheppard to begin discussing possible alternatives open to the MSCS in its relationship to the ACS.

The board of the ACS did act on the charges made by the MSCS, but not to the satisfaction of either Latrobe or Sheppard. ACS secretary Ralph R. Gurley wrote the Maryland society on April 12, 1833 that the national society would waste no time in "correcting the evil complained of in the letter addressed by the emigrants from your state to Mr. Sheppard." While he recognized the potential damage the suffering of the colonists could have on the movement, Gurley asserted that he, at least, doubted

[67] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. Henderson to C. C. Harper; Eric Burin, "Envisioning Africa: American Slaves' Ideas About Liberia." In *Liberian Studies Journal*, Vol. XXVII, no. 1, 2002, 5-6.

[68] Latrobe Diaries, November 27, 1833.

> the accuracy of the statements in that letter. I cannot imagine how the Colonial Agent…should allow the abuses stated to exist. He was told by me, that every thing in regard to the success of future operations in Maryland would depend upon the Report of the emigrants by the Layfayette, & it would be marvelous indeed should they be left in misery & without adequate supplies while all the recent expeditions have been well furnished with the best stores.[69]

Short of calling the colonists liars, Gurley refused to accept the charges made against his society. Tenaciously, Harper responded on the thirteenth that he had the testimony of Captain Hardie and the first and second mates of the Lafayette to corroborate the charges leveled by the emigrants. The captain described the colony as totally neglecting "agricultural pursuits_ the affections already of artificial distinctions in Society, & the indifference and even unkindness with which the new Emigrants were received by almost all the settlers there." Further, the colonists showed the crew the food Governor Mechlin gave them; "they were allowed per week a pound of meat, a pound of fish, Cassada + a gill of molasses; that the beef they exhibited to him was so spoilt, as to be literally green, and the Fish so rotten that it would scarcely hang together. Captain Hardie states that he remonstrated with Gov. Mechlin on this subject, and that the Governor replied that the bad provisions must be used first."[70] Harper enumerated further on the other charges made against the ACS and its agent proving the case to Gurley. Nevertheless, the outcome of the correspondence between the two societies was clear. There was no choice on the part of the Maryland society given the mandate from the Legislature to carry out colonization. The society

[69] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. Ralph R. Gurley to C. C. Harper, April 12, 1833.

[70] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, State Managers Book, reel 17. Charles Harper to Ralph R. Gurley, April 13, 1833.

must "address the evil complained of by said Emigrants [before it produced] an entire stop to Colonization in this state."[71]

Privately, Latrobe began acting on what he discussed with Sheppard after the meeting in Washington, a league of all the states north of the Potomac River to promote independent state action for the purpose of making Maryland a free state.[72] From the ACS, the managers of Maryland's society demanded a place in Liberia for provisions for Maryland separate from those of the ACS. The MSCS also requested written authority to send its own agent to Liberia to oversee the administration of those provisions and to set up accommodations for colonists away from those of the ACS.[73] The ACS acquiesced in these demands made by the Maryland society for the time being due to national crises occurring at the same time. The two societies sought a mutual compromise, but Latrobe and his fellow colonizationists were brewing other plans too. Latrobe would have his way as the Board of the MSCS approved his plan to establish a new colony at its June 1833 meeting. The MSCS would now be completely independent of the ACS and could carry out its agenda at its own pace under Latrobe's guiding hand, the only true and efficient plan.[74]

[71] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. May 18, 1833.

[72] Latrobe Diaries, November 27, 1833.

[73] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. May 18, 1833.

[74] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. June 28, 1833.

Chapter Three: Friends of your Country, Can You Stand Idly By?

As the divide between the ACS and Maryland colonizationists widened after 1831, national events came to bear on the decisions of the MSCS. In February of 1833, South Carolinians stood poised to leave the Union if Andrew Jackson attempted to enforce the duties levied by the 1832 tariff. Soldiers had taken their positions in Charleston and waited for federal troops to arrive. Pushed to the breaking point, it looked as though the young American republic had reached the end. Fortunately, protectionist Congressmen, led by Henry Clay, hammered out a compromise that ended the Nullification Crisis before shots were fired. While the issue of the tariff and South Carolina's effort to nullify it had little to do with slavery and colonization, it nonetheless had a significant impact on both issues, which MSCS actions highlighted.[1]

The hostility that emerged in April of 1833 over the treatment of colonists by ACS agents showed the division within the colonization movement, just as nullification reflected the division emerging nationally over slavery and states' rights. Such moments of peril added all the more pressure for colonization to succeed. Events occurring during the period from 1831 to 1834, within the colonization movement and on the national stage, influenced the direction of the MSCS and led to the organization's decision to found its own colony, Maryland in Liberia, in June of 1834. John Latrobe interpreted these national events and the situation in Liberia as a powder keg just waiting for a spark to ignite it. Something had to be done to prevent the loss of the Union. Much like the protectionist Henry Clay, he presented a compromise that he believed would solve all the problems surfacing in the early 1830s. The decision to push independent

[1] William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina 1816-1836*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), 2-3.

state action in the colonization movement was not reached easily by the society, but its members recognized the utility of Latrobe's plans especially given the national tensions of early 1833. However, they also recognized the need to portray the society in a way that would not alienate its base of support within the state. As such, the organization resorted to moral attacks on the ACS to justify its separation from the national society. The founding of Maryland in Liberia allowed the MSCS to carry out its colonization agenda in Maryland without any interference from the ACS, and without further agitating an already tense national feud over slavery and states' rights. This chapter examines how and why the Maryland State Colonization Society achieved its final separation from the American Colonization Society. The MSCS' separations further illustrated how a transnational perspective informed Latrobe. He directed the organization's efforts in an attempt to create the colony he envisioned while protecting the Union he loved from division.

It was clear by 1833 that the MSCS had no intention of continuing its relationship with the national society regardless of its public cordiality. The members perceived that colonization, administered nationally, would only become more difficult as sectional tensions multiplied. The nullification crises demonstrated this to Latrobe. The dispute over the treatment of the Lafayette emigrants served as a convenient opportunity for the MSCS to diverge from the national movement and pursue its own agenda. While many of the members of the MSCS recognized that their actions grew out of "the most serious sense of our responsibility in thus cutting loose from the Parent Society and setting up for ourselves," it also reflected Latrobe's influence on the society.[2] Latrobe had contemplated a separate colony even before the MSCS formed in 1831, and he continued to express his interest in the idea. Within months of the Maryland society's

[2] MS 1677 John H. B. Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society), entry November 27, 1833.

formation, Latrobe began gathering information on establishing a new settlement away from those established by the ACS.

Initially, Latrobe asked a few of the ACS settlers with whom he corresponded regularly for their feelings about founding a new settlement on the coast of Africa. One settler, George R. McGill, who left Baltimore for Liberia in 1827, often reported to Latrobe about conditions in the colony and possible trading opportunities there, a subject about which Latrobe expressed much interest. Latrobe suggested that McGill explore the possibility of a new settlement in Africa not subject to ACS control. McGill not only recommended two possible locations for such a colony, but sounded the idea among other settlers for Latrobe. He even offered to negotiate the purchase of the island of Bulama, the spot he felt most suitable for Maryland to establish a colony, if Latrobe wished.[3]

Several other settlers responded to Latrobe's query, holding a meeting on July 2, 1831 in Monrovia to discuss the subject of a new settlement under the Maryland society's administration. The seriousness of the colonists was demonstrated by their forming a committee to answer the questions Latrobe posed to them: what would be the best mode of establishing a new colony and who would be willing to engage in the same? Should a new colony be settled by colonists already acclimated to Africa? McGill, Frederic James, James Bensin, Henry P. Spriggs, and Remus Harvey comprised the committee and reported a favorable response from those attending the meeting. They were interested in assisting the Maryland society in creating a new settlement in 1831, apparently because they were dissatisfied with the settlements controlled by the ACS. Fortunately for Latrobe, these settlers only expressed their interest in his proposal, taking no

[3] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. George R. McGill to John Latrobe, September 2, 1831; Remus Harvey to John Latrobe, July 9, 1831.

other action during that summer. Had they attempted more, the MSCS was not prepared to help them in any case because of the domestic situation in the United States. The MSCS still worked with the ACS and Latrobe did not want to drive supporters away from the movement as many colonizationists still placed their loyalty with the national society. Nonetheless, Latrobe continued to exchange letters with McGill in particular until the MSCS was in a position to found a new settlement. The experience of older colonists like George McGill would prove helpful to the MSCS when the time came to cease its cooperation with the ACS.[4]

Although Latrobe initially worked to foster cooperation with the ACS, he also prepared the MSCS for more independent operations. Always cautious, he worried about acting too hastily and without sufficient justification because he did not want to injure the movement. The years from 1831 to 1833 were critical as national issues informed the decisions and the final plans of the MSCS to found its own colony. Nat Turner's Rebellion in August of 1831, the resulting debate over slavery in the Virginia legislature, and the Nullification Crisis of 1832-3 marked an intense period in antebellum America. These events made it necessary for the MSCS to continue cooperating with the ACS as colonization seemed to be of growing importance. Yet these events also convinced John Latrobe and colonizationists generally in the Upper South that colonization was the only solution to the mounting national tensions surrounding the issue of slavery. The plan Latrobe developed and advocated was designed to achieve this goal.

The ACS had attempted to restore the Maryland society as a full auxiliary member, but Latrobe and others in the organization, Moses Sheppard and Charles C. Harper, refused because of the conditions placed on them by the parent society. However, a public and messy break

[4] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. George R. McGill to John Latrobe, September 2, 1831; Remus Harvey to John Latrobe, July 9, 1831.

would not do either organization much good. Then in the summer of 1831, the hysteria created by Nat Turner's revolt in neighboring Virginia, prevented the formal division between the societies for a short time as colonization received renewed support and the ACS sent out some of its largest expeditions. Large numbers of free African Americans applied for transportation to Liberia. Emigration to Liberia jumped from 165 for the whole year of 1831 to 676 in 1832, a direct consequence of Turner's Rebellion and the white backlash. In fact, the ACS had more African Americans willing to leave the United States for Liberia than it could afford to carry. The numbers for 1833 were even larger. Due to the rapid growth in the numbers of blacks willing to go to Liberia, the Maryland leaders felt that a split between the societies would waste the sudden progress of the movement.[5]

Turner's Rebellion also led to a two-week long, heated debate in the Virginia legislature over slavery. This debate and its outcome demonstrated a marked change in the defense of slavery. Prior to this debate, many defenders of slavery argued that the institution was a necessary evil.[6] After the debate, Deep South defenders, such as John C. Calhoun, claimed that it was time slaveholders stop apologizing for slavery and recognize the "positive good" of the institution. While the debate itself reflected the internal dynamics of Virginia politics, especially the tensions between non-slaveholders west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the planters of the Piedmont, the debate illustrated the growing rigidity of positions too, which in reality extended far beyond Virginia. In the end, the legislature of Virginia forecast the end of slavery, but not

[5] Tom W. Shick, "A Quantitative Analysis of Liberian Colonization From 1820 to 1843 With Special Reference To Mortality." In *Journal of African History*, XII, I (1971), 47.

[6] *African Repository*, Vol. III. March, 1827. No. 1, 16; James F. Hopkins, ed., *The Papers of Henry Clay*, Vol. 2 The Rising Statesman, 1815-1820 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), Henry Clay to James Monroe, September 22, 1817, 384.

until the public overwhelmingly supported it.[7] In a larger sense the decision that slavery would eventually end further divided the country. The South had been united in its necessary evil defense of slavery. Now, in 1832, the South had split over slavery, with Maryland and Virginia both declaring slavery's eventual end. South Carolinians, especially Calhoun, viewed Americans in the Upper South, those in Virginia and Maryland especially, as traitors because they conceded slavery's ultimate end and endorsed colonization as the solution most likely to remove the last impediment to abolition, free African Americans.[8]

Within a year, the slavery controversy reappeared in the Nullification Crisis in 1832. While the issue originated out of southerners' hatred of tariffs, which they believed hurt them more than any others in the United States; it quickly took on larger significance as the debate turned on the issue of questions such as states' rights. The push for the right of nullification and possible secession by South Carolinians further exacerbated the tensions between North and South as well as between the Deep South and Upper South. Nullification, if accepted, would have allowed any one of the southern states to repeal any law they deemed injurious. Ultimately, President Andrew Jackson settled the matter through compromise and threats, getting Congress to reduce the tariff, while presenting a show of force authorized by Congress's Force Bill. The power of the states to decide issues within its borders, however, was a critical issue as most southerners maintained that slavery was an issue belonging to them alone. Even here Latrobe agreed. These potentially explosive events not only threatened to destroy the Union, they also

[7] Alison Goodyear Freehling, *Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), xiii.

[8] *MSCS Paper*s, III. Correspondence Sent, reel 16. John Latrobe to Courtlandt Van Rensellaer, July 10, 1833; Alison Freehling, *Drift Toward Dissolution*, xiii; William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*,272.

showed John Latrobe that a change in colonization led by a slave state could solve these issues without conflict.[9]

The importance of state action in colonization could not be denied. For years, Latrobe pushed colonization in Maryland as the one program that could solve the ills he believed two free races caused in a republic, while removing the primary source of tension between the sections of the Union. Nevertheless, many supporters of slavery in the Deep South were not convinced by his arguments, however. Founding a new settlement under an independent state society, he thought would prove colonization's usefulness in resolving the debate because the fate of slavery within the state was a concern of Maryland alone. Separate state action, he later explained, prevented outside interference, which caused the conflict over slavery in the first place.[10] If his ideas succeeded, Maryland would be the model for slave states to become free-states. In addition, Latrobe desired to maintain the goodwill of the clergy and political leaders believing their aid essential for success. The sailing of the Lafayette colonists from Maryland, the largest single expedition by the state society, provided the point of attack that would allow the MSCS to keep the support of the clergy while avoiding the divisiveness found in the ACS effort. The controversy surrounding the Lafayette emigrants illustrated why a national movement controlled by the ACS could not end slavery in the United States.

The Maryland society attacked the ACS colony for its failure to reflect the moral, religious and social values that would benefit the movement. The ACS colony, however, was not necessarily administered in a way to control such aspects. The ACS controlled all government aspects such as appointing governors for example. Executive and judicial powers

[9] *MSCS Paper*s, I. Minutes, reel 1. Address given by Latrobe, April 26, 1834.

[10] *MSCS Paper*s, I. Minutes, reel 1. Address given by Latrobe, April 26, 1834.

were combined under the governor's authority. But the ACS did not control the colony to the extent that moral and religious values were predetermined nor was the spread of western concepts of those values an immediate objective of the national society's efforts. Civilizing and Christianizing Africa were long touted as two of the goals of colonization, which also contributed to its broad support. Yet the ACS did not directly undertake those aspects; under the ACS these were indirect byproducts of colonization. The MSCS members felt that the history of Liberia up to 1833 did not reflect these goals. The focus on spreading Christianity and western civilization reflected the changed attitudes of Maryland colonizationists too, especially as some reform movements, temperance for example, won over men such as Latrobe. Essentially, Maryland colonizationists suggested that the frequent warfare that characterized the relationship between the colonists and indigenous Africans was a result of ill-behaved settlers, excessive alcohol use, and the failure of ACS officials to enforce critical policies. These failures ultimately doomed the effort. Latrobe charged that "there was no civil government [in Liberia]; what stood in the place of one, was a pure despotism of an agent, resting on no legal basis and possessing no physical force to compel obedience" from the settlers.[11] The system created under the ACS failed to achieve its goals because of this fact. Independent state action, Latrobe maintained, could not only solve America's problems, it could also establish a colonial system that avoided the problems plaguing the ACS colonies.[12] Furthermore, given the growing tensions in the United States, it seemed the only safe means to make slave states free without causing another secession crisis. The problems the ACS had in its colonies became, for Maryland

[11] 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,* (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1885), 10.

[12] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. June 28, 1833, October 2, 1833, January 8, 1834; III. Correspondence Sent, reel 16. John Latrobe to Robert S. Finley, July 22, 1833; John H. B. Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia,* 10.

colonizationists, the point of attack and a blueprint for what not to do when implementing a new settlement.

John Latrobe used these criticisms to bolster his other reasons for the development of a new colony by the Maryland society, namely, the fact that the colonies of Liberia still did not fully support themselves through agriculture even after eleven years. Colonizationists expected that the settlers of Liberia would be self-sufficient within a six-month period.[13] This assumption that the colony would be independent depended on settlers practicing husbandry for their livelihood and producing enough to feed the colony and its newly arriving immigrants. The failure of Americo-Liberians to do this arose largely from their desire to earn a living in ways other than farming. Latrobe's friend in Monrovia, George R. McGill, made it clear that he wished to take advantage of the opportunities for trade in Liberia rather than be a yeoman farmer.[14] Other well-known colonists such as Joseph J. Roberts, who became Liberia's first president in 1847, also wanted to make a living through trade. This was clear even at the time of his departure from America in the 1820s. Latrobe did not condemn McGill for his enterprises, perhaps because he himself thought much about the trading opportunities Liberia presented, especially if profits from trade could be used to accelerate the program. Yet, very few colonizationists took into consideration the fact that many of the Liberian colonists were not content with being simple farmers raising cash crops to be taken to the United States. Most colonizationists were more concerned with the speedy settlement than the entrepreneurial interests of the settlers. Nonetheless, many of the settlers sought an occupation other than

[13] Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831-1857*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 50-51.

[14] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. George R. McGill to John Latrobe, 1827.

farming to earn a living in part because they had already experienced the hard life of farm work. Furthermore, many colonists, while being excluded from much of America's economic life, possessed American values nonetheless. They had grown up in the emerging market; once colonists had a chance to choose their occupations, many hoped to become merchants or traders rather than pursue a profession they detested or that reminded them of their past condition.[15]

Low agricultural productivity, however, raised several issues affecting the pace of resettling African Americans. Latrobe focused on these issues, arguing that certain things must be done for colonization to be successful. Without sufficient agricultural production, the colonists were dependent on native production for basic foodstuffs. This often led to conflict between the two groups, especially over the price of food. Other difficulties arose over settlers employing Africans as workers on their farms. Most important for Latrobe was the fact that some settlers still relied on the ACS for support, which reduced the resources available to transport others to the colony.[16] This point was critical for colonization and for Latrobe's plans. Agricultural independence not only secured personal liberty in Latrobe's understanding of Jeffersonian republicanism, it also determined the rate of immigration to Liberia. The independence known by yeoman farmers, he believed, would draw African Americans to the colony because it was generally beyond their reach in America.

For Latrobe and the MSCS, the failure of the ACS to make Liberia self-sufficient slowed progress toward colonization's ultimate goal of removing African Americans and ending slavery in the United States. This was the reason so many white Americans lost interest in the

[15] Phil Sigler, "the Attitudes of Free Blacks Towards Emigration to Liberia," (Ph.D Diss., Boston University, 1969), Chapter two.

[16] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. George R. McGill to John Latrobe, January 25, 1831; Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 50-51.

movement; they saw no immediate or noticeable benefit to the program, something Latrobe hoped to change with his plan of separate state action.[17] Marylanders thought that the commercial character of Liberia under the ACS needed to be restrained so that colonizationists could make good progress in removing black Americans. "An agricultural community spreading itself to the interior," said Latrobe, "would not only present better examples to the surrounding Heathen…but would afford greater facilities for a rapidly increasing emigration from this country than could be afforded by trading towns, however prosperous they might be."[18] Agricultural development, the MSCS argued, ultimately determined the success of the movement.

In addition to inadequate agricultural self-sufficiency, Maryland colonizationists attacked the ACS for what they interpreted as rampant abuse of alcohol by the settlers. While the use of alcohol genuinely concerned members, Latrobe in particular, the charges against the ACS stemmed more from the general mood created by the rapidly growing temperance movement than from direct evidence. The Second Great Awakening and resulting social reform movements of the nineteenth century sought to improve America, and no doubt he considered colonization as reforming society too. Latrobe supported such reform efforts, especially temperance, because alcohol was one of the vices of the laboring classes. No doubt, he observed this at events such as horseracing.[19] Nonetheless, attacking the ACS on the issue of alcohol provided a convenient

[17] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. April 30, 1833, June 28, 1833, October 2, 1833; III. Correspondence Sent, Secretary's Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Governor Mechlin, October 5, 1832, John Latrobe to James Hall, October 11, 1832; Edward Lama Wonkeryor, "America's African Colonization Movement: Implications for New Jersey and Liberia," in *Liberian Studies Journal* Vol. XXVII, No. 1 (2002), 38.

[18] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. October 2, 1833.

[19] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, October 20, 1834; for reform movements, see David Brion Davis, *Ante-bellum Reform*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); Barbara Cutter, *Domestic Devils, Battlefield Angels: The Radicalism of American Womanhood, 1830-1865.* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003); David M.

justification while maintaining the support of the clergy and temperance advocates such as John Tappan.[20] Many charged that alcohol led to the poor behavior of some colonists. Furthermore, critics alleged that the abuse of alcohol in the colony undermined the missionary effort among indigenous Africans. Although some of these charges could be sustained, the prevalence of alcohol on the coast of Africa was not a new phenomenon associated only with the settlement of Liberia. Rum in particular was a staple in the trade between Africans and Europeans for centuries, so much so that it became common to include it in most trading arrangements. The charges nonetheless provided an opportunity for the MSCS to differentiate itself from the ACS and to justify its actions. The strong position of Latrobe and the MSCS on alcohol also led them to make its consumption and the trading of liquor illegal in Maryland in Liberia.[21]

Coupled with the charges of ACS officials mistreating colonists in Liberia, these allegations gave the Maryland society a reason to act as it did in April of 1833. The charges levied against the ACS also gave the MSCS a moral underpinning that virtually ensured the support of the clergy, even more so after the society encouraged missionaries to establish posts and schools in Maryland in Liberia. Through its leadership, especially Latrobe's, the MSCS developed a plan for its colony that would address all the concerns expressed up to 1833 while finally claiming direct control and responsibility for emigrants from Maryland.

The series of traumatic events from Turner's Rebellion to the sailing of the Lafayette, finally won for Latrobe the backing of his fellow colonizationists for establishing a colony administered solely by Maryland's society. His persistence, however, was not without minor

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Streifford, "The American Colonization Society: An Application of Republican Ideology to Early Antebellum Reform," in The Journal of Southern History Vol. 45, Iss. 2 (May 1979), 201-220.

[20] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 3. Tappan to John Latrobe, October 16, 1833.

[21] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. April 11, 1833, June 28, 1833, October 2, 1833.

consequences of inconvenience. Latrobe pushed so often for the MSCS to found its own colony at Cape Palmas that the organization's members began referring to him by that name, making him the butt of their jokes. Nevertheless, he had achieved his objective, which was most dear to him.[22] Despite a unanimous approval of Latrobe's project by the managers, the members achieved little progress toward making the colony a reality after the meeting in April of 1833. Latrobe admitted in his journal that he thought little about the proposed colony as he presumed that the ranking members of the Board of Managers would now take charge of the project he initiated. By June, however, he disappointingly realized that the managers of the MSCS had not taken "a single step" toward founding a colony.[23]

Frustrated with the lack of enthusiasm shown by his friends in the cause, Latrobe once again set his mind to establishing a colony at Cape Palmas and creating a government. Latrobe worked to create a temporary government, a criminal and civil legal code, and a constitution that protected the rights of the colonists. He also arranged the purchase of supplies and prepared a vessel to take the initial group of settlers to Africa. Latrobe proposed several resolutions at the June meeting to further this process and spur the other members to action. These resolutions addressed many of the complaints colonists and critics had made against the ACS colonies and comprised key parts of the laws and government of Maryland in Liberia. They also reflected the direction that the state of Maryland was heading as social reform movements gained support.

The resolutions sought to move Maryland a step closer to being a free state. By guaranteeing specific rights to the colonists, Latrobe hoped to draw more emigrants to the

[22] John E, Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803-1891*, (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1917), 145.

[23] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, November 27, 1833.

colony. And if free blacks willingly left the state, it stood to reason that slaveholders would have one less reason not to emancipate their chattels. Furthermore, a provision eliminating slavery in the colony should gain the support of anti-slavery and abolition societies in America. The social pressure to make America a temperate society influenced Latrobe's resolutions too. Latrobe clearly thought alcohol a destructive indulgence of Americans and that it should be used sparingly. Yet, temperance also could prove useful in gaining the support of clergy for the cause. Latrobe used such reasoning to appeal to varied interests within Maryland and the rest of the states, asking very simply, "friends of the temperance cause can you be lukewarm in this work? Friends of your country can you stand idly by? Friends of Africa, will you let pass the opportunity…of planting another fortress against the slave trade, of erecting another Altar to civilization and the Gospel?" His plans reflected his commitment to the social reform that appealed to many Americans' patriotism in the 1830s.[24]

His resolutions also addressed the goals he held for Maryland in Liberia. By ensuring that slavery would never be allowed in the colony, Maryland in Liberia could help to end the illegal Atlantic slave trade that continued despite being abolished by European nations before the United States and Great Britain followed in 1807 and 1808 respectively. Latrobe assumed that the colony would make it more difficult for the slave trade to be carried out along that part of the coast. Latrobe's emphasis on religion, a facet emphasized in America's Constitution, was clearly reflected in the Bill of Rights included in the colony's constitution. Latrobe meant to guarantee "a natural and unalienable right to worship Almighty God…and no one shall be hurt, molested or restrained in his person liberty or estate, for worshipping God in the manner and season most

[24] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, November 27, 1833; *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. June 28, 1833; *MSCS Paper*s, I. Minutes, reel 1. Address given by Latrobe, April 26, 1834.

agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience."[25] A strong Christian presence, he assumed, would discourage the trade in slaves as well. Other resolutions included in Maryland in Liberia's constitution originated from Latrobe's frequent discussions with Robert S. Finely, Jr. who was working for the Colonization Society of New York in the 1830s. Both supported temperance and Latrobe felt that the temperance principal was "a fundamental one" because the "sad experience of this country has shown the demoralizing effects of the use of ardent spirit."[26] Thus, he required that all Maryland colonists take an oath of temperance before they left the United States for Africa.[27] Such resolutions addressed the specific concerns of Latrobe, the MSCS, and American society, but also were part of a plan designed to address the problems the ACS colonies experienced. The MSCS tried to use the lessons learned through the ACS and its colony to maximize the chances for success with its own colony.

In addition to his efforts to shape the government of the colony and prepare the founding expedition, Latrobe led the effort to create a northern league of states committed to making Maryland a free state through colonization. The idea originated when he and Moses Sheppard discussed the options the Maryland society should pursue after meeting with the ACS in April of 1833. Latrobe thought much about Sheppard's idea to enlist the help of states north of the Potomac River in ridding Maryland of slavery—the first goal listed by the MSCS in June of 1833 especially after the turbulence of the previous two years. Opposition from slaveholders in the state of Maryland would also require help from northerners supportive of emancipation.

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[25] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. November 22, 1833.

[26] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, November 27, 1833; *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. June 28, 1833.

[27] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. June 28, 1833.

Latrobe hoped that the plan of independent state action would remove all the objections northern states presented against colonization. Maryland, he wrote,

> now stands before the American public, pledged to the extirpation of slavery…it has undertaken to illustrate Colonization, to prove that all its tendencies are toward liberty. Our mode of reasoning when we confidently anticipate aid from the north of the Potomac is this. Our northern friends support Colonization on account of its supposed tendencies toward liberty. The extirpation of slavery is then their sole object, or at all events their chief object. Now Maryland is the only slave state of the Union, which is prepared to act, has indeed avowed its intention of acting upon this principle.[28]

Such a declaration by Latrobe and the endorsement of the MSCS was a radical shift in thought and not accepted by everyone in Maryland. Some supported only the removal of free blacks. Ending slavery would destroy the economy of the state, especially that of the southern counties, which relied on slave labor.[29] In a larger sense, the actions of he MSCS violated an unspoken rule established when the movement began in 1816 not to discuss the fate of slavery. Further, the decision was a clear break from the slaveholding faction in the national colonization movement. Henry Clay, the protectionist politician who worked to preserve the Union in February 1833, stated early in his career that "colonization must avoid the question of emancipation."[30] Latrobe and the MSCS not only took the emancipation question on, but also made it a goal in their efforts. The MSCS embodied an attempt to end slavery and provide the solution to the tension that the politicization of abolition caused nationally.

The emergence of abolition in national politics threatened national unity and Maryland's plan offered a way to end slavery without destroying the Union. This was a particular concern in

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[28] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Corresponding Secretary's Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Courtlandt Van Rensellaer, July 10, 1833.

[29] *MSCS Papers*, Kennard to Emory, 1834.

[30] Philip J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 28.

Maryland considering that many southern slaveholders viewed colonization as another abolitionist attack on the South.[31] Yet, even though Latrobe intended the plan of state action Maryland followed to alleviate the tensions over slavery, the removal of black Americans created objections to colonization for different reasons. As William Freehling has shown in his studies of America's road to disunion, the closing of the slave trade and then the efforts to colonize African Americans outside the United States upset the balance of power because slaves counted in determining representation at the national level.[32] What Marylanders had done in endorsing colonization with the purpose of ending slavery was to illustrate their willingness to accept political losses that came with a decreasing population. But then there was no reason they should not accept it as Maryland's share of representation in the national house declined long before the 1830s. They were already losing power. Further, the decision to seek an end to slavery through colonization grew out of the realization by Latrobe that no compromise could be affected between the two sides. Colonization was the only way to protect the Union from a repeat of the events of 1833.[33]

Latrobe thus took a side in the debate and began an active, public campaign to gain the support and pecuniary aid of the North for Maryland's plan. During the month of July, Latrobe began corresponding with prominent northerners as well as agents of colonization societies in Pennsylvania, New York and throughout New England, explaining the MSCS' plan and requesting their aid for the project.[34] He followed up on his correspondence by making a

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[31] Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum* South, (New York: The New Press, 1974), 181, 213; Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 187.

[32] Freehling, *The Road to* Disunion, 137, 148.

[33] Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 61.

[34] Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and His Times*, 148.

whirlwind tour of the North, particularly New England during the month of August. During his visit in the North, Latrobe called on Courtlandt Van Rensellaer who inquired about the plan earlier in 1833. He also visited Reverend Thomas Gallaudet of Hartford, Connecticut, and then John Tappan. Tappan, well known for his support of abolition and temperance, seemed a likely, and Latrobe hoped, influential candidate to help his cause. While Tappan did not make any commitment to assist the MSCS, he did introduce Latrobe to many others in the Boston area interested in colonization, including former president John Q. Adams who opposed the movement. Tappan also encouraged Latrobe to visit Andover, Massachusetts, where he gave a speech on colonization at the Andover Theological Seminary. Finally, Tappan introduced the MSCS representative to Dr. B.B. Wisner, the secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions in Boston, an organization looking to start a missionary program in Africa. This chance meeting later bloomed into a partnership that resulted in Maryland in Liberia hosting missionaries from that organization.[35] Everywhere Latrobe went he spoke about Maryland's colonization plans so much that he remarked privately that he "literally preached on the subject as may be inferred by looking back at my journal for August."[36] After nearly a month of traveling for the cause of colonization, Latrobe returned to Baltimore satisfied that he had made many friends for the Maryland society who would aid him in making Maryland a free state.

Continuing to push his agenda after returning to Baltimore, Latrobe proposed an additional set of resolutions at the next MSCS gathering on September 6, 1833 only to find his colleagues dragging their feet again. Inaction by his fellow members and the fact that the managers left his resolutions on the table until the next meeting left him "disappointed in the

[35] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, August 6, 8, 21-24, 26, 1833.

[36] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, November 27, 1833.

lukewarmness of many of those with whom I am acting in the matter of colonization."[37] Latrobe appeared ready to abandon the movement due to the apathy of his colleagues, stating his wish that "someone else would take the active lead."[38] Certainly, he felt frustrated with the whole plan since he was doing much of the work in planning the colony, while also handling the affairs of the society, including corresponding with its associates throughout the country. Latrobe's dedication in regard to founding a new colony took on an almost religious significance for him. Feeling that the project had significant implications for humanity, particularly African Americans in Maryland, Latrobe described himself as a "humble agent whom he [God] has permitted to be active in the work that has yet been performed." He hoped "that it may be for the benefit of the cause of freedom and religion" that colonization succeeds.[39]

It was not surprising that Latrobe felt so disappointed, given the pace of activity in the movement. It was now October and there was still much to do as the MSCS expected the first settlers of its new colony to leave Baltimore during the month of November. Yet all seemed increasingly difficult. Nearly all those Latrobe met or requested assistance from during July and August failed to help. John Tappan declined to assist the MSCS, choosing to focus on the cause of temperance instead.[40] Colonization auxiliaries in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and New York responded similarly. The societies in Connecticut and Pennsylvania refused to aid the Maryland society because they had already pledged their funds to the ACS.[41] The Colonization Society of New York responded similarly, but for different reasons. That society's agent, Robert Finley,

[37] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, September 6, 1833.

[38] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, October 3, 1833

[39] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, November 27, 1833, September 29, 1833.

[40] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Tappan to John Latrobe, October 16, 1833.

[41] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Benjamin Gerhard (Pennsylvania Society) to John Latrobe, October 21, 1833; James Bayard (Connecticut Society) to John Latrobe, October 22, 1833.

explained to Latrobe that the New York organization planned to pursue its own independent action, making assistance to other organizations impossible.[42] The decision of the New York society no doubt incensed Latrobe. New York had a sizable black population to be sure, but a goal of the plan Latrobe advocated was to prove that slave states could become free through colonization. The members of the New York society missed the point of his plans. The lack of support for Maryland's colonization efforts in the North went farther, however, as Latrobe attempted to hire a general agent to represent the MSCS and solicit aid designed to remove Maryland's black population. None that he approached in 1833 was willing to accept the job despite the society offering a salary of $1,000 annually.[43]

The lack of support outside of Maryland would have doomed the plans of the MSCS were it not for the state fund established by the legislature in 1832. Moses Sheppard, Charles Howard, and Charles C. Harper were selected as the first managers of the state fund. Sheppard and Harper were particularly close friends of Latrobe. Supporters and members of the colonization society, they naturally looked to aid the MSCS through their power to allocate the funds contributed by the state for colonization. Since little aid from outside Maryland was expected, the MSCS president, George Hoffman, Francis Anderson, and John Latrobe formed a committee to oversee the financial arrangements to fund the colony's founding expedition. They determined that the cost to place a settlement at Cape Palmas or near there was approximately $8,000, which they sought to borrow from the state.[44] The managers of the state fund easily

[42] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Robert S. Finley, Jr. to John Latrobe, December 31, 1833.

[43] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Leonard Bacon to John Latrobe, October 22, 1833; Robert S. Finley, Jr. to John Latrobe, December 31, 1833.

[44] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. George Hoffman, F. Anderson, John Latrobe, The Committee of the Society to the Board of Managers of Md. St. Col. Fund, September 7, 1833.

approved a loan to the MSCS. "The board will pay $30 for every emigrant taken to Africa by the MSCS during that year and advance the difference not to exceed $8,000 as a loan."[45] The society would repay the advance by transporting emigrants to Maryland in Liberia. Interestingly, the amount set by the managers of the state fund for transporting colonists was the same rate the MSCS had refused to pay the ACS in 1831.

With the funding secured, the MSCS focused on finding a governor for the colony, finalizing the government, and readying a small but organized group of colonists to sail in November. As governor the MSCS members chose Dr. James Hall. Well qualified, Hall had served previously in Liberia as the colonial physician for the ACS. He also had considerable experience negotiating with Africans and was well familiar with the region around Cape Palmas. In fact, Hall had personally recommended that spot to Latrobe for Maryland in Liberia. All these factors plus his medical training made him very desirable to the MSCS. The timing was convenient as well as Hall had just returned to Baltimore from Liberia in the summer of 1833. Before Hall left Baltimore to visit his family, Latrobe contacted him, explained the MSCS plan, and offered him the governorship with an annual salary of $2,000. Hall accepted immediately requesting only a short time to visit his family before returning to Africa.[46]

With a governor in place, Latrobe turned his attention to writing the constitution and laws, which formed the basis of Maryland in Liberia's government. Certainly, the laws written by Latrobe reflected his understanding of American history, but more important, they were

[45] Based on information, especially that provided by Dr. James Hall, the governor of the colony, the committee estimated that $3,000 was needed for transportation and supplies for the initial group of settlers; $2,000 to purchase territory at Cape Palmas, and the remaining $3,000 for defensive structures, buildings, arms and other miscellaneous supplies. *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. September 9, 1833.

[46] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. July 19, 1833; September 9, 1833; October 9, 1833; II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. James Hall to John Latrobe, February 7, 1833.

designed to create a pull factor—hopefully creating a desire among Maryland's free black population to go to Africa. He also assumed that the system would create an orderly, productive society. The American influence was clear in the constitution and charter for a temporary government as it borrowed heavily from the United States Constitution, the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, and even Maryland's constitution.[47] The Bill of Rights and the constitution reflected the American experience and the values of the MSCS members. The first article, for example, granted the settlers many of the same privileges guaranteed to white Americans while reserving a role for the MSCS as the highest political authority. Article Two prohibited the use of ardent spirits, except for cases of sickness. Latrobe was directly responsible for this provision and made the trafficking or use of alcohol a punishable crime. The society illustrated its seriousness with this particular issue by requiring emigrants to sign a written oath before embarking for the colony. Settlers who broke the provision lost the right to participate in the political process and were barred from holding any elected office in the colony. The fourth article reflected Latrobe's fears about the potentially disastrous interactions between the settlers and indigenous Africans. The colonists of Liberia frequently clashed with the indigenous people throughout their history. Latrobe attempted to prevent this from happening through the constitution, which provided that all natives be part of the colony. This also implied that the Greboes would be subject to the colonial government's authority.[48] The constitution further illustrated Americans' distaste for taxes by specifically defining what types of taxes could be imposed by the government of the colony. One aspect that differed from the United States was in education. From its beginning, Latrobe emphasized education in the colony and sought to support it with tax money. The

[47] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, November 27, 1833.

[48] Semmes, *The Life and Times*, 146.

creation of a public education system funded by taxes was more difficult than he anticipated and the missionaries actually became the primary educators in the colony. Still, the attempt was certainly influenced by the educational changes taking place in the United States as state funded schools were established.[49]

Like the United States' system of government, Maryland in Liberia's government protected the individual rights of the colonists. The bill of rights for Maryland in Liberia guaranteed the right to practice any Christian religion, to free speech, to be secure in one's property, and it gave every individual access to the legal system as outlined in amendments four through eight in the United States Constitution. There were important distinctions, however. While the colonists' rights to worship were protected, this first amendment to Maryland in Liberia's constitution did not include the religions practiced by many of the indigenous peoples, specifically the Grebo who still participated in rituals and ceremonies that Americans considered pagan superstitions and witchcraft. Latrobe and the others sponsoring the undertaking naturally presumed that the indigenous people would convert just as Europeans assumed when they colonized the Americas, but the presumption ignored the realities of African society. Many West Africans had been exposed to Christianity long before Americans settled there and had not converted. Missionaries often exaggerated the willingness of Africans to convert, partly because they misconstrued African adoption of some aspects of Christianity when they were in reality combining it with their traditional beliefs.

Interestingly, Latrobe's convictions in guaranteeing religious freedom in the colony were not as strong when it came to other legal rights, such as jury trials. The settlers, just like white Americans, could not be unlawfully detained nor subjected to double jeopardy or face cruel and

[49] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. November 22, 1833; Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 32-3.

unusual punishment. Yet Latrobe "would have done away with the trial by jury in civil cases, but was deterred by a decent respect for the opinions of mankind."[50] Apparently he had some concerns that the colonists, many generally uneducated, would make the wrong decision in cases where jury trials were commonly used, not to mention that it would make a good argument for those opposed to colonization to use in attacking the movement. While he never stated his reasoning for this opinion clearly, he certainly worried that the colonists would take advantage of the natives in the same way whites had used the law to exploit racial groups in the United States. Latrobe witnessed such incidents recording in his journal about cases in which the guilty went free and the innocent were punished. He evidently had doubts about jury trials generally.[51] Much of Latrobe's legal experience factored into the constitution as did his desire to bring about social order in America. He hoped that the government of Maryland in Liberia would be a peaceful one that would allow the colony to prosper and draw African Americans; ultimately alleviating the conflict threatening the Union.

As the time for the departure of Maryland's pioneers approached, a final problem caused dissension among the MSCS board members. The MSCS still needed to prepare the necessary items to purchase land at Cape Palmas. The board members decided months earlier that Maryland in Liberia would be a temperate community, and that the use and trade of ardent spirits would not be tolerated except for medical purposes. At the same time, the MSCS board members all knew the realities of trade on the west coast of Africa. Dr. James Hall assured the

[50] Semmes, *The Life and Times*, 146.

[51] Latrobe wrote of his first cases involving black Americans charged with thefts, which form the earliest entries of his journal. The outcome of some of these cases as well as his early experiences as a lawyer seem to have jaded him somewhat as to the effectiveness of jury trials. Latrobe, Diaries, September 1824.

members that he knew of no instance in which land was purchased in Africa without rum.[52] This posed a substantial dilemma for the MSCS. Would they hold to the temperance principle even if it meant dooming the efforts of the society by preventing the purchase of land for the settlement? Faced with no easy resolution to this problem, society members voted on whether or not to use rum in the purchase of land if the mission depended on that single factor. This was the only occasion on which an issue of policy went to vote in the society as action had always been unanimous. Some members insisted that the society not diverge from the constitution which made ardent spirits in the colony illegal. Others denied the proposition that article two of the constitution extended to purchasing land for the colony. The board decided by an eight-to-four vote that rum could be used to purchase Cape Palmas if no other deal produced the desired end. Latrobe instructed Governor Hall to take a "quantity of rum among other articles intended for the purchase of territory. This you are not to use, unless you should be satisfied that the object of the expedition will be frustrated without it. One of the most gratifying pieces of intelligence which you could give to the State Society is your despatch announcing the purchase of the territory would be the fact that it had been purchased without Rum."[53]

The willingness of some to sacrifice everything to uphold the temperance principle on this occasion illustrates the strength of the values that shaped the ideas of Maryland colonizationists. The MSCS wanted to hold to the values proclaimed by its members, but when faced with failure on account of temperance, the society's actions suggest that colonization was more important. Ultimately, it was better to sacrifice this one principle if it was the only means

[52] Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 36.

[53] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes. Reel 1. October 9, 1833; Correspondence Sent, reel 16, John Latrobe to James Hall, November 25, 1833.

of ensuring colonization's success. Latrobe's vision was more important to him than losing everything for the want of a place to plant the colony.

Although the MSCS compromised its position on temperance, its members still desired a colony that reflected their religious zeal. An emphasis on religion in the colony, Latrobe believed, increased the chances for success. A cooperative effort with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), an organization Latrobe encountered during his tour of New England in August of 1833, further reflected the goal of Christianizing Africa. Latrobe thought the presence of missionaries guaranteed that colonists would behave as the MSCS hoped. The MSCS could create a strong Christian presence in its colony by offering the ABCFM every resource available to the organization.[54] As the ultimate objective of the ABCFM missionaries in Africa was the "moral improvement of the native tribes in connection with promoting the spiritual and intellectual interests of the colonists," the partnership seemed well suited to the goals of both bodies.[55] After a brief courting period, it was agreed that two mission representatives would accompany Governor Hall and the colonists to Africa in November of 1833 to scout the area, and if suitable, choose a mission site.

The ABCFM initially searched for African-American missionaries for its new West African initiative as its members believed that they would exert a greater influence on Africans than would white missionaries. This proved more difficult than the ABCFM assumed, since most African-Americans did not wish to go to Africa. Many considered it a certain death

[54] The ABCFM, founded in 1810, comprised Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists. The ABCFM supported colonization for its potential for spreading the gospel in Africa and a mission in Maryland in Liberia would provide a secure base of operations among Africans. Jacobs, *Black Americans*, 8; MSCS Papers, Minutes, Vol. 1, reel 1. September 9, 1833; Correspondence Received, Vol. 2, reel 2. B.B. Wisner to John H.B. Latrobe, September 21, 1833.

[55] MSCS Papers, Correspondence Received, Vol. 2, reel 2. B.B. Wisner to John H.B. Latrobe, October 5, 1833.

sentence.[56] Unable to obtain sufficient numbers of black missionaries for Maryland in Liberia, the ABCFM, therefore, appealed to white clergymen from the South to serve as missionaries thinking that they would withstand Africa's climate better than ministers from northern states.[57] Reverend John Leighton Wilson, a white South Carolinian, answered the call of the ABCFM for African missionaries in 1833. Newly ordained, Wilson volunteered along with Stephen R. Wynkoop, chosen by the ABCFM to be Wilson's assistant, to accompany the first group of emigrants in the fall of 1833 and to assess the potential for promoting the gospel in Africa.[58]

The agreement between the MSCS and ABCFM was the final piece of the puzzle Latrobe thought necessary to settle a colony and make the movement a success. In November of 1833, the MSCS was finally ready to establish Maryland in Liberia. The colonists left Baltimore on November 28, 1833, aboard the brig Ann. Latrobe was there to see the Ann depart with Governor James Hall, his assistant agent Reverend John Hersey, ABCFM missionaries J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen R. Wynkoop, and nineteen emigrants from Maryland. Latrobe commented that it was "a bleak November day" with "clouded skies and the misty rain, and the fact that the agent had to be carried from a sick bed to his berth in the cabin would have been ominous of failure."[59] The fact that it was a miserable day when the Ann sailed from Baltimore was just the beginning. Hall had taken extremely ill shortly before they were to leave Baltimore. There were doubts as to whether or not he would even live to see the settlers reach Africa.

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[56] William Watkins to William Lloyd Garrison, May 1831. In *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 3:99.

[57] The ABCFM members believed that southern whites could cope better with the climate of Africa than New Englanders. This belief that African-Americans or southern whites could tolerate the tropical climate, and thus diseases of Africa, better than those from the northeastern United States, demonstrated the ignorance of many Americans about Africa. By the 1830s, it was well known that Africa was lethal to all non-Africans, white or black. Clifton Jackson Phillips, *Protestant America and The Pagan World*, 208.

[58] MSCS Papers, Correspondence Received, Vol. 2, reel 2. B.B. Wisner to John H.B. Latrobe, September 21, 1833; *African Repository* Vol. 10 August 1834, 178.

[59] Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 37.

Despite his extensive preparations and the acknowledgement by MSCS officials that the entire venture would not be easy, unexpected difficulties began almost immediately for MSCS officials making it seem as though Maryland in Liberia would be plagued by the same problems of the ACS colonies. The situation appeared very serious to Latrobe and the beginning of the venture left him wondering if his efforts would benefit his fellow man as he seemed to be the only dedicated member.[60]

Latrobe expressed his feelings about the matter to his friend Robert S. Finley, Jr., on numerous occasions. "We put ourselves on this venture as you well know," Latrobe told him, "in confident reliance upon the North, and we had your voucher, in some manner for doing so, although the thing spoke pretty much for itself." Yet, exclaimed Latrobe, "not a dollar have we yet—saving $100 from John Tappan out of the state—and we find but little warmth nowhere we want it the most…Such labor is worse than that of Sisyphus."[61] Referring to his efforts during the summer of 1833 to gain the aid and support of the North, Latrobe showed his disappointment with those he believed would be most sympathetic to the cause. However, he was not simply tired of the work, rolling the stone of colonization up a hill only to have it come back down. The following month, in another letter to Finley, Latrobe complained that the "truth is, that I am somewhat disappointed with the result of our Maryland scheme so far as its effect northward is concerned." No doubt he was disappointed seeing as he could not even enlist the help of a good friend.[62]

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[60] Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, November 27, 1833.

[61] A reference to a confidant of the Greek god Zeus, Sisyphus betrayed a secret of Zeus. Zeus punished him in Hades by making him try to roll a stone uphill forever. *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, C. Corresponding Secretary's Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to R.S. Finley, December 5, 1833.

[62] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, C. Corresponding Secretary's Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to R.S. Finley, January 9, 1834.

Already depressed over the lukewarm reception and slow progress of Maryland's colonization plans, Latrobe's plan faced further setbacks. Bad weather had slowed the vessel immediately after it left the harbor, and at one point left the Ann simply floating at sea with no wind. This endangered the expedition, as the MSCS planned the trip based on the recommendation of Dr. Henderson, an ACS official, so as to allow the settlers as much acclimation time as possible. However, the weather seemed only a minor problem after fighting broke out on the vessel between Captain W. C. Langdon and Maryland in Liberia's vice-agent, John Hersey. Governor Hall reported the incident in a letter dated December 2, 1833. Hall said that the "captain is a regular rum drinker, which was a source of great annoyance to Brother Hersey." Furthermore, "some considerable sparring took place between them, both threatened to quit the Cabin for the storage, but I finally succeeded…in restoring the peace."[63]

Reverend Hersey's own letter on the subject indicated that it was not only the captain's drinking that bothered him. The voyage was a lengthy one of sixty-one days, which he described as "boisterous, tedious, and most unpleasant." Hersey reported that the captain became intoxicated soon after setting sail and "poured out a ... volley of ... blasphemies... in the most vulgar and uncouth manner." Apparently, the captain regularly became intoxicated on rum and once drunk, cursed and behaved violently and vulgarly toward all those on board the ship, especially Rev. Hersey. The reverend attempted to speak to the captain, stating that he as well as some others would consider it "a peculiar favour if he could refrain from such excesses." [64] Hersey adopted this course of action at the behest of Governor Hall, who reminded his assistant

[63] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, December 2, 1833.

[64] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Hersey to Rev. William McKenny, At Sea, January 14, 1834.

that while at sea they were quite dependent on the captain. Unfortunately, this did little good as Hersey continued to describe how the captain, "in the midnight hour…would rave and swear…He would beat his poor old cook in the most cruel manner..." Later when this cook tried to "mix" with the emigrants, the roles played by the assistant agent and ship's captain reversed. Hersey demanded that the captain do something about his cook while Capt. Langdon defended the man.[65] Hersey obviously objected to the captain's behavior, but also seemed to be fighting with him for power on the vessel, particularly over control of the passengers. Dr. Hall intervened in time to prevent any fisticuffs between the captain and the reverend. Nonetheless, Hersey believed that the whole incident had tarnished his reputation, and more importantly to him, destroyed his authority with the colonists, particularly after Hall forced him to back off. Thus, after a lengthy voyage and many difficulties, Hersey resigned his position as vice-agent when they reached Africa.[66]

Once Hall and company arrived at Monrovia they were joined by a small number of colonists residing there who wished to go to the new colony. Most of those who had written John Latrobe in response to his previous inquiries about a new settlement in 1831 joined Hall's expedition. Among them were George R. McGill, James Benson, and James Thompson. Both McGill and Thompson would later serve in important positions in Maryland in Liberia. The others who joined the expedition arrived at Monrovia in the Lafayette the previous year. This brought the total number of emigrants going to Cape Palmas with Governor Hall to thirty-five.[67] Hall contended that many others wanted to go, but personal debt prevented their leaving the ACS

[65] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Hersey to Rev. William McKenny, At Sea, January 14, 1834.

[66] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Hersey to John Latrobe, February 3, 1834.

[67] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, February 9, 1834.

colony. Four of the newest members of the venture came from the settlement of Bassa, alleging their reasons for leaving stemmed from their disappointment with the amount of rations received and their severe suffering at the hands of ACS officials.[68] Regardless of the reasons for leaving the ACS colonies, Hall desperately needed the manpower for the expedition, as nearly half of his settlers were women and children, and the most difficult tasks still lay ahead. Thus, this tiny band set off for Cape Palmas in the hopes that the Maryland colony would be more to their liking than those managed by the ACS and with them were the hopes of Latrobe that his Union would endure because of the MSCS.[69]

On February 13, 1834, the Maryland colonization society's settlers arrived at Cape Palmas where Hall made arrangements for a palaver (a meeting in which gifts are exchanged before negotiating) on the following day. The meeting took place the next morning at which Hall met with King Freeman, alias Parmah (Pah Niemah), the leader of the Cape Palmas Grebo; Joe Holland, alias Pahfluer (Baphro) of Grand Cavally; and King Will, alias Weah Bolio of Grahway, leaders of neighboring Grebo peoples.[70] Other important African leaders attending were William Davis (Tudi Mah), Bill Williams (Simlah Ballah), and William Hall (Yellow Will). The meeting is telling in that it should have shown the MSCS and its officials that their intelligence regarding the Cape Palmas inhabitants was not as accurate as they thought. Further, it proved difficult to convert the Grebo over to the cultural and social values that Latrobe wished

[68] The Maryland society's home agent, Reverend William McKenny, reported to the MSCS managers that the biggest reason Maryland emigrants from Monrovia wanted to go with Hall was because the ACS had deceived them by promoting the colony falsely in order to get them to migrate. There is little evidence, however, to support this conclusion by McKenny. On February 4, 1834, the expedition left Monrovia with 19 men, 4 boys, 3 women, 4 children, and five more who joined from Grand Bassa. MSCS Papers, Minutes, Vol. I, reel 1. December 7, 1833.

[69] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, February 9, 1834.

[70] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, April 26, 1834. "Copy of the Deed for Maryland in Liberia;" Martin, "The Dual Legacy," 74, 99

primarily because the MSCS assumed that they would willingly adopt American practices because they were the same race as the colonists. In reality, the intelligence was inaccurate because it was reported in a manner designed to please superiors and hopefully drum up support for the cause of colony and mission. In addition, the demands made on Hall suggest that the Greboes were really interested in only what they believed would benefit them.

A brief history of the indigenous Africans in the Cape Palmas region in the 1830s helps suggest the complexities facing Maryland in Liberia. An obvious starting point is the names of these kings. All had both European and African names, indicating that the Grebo had adopted at least some European culture when it served their purposes. The Grebo had, in fact, been in contact with Europeans since the fifteenth century.[71] King Freeman and many other leaders used their people's position along the coast to fill the middleman role between Africans farther inland and European traders to establish themselves in positions of power. In fact, King Freeman was the only Grebo leader attending the palaver who did not already speak English fluently, demonstrating that the Greboes had adopted those cultural attributes which benefited them. The adoption of westernized names and a willingness to speak English, however, did not mean that the Grebo or other Africans living in the vicinity had adopted western culture wholesale or that they wished to. James Hall, and of course the MSCS, incorrectly interpreted these signs as an understanding and acceptance of concepts practiced by Americans, such as individual ownership of land.

[71] Such contact began in the fifteenth century when the Portuguese came to West Africa. The resulting trade resulted in a cultural change among coastal peoples, primarily through the adoption of certain aspects of European culture. Martin, "The Dual Legacy," 74, 99; James L. Newman, *The Peopling of Africa: A Geographic Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 124-126

The synthesized culture of the Grebo also allowed the three kings, specifically King Freeman who controlled Cape Palmas, to exchange land for the trade goods sent by the MSCS. Hall testified that all three readily signed the deed giving up "all the possessions of the above named kings in this country generally penetrating about twenty miles in the interior & to the same extent sea board."[72] This was a strange exchange to say the least, since Hall took possession of the land cheaply, claiming it cost him only $1,000 in goods. Among the items Governor Hall provided in the transaction were a small number of guns with ammunition, cloth, tobacco, and glassware. Land ownership, however, among many African groups had been, and still was, communal. More likely King Freeman thought the exchange gave the MSCS the right to use the land, but it was not a permanent title to the territory. Yet Hall claimed a large territory totaling nearly 400 square miles for the society and defined the boundaries as Latrobe instructed him—vaguely. Using descriptions such as a "palm tree" to mark the corners of the claim, Hall clearly intended the land to belong to the MSCS permanently regardless of the Grebo's understanding of land ownership, but he also sought to enlarge the territory if the opportunity presented itself. Again, this was per Latrobe's orders. Latrobe wanted Hall to obtain as much territory as possible as well as pre-emption rights to as much land as he could to prevent it from falling into the hands of the French or British. Both countries maintained a strong presence on the coast, especially the British as they attempted to enforce the ban on slave trading and also administered Liberia's neighbor, Sierra Leone. If the Greboes decided to sell more land, Hall was to exercise the colony's rights as first buyer. This was an important detail to Latrobe who

[72] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, February 9, 1834.

hoped the colony would grow into much more than a settlement for African Americans.[73] These concepts were western in origin and had little actual meaning to the Greboes, however. Regardless of the Greboes' understanding, Hall felt satisfied with the exchange and believed that it gave the MSCS what he termed "legitimate" possession of Cape Palmas and a proper footing to grow into the core of a new republic.[74]

Further pleasing the MSCS, Hall made the property arrangements without giving up the rum he carried on the Ann. The Grebo leaders made several demands for rum in exchange for the colonists using the territory, but Hall claimed the territory without meeting most of them. Hall even succeeded in getting the Grebo leaders to agree that their people would be considered citizens of the colony, remaining sovereign people only in their towns and keeping the right to hold only those lands currently under cultivation.[75]

Although Governor Hall achieved all he was directed to do by the board, he did obligate the MSCS to provide other services to the Greboes. One condition that they insisted on was free schools for their children, a demand that the missionaries agreed to meet. The ABCFM eventually opened three schools in Maryland in Liberia after Secretary Rufus Anderson insisted that the missionaries control these schools; the colony had no say in their operations. This condition met no resistance from the MSCS since it lessened the responsibility of the

[73] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, reel 16. John Latrobe to James Hall, November 25, 1833; II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, February 9, 1834.

[74] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, February 9, 1834

[75] MSCS Papers, Correspondence Received, Vol. 2, reel 2. James Hall to John H.B. Latrobe, February 12, 13, 19, 1834; III. Correspondence Sent, reel 16. John Latrobe to James Hall, June 2, 1834; Minutes, Vol. I, reel 1. See a copy of the deed for Maryland in Liberia, April 20, 1834; Charles S. Johnson, *Bitter Canaan: The Story of the Negro Republic* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1988), 86

government and promoted the goal of spreading Christianity.[76] In addition, Hall arranged for one son of each of the Grebo signatories to be sent to the United States under the care of the MSCS. While the MSCS accepted this condition with full intentions to educate the sons of the Grebo kings, Hall had other motives in agreeing to send these young men to America. Governor Hall, ever cautious, remained fearful about the relationship between the fledgling colony and the Grebo despite the cordial meetings. In the event that things turned sour between the natives and the settlers, Hall wrote Latrobe that the boys could be used as leverage against the Grebo in any dispute.[77] This concluded the purchase of Cape Palmas.

The actual settlement of Maryland's colony had only just begun with the signing of the deed by Grebo leaders. Yet John Latrobe had spent nearly five years getting to that point. It took considerable planning and effort on his part along with internal developments in Maryland and the United States to make it successful. The initial group of settlers had overcome the logistical problems as well as those arising from nature delaying them at sea to finally start Maryland's colony. Maryland officials also had several problems that they worked through during the voyage, but the real challenge still lay ahead of them all. The difficulties faced by officials and colonists during the fall of 1833 and the spring of 1834 were minor ones when compared to the tasks of actually building a settlement on the coast of Africa, the job Hall turned to during the summer of 1834.

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[76] Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterian missionaries operated the schools. Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 132; MSCS Papers, Correspondence Received, Vol. 2 reel 2. Rufus Anderson to John H.B. Latrobe, April 24, 1834.

[77] The three sons of Kings Freeman, Holland, and Will did leave for the United States, but only two arrived as one became sick before leaving Liberia. Another died shortly after arriving in America, at which point Latrobe sent the last boy home to Cape Palmas. *African Repository* August 1834, 178-179; Latrobe, *Maryland In Liberia*, 4; MSCS Papers, Correspondence Received, Vol. 2, reel 2. James Hall to John H.B. Latrobe, February 19, 1834; Minutes, Vol. I, reel 1. April 20, 1834; Martin, "The Dual Legacy," 75.

Chapter 4: "You are no longer the friend of our Colonization Cause:" The Challenges and Realities of Colonization in Africa.

During the first few months that James Hall and his little band of colonists lived at Cape Palmas they built houses and government buildings all the while hoping that they would survive. On the surface it appeared that the peaceful negotiations between the Greboes and the Maryland State Colonization Society's settlers were indicative of a good relationship. However, Hall never assumed that all would be well between the two and he was right to believe so as the colonists quickly came into conflict with the Greboes at Cape Palmas. Yet the conflicts with the Greboes made up only some of the troubles facing John Latrobe and the colonists of Maryland in Liberia. The settlers of Maryland's colony also confronted American missionaries who intervened in the colonists' relationship with the indigenous peoples, acted as the moral police of the colony, and were usurpers of the colony's executive authority. This chapter examines the numerous problems faced by MSCS officials and how those problems shaped the actions and policies of the society. Many of the problems experienced in the colony stemmed from Latrobe's faulty assumptions about Africa and his belief that colonization could be carried out easily under the right system. This chapter illustrates how the reality of colonization challenged the ideals, goals, and beliefs outlined in the previous chapter. It further explains the failures of the MSCS to cope with these realities. At times, the resolution of these problems required unorthodox actions and depended on outside forces, even including the United States Navy. The colonists, however, almost always looked to John Latrobe who had to accept the fact that many of his objectives were unrealistic in part because he could not ensure their being carried out in Africa.

The colony began with high hopes for Africa and the United States. Latrobe had advocated Cape Palmas as the site for the colony for its perceived benefits, one of which was that it appeared to be a healthier spot than any of the locations picked by the American Colonization Society. The ABCFM missionary, John Leighton Wilson, praised the project, first because it was achieved without using rum to buy the land and second, because he believed that Cape Palmas and its people were favorably disposed to the objects of his missionary agenda.[1] On the surface, everything appeared promising.

The cracks in the façade of colonization soon appeared. By May of 1834 Governor Hall reported conditions contradicting his initial assessments as well as those of the missionaries and colonists. One colonist, Joshua Stewart, wrote to his mother admitting that the place was agreeable at first, but now all the colonists were ill. Worse still, nothing was being done to advance the colony because all were "very sick with this fatal disease." Illness was not the only reason for the suffering of the colonists. Stewart claimed that he and his family had no clothes to wear. Finally, he charged that all the colonists had "been badly treated by the Governor of this place that Dr. Hall."[2] The allegations of the governor's poor treatment of the colonists stemmed from disagreements over the amount of rations he gave out to the settlers. The governor noted that the colonists had consumed more at sea than he anticipated due to the extended time taken to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Availability of provisions was a serious issue for the colony because it had to procure them from the Grebo people until they established their own farms and provided basic necessities themselves. Hall was consequently forced to ration food until the next ship

[1] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. J. Leighton Wilson to John Latrobe, April 15, 1834; *African Repository* Vol. 8. August, 1834, 178.

[2] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Joshua Stewart to Charlotte Stewart, May 5, 1834.

arrived with supplies from Maryland.[3] Nevertheless, Stewart lamented the fact that he had not listened to his mother and stayed in the United States. Stewart at first presumed that Liberia offered more than he could ever expect in Maryland, even as a free man. He soon found that he hated the colony and Africa so much that he pleaded with her to help him and his family return to the states. He even promised to "serve any way or at any time" for whomever was willing to advance him the cost of transportation. If necessary he would make the ultimate sacrifice and "sell myself for a slave for the sake of getting home once more."[4]

Such serious grumbling aggravated Latrobe. He dismissed Stewart, and others who complained as people who seemed "very evidently to be disappointed at having to work hard and bear the difficulties of new settlers."[5] Petty complaints incensed Latrobe because he knew that reports from the settlers influenced those in America more than any other arguments in favor of colonization, particularly in the black community. Assessments contrary to the portrayal offered by the society's agents only made the task more difficult and further jeopardized the effort in the United States by slowing the rate of emigration, which was the ultimate marker of success in white eyes. To achieve the goals of colonization, the MSCS could afford neither disturbances within the colony nor any serious conflicts to arise with the Greboes. Unfortunately, the MSCS had overestimated the prosperity of the region. All had mistaken the health of Cape Palmas based on the appearance of the Greboes, who had achieved a balance in what was actually a delicate environment subject to famines. As such, conflict quickly became pervasive in the colony.

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[3] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, October 15, 1834.

[4] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Joshua Stewart to Charlotte Stewart, May 5, 1834.

[5] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to James Hall, Esq., February 21, 1835.

Fearing that difficulties between the Greboes and the colonists might occur, Hall chose to make the settlement on the point of Cape Palmas. Hall's assumption rested on the history of the ACS colony's relations with indigenous Africans. Moving the settlers inland offered more material benefits by enabling the Governor to assign farms and lay out the town lots immediately, but Hall instead focused on the cape for its strategic advantages, a wise choice considering the illnesses of Hall and the colonists. Furthermore, he concluded that inland settlements also would have left the colonists vulnerable, isolated, and starved if the Greboes chose to dispose of the settlement. The cape, in contrast, afforded the colony easy access to the sea and allowed the few artillery pieces they possessed to be placed in a central vantage point for use against the Greboes should things turn for the worse.[6] Establishing the settlement on the cape also gave the colony an advantage that was overlooked at first. By controlling the cape, Hall could control trade with the interior. The Greboes dominated this trade in addition to supplying European trading vessels with food, water, and wood. Hall failed to realize that the colony threatened the economic dominance of the Greboes' coastal trading towns, and that Grebo leaders objected to American interference once the colonists began siphoning trade away from their people.

Governor Hall's fears that the Greboes might assault the colony were realized shortly after establishing the settlement on the cape. The natives, he told Latrobe, appear "to wish that we would sit down with them + become one people," as they fully understood the benefits that the colony offered. Nevertheless, he asserted that the Greboes "are so fickle + capricious that we are obliged to be ever upon the look out. They have twice called their people from our town +

[6] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, April 24, 1834; Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 43-44.

forbid all trade or intercourse of any kind with us + the aspect of affairs was so threatening that we were obliged to be all night upon our arms."[7] The situation neared desperation, particularly as the settlers were dependent on trading with Africans for food. After the Ann left the colonists, King Freeman ordered an embargo against the colony as he moved to reassert control over trade in the region. Freeman recognized the settlers' reliance on his people for food once the supplies they brought were gone. Hall hoped to remedy this by opening trade with the Greboes at Rocktown, a few miles to the northwest. Competitors with the Cape Palmas Greboes, they willingly supplied Hall with staples such as rice. The Rocktown Greboes were not under the direct control of King Freeman and Hall made good use of the classic strategy of dividing and conquering, but such a strategy was bound to generate conflict.

In April, King Freeman attempted to take control of the situation by prohibiting all Greboes from trading with the colonists. This was a direct challenge to Maryland in Liberia and Governor Hall's authority as well as an obvious ploy to get better terms of trade through intimidation. King Freeman made it clear to Governor Hall that he "would do as he pleased," he was after all a king.[8] Hall responded to the situation telling King Freeman that any effort by him or his people to interfere with trade in Maryland in Liberia would be considered an act of war. If war broke out, Hall warned Freeman, "I will not stop as long as one American lives or until I had destroyed every native town within gunshot of the cape town."[9] Even though the colonists were severely outnumbered, they maintained a small military advantage by mounting their only

[7] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, April 24, 1834.

[8] 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,* (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1885), 46-47.

[9] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, April 24, 1834.

cannon to face Freeman's town, which Hall masterfully exploited. The incident vindicated Hall's decision to settle at the coast rather than move inland. Having a native town within range of his only cannon allowed him to use the threat of force in his negotiations with the Greboes. Freeman conceded the issue, confirming Hall's suspicion that the king sought a more profitable trading arrangement or the restoration of the trade lost to Americans, rather than to exterminate the settlement. Hall continued trading with others along the coast further weakening the position of the Cape Palmas Greboes in their attempts to charge higher prices.[10] The incident also motivated Latrobe to request that the squadron of United States naval vessels patrolling the African coast periodically visit Cape Palmas as a show of military force. While the United States and its vessels of war had no direct connection with the colony, Latrobe encouraged visits by United States warships in the hopes that their presence would convince the natives of American military superiority. In essence, it became a policy of the MSCS to foster the idea among the Greboes at Cape Palmas that the colonists were under the protection of the American navy; an idea aimed at curtailing Grebo attempts to gain a material advantage over the colonists.[11]

While Hall forced King Freeman into submission on the issue of trade in the colony, problems between the Greboes and settlers continued as the groups came into conflict. Hall charged some Greboes with stealing from the colonists. In a report sent to Latrobe, Hall said the Greboes literally reached through the thatched walls of the colonists' shelters and stole the clothes off the sick as they lay in their beds. He promised that as soon as the colonists were strong enough, he would "make the king responsible for all thefts committed by his people…and

[10] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, April 24, 1834.

[11] Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 56.

demand restitution." Hall even suggested that the king himself supported the crimes against the settlers because the booty was divided among the headmen of the Grebo village.[12] Since King Freeman "suffered it to exist as a custom of his people, he was himself responsible."[13] If Hall could make Freeman accept responsibility, it would establish the Governor as a higher authority in the area while lessening the importance of the king. If successful, it would also establish a precedent that would allow Governor Hall to apply the colony's laws to all Greboes in the territory of Maryland in Liberia. True to his word, Hall approached King Freeman regarding the thefts and demanded that he pay for every item stolen from the colonists.

Incidents of theft, however, were not limited to the Greboes. While Hall sought to assert his dominance over Freeman, the king's people captured a colonist who was trying to steal cassava from a native farm. Yet in a clear double standard, Hall did not demand that the colonist pay for the damages, nor did Hall offer to pay restitution for losses suffered by individual Greboes. Instead, Hall punished the colonist according to Latrobe's legal code, but demanded restitution in cases involving Grebo people. The king bluntly asked why he had to pay for the losses of the colonists when his people stole from them, while Hall was not liable when the reverse occurred.[14] Hall paternalistically explained that the colonists would be punished according to the principals of western law, thus no monetary compensation was forthcoming to Grebo victims. However, if the Greboes would submit to such laws, they would be applied equally. King Freeman agreed and arranged to send Simleh Ballah to Baltimore to see Latrobe. There Latrobe wrote a set of laws for the Greboes similar to the code governing the colony. This

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[12] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, April 24, 1834.

[13] *MSCS Papers*, VIII. Commissions and Reports, Reports of the Board of Managers, 1835-1847. *Report of the Board of Managers,* 1850, 11.

[14] Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 46-47.

unforeseen occurrence provided a perfect opportunity for Latrobe to proselytize American values among indigenous Africans, a significant step in making the inhabitants of Maryland in Liberia one people and in creating an African republic.[15]

Although Hall had a clear double standard when it came to crimes committed in the colony, partly due to military necessity and a need to keep the colony unified, others were not bound by such constraints. Both missionaries accompanying the pioneers of Maryland in Liberia, J. Leighton Wilson and Stephen R. Wynkoop, as well as former colonial agent Rev. John Hersey, condemned the behavior of the colonists. Wilson submitted multiple reports on the Cape Palmas settlement to his superiors and to the ACS, which published them in its journal, *The African Repository*. His assessment of Cape Palmas was very positive and he portrayed the Greboes magnanimously.[16] In private correspondence with both his superiors and John Latrobe, however, he indicated his disapproval of the settlers and his desire that the missionaries be a separate entity within Maryland in Liberia. The longer Wilson lived in the colony the stronger was his conviction that the colonists actually harmed missionary efforts. Thus he worked "to impress the mind of the king and his people with the fact, that the mission is to be entirely distinct from the colony, and will be identified with the interests of the natives."[17] Wilson's attitude reflected both his observations of the relationship between the colonists and Greboes and his familiarity with the other Liberian settlements. He feared that a close association with the

[15] This event also illustrated an aspect of colonization that was a serious issue for Africans in cultural transition resulting from foreign contact. African agency, the willingness of Africans to adopt aspects of western culture, because of some perceived benefit, raises the question of the role Africans played in colonization. Clearly, in this instance, King Freeman was attempting to level the playing field with colonizers. However, such agency resulted in considerable internal conflict and resistance to colonizing agents. Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, 48.

[16] *The African Repository*, vol. 8 (August 1834): 179.

[17] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, Vol. 2, reel 2. J. Leighton Wilson to Ira Easter, June 2, 1836; Vol. 2, reel 3. Wilson to John Latrobe, March 18, 1837; Wilson to Easter, July 5, 1838; Wilson to Latrobe, January 15, 1839.

colonists could threaten the mission station if relations between the colonists and the natives deteriorated. He wanted the Greboes to understand that the missionaries and colonists were different groups of Americans.

Other reports echoed the doubts expressed by Wilson. Reverend John Hersey went to the colony as Hall's assistant, but quickly became disillusioned by the whole scheme of colonization. He too challenged the wisdom in settling Maryland's blacks among the Greboes. On "our arrival at Cape Palmas the emigrants discovered not only an indisposition to work, but they manifested an unkind and hostile feeling towards the natives, and a wrangling spirit among themselves." Furthermore, they showed little respect to Governor Hall and on more than one occasion "insulted and injured the natives." Hersey noted that "one time a native who was working in our employment [for the governor] was refused a drink of water by one of the colonists…a scuffle ensued_the native was too strong for the colonist, and drew blood in several places from his face." At this point, the humiliated settler declared that he would "kill all the natives_to exterminate them from the land, and burn their town."[18]

The attitude displayed by some of the colonists was only part of the problem according to Hersey. He noted that settlers frequently hired local Africans to work on their farms with no "reasonable prospect of making them any remuneration for their services."[19] This no doubt contributed to the thieving in the colony and causing more problems between Hall and King Freeman. Finally, Hersey was critical of the democratic process in the colony. When the colonists held elections in February of 1834, they voted for a man Hersey thought wholly

[18] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Reverend John Hersey to John Latrobe, July 21, 1834.

[19] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Reverend John Hersey to John Latrobe, July 21, 1834.

unqualified to be Hall's assistant. Hersey therefore suggested that the MSCS curb the colonists' uncouth manners by suspending the elective franchise until they were properly prepared for the duties of citizenship.[20]

Like many white Americans, Hersey had doubts that African Americans were capable of exercising the rights of free people, and the settlers' selection proved it as far as he was concerned. Such a report concerned Latrobe, yet he was reluctant to accept such accusations without hard evidence. Nor was he ready to disenfranchise the settlers. Latrobe understood that democratic participation was an important factor in getting African Americans to migrate to Maryland in Liberia. Furthermore, as a supporter of President Andrew Jackson, he endorsed the expansion of the elective franchise for white males. To take the right to vote away from the colonists would have violated the strong democratic feelings Latrobe held, even though he himself intimated that white men in the United States were sometimes too ignorant to exercise good voting sense.[21] Ultimately, Latrobe ignored Hersey's recommendation. Instead, he emphasized to Governor Hall his desire that the colonists and Greboes "should be as one people." Peace between the two groups in the colony was more important because it affected the speed of settlement, the potential for growth, and Latrobe's long-term vision for both continents.[22]

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[20] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Reverend John Hersey to John Latrobe, July 21, 1834.

[21] By his own admission, Latrobe charged that the working classes had many vices, but he still spoke for and supported the Jacksonians. However, he intimated that some men voted strictly for the party to which they belonged. While elections were generally a test of approving the behavior of politicians, he voted his conscience, an act of rational intelligence. John Latrobe, *Diaries*, Collection of the Maryland Historical Society. Entries under dates: October 20, 1834; October 22, 1834; November, no day listed, 1838.

[22] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. January 10, 1835.

In the colonization of Africa, conflict between the colonizers and the colonized was not unusual. Maryland in Liberia differed from the later European takeover primarily because the colonizers were of African descent. Latrobe and the MSCS assumed that race would be a unifying factor between the two groups at Cape Palmas. This attitude was more a product of American racism than anything else. Perhaps nowhere was race more important than in the United States.[23] Being of the same race, however, did not unify the colonists with the Greboes. Cultural differences often prevented unity. Likewise, in the history of African colonization missionaries often defended the indigenous peoples against the colonizers. This was also true in Maryland's colony since Reverend Wilson believed the opportunities for spreading Christianity among the Greboes were promising and conflict would only hurt his efforts. Several prominent Grebo leaders already exhibited aspects of Christian influence; Wilson assumed that they would help him spread his faith to Africa's interior peoples and suggested as much in his reports home.[24] But Wilson's criticisms of the colonists did not sit well with Latrobe, who intended the two causes to be mutually supportive.

Wilson's insistence that the missionaries be separate from the colony ran counter to his repeated interference in the affairs of the colony, supporting the Greboes in their conflicts with the colonists. Because Governor Hall was often in poor health, he actually encouraged the missionary's involvement in colonial affairs. Furthermore, the missionaries acted as mediators

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[23] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. January 10, 1835; Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, (New York: The New Press, 1974); Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 60-67;Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992); Peter Kent Opper, "The Mind of the White Participant in the African Colonization Movement, 1816-1840." (Ph.D. Diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1972); Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), Chapter eight; David M. Streifford, "The American Colonization Society: An Application of Republican Ideology to Early Antebellum Reform," in The Journal of Southern History Vol. 45, Iss. 2 (May 1979), 212.

[24] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. B.B. Wisner to John Latrobe, October 5, 1833; *African Repository*, Vol. 8. August, 1834, 178-185.

almost from the beginning when disputes occurred between the two groups. Certainly Wilson's southern paternalism contributed to this attitude, as did the fact that King Freeman had developed a strong relationship with Wilson. When he wanted to address Latrobe, he almost always sought Wilson out to act as a translator, indicating Freeman trusted the missionaries enough to handle his negotiations with the MSCS. Hall did little to discourage this, and he found Wilson's assistance, more often than not, benefited the colony by more quickly settling disputes with the Greboes.[25]

Latrobe, like Hall and the other MSCS members, initially envisioned the missionary presence as a beneficial one, especially after the ABCFM agreed to operate the three schools in the colony the Greboes demanded as a condition of the original land purchase. Such cooperation lightened the load for the colonization society. Education was an important issue to Latrobe and he pushed it from the beginning. Education of the colonists and native inhabitants would contribute to the prosperity of the colony as well as accelerate the westernization of the Greboes, he believed. Education also provided another point on which to draw support, as public education was growing in the reformist climate of the United States. Additionally, an educational system in Maryland in Liberia involved women in the cause of colonization; the ladies of Baltimore extended regular financial support for schools in the colony beginning in the mid-1830s.[26] Therefore, the MSCS gratefully accepted the assistance of the missionaries in

[25] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, October 15, 1834; March 1, 1835.

[26] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. Latrobe to Samuel Bayard, April 19, 1837; Charles Earp, "The Role of Education in the Maryland Colonization Movement." Journal of Negro History. 26 (1941): 365-388; Kurt Lee Kocher, "Religious and Educational Activities of the Maryland State Colonization Society, 1833-1843." (Master's Thesis: Towson State College, 1974).

establishing the colony's education system. What Latrobe did not anticipate was that the colony would be so reliant on the missionaries for negotiations with the Grebo leaders.

Making the situation all the more dire for Latrobe was Governor James Hall's extremely poor health, which raised doubts about his continuing as the head of Maryland in Liberia. Latrobe valued Hall for his ability to further the agenda of the MSCS but recognized that another agent would be needed and he began the search for a replacement in 1835. Latrobe proposed that someone be sent to the colony in November of 1835 as a special agent to assist Governor Hall or take over completely if his health failed. Latrobe's original choice for the job was J. C. F. Finley, a relative of his friend Robert Finley. He apparently had no interest in going back to Africa (he had just recently returned) and declined the offer made by the MSCS. Latrobe then nominated a young dentist from Baltimore, Oliver Holmes, to be the society's special agent. Holmes accepted the position and left for Maryland in Liberia with the November expedition. Holmes's arrival in the colony was timely as Hall's poor health forced him to leave, making Holmes the interim governor.[27]

Latrobe endorsed Holmes as the temporary governor because of the young man's dedication to the cause of colonization. Latrobe praised Holmes for leaving "a lucrative business here for the sake of it. He is a most respectable young Gentleman_a member of the Episcopal Church and is entitled to consideration for his personal good qualities."[28] Latrobe, nevertheless, made it perfectly clear that Holmes was to follow the precedent set by Hall in governing the fledgling colony. When it came to the Grebo, Holmes was to avoid open hostilities.[29] Latrobe

[27] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. November 14, 1835.

[28] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to Rev. J. L. Wilson, December 12, 1835.

[29] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to Oliver Holmes, March 18, 1836.

soon found that good qualities or intentions did not make him a good administrator, nor did it keep him from conflicts with Wilson or the colonists. By the time he left the colony, the only ones Holmes seemed to be getting along with were the Greboes.

Joining Holmes in running the colony for the MSCS was Charles Snetter. Snetter had only recently moved to Maryland in Liberia. At Hall's request he emigrated from the ACS colony. Latrobe was uncertain of the propriety of Hall's actions in stealing Snetter away from the older colony, but the governor soon won approval for the move by asserting that "I know Snetter to be a capable enterprising popular fellow + feel that I could entrust the colony with him in case of accident with more confidence than any other coloured man in Liberia."[30] Not all those in the MSCS shared Hall's optimism in suggesting that a colonist was ready to govern the colony so early in its history. Charles Howard, one of the state fund managers and future president of the MSCS wrote Hall in the spring of 1835 expressing his disapproval. No matter how "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."[31] Knowing that a significant portion of the settlers had been slaves, many white colonizationists believed that it would take a generation before they were ready—trained as it were—in the art of self-governance. Such attitudes reflected a central tension in the colonization movement.

Despite the rough start with the Greboes, Governor Hall had achieved relatively peaceful relations by the end of 1835. That all changed when he prepared to leave the colony in the hands

[30] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. James Hall to John Latrobe, March 1, 1835.

[31] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. Charles Howard to James Hall, May 30, 1835.

of Oliver Holmes and Charles Snetter. Accusations of theft again escalated the tensions between the colonists and Greboes. Retaliating against King Freeman's people for stealing crops from the farms of settlers, the colonists began killing the livestock of Grebo villagers. Tensions rose until the missionaries joined the fracas.[32] Both sides agreed to a palaver to stop the conflict before it turned more violent. The palaver highlighted cultural differences regarding property as well as the struggle for economic dominance in the colony. King Freeman blamed the whole situation on the colonists, stating that his people stole from the farms only after bullocks belonging to his people were slaughtered. Certainly, given the propensity for poor agricultural yields in the settlement's early history, the colonists would not have hesitated to turn to animals for sustenance. Hall well knew that the Greboes took slaughter of their livestock very seriously because livestock were critical to their economy. Hall also understood that sometimes theft was a means of gaining compensation from an offending party.[33] Holmes, with no experience in Africa and little knowledge of the Greboes, did not fully recognize the seriousness of the situation. Settlers, on the other hand, blamed Governor Hall for the conflict, claiming that his refusal to give gifts to the headmen before leaving had insulted them, thus bringing hostility on the colonists. They suggested that Africans perpetrated the thefts to compensate for Hall's shortcomings and not their actions. Equally important, several of Freeman's people owed debts to settlers, and the colonists realized that they stood to lose any chance of collecting those debts

[32] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. King Freeman to the Gentlemen of the Colonization Board of Baltimore (written by J. L. Wilson for king Freeman), September 5, 1836.

[33] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Robert McCoy to John Latrobe, July 13, 1836; King Freeman to the Gentlemen of the Colonization Board of Baltimore (written by J. L. Wilson for king Freeman), September 5, 1836.

if a settlement occurred too quickly. Missionaries eventually helped both sides reach an agreement, although peace between the two groups was only temporary.[34]

Latrobe responded to the lingering problems by devising a new legal framework modeled after American law. He hoped that these changes would stop vigilante justice, promote unity in the colony, and more fairly administer justice to both parties. Latrobe sent a revised law code to the colony in 1836, which included ordinances creating native magistrate positions. This was the first significant change initiated by the MSCS in response to the realities of colonization. Latrobe and MSCS officials acknowledged that race alone was not sufficient to create common accord between the settlers and Greboes. There were obviously significant cultural differences and King Freeman in particular publicly objected to the clear legal double standard applied in Maryland in Liberia. Native magistrates addressed these concerns. The new constables specifically served the Grebo community at Cape Palmas, but were vested with the powers associated with such officials in western law. They collected evidence and enforced punishments, which Latrobe assumed would make rule by Americans more palatable to the Greboes.[35] The degree to which this system succeeded is difficult to determine. Most of the Greboes under King Freeman's control accepted this change, but certainly not all of them. Furthermore, the legal changes did not truly address the problems behind the petty thefts: economics, cultural rifts, and tense trading relations often created by environmental factors.

Despite changes in the colony's legal code, the problems for Holmes and Snetter went beyond controlling relations with the Greboes. Both the missionaries and colonists alleged that

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[34] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. King Freeman to the Gentlemen of the Colonization Board of Baltimore (written by J. L. Wilson for king Freeman), September 5, 1836.

[35] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. King Freeman to the Gentlemen of the Colonization Board of Baltimore (written by J. L. Wilson for king Freeman), September 5, 1836.

Holmes was an alcoholic, and that his government was corrupt. While the charges of alcoholism were Holmes's alone to bear, Snetter bore some of the responsibility for charges of corruption. As the assistant agent, Snetter was responsible for keeping the financial books in the colony, specifically for the colonial store. As it turned out, the ledgers had been neglected for several months and the colonists complained about the mark-up on goods sold in the colonial store by the MSCS. Neither accepted responsibility for the problems of the colony. Instead they blamed each other. The charges against Holmes came directly from two missionaries who claimed that he brewed his own wine from water, molasses, and rum. According to Wilson, this drink caused Holmes to make a spectacle of himself. Furthermore, the drink violated the laws of the colony as well as the oath demanded of every colonist before embarking from Baltimore. Even more disturbing to the missionaries and Latrobe was the fact that Holmes supplied his Grebo laborers with the wine.[36]

Wilson objected even more strongly when Holmes verbally attacked Charles Snetter in an attempt to shift the blame for the charges leveled at his administration. In a move uncharacteristic of Wilson, he informed Latrobe of Holmes's transgressions, while making certain he defended Snetter before the board of the MSCS. Wilson began by boldly declaring to Latrobe that "You are aware that I do not meddle with colonial affairs, + those who are witnesses of daily actions will testify that I confine myself to the proper duties of a missionary of Jesus xt." Far from the truth, Wilson often meddled in colonial affairs, but this case was exceptional because it was one of the very few occasions that he actually defended a colonist. Wilson

[36] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. J. Leighton Wilson to John Latrobe, September 6, 1836; James Thompson to John Latrobe, September 6, 1836.

asserted that the man was the "crown of the American population in Africa," and hoped that Holmes's accusations against Snetter would not be given any credence by the MSCS.[37]

Latrobe and the MSCS hoped to end such problems by appointing a new governor, one who would enforce the laws of the colony, manage the affairs of the store, and keep the missionaries from extending their influence into secular matters. Latrobe was also convinced that the colonists themselves needed to be in control of their government. Therefore, he was looking for a settler who could do all that the society desired. Latrobe differed from his colleagues in that he believed white rule must cease sooner rather than later; however, his motives were not entirely altruistic. Latrobe was extremely sensitive to criticism of the MSCS in the United States. Critics, mainly abolitionists, charged that the colonists were nothing more than servants under a white governor; a notion he rejected entirely. Still, Latrobe recognized the potential propaganda value if his colony could tout the first and only African American governor. After all, abolitionists were successfully using the press to politicize emancipation; why could he not do the same for colonization. As such, he suggested that the governorship be offered to a man of color, John B. Russwurm.[38]

By June of 1836, Latrobe had convinced his colleagues that his choice for governor was the correct one. John B. Russwurm, a man of mixed descent, was the second African American to graduate from college in the United States. After graduating from Bowdoin College, Russwurm started an abolitionist newspaper in New England, *Freedom's Journal*. Russwurm denounced colonization early in his journalistic career; however, by 1829 his sentiments on the

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[37] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. J. Leighton Wilson to John Latrobe, September 6, 1836.

[38] John E. Semmes, *John H. B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803-1891*, (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1917), 149.

future of American blacks had changed and he volunteered to immigrate to Liberia. At Monrovia he became editor of the *Liberia Herald* and a school teacher. Although many African Americans and abolitionists considered his departure for Africa the worst kind of betrayal, Latrobe interpreted his change of heart toward colonization as that of an enlightened man who realized where his real future lay. Latrobe further felt that Russwurm's education and service to the colony at Monrovia qualified him to be Maryland in Liberia's governor, and he offered him the position in June of 1836.[39] In appointing Russwurm, Latrobe's position became clearer. The MSCS was departing from "the custom which has prescribed that Agents and Governors in Africa should be white men…The Board cannot believe that their authority in force or duration, will be less in Africa because it is wielded by other than a white man, they cannot think that the colonists and natives will pay less respect to the representative of the law and head of the civil and military government because he is of the same race with themselves."[40] If anything, the appointment of Russwurm should, Latrobe thought, create more peaceable relations between the groups residing at Cape Palmas. Russwurm accepted the position as governor and left Monrovia for Cape Palmas in the fall of 1836. Wilson, although having no official authority, expressed his approval of the Maryland society's selection of Russwurm, happy that Holmes was leaving the colony. He hoped that now things could settle down between everyone in the settlement.[41]

Restoring the peace between all the groups in Maryland in Liberia was the primary task Latrobe demanded from his new governor. Latrobe instructed Russwurm that board members

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[39] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. June 28, 1836.

[40] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, June 30, 1836.

[41] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. J. Leighton Wilson to John Latrobe, September 6, 1836.

"do not wish the History of the United States of America to be repeated in Africa so far as it is connected with the fate of the Aborigines."[42] Latrobe's instructions reflected the history of relations with Native Americans as well as the events then taking place in the United States. President Andrew Jackson had backed the removal of the Cherokee from Georgia in defiance of a Supreme Court ruling in a case that sought to revoke the Indian Removal Bill passed by Congress and signed into law May 28, 1830. The bill authorized force in removing Indians west of the Mississippi River, with which Jackson agreed.[43] Although Latrobe strongly supported the President in 1828 and was one of the founding members of the Democratic Party in Maryland, he did not agree with the process of removal. In fact, he looked at Native Americans sympathetically. His viewpoint was much influenced by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson, at one point hoped that Native Americans could be assimilated rather than exterminated. Though Jefferson eventually abandoned this view, Latrobe was nevertheless swayed by the idea.[44] He even represented the Choctaw in treaty negotiations with the U.S. government. Consequently, Latrobe hoped that relations between the settlers and Greboes in Africa did not mirror the history of America and its native peoples. He specifically instructed Russwurm to incorporate them into the colony, not drive them away.[45]

Russwurm arrived just in time to witness another round of hostility with the Greboes. Stealing remained a problem; however, now the thefts had spread to include the colonial store

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[42] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, June 30, 1836.

[43] John Ehle, *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 230-255.

[44] Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 78, 276, 338.

[45] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, June 30, 1836.

run by the MSCS. The importance of the store cannot be overestimated. The store was the primary supplier of American manufactures to the colonists as well as the primary market for their produce. Latrobe had ordered Governor Hall to purchase whatever "articles they raise, to a limited extent, to be regulated by your best judgment."[46] This was partly intended as a policy to motivate agricultural production in the colony, but the program also worked to the advantage of the MSCS because there was no circulating specie in the colony. The government often paid wages in trade goods from the MSCS' store, and then applied the profits toward reducing the financial burden on the state's costs. This was the primary reason the MSCS sought to control trade within the colony. Russwurm recognized the importance of commerce in accelerating the plans of the MSCS and acted to increase security at the store and pressure the newly appointed native magistrates to identify the perpetrators.[47]

Within days, Russwurm's actions produced results as the magistrates secured some of the stolen items as well as the identity of one thief, a relative of King Freeman. They further suggested that King Freeman was the one who had been hindering the efforts of the magistrates in bringing the culprits to justice. The magistrates eventually apprehended the prime suspect in December of 1836 only to have Grebo allies forcibly break him out of jail and block the primary road between the Cape and the newest Maryland settlement four miles inland called Harper. Fearing for their lives, the settlers near Harper sought refuge at Wilson's Fair Hope mission.[48]

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[46] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to James Hall, February 21, 1835.

[47] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, February 10, 12, 1837.

[48] The native magistrates arrested the father of the accused to force his surrender. They were successful, but only temporarily held the man before he was set free by a mob. *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, February 10, 12, 1837; J. Leighton Wilson to John Latrobe, March 18, 1837; J. L. Wilson (writing for Simlah Ballah) to John Latrobe, June 6, 1837.

Wilson worked to calm the hysteria relaying the Greboes' message that they intended no harm to the settlers. Rather they sought only to scare them into freeing the man accused of robbing the store.[49]

The fact that the settlers sought refuge at Wilson's Fair Hope mission must have given him some satisfaction as it implied that his presumptions about them had been correct. If the colonists behaved as good Christians then they had nothing to fear from the Greboes. For Wilson, the colonists' appeal for protection from him was nothing less than an indictment of wrongdoing on their part. This incident also demonstrated another facet of the relationship between the missionaries and the Grebo people; because the colonists sought shelter at the mission it justified Wilson's persistence in arguing that the missionaries were separate from the colony. More detrimental, however, Russwurm's handling of the incident led Wilson to become increasingly critical of Liberia's first African American governor.[50]

While the colonists prompted involvement by the missionaries this time, Wilson had few qualms about using his influence to resolve the situation. Wilson arranged a palaver between Russwurm and Freeman. There, Freeman insisted that the settlers had started the most recent troubles, but Russwurm would hear none of it. The governor reported to Latrobe that the charges against the colonists were "quite imaginary, leaving out of view others which were utterly false."[51] Russwurm attributed the recent round of thefts to two factors: first that the king failed to punish petty thefts by his people and second, the older colonists' refusal to farm. Instead, some settlers chose to pursue activities promising higher income and more rapid prosperity, such

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[49] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Simlah Ballah to John Latrobe, June 6, 1837.

[50] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, February 10, 12, 1837; J. Leighton Wilson to John Latrobe, March 18, 1837.

[51] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, February 12, 1837.

as producing lumber and shingles or performing carpentry work for the missionaries. These individuals often hired native laborers to work their farms, but they were not always consistent about paying for that labor.[52]

Wilson disapproved of Russwurm's handling of the situation in part because the governor pressed the magistrates into acting. Their efforts produced results, but only through questionable means. The constables seized the elderly father of one of the thieves and refused to release him until his son, one of the suspects came forward to answer for the crimes. This was the cause of the riot at the jailhouse. But Wilson's real feelings stemmed as much from his feelings of racial superiority as from the handling of the events. The whole incident, Wilson informed Latrobe, was because "Mr. Russwurm's complexion was a disadvantage so far as it was necessary for him to have an influence over the natives."[53] Wilson felt that even a light-skinned African American, as Russwurm was, did not have the same authority with the Greboes that a white man had. In short, Wilson suggested that under white rule none of these problems would have existed. This, of course, was an exaggeration, as Hall suffered through several difficulties with the Greboes. Even Wilson's superior, Rufus Anderson, confirmed that the source of Wilson's disapproval lay in his racism. Writing Latrobe, Anderson urged that "You will understand me, however, when I suggest, in respect to the whole matter of jurisdiction while the governors of your colony are colored men + our missionaries are Southern men, that while all necessary care is taken to preserve the principles of <u>rights</u> (which ought not to be conceded by your agent) difficulties which may arise, and which threaten to be serious as far as may be, be referred for settlement to

[52] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, February 12, 1837.

[53] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. J. Leighton Wilson to John Latrobe, March 18, 1837.

the Societies at home."[54] Complicating this relationship was the fact that Russwurm did not seek Wilson's advice as the former governor had, nor would he allow the missionary any official authority in the colony. This cut Wilson to the quick; such behavior would never have been tolerated in his native South Carolina.

Latrobe tried to defuse the potentially explosive situation between Russwurm and Wilson. He instructed Russwurm "to avoid all interference with them in their spiritual effort and allow them no interference in your temporal affairs." The two were not competitors, but rather cooperating agents working in the grand design. If it failed, it meant disaster for the United States. This message apparently never reached the reverend.[55] Wilson asserted that Russwurm's attempts to establish his authority over the Greboes would lead to an African 'trail of tears,' a reference to Latrobe's greatest fears.[56] But Latrobe attached greater importance to Russwurm's success, a clear impact of the experience gained during the previous two years and the growing sectionalism in the states. Latrobe counted on the fact that Maryland in Liberia was administered by a black American to be a significant emigration pull factor. He hoped that Russwurm's appointment would silence charges by abolitionists that immigrants in Liberia were nothing more than another group of slaves serving a white master in the form of the governor. Finally, his strong support of Russwurm illustrated what was most important to him, the success of colonization. Latrobe would not allow problems with the missionaries to hinder colonization.[57]

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[54] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, Letter Books, Foreign, reel 12. Rufus Anderson to John Latrobe, July 11, 1838.

[55] Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 125.

[56] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, October 24, 1837.

[57] Jane Jackson Martin, "The Dual Legacy: Government Authority and Missionary Influence Among the Glebo of Eastern Liberia, 1843-1910," (Ph. D. diss., Boston University, 1968), 122-123.

Russwurm reciprocated the critique of Wilson, asserting that the missionaries obstructed his duties. An astute man, Russwurm always immediately appealed to Latrobe in his disputes with Wilson in ways that ensured his sympathy. Russwurm asserted that one of the biggest reasons the colony was not meeting Latrobe's goals was the missionary presence; nowhere was this more apparent than in the area of agriculture. The colony repeatedly felt the pinch of hunger.[58] It was established policy that the governors promote farming and the production of cash crops to give the colony self-sufficiency and boost the economy. Latrobe had often criticized the ACS colonies for their lack of production because output indirectly determined the rate of migration to the colony. In fact, Latrobe authorized Russwurm to sell land to any emigrant who wanted to farm on a large scale. The only condition was that one-fourth of the acreage be under cultivation within the first year.[59] Such policies were ineffective, Russwurm explained, because several settlers worked for the missionaries rather than on their own farms.[60]

Ultimately, much of the blame for the colony's shortcomings lay with Latrobe's inexperience, presumptions, and high ideals about colonization. He instructed Hall to push cash crops, in particular cotton and tobacco, which were labor intensive and not necessarily suited to the environment of this part of tropical Africa. The colony also encouraged the planting of

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[58] The importance of agriculture and the difficulties created by bad harvest cannot be overestimated. Production not only influenced the rate of settlement, it also contributed more often than not to the conflicts between the settlers and the Greboes. The shorter the crop, the higher the price the Greboes charged the settlers. The occasions on which provisions in the colony was an issue were numerous, and here I cite only a few as the reports covering this problem span over the first decade of Maryland's settlement. *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (1839); II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Meeting of the Citizens of Harper, June 26, 1835; Reel 3. Alexander Hance to John Latrobe, April 7, 1838; J. Leighton Wilson to Ira A. Easter, July 5, 1838; John Russwurm to John Latrobe, May 31, 1841; John Russwurm to John Latrobe, May 24, 1842.

[59] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, June 30, 1836.

[60] Initially, colonists could hold only five acres; this was a clear attempt to promote agriculture by the MSCS. *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, February 12, 1837; J. Leighton Wilson to John Kennard, July 6, 1837.

coffee trees, which did not produce any fruit for several years. In addition, the colony restricted the trading rights of the colonists, more or less forcing them to sell to the colonial store and accept material goods at inflated prices in payment for their produce. Farmers could not take full advantage of the market nor were they permitted to trade freely with the Greboes, thus there was little incentive for settlers to pursue agriculture on the scale Latrobe wished. Finally, Latrobe encouraged experimentation, especially through Russwurm and the colonial farm. At the government farm he tried several different cash crops (varieties of tobacco, coffee, and cotton for example), seeking those that promised high yields, rapid growth, or profitable sales. None of these types of crops, however, facilitated population growth in the colony. Furthermore, experimentation was a time-consuming process. Such policies combined to inhibit agriculture rather than promote it in Maryland in Liberia. It was, then, little wonder most of the colonists did not respond enthusiastically to farming.[61]

The handling of the dispute between Governor Russwurm and John Wilson also illustrated Latrobe's misconceptions about the ease of colonizing and the role of the missionaries in the movement. Latrobe asked Wilson not to hire settlers, particularly those who had some education, as their talents were desperately needed by the colony. Yet missionary work required educated people, and Wilson hired several Marylanders to be teachers in the three schools established in the colony.[62] Wilson defended himself by reminding Latrobe that Hall had insisted that colonists be employed in the schools run by the missionaries. Initially, the arrangement seemed to suit everyone involved as the missionaries could not obtain enough

[61] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to James Hall, November 25, 1833, June 2, 1834; Charles Howard to James Hall, May 30, 1835; John Latrobe to John Russwurm, June 30, 1836, May 16, 1837.

[62] Martin. "The Dual Legacy," 129.

workers from the United States to staff the schools. In any event, Wilson refused to accept any blame for the colony's poor agricultural development. That rested entirely on the shoulders of the colonists and the MSCS.[63]

Latrobe's intervention did little to ease tensions. In fact, relations with the missionaries deteriorated further in April of 1837 when Russwurm aided one Don Pedro Blanco. Blanco claimed to be a Spanish explorer, but he was, in fact, a slave trader who had two slave factories along the coast near the Liberian settlements. Blanco's vessel needed repair and Russwurm allowed him to dock at Cape Palmas to do the work. Wilson exploded when he discovered that the governor had aided Blanco.[64] He charged Russwurm with making the colony (and by implication the missionaries) an accessory to the slave trade, a violation of one of the avowed purposes of placing the American colonies on the coast of Africa. Their presence was to aid British and American forces in suppressing the trade in African slaves. Russwurm's actions were a potential public relations catastrophe for Latrobe, should the American people, and more important, the Maryland public hear about it. Abolitionists were already critical of the colony; news of involvement with a known slave trader could destroy Maryland's colonization efforts completely.[65]

Latrobe's correspondence with Russwurm revealed that the governor acted on the assumption that most nations generally aided vessels in distress as an act of humanitarianism. Still, Latrobe stressed, "such a waiver has never been construed to extend to the vessels of

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[63] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. J. Leighton Wilson to Ira Easter, June 2, 1836; J. Leighton Wilson to John H. Kennard, July 6, 1837.

[64] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. J. Leighton Wilson to John Latrobe, April 21, 1837.

[65] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. S. Fonerden, F. H. Smith, W. R. Stuart to unidentified, March 25, 1837.

pirates, who…are entitled neither to succour nor protection." Latrobe warned that the colony, "cannot recognise those nice distinctions, that national pride and jealousy have drawn, so far as permit a vessel belonging to a Slave dealer; and engaged in the performance of duties incident to his nefarious traffic, to enjoy wither its jurisdiction, the comfort and assistance, under any circumstances that the fair and honest trade, would demand and receive as a matter of right…This course is now marked out for you, as one which the Board will never permit a departure from."[66] The connection of Maryland in Liberia in any way with such characters, Latrobe knew, would destroy the credibility of colonization. Russwurm, however, blanched at Wilson's criticisms. He asked Latrobe to keep Wilson from interfering in the colony.[67]

The controversy over assisting Blanco's vessel foreshadowed the coming battle between Russwurm and Wilson for supremacy in the colony, a battle which Latrobe would have to mediate. Wilson's job, in Latrobe's estimation, was the spiritual and moral improvement of the people of Maryland in Liberia in the hopes of spreading the word of God. Born in South Carolina, Wilson shared the views of many slaveholders and he treated the settlers, including the governor, paternalistically.[68] He felt a responsibility to police the settlers' conduct. The missionaries also hoped to convert the Greboes to Christianity. By contrast, Russwurm and the settlers had emigrated so that they could control their destiny. They sought the right to govern

[66] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, October 24, 1837.

[67] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Russwurm to Oliver Holmes, December 27, 1837; John Russwurm to John Latrobe, April 28, 1838.

[68] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 1. B.B. Wisner to John Latrobe, October 2, 1833; Latrobe, *History of Maryland in Liberia*, 21.

the colony as outlined in the constitution, and even though the highest authority rested in the MSCS; the colonists saw missionary interference as an attempt to curtail their liberties.[69]

The conflicting objectives of each group became apparent in two incidents that followed the Pedro Blanco crisis. The first involved a settler named James Thompson who began working for the missionaries when James Hall ran Maryland in Liberia. By 1837, he was working under Dr. Thomas Savage at the Mount Vaughan Mission. One day Savage overheard two young women discussing how Thompson had made sexual advances toward them. Savage questioned Thompson about the allegations, after which he admitted to adultery with one of the women, but denied any other wrongdoing or misconduct. The matter caused considerable controversy because Thompson was an employee of the missionaries and his behavior clearly violated acceptable Christian behavior. In addition, Thompson's actions proved unacceptable to many colonists who frowned upon sexual relations with natives. After the investigation, Savage expelled Thompson from Mount Vaughan and reported the affair to the Court of Inquiry, the judicial body of Maryland in Liberia, for review. Although the court acquitted him, Thompson's case illustrated the conflicting agendas of each group.[70] The missionaries believed they were responsible for the moral and spiritual welfare of the colony. They preached monogamy to the Greboes, but such behavior by a colonist made it even more difficult to convince members of a society that accepted polygamy. Thus, Thompson's expulsion represented the desire to remove examples contrary to Christian teachings. Thompson's unanimous acquittal, on the other hand, illustrated the colonists' desire to handle their own affairs. The court found Thompson not guilty

[69] *African Repository*, Vol. 1 (April 1825), 35; Gurley, *Life of Ashmun*, 111; Latrobe, *History of Maryland in Liberia*, 21; Sigler, "Attitudes of Free Blacks," Chapter 4; Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, 19, 39.

[70] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Thomas Savage to Charles Snetter, September 15, 1837; George R. McGill to John Latrobe, December 25, 1837.

due to lack of evidence, even though the charges against him violated an informal moré of the community.[71]

The second, and more ominous, illustration of missionary-settler differences grew out of disputes over property, theft and attempted embargos by the Greboes. Fearing an escalation of tensions with the Greboes to the point of military conflict, the board of managers concluded that the formation of a militia would curtail the aggressiveness of the Greboes at Cape Palmas. In arriving at this decision, Latrobe and the MSCS relied on the advice of Americans visiting the colony. Peace was still the objective, but Russwurm prepared for the worst.[72] Latrobe, however, had determined by 1838 that there would never be peace between the two peoples, and the MSCS needed to change its actions regarding the Greboes. Latrobe convinced the board of managers to approve a proposal to buy out King Freeman and relocate the Greboes farther inland. "The Board have determined," he told Russwurm, "that it is best to get King Freeman to move his town from off the Cape: and you are authorized to expend five hundred dollars in trade goods at invoice price to accomplish this…this is now a most important matter. We want King Freeman bought out and removed."[73]

The reality of colonization, the continuing conflict with the Greboes, and growing criticism of the missionaries had forced Latrobe to abandon his initial agenda in the colony. To him, colonization was becoming more important in the United States as abolitionists pushed Congress to abolish the internal slave trade operating in the nation's capital. Thus, he needed to

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[71] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Thomas Savage to Charles Snetter, September 15, 1837; George R. McGill to John Latrobe, December 25, 1837; John Russwurm to John Latrobe, December 27, 1837.

[72] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. The Proceedings of the Governor & Council at Maryland in Liberia; John Russwurm to John Latrobe, April 23, 28, 1838; J. Leighton Wilson to John Russwurm, April 16, 1838.

[73] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, October 24, 1837.

expedite the growth of the colony. Removing the Greboes from Maryland territory would remove a critical barrier. Repeated troubles with the Greboes had proved to Latrobe that he could no longer hold onto notions that the colonists and indigenous Africans could become one people, and it appeared that their fate was to become that of the Cherokee. Removal or extermination seemed to be the only choices; Latrobe decided on removal. When asked about the new policy with the Cape Palmas Grebo, Latrobe asserted that in the treaties of 1834, Grebo leaders renounced their sovereignty as well as that of their people. Indeed, he noted, "the power was given to the American governor to set all palavers, by which I understand in this connection, to decide all questions."[74] Removal would also have the benefit of curtailing the missionary influence, if not the missionaries themselves, who he expected to follow the Greboes.

The missionaries were not aware of the change in policy although Wilson already predicted that the colonists would eventually force the Greboes from Cape Palmas. The MSCS authorized Governor Russwurm and his council to write new laws regulating military service in the colony. Latrobe, himself a former commander of a militia unit in Baltimore, supported Russwurm's decision to require militia service from all male settlers aged sixteen to sixty, including missionary employees. The governor stood firmly behind this decision even though he was to "accord special solicitude to the missionary group" and their spiritual efforts.[75] Only then did missionaries learn of the new policy, triggering yet another power struggle between Russwurm and Wilson. Several settlers worked at the Fair Hope mission as well as two African American missionaries who came to the colony with Wilson in 1834. When these two men

[74] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book. John Latrobe to Rev. L. Minor, November 14, 1839.

[75] Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 125.

failed to muster with the other settlers for military drills, Russwurm immediately fined them in accordance with the regulations. Wilson appealed the penalty directly to the governor as well as to his superiors and Latrobe.[76] Wilson argued that because the two men in question were missionaries only, they were not subject to the laws of the colony, nor were they required to perform military duty.[77] Russwurm countered that an exemption for these two individuals, who in fact came not only as missionaries but as settlers, would encourage other colonists to seek similar exemptions by working at the mission stations. Neither would concede, and the issue was left to their superiors for resolution.

John Latrobe and Rufus Anderson presented the case to their respective governing bodies. Wilson suggested that representatives in the mission stations in Africa carried the status of foreign diplomats because of their independence from the MSCS and because they were not legally associated with Maryland in Liberia. The real issue, as Latrobe saw it, was a challenge to the authority of the colonial government. Wilson essentially suggested that anyone employed at his mission was no longer subject to the laws of the colony. Latrobe agreed with Wilson's interpretation, except that these two missionaries were colonists. Furthermore, full diplomatic immunity did not apply because the government of Maryland in Liberia owned the land where the mission stations stood; this cession did not extend sovereignty to the missionaries within the colony. Such a construction of immunity as Wilson urged failed as well because missionaries were not representatives of a foreign government. The conclusion reached by Latrobe was that

[76] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, April 28, 1838; J. Leighton Wilson to John Russwurm, April 16, 1838; John Russwurm to J. Leighton Wilson, April 16, 1838.

[77] Wilson based his position regarding the two men on a technicality that they had not signed the registry of colonists in Baltimore before leaving in 1834. As such, they were not legally settlers, and thus not subject to the ruling. *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. The Proceedings of the Governor & Council at Maryland in Liberia; John Russwurm to John Latrobe, April 23, 28, 1838; J. Leighton Wilson to John Russwurm, April 16, 1838.

the two individuals did have to serve in the militia, but, more important, even employees who left the United States specifically for missionary purposes in Africa were subject to the laws of the colony. There was no immunity from the authority vested in Russwurm.[78] With this decision, Latrobe hoped he would have no more difficulties with the missionaries, as their role in the colony should be clear from this point forward.

Relations between the missionaries and colony officials remained tense throughout 1838 even though Latrobe assumed he had settled the issues. Latrobe's desire for a colonial militia and the removal of the Greboes, however, backfired after a violent incident involving the militia and a small Grebo contingent. On the night of July 25, 1838 most of King Freeman's town was incinerated in a fire. The blaze drew people from miles around. Russwurm ordered guards posted nearby as he presumed looting would occur if he was not vigilant. Early the next morning the guards halted a small "body of armed Bush natives from the towns of Barroway," near the newest Maryland settlement of Mount Tubman. The guards allowed them to pass; believing them harmless. Shortly thereafter, however, according to Russwurm, "they commenced a murderous attack on the house of Ebin Parker who had been so rash as to shoot one, wounding him in the shoulder, two or three days previously. Before any assistance could be rendered they had succeeded in killing Parker and three of his children." The attack was an act of revenge against Parker for the altercation a few days earlier, and the fire provided an opportunity to exact it. Unfortunately for Parker, the magistrate had failed to arrest him before the natives inflicted their own justice.[79]

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[78] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Rufus Anderson to John Latrobe, July 11, 1838.

[79] Russwurm had ordered Parker's arrest for the earlier altercation, but the magistrate had not carried out his orders. Most puzzling to Russwurm, however, was that Parker had seen the men coming, yet "his obstinacy was

Through poor luck or just sheer coincidence, a small band of Grebo youths not connected with the events at Ebin Parker's home ran into a squad of militia after the assault. The commander of the unit, none other than the former colony secretary, Charles Snetter, ordered the young men to return to their towns. Snetter was unaware of what had happened at the Parker residence. But before the youths could obey Snetter's commands, another militia unit approached at which point the young men fled. Snetter, alarmed by the suspicious behavior, ordered his men to fire and three were hit. Two of the three died from their wounds immediately. Russwurm, after his investigation, concluded that the entire incident could have been avoided had the local magistrate carried out his orders.[80]

The entire incident raised many unanswered questions. It was not clear why the three young men ran when faced with two militia units. Nor did the inquiry resolve why Snetter gave the order to fire so quickly, especially in light of the fact that he had no knowledge of the events at the Parker home. Furthermore, the victims had not threatened physical confrontation with him or his men. Instead, the evidence suggests that tensions between the colonists and Greboes remained high, and that the colonists exhibited a negative attitude towards the natives. Nevertheless, Charles Snetter found himself on trial for murder, perhaps to avoid any further escalation in violence. The trial itself proved quite interesting. Snetter had served as secretary under James Hall and he was also well liked by Wilson. When Russwurm arrived, he made Snetter an offer to work in his administration managing the colonial store. Snetter declined in favor of a position teaching at the Fair Hope mission under Wilson. Russwurm resented

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so great that he would not suffer even his wife to take the children and flee." *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, Foreign Letter Books, reel 12. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, August 6, 1838.

[80] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. The Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry held August 18 & 20, 1838; Foreign Letter Book, John Russwurm to John Latrobe, August 6, 1838, August 21, 1838.

Snetter's decision, particularly after he learned that the salary Wilson gave him was less than the pay to manage the store. Despite Russwurm's personal animosity toward Charles Snetter, he did not excuse himself from the investigation. Instead, he ultimately concluded that the incident was not an accident and that the officer in charge should be held accountable.

The trial divided the colony. Normally, the colonists were reluctant to convict their own, but in this case Russwurm exacted a heavy punishment. Found guilty, Russwurm banished Snetter from the colony, demanding that he leave on the next available vessel. Perhaps Russwurm felt this was the only way to appease angry Greboes, but his decision most certainly subjected him to the wrath of the settlers. Several colonists voiced their opposition to the ruling; approximately fifty appealed the decision in a written statement to Latrobe. They even petitioned the board of the MSCS to overturn the ruling.[81] The governor denounced them all, particularly Snetter and his friends as nothing more than demagogues. "All are ignorant," he declared, "but these whose lives have been spent on plantations are deplorably so: they know nothing_ + have to learn their social + political alphabet, as much as a child does his A.B.C."[82] Russwurm's decision mixed both personal feelings and politics. The conviction of the man in charge of the soldiers that killed the Grebo youths most certainly appeased those demanding justice. Russwurm also needed to resolve the situation as quickly as possible because the destruction of King Freeman's town provided just the opportunity for him to "buy out" the Greboes. Unfortunately for Russwurm, he failed to achieve any of these objectives.

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[81] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, Letter Books, Foreign, reel 12. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, November 1, 1838.

[82] Interestingly, many of the colonists were in fact free born African Americans early in the colony's history. *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, Letter Books, Foreign, reel 12. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, November 1, 1838.

This entire incident brought the sharpest criticism yet from the missionaries. Wilson had already begun his public denunciation of colonization in the American press after losing his bout with Russwurm over military service by mission employees. The killing of Africans only reinforced his belief that colonization could not achieve its goals because the settlers were too hostile to coexist with the indigenous people. Latrobe defended Russwurm's decisions on all fronts. Latrobe wrote the missionaries that Wilson had no authority in the colony and that he was there only by the acquiescence of the MSCS. He also chastised the missionaries for their careless and negative correspondence sent to the United States. Colonization had "unfriend enough" without adding the missionaries within our borders.[83]

Latrobe next appealed directly to the ABCFM to stop Wilson's charges that colonization was actually a friend of the slave trade. Wilson wrote that there were still at least two slave "factories" operated by Pedro Blanco and Theodore Canot, near the Liberian colonies.[84] He also suggested that the United States government end the façade of colonization and take over the colonies just as the British government had done with Sierra Leone to the north of Liberia. Latrobe scoffed at Wilson's assertions knowing that the United States Constitution prohibited America from holding colonies. Maryland in Liberia would remain under the direction of the MSCS "so long as it is the interest of the colonies to be submissive to the societies here."[85]

As for the settlers challenging Russwurm, Latrobe devised a plan to deal with them too. In a confidential letter to Russwurm, Latrobe wrote of his desire to make the executive of

[83] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to Rufus Anderson, September 3, 1838; John Latrobe to John A. Vaughan, October 2, 1838; John Latrobe to J. Leighton Wilson, November 21, 1838.

[84] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. W.K. Latimer to Latrobe, June 3, 1841. [an account of Latimer's visit to Liberia in the Cyane]

[85] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to Rufus Anderson, November 29, 1838.

Maryland in Liberia "very strong." Latrobe had hoped that the republican institutions designed for the colony, the method of settlement, and missionary cooperation would avoid the very problems then plaguing the colony. In short, the MSCS was solidifying its position against all opposition from within the colony. Because the colonists refused to obey the decisions of the court and "the constitutional decrees of the Executive_ there must be a power to make [them] obeyed and respected_ otherwise instead of a government of laws we will have anarchy ruling the colony." Latrobe proposed the formation of "a force in the colony paid by the colony, under the control of the executive and dependant upon it, whose duty it shall be the preservation of order,_ the custody of the public property…and the carrying into effect when the civil force is insufficient the laws of the colony and the mandates of the executive."[86] But the society's financial problems delayed implementation for a year. Latrobe finally acted on these ideas in November of 1839. He wanted to create a separate force, independent of all power except that of the governor, because the settlers were already members of the militia. The government could not rely on the militia to quell a rebellion by settlers. American experience, specifically the different outcomes of the Whiskey Rebellion and Shay Rebellion, had demonstrated the value of such a force as he intended to create. Further, he wanted to prevent any more bloodshed between the Greboes and colonists. "Our object is not to affect the civil rights we have granted in the charter, but to ensure the peaceable enjoyment of them, by putting it out of the power of evil designed men to create disturbances by imposing upon the ignorant."[87] The problem here for

[86] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, July 20 1839.

[87] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, November 21, 1839.

Latrobe and Russwurm was that the society did not have the resources to carry out such a plan at that moment.

Wilson's disapproval of Maryland in Liberia led him to begin searching for a new site for his operations by 1839. The Fair Hope mission, however, continued at Cape Palmas until 1843 and so did the conflicts between the missionaries and colonial authorities. During that four-year period the issue of military service resurfaced when Russwurm attempted to make Grebo males at the missionary station serve in the militia. Wilson argued that the governor's authority did not extend to the Grebo at his mission, who were not residents of the colony. Moreover, it was immoral to call on them to fight against their own people.[88] Latrobe moved to halt this controversy immediately. Writing to both Wilson and Russwurm, he cited the original treaty with the Greboes, which showed that the natives, regardless of circumstances, were subject to military service because they were residents within the limits of Maryland in Liberia. Survival of the colony depended on its defensive capabilities, and its numbers were only about five hundred. Those Greboes within the limits of the colony were indeed subject to the laws regulating military duty as an obligation of all citizens. However, the benefits of citizenship did not extend the right to those subjects to vote for elected officials or hold government offices.[89] Latrobe's clearly contradictory arguments only exacerbated the problems between Wilson and Russwurm. Nevertheless, Wilson lost this argument too.

The final episode between the missionaries and colonists came in 1842, after which the missionaries under J. Leighton Wilson left the colony for a location along the Gabon River.

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[88] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to L. Minor, November 14, 1839; II. Correspondence Received, Foreign Letter Book, reel 12. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, June 24, 1841; September 22, 1841.

[89] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to Rev. Rufus Anderson, November 23, 1841; John Latrobe to Rev. John A. Vaughan, January 5, 1842.

During July, about $350 of trade goods were stolen from the Fair Hope mission. The whole situation was handled poorly, most likely because Wilson was absent during the incident. Wilson's assistant, A.E. Griswold, accused the Grebo residents of a nearby town of pilfering the goods. Rather than seek the governor's help in apprehending the perpetrators, Griswold appealed directly to the captain of the U.S.S. Vandalia.[90] Why exactly Griswold did so is unclear, but it was due perhaps to the mission's strained relationship with Governor Russwurm. Past experience left the missionaries bitter, and Griswold concluded that no justice would be achieved by appealing to Russwurm. Since the missionaries were foreigners still claiming the status of diplomats, they could legally appeal to the Navy for help as United States citizens. The African Squadron, as it was known, was authorized by the Secretary of the Navy to assist Americans in Africa, but was prohibited from interfering in the relations of the colonists and the indigenous population.[91] This case did not conform to those guidelines; the missionaries were not colonists.

Latrobe, the MSCS, and the colonists had long desired a relationship with the United States Navy. As in the case of the missionaries and the relationship with the Greboes, Latrobe and the others presumed that protection of Americans by the navy was beneficial to the colony. This was yet another ironic twist. African Americans colonizing Africa were worthy of military protection, a protection they could not rely on in America. Latrobe and Russwurm encouraged the connection believing that the presence of vessels of war would have a salutary influence on

[90] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. John Russwurm to James Hall, MSCS Home Agent, September 26, 1842; John Russwurm to John Latrobe, February 20, 1843.

[91] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Russwurm to James Hall, September 26, 1842; This collection contains numerous letters from Navy personnel patrolling the coast of West Africa. The letters chronicle the activities of the African Squadron from 1842-1844. *Message from the President*, 28th Congress, 2nd Session. Senate, Document 150, "Notes of a palaver held at Cape Palmas on the 8th of December, 1843, and the proceedings preliminary thereto," 34.

the natives.[92] The captain of the Vandalia sent forces ashore where they issued an ultimatum to King Freeman declaring that if the offenders were not delivered along with the goods he would fire on the town. This action was surprising considering that the mission had previously been on good terms with Freeman. Things continued to escalate as Russwurm intervened. The governor argued that the missionaries had acted rashly; they should have appealed to him and not American servicemen. What he really objected to was outside interference by naval forces.[93]

The incident was eventually resolved without the use of force by the navy, although the threat of force was a major factor in extracting restitution from King Freeman. The peaceful outcome, however, was not the most important point illustrated by this tussle in Maryland in Liberia. The whole history of problems with the missionaries led to a change in policy by the MSCS regarding the Fair Hope missionaries. Latrobe issued an ultimatum demanding that the missionaries conform to all MSCS authorities or leave the colony. Wilson, after returning to Fair Hope, made it clear that he would not remain in the colony as he saw no way for achieving his goals alongside those of the MSCS. In fact he had concluded, "that the colored people of the U. S. can never be raised to any considerable morals or intellectual worth unless they are colonized to themselves."[94] In the end, Wilson and the Fair Hope missionaries left the colony in 1843 pushing Maryland in Liberia into a new phase of its history.

The whole episode greatly upset Latrobe but served to illustrate how Latrobe's presumptions about colonization in Africa and his conflicting policies for the colony contributed

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[92] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to Martin Van Buren, President, May 9, 1839; J.K. Paulding, Secretary of the Navy, January 27, 1840.

[93] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to Martin Van Buren, President, May 9, 1839; J.K. Paulding, Secretary of the Navy, January 27, 1840; II. Correspondence Received, Foreign Letter Book, reel 12. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, February 12, 1842.

[94] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, Foreign Letter Book, reel 12. John Leighton Wilson to John Latrobe, January 15, 1839.

to the problems and forced him to reassess and change his goals. Writing to Rufus Anderson of the ABCFM, Latrobe lodged his protest over the missionaries' failure to ask "protection from the government under which they lived…avowing a determination not to ask such protection, the aid of strangers to our government in Africa was involved and the consequences are as stated in the testimony." Latrobe continued chastising the missionaries when he stated that he could not "find any palliation for conduct which so ill becomes the sacred character of your messengers of God's mercy to the heathen."[95] Latrobe's suggestion that the missionaries should leave the colony if the ABCFM could not control them was not sufficient to abate Latrobe's wrath as he felt the need to express his disapproval to the Secretary of the Navy too. To the honorable secretary, Abel P. Upshur, he wrote that the officers of the Vandalia had held some "sort of drum head court martial, not over the thieves, but over the poor old negro, called king Freeman…and sentenced him to pay so many bullocks + croos of rice as an arbitrary valuation of missionary losses guessed at by the parties." While admitting that Captain Ramsey may not have intended to "act with discourtesy or unkindness," he had nonetheless acted inappropriately. The issue was one of internal affairs in the colony, and in the future it should be handled as such.[96]

The great irony here was that the situation was mostly the result of actions taken by Latrobe and MSCS officials. It had long been in the making. Furthermore, asserting that the United States Navy had no reason to interfere, even at the request of American citizens, went against his own correspondence to previous Navy secretaries and officers in the West African Squadron because he often referred to the colonies as American possessions. American military

[95] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 17. John Latrobe to Rufus Anderson, December 8, 1842.

[96] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 17. John Latrobe to A. P. Upshur, December 21, 1842.

presence, for Latrobe, was only desirable when it was useful to Maryland in Liberia's agenda, and not welcome otherwise. Finally, this situation illustrates the duality of MSCS policy in determining the status of the Grebo and Latrobe's internalization of American race relations. Latrobe chided the secretary for the way Captain Ramsey treated "the poor old Negro, King Freeman," which clearly showed his adoption of paternalistic behavior so characteristic of southern slaveholders. But Latrobe had also played the inverse of the paternalistic master as he had condoned the policy of forcing the Grebo leader to account for the actions of his subjects. This had been policy under Maryland in Liberia's government since James Hall was the governor. One must conclude, then, that the real issue for Latrobe and Russwurm on this occasion was the interference of outside forces, which imputed weakness on the part of Maryland in Liberia.

Many of the conflicts that occurred in Maryland in Liberia during its first nine years were in fact caused by the inconsistent policies implemented by the MSCS as well as the misreading of cultural conflicts and the political situation in the United States and Liberia. All of the MSCS members assumed that the colonists and Greboes would amalgamate into one people. They did not. Latrobe in particular assumed that the presence of the missionaries would not only further his colonization goals, but also that they would help keep relations peaceful while further westernizing the Greboes. They did not. Instead, the missionary presence evolved into one of the greatest sources of difficulty for the governor of the colony and the MSCS president as J. Leighton Wilson repeatedly challenged the power of both. Finally, the U.S. Navy became involved in the affairs of the colony, which contradicted the policy of both the MSCS and the United States. The aid the navy gave to the colonies of Liberia, including Maryland in Liberia, gave credence to the assertion that these colonies were under the control of the U.S. as well as

further solidifying in the minds of indigenous Africans that the colonists had no intention of becoming one people with them. Finally, the presence of the African Squadron would help Maryland in Liberia move into its next phase as Commodore Matthew Perry used his command to aid Russwurm in bringing the Greboes under the rule of the colony.

Chapter 5: "Hear me for my cause": the Politics of Colonization and Abolition in the United States: Part One, 1834-1843

The realities of colonization in Africa were far different from the ideals envisioned by Latrobe and his colleagues in Maryland. The repeated troubles between the settlers and indigenous peoples, the differing agendas of the MSCS and the missionaries, and the military presence of international powers forced Latrobe and the MSCS to alter their policies in Africa. Yet success in Africa depended on more than resolving the colony's problems and the unification of the numerous parties involved in Maryland in Liberia. Colonization was a movement that encompassed two fronts. While Latrobe dealt with the colony's problems, a debate flared in the United States over slavery and its future as well as the final status of African Americans. The colonization movement, at the state and national level, inevitably joined in this political fight, particularly after the formation of the American Antislavery Society late in 1833. The assault on the institution of slavery had only just begun and John Latrobe, whether he wanted to or not, had to carve out a place for his colonization plans within the national debate. Latrobe chose to follow what he and others described as a middle path of action designed to give colonization the best chance for success in Maryland while alleviating rising tensions throughout the Union. His task in the United States, however, proved quite difficult. The actions of the MSCS in the fight over slavery in the United States and Latrobe's attempts to promote and defend the Maryland Plan as the one solution to all questions regarding slavery and African Americans are the subjects of this chapter.

By the time the MSCS established its colony in Africa in 1834, the debate over slavery was becoming increasingly antagonistic and violent. The division of opinions on the subject widened after the Missouri Compromise of 1820, but the fastest growing and most feared

segment seemed to be those calling for immediate abolition. That many thought the institution repulsive cannot be denied. Hostility to the institution of slavery, however, changed the position of many southerners as their defense of slavery evolved from the "necessary evil" argument used before the Virginia Debates of 1832 to that put forth by John C. Calhoun's "positive good" speech before the Senate in 1837.[1] Yet not all Americans saw it this way. The Virginia Debates of 1832 showed clearly, that in the Upper South, the feelings about slavery and the need to defend it as critical to southern culture was not universal. Most knew that they had to tread softly on the subject of slavery because it was a delicate issue, which inflamed men's passions.[2] This was even more evident after the issue of states' rights burst onto the national scene during the Nullification Crisis of 1832-3. Nevertheless, a new generation opposed to slavery, more active and bold, emerged under the leadership of men such as Benjamin Lundy, Arthur Tappan, Thomas Weld, and William Lloyd Garrison. Deep South defenders of slavery followed the likes of Calhoun, and their newest hero, James Henry Hammond.[3]

Increasing agitation by abolitionists, especially those seeking immediate emancipation, led the MSCS to further define its goals and position relative to slavery. Latrobe saw himself as

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[1] Calhoun's defense of slavery in the Senate led to the "positive good" position by pro-slavery southerners. Calhoun stated in the United States Senate that "slavery as existing where two races of men of different colour, and striking dissimilarity in conformation, habits, and a thousand other particulars, were placed in immediate juxtaposition. Here the existence of slavery was a good to both." After comments from another senator, Calhoun continued declaring "it as his conviction that, in point of fact, the Central African race had never existed in so comfortable, so respectable, or so civilized a condition as that which it now enjoyed in the Southern States…In fact, the defence of human liberty against the aggressions of despotic power had been always the most efficient in States where domestic slavery was found to prevail. He did not admit it to be an evil. Not at all. It was good—a great good." *African Repository*, Vol. XIII. No. 3 March, 1837. (Washington: 1837, reprint, New York: Krause Reprint Corporation, 1967), 85.

[2] Maryland colonizationists emphasized this escalation of hostile feelings fearing that if it were not checked, it would ultimately destroy the nation. *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. October 2, 1833.

[3] Hammond was just beginning his political career at this time. He would serve his first term in the House of Representatives in 1835, when the Congress was flooded with petitions to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. He was one of the first to push House members not to receive such petitions. *The Congressional Globe*, 24th Congress, 1st session, Vol. II-III. (City of Washington: Blair & Rives, Editors, 1836), 27.

a southern man, and as such, he was a strong believer in the doctrine of states' rights. The institution of slavery, no matter how repugnant to his or anyone else's sensibilities, was beyond the rule of the federal Congress. Nor could northern states interfere within the boundaries of slaveholding states. Such a stance did not make Latrobe unusual, as many northerners shared that belief.[4] Northern activism to end slavery in the South only led to a more rigid defensive posture by southerners. This belief was a guiding principle for Latrobe when it came to slavery and colonization. Latrobe and the MSCS adopted

> a rule to avoid interfering by word or deed with the subject of slavery in other states. When each state thus holds colonization in its own keeping it will cease to be an object of dislike or apprehension to any one of them: It will no longer be the pretence for raising the cry of interference on the part of the North with the slavery of the South, which has already excited such angry feelings, and which threatened at one time to jeopardize the continuance of the Union itself.[5]

Efforts by abolitionists only made southerners hostile to both abolition and colonization because they violated the sovereignty of southern states. Furthermore, Latrobe did not want to attack slaveholders as a group because the MSCS counted on them to free their slaves for colonization in the near future. Aggravating them only worked against the long-term objective of colonization.

Latrobe understood the problems associated with slavery and why many opposed the institution; he opposed it as well. His disgust with the institution became clear in the fall of 1834 when he toured Louisiana and the Deep South. His anxiety was due primarily to the fact that both his father and brother had died from fever while working in New Orleans. Somewhat of a hypochondriac, he feared that he may suffer the same fate. Taking advantage of an opportunity

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[4] *Maryland Colonization Journal*, Vol. 1 August 1835, No. 9 Excerpt from the Maine Wesleyan Journal.

[5] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. October 22, 1833.

to leave the city to visit a sugar plantation, Latrobe went to see sugar production first hand. This was the first time he had ever seen the process, which relied on slave labor. He marveled at the process, the mechanical aspects of the mill no doubt arousing his engineering interests. But slavery overshadowed his enjoyment: "The melancholy recollection however that the many were labouring for the one in the very worst form of servitude—Negro slavery, destroyed the zest with which I would otherwise have enjoyed the new scene before me."[6] While slavery personally repulsed Latrobe, he, like most southerners, recognized that the Constitution protected the peculiar institution. He also realized the need to distance himself and the MSCS from abolitionists. He wrote a friend that "I would not have you think however that I am one of those fanatics who would, if possible procure immediate abolition throughout the land." No matter how much he detested slavery it was "recognized by the laws" and none could interfere with it unless the masters consented. Plus he, like Jefferson, feared the effect that emancipating thousands of slaves at one time would have on his society. A race war would surely take place.[7] The plan he suggested, and the MSCS followed, kept these concerns in mind.

Independent state action tried to lessen conflict between the supporters of slavery and abolition, which increased with every passing year. Conflict escalated with the number of anti-slavery petitions Congress received each session beginning in 1835. The wave of memorials asking Congress to interfere in some aspect of slavery, whether with the slave trade or slaves in the nation's capitol had actually begun years earlier. Such petitions were almost always left without discussion after being read on the floor of the House. Marylanders were not strangers to

[6] Quoted in: Samuel Wilson, Jr., *Southern Travels: Journal of John H. B. Latrobe, 1834*, (The Historic New Orleans Collection, 1986), 38.

[7] Wilson, Jr., *Southern Travels*, 66.

this process either. In 1827 Congressman John Barney presented a petition written by Benjamin Lundy and signed by several Baltimoreans requesting that the children of slaves born in Washington be free thereafter.[8] Southerners insisted that petitions that found their way on to the floor of the House of Representatives or Senate be ignored, but the petitions continued. In 1828 the citizens of Washington petitioned Congress on the basis that "The People of the District have, within themselves, no means of legislative redress, and we, therefore, appeal to your honorable body, as the only one invested by the American Constitution with the power to relieve us." They continued by asking Congress to provide some gradual means of ending slavery in the capitol.[9] They sent a similar petition in 1829.

The unique status of Washington, D. C. provided a point of weakness which those wanting to end slavery could attack. Many conceded that Congress could not interfere with slavery in the individual states, but it could in the District of Columbia because no state claimed jurisdiction there. Colonizationists used this logic to renew attempts at enlisting Congressional aid in their plan. In 1830, Charles Fenton Mercer introduced a bill in Congress that would have provided $50,000 to the American Colonization Society for transporting emigrants to Liberia. Deep South states quickly objected. Members of the Maryland Legislature responded by arguing that Congress could do so by using the "general welfare clause" of the Constitution.[10] The majority did not agree with Maryland or the petitioners of the District of Columbia, thus neither gained any support from Congress.

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[8] Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery*, completed by Ward M. McAfee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 68.

[9] Doc. No. 215, House of Reps. 20th congress, 1st session "Memorial of the Inhabitants of the District of Columbia praying for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia," March 24, 1828 (Washington: Gales & Staton), 3.

[10] Maryland State Archives (online), MSA SC3170, pp. 186-189 (http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/megafile/msa/speccol/sc4800/sc4872/000050/html/m59-0045.html).

The failure of these early attempts to penetrate the armor of slavery in Congress may have discouraged those wanting to end slavery, but it hardly curbed their zeal or efforts. The formation of the American Antislavery Society and cries for immediate abolition raised the level of confrontation at the beginning of Congressional sessions in 1835. During the winter session of the twenty-third Congress New Englanders presented several petitions regarding slavery. Influenced by the likes of William Lloyd Garrison, citizens from Maine and Vermont sent petitions to their representatives in Washington. On February 16, 1835, a Maine Congressman presented a memorial from the citizens of Waterville "praying Congress to pass a law prohibiting slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia." The Honorable Horace Everett of Vermont followed this with another petition from his state asking for the same thing. Just as with earlier petitions, the basis of the argument was that Congress was the only body with the power to do so in Washington. Furthermore, it was a national disgrace to see an institution such as slavery continued near the halls of the most democratic government in history.[11]

The strategy of abolition was to start small, attacking slavery at its weakest link. To many, that link was Washington. Defenders of slavery noted this too, arguing the opposite point, that if slavery was forced out of the capital, it was only a matter of time before it ended throughout the Union. The House of Representatives in 1835 read the petitions and referred them to the Committee for the District of Columbia, knowing that they would make it no further.[12] The twenty-fourth Congress repeated this scene when it came into session in December of 1835, tabling the petitions by a vote of 180 yeas and 31 nays. The vote well

[11] *The Congressional Globe*, 24th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. II-III (Washington: Blair & Rives, 1836), 24.

[12] *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States: Being the Second Session of the Twenty-third Congress.* (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1835), 387-388.

illustrated the 'slave power.' With the help of northern doughfaces, southern Congressmen had no trouble dismissing the northern antislavery petitions.[13] Two days later, on December 18, 1835, the representatives from Massachusetts followed with more petitions. This time, the freshman representative from South Carolina, James H. Hammond, moved that the petitions not be received yet alone read on the House floor.[14] Hammond had heard enough and refused to let northerners further impugn the South in the House of Representatives. Much more aggressive in his defense of slavery than John C. Calhoun had been, Hammond argued that it was time that Congress stop indulging these inflammatory requests. His motion to stop receiving antislavery petitions not only caused a controversy because the right of petition was protected by the Constitution; the move also broke the traditional response the House of Representatives made to memorials asking for abolition. His proposal sparked a debate that eventually led to the first "gag rule" regarding antislavery petitions demanding an end to slavery in the District of Columbia.[15] The motion by Representative Hammond led southerner to see him as their protector and it also marked a new stage in the debate over slavery. No longer would the South stand for political interference with clear states' rights and property issues.

Hammond's unusual request originated in the mass mailings abolitionists sent to the South via the federal postal service during the summer of 1835. A large number of these pamphlets were sent to Charleston, South Carolina in July. Charleston residents responded to this outrage by storming the post office and burning the mail. The repercussions of this direct assault on slavery went far beyond this act, however. Such agitation further hardened the

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[13] *The Congressional Globe*, 24th Congress, 1st session, Vol. II-III, 24 Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000).

[14] *The Congressional Globe*, 24th Congress, 1st session, Vol. II-III, 24-27.

[15] *The Congressional Globe*, 24th Congress, 1st Session, 27-35.

division between the North and South as well as the division over slavery emerging within the South. Those in the lower South began to see Northerners as meddlers who actually hurt the cause of emancipation by making slaveholders reluctant to free their chattels. South Carolinians in particular also accused those in the Upper South of being traitors because Maryland and Virginia had so publicly declared in 1832 that slavery would eventually end. Hammond's "gag rule" would theoretically end the agitation by not bringing the issue of abolition up at all in Congress. Hammond's arguments received enough sympathy that Congress enacted the first gag rule in 1836, which prohibited the reading of abolitionist petitions.[16]

The gag rule in Congress alleviated the fears of some slaveholders. Nevertheless, slaveholders remained vigilant against the agitation of abolitionists as members of the MSCS soon discovered. "I assure you, sir," wrote a slaveholder to MSCS agent John Kennard, "that I feel it to be the duty of every slave holder to use his best exertions to prevent Abolition from depriving him of any rights, privileges or advantages whatever."[17] The consequence of political agitation in the South, then, was a determination by southerners to resist every effort touching slavery. This rigidity of mind, Latrobe's confidants assured him, could be found among northerners too. "The spirit of abolitionism, the fierceness + craft of which, we have had to encounter at every step, has created groundless + stupid prejudices against the South en masse."[18] Any effort that touched upon the possible end of slavery thus set off controversy.

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[16] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 3. Stephen Wynkoop to John Latrobe, February 18, 1836; D. M. Reese to John Latrobe, April 7, 1836; Henry A. Wise to John H. Kennard, May 2, 1836; Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic*, 74-75; William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 291-292.

[17] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Henry A. Wise to John H. Kennard, May 2, 1836.

[18] *MSCS Papers*. II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. D. M. Reese to John Latrobe, April 7, 1836.

Unfortunately for Latrobe, this hostility extended to colonization as both sides saw colonization as the agent of the other. To the Deep South, colonization efforts in Maryland and Virginia, the states where it had the strongest support, was nothing more than an attempt to diffuse slavery. Diffusion was the cowardly way out of the quandary over slavery. Partly, this assessment grew out of the seemingly abolitionist tone of the printed communications coming out of colonization societies like the MSCS. Latrobe's closest friend and fellow colonizationist, Charles Harper, hinted to the public that it was in fact the purpose of colonization generally to end slavery. MSCS members must "act upon the belief, that Colonization has a tendency to promote emancipation…and so inducing masters to manumit, for removal to Africa, who would not manumit unconditionally."[19] To those from Deep South states like South Carolina colonizationists appeared to be traitors, especially when Harper said it "cannot be denied that the coloured is the injured race."[20] This was not a radical departure for the MSCS; the society had always proclaimed its purpose was to make Maryland a non-slaveholding state by gradual means. Slaveholders, however, no longer distinguished between immediate and gradual emancipation; both were an attack on their personal rights.

Colonization also faced opponents in the North especially among northern abolitionists. Even the "Maryland scheme whose benevolence + success would seem to defy all opposition, is denounced here with unmeasured malignity," according to one colonizationist.[21] With the formation of the American Antislavery Society the abolitionist movement split between immediate abolitionists and gradual emancipationists. Those demanding an immediate end to

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[19] *MSCS Papers*. XV. (Papers not in original collection), reel 31. *An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Maryland State Colonization Society by C.C. Harper, January 23, 1835*.

[20] Harper, *Address*, 1835

[21] *MSCS Papers*. II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. D. M. Reese to John Latrobe, April 7, 1836.

slavery, while in the minority, not only politicized the issue of slavery nationally, but succeeded in politicizing colonization too. Following William Lloyd Garrison, extreme abolitionists attacked colonization in 1832. Garrison's *Thoughts on African Colonization* made several charges against the national society based primarily on its refusal to oppose slavery. Garrison argued that the ACS, in fact, actually strengthened slavery by its recognition of slaves as property, and its aim to remove only free blacks inflated the price and made slavery more secure. "In short, it [the ACS] is the most compendious and best adapted scheme to uphold the slave system that human ingenuity can invent."[22] ACS members as well as some gradual emancipationists defended colonization, arguing that a plan involving immediate, unconditional abolition, such as that advocated by Garrison "would without doubt, be inexpedient and dangerous. The change must be effected gradually, to be safe or useful…Slave holders at the South have in various instances declared their entire willingness, nay, their anxious desire to manumit their slaves…all that is wanting is the zealous action of the North" in support of colonization.[23]

The attention that both colonization and slavery received nationally was one of the reasons that Marylanders pushed separate state action. State action, Latrobe assumed, would remove the scheme from the national political arena along with the objections to colonization noted by Garrison. Latrobe observed the increasing political division among even the supporters of colonization in January of 1834. He, perhaps more than any other colonizationist in Maryland, recognized that the politicization of colonization had the potential to doom the effort

[22] William Lloyd Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization*, edited by William Loren Katz, (New York: Arno Press & The *New York Times*, 1969), 11-12; *African Repository*, Vol. IX] June 1833 [No. 4, 105.

[23] *African Repository*, Vol. IX] June 1833 [No. 4, 124.

and the Union.[24] He misjudged the mood of anti-colonization sentiments, however, as abolitionists turned their attention toward the MSCS after it established a colony at Cape Palmas. As with the national society, the leader in opposing the MSCS was William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison believed that the "subject of American Slavery is one of paramount interest and importance to every American citizen. Its bearing on the character and future destiny of the nation—on the purity and permanency of our free institutions—is such as makes it a matter of common concernment; and attention to it, and its proper remedy, a matter of common obligation and duty."[25] Latrobe agreed but also noted that the nation's expansion promised to give further life to slavery. The success of the cotton growing states would make abolition more difficult. Where he diverged from Garrison was in how to achieve it.[26]

Latrobe also disagreed with Garrison's emphasis on abolition. One problem abolitionists had with colonizationists was their refusal to make the end of slavery their primary mission.[27] This, Latrobe argued, only caused more division as many slaveholders supported the ACS. "Any attempt on the part of the north to procure the avowal, in the Parent Society, of principles obnoxious to the South, could only succeed after a bitter contest, and would if successful be followed by the withdrawal of nearly all, if not all, the Slaveholding States from any participation in the general design; which the success of the South in such a contest would perhaps be followed by the North's withholding that assistance which it had heretofore so

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[24] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. Report read by John Latrobe January 8, 1834.

[25] William Lloyd Garrison, "*The Maryland scheme of expatriation examined. By a friend of liberty*." (Boston: Garrison & Knapp, 1834), 3.

[26] *MSCS Papers, III.* Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Elisha Whittlesey, September 14, 1836.

[27] *African Repository*, Vol. IX, June 1833, No. 4, (Original: Washington: The American Colonization Society, 1834; reprint New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1967), 105.

liberally afforded."[28] Latrobe remained convinced in the wake of immediate emancipationists' attacks that the plan presented by the MSCS offered the best possible solution by proposing a middle path to end slavery: state colonization societies controlling the movement within each slave state, assisted monetarily by the free northern states, could end slavery peacefully and without objections by southerners.

Latrobe's moderate stance, similar to the tactics used by Henry Clay in abating crises threatening the Union, faced a severe challenge as Garrison had just returned from England, where he received high praise as the head of American abolition. Garrison's new status gave added momentum to the push for immediate emancipation. The timing was critical for abolitionists in the United States who wanted to capitalize on Britain's 1833 decision to abolish slavery in its West Indian colonies and all others. Garrison took advantage of the wave of enthusiasm for the cause to push the New York City Anti-Slavery Society and its leadership, none more prominent than Arthur Tappan, to call for a convention to form a national society. Coincidently, the move and resulting formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society saved Garrison and his paper, the *Liberator*, from financial ruin. It also made him one of the most hated men in the country as southerners immediately thought of him when abolition was mentioned.[29]

With the formation of the American Anti-slavery Society, Garrison's attacks on colonization extended to the MSCS. He had already publicized his disapproval of the national society in 1832. The editor of the *Liberator* next published a pamphlet entitled *The Maryland*

[28] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. October 22, 1833.

[29] Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964), 48-58.

Scheme of Expatriation Examined in early 1834. No doubt his hostility to the Maryland scheme was partly influenced by his imprisonment in Baltimore a few years earlier when he worked with Benjamin Lundy to promote abolition in the state. Garrison labeled the Maryland scheme as the "most atrocious oppression" conceivable because colonization was linked to the removal of blacks from the state through fines and imprisonment. Much of Garrison's antipathy for the Maryland colonization movement focused on the laws passed by Maryland after Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, which led the state to incorporate the Maryland Colonization Society. These laws had less to do with colonization than with a response to fears lingering after Turner's Rebellion. The state turned to colonization because of its tendency to end slavery gradually and peacefully. State legislators assumed that by preventing slaves from being brought into the state and requiring their removal after emancipation, Maryland could diffuse slavery away until there were so few slaves a general emancipation could be executed. Nevertheless, Garrison condemned both the state and the society because the laws required involuntary removal.[30]

Garrison characterized the whole plan as "the cold-hearted and bloody design of extermination," abolishing slavery only by getting rid of blacks completely.[31] Garrison also took the MSCS to task on its efforts to occupy the middle ground that Latrobe used to define state action. Latrobe argued that state action was preferable because it removed slavery and colonization from the national arena. Garrison, however, determined that independent state action should be rejected because it was "a middle ground—a resting place! What is this but saying it is effectual to check the progress of public sentiment, and thus stand between it and the abolition of slavery?" Garrison wrote:

[30] Garrison, "The Maryland scheme," 5-13.

[31] Garrison, "The Maryland scheme," 5, 13.

> Colonizationists, and especially the Maryland Colonizationist, does stand in the breach, to keep off the abolitionists, and if he would only give up his colonizing schemes and get out of the way, the question would be brought to issue at once, and *then* the slaveholder would not find an advocate in the literature, or the public opinion, or religion of the whole world; and if he did not go for abolition, the abolitionist would be upon him.[32]

Garrison's position was a moral, not a political, one. He ignored the growing rigidity of the South. In fact, he matched it. Furthermore, he ignored the fact that Maryland really was a middle ground between slavery and freedom, as well as between an agrarian society and an emerging free-labor industrialized one. For Maryland, independent state action was aimed specifically at avoiding the tensions growing out of the fight to end slavery, which slowly engulfed the nation. To colonizationist C. C. Harper,

> It is evident…that the vicinity of non-slave holding States has a powerful tendency to induce a similar condition of things in any adjoining slave-holding State; whether by example, or by the superiority thus exhibited of free labour over the labour of slaves…Of this fact we may satisfy ourselves by remarking that in those counties of Maryland that bound on Pennsylvania there are comparatively few slaves, but in those that border on Virginia a great many; and that the slave population, sparse in Delaware and here, becomes more and more numerous and compact in your descent towards the South…If then we earnestly design to attempt the eradication of slavery from our country, we must proceed from the north, where it is weaker and more manageable, to the south, where it is more firm and obstinate; commencing with this State, which is the frontier of the deplorable system.[33]

Maryland's middle ground was caught in a trap; colonization was too slow for Garrison's immediate emancipation, but hard-line southerners saw Upper South colonizationists as traitors for not supporting their society. Under these circumstances, the MSCS worked to broaden its support. At the insistence of John Latrobe and Charles Harper, it proposed the creation of "Societies for the purpose of aiding the Maryland State Colonization Society" in its efforts to

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[32] Garrison, "The Maryland scheme,"14-15.

[33] *MSCS Papers*, XV (not in original collection), 4. An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Maryland State Colonization Society by C. C. Harper, January 23, 1835, reel 31.

render Maryland a non-slaveholding State. This plan hoped to create MSCS auxiliary societies in northern states, particularly New England. By doing so, Latrobe assumed that the true nature of the Maryland plan would be correctly presented to northerners. Converts to the Maryland scheme of colonization would form aid societies that would contribute financially to the MSCS, giving the movement much needed additional resources. This would also encourage those wanting to end slavery to participate directly while avoiding direct confrontations with slaveholders. Aid societies would further be useful in countering the anti-colonization spirit coming from the abolition camp. If successful, the agenda of the MSCS would compete for the supporters of the American Antislavery Society by promising a decrease in sectional tensions, which ultimately would save the Union as other states adopted the Maryland plan to become free states.[34]

Latrobe miscalculated, however, just as he had with the realities of colonizing Africa. His efforts to reduce sectional tensions and create auxiliaries drew little support in the north. Latrobe's attempts to gain even minimal financial aid for the cause of the MSCS in the northern states proved difficult. His experiences in the summer of 1833 should have convinced him of this. Apathy if not outright resistance to the idea of independent state action continued even after the establishment of Maryland in Liberia. The MSCS' failure to hire an agent to represent the society in the North provided another illustration of northern resistance to the plan. The best that the MSCS could manage in northern states until 1836 was a part-time agent. Even the Board of Foreign Missions, which had set up missions in Maryland in Liberia, tried to avoid a full association or the appearance of one with the Maryland colonization society in New England. Rufus Anderson felt that "no good would be gained by publicly associating ourselves or any of

[34] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. June 9, 1834.

our missionaries with any existing colonization society. On the contrary, it would soon cripple our power of aiding you directly or indirectly."[35] The Maryland plan had indeed received a cool reception in New England.

Stephen Wynkoop, formerly associated with the Fair Hope mission in Cape Palmas, did what he could as a temporary MSCS agent in New England, but he faced numerous difficulties. His experiences illustrated exactly why the MSCS failed to produce auxiliaries in northern states, and suggested that hostility to the plan grew from both the agitation of abolitionists and those loyal to the American Colonization Society. The course of action Latrobe should pursue in New England required

> the right kind of man_ a fearless, bold man, a zealous, fluent, eloquent, and very persistent man. The plans of your Soc. meet the approbation of the N. Eng. people_ but then the abolitionists will oppose your agent with ten fold bitterness. The Maryland Soc. on account of its intrinsic excellence is a very eye sore to abolitionists. Could your society be crushed they would mount a citadel and cry victory!_ Then again the real and tried friends of colonization feel a reluctance in withdrawing from the old society.[36]

As Wynkoop indicated, the MSCS had to deal with more in the northern states than abolitionists. Several state colonization societies opposed the move by Maryland too. One New York colonizationist explained that even

> though many of us, + myself of the number, regard your state effort as worthy of all praise + would personally rejoice if we could throw our whole efforts, funds, + prayers into the scale in behalf of Cape Palmas, yet it would be impossible for us here to accomplish any thing, should we take that step. True we do but little indeed in our present union with the Pennsylvania society, in comparison with what ought to be expected of our great city + state, yet that little would be lost to

[35] *MSCS Papers*. II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Rev. R. Anderson to Rev. Ira A. Easter, February 17, 1836.

[36] *MSCS Papers*. II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Stephen R. Wynkoop to John Latrobe, February 18, 1836.

> the cause, should we even seem to be in league with a slaveholding state. Such is the fact of the case, however much we may + do regret it.[37]

The subjects of slavery, abolition, and colonization had become so polarizing by 1836 that the mere hint of association with slavery by northerners was enough to destroy any colonization society. The message was clear to Latrobe; he could not unify antislavery and colonization sentiment through auxiliary societies. He could not even count on any significant aid from the north. Still, he hoped to avoid the confrontation Garrison predicted if colonizationists stepped aside. To Latrobe, the plan he and the MSCS were pursuing was the only one that could preserve the Union.

Abolitionist efforts had clearly affected the support of colonization, and Latrobe's refusal to respond gave the charges legitimacy. In fact, Latrobe's feelings about the attack made on his society are conspicuously missing from his voluminous correspondence and his personal writings. His general feelings can only be implied from letters written to him. The society's one representative in New England, Stephen R. Wynkoop, frequently corresponded with Latrobe about his instructions and the progress of the cause there. On one occasion Wynkoop encountered a less than friendly group of abolitionists in Boston as he made his rounds on behalf of the society. The effect of Garrison was obvious to him.

> Mr. Garrison has resorted to the blackest and foulest means of slandering the Maryland Scheme of colonization. He has taken your laws, adopted for your own necessity against your colored population, and connected them with your scheme of colonization; and thus has tried, and with a good deal of success to impress the community with the belief, that these laws were enacted expressly to drive your blacks into the plans of colonization.[38]

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[37] *MSCS Papers*. II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. D. M. Reese to John Latrobe, April 7, 1836.

[38] *MSCS Papers*. II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Stephen R. Wynkoop to John Latrobe, June 25, 1835.

Of course other northern states had laws seeking to keep blacks outside their borders, but Wynkoop concluded that Latrobe's refusal to respond gave credence to the charges leveled by Garrison. Wynkoop made an impassioned plea for Latrobe to take Garrison on publicly. The people of New England "are not disposed to favor Garrisonianism, few, surprisingly few…have connected themselves with the antis. They hate them as bad as you do_ and yet they are paralyzed. Charge after charge of blackest hue has been reiterated against you and no reply, or refutation being made, some have thought there might be truths among these charges."[39]

Still, Latrobe continued to promote colonization as he had done, choosing not to exacerbate the antagonistic feelings already existing between north and south. Instead, he remained silent; relying on the colonization journal the society began publishing in the spring of 1835 to win supporters for the organization and plan. Latrobe suggested to one confidant that if Maryland failed, "I see nothing but a chaos, frightful with the elements of abolition, amalgamation, extirpation and disunion."[40] This was one reason why so many opposed abolition without the removal of slaves. Latrobe, Maryland colonizationists, and most white Americans equated the demand for immediate abolition with amalgamation. This was one of the key differences between colonization and abolition. The MSCS wanted to end slavery but the members doubted that in the climate that existed in America blacks would be given social or political equality once slavery was abolished.

> This incomplete emancipation could only betray them at some future period to assert an equality of rights, which would produce a struggle that no man sincerely bent on doing good can desire to see ensue, even though he believe it might possibly be successful. To manumit great numbers of them suddenly would

[39] *MSCS Papers*. II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Stephen R. Wynkoop to John Latrobe, June 25, 1835.

[40] *MSCS Papers*. II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Latrobe to Elisha Whittlesey, September 14, 1836.

> therefore be not only a serious nuisance to society, but a false and mistaken mercy to themselves. To manumit them at all, however, gradually, without removing them, would but consign them to the same fate by degrees. Most abolitionists, I know, disclaim amalgamation. But if the end of abolition be equality, abolition were incomplete, it seems to me, without amalgamation.[41]

Nevertheless, abolitionists successfully challenged colonization. Latrobe and the MSCS board finally realized that they must adopt at least some of the strategies of other societies, including the abolitionists themselves.

Within Maryland, colonizationists claimed that abolition had little effect on the movement and that the MSCS was having a positive impact. Unlike the rest of the country, Latrobe asserted at the colonization society's annual meeting in 1836 that Maryland was free of "the excitement which, during the past year, has agitated the country at large on the subject of slavery."[42] The actions of the society, however, indicate that Maryland was far from being free of the very agitation that was occurring elsewhere. The MSCS had already changed its policy in regard to using the printed media for propaganda purposes by 1836. Latrobe and the MSCS tried to voluntarily separate colonization in Maryland from the debate over slavery by breaking with the national society and promoting independent state action. Likewise the society rarely made its actions known to the general public, other than through the occasional address, which it had printed, to avoid public controversy. But abolitionists did not hesitate to use newspapers, journals and pamphlets to promote their agenda. This tactic had proven very successful in politicizing their cause and bringing the abolition of slavery into national politics in a way not seen since the Missouri controversy. Thus, the MSCS decided to take its case to the public through the newspapers. Newspapers in Baltimore, however, were unwilling to devote much

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[41] *MSCS Papers*, XV (not in original collection), 4. An Address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Maryland State Colonization Society by C. C. Harper, January 23, 1835, reel 31.

[42] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. March 4, 1836.

space to the cause without remuneration. To win in the media required a considerable outlay of money by the MSCS, money it did not have. The society was already in debt nearly $6,000. Nevertheless, the members decided to begin publishing their own journal—*The Maryland Colonization Journal*—on a monthly basis. Latrobe insisted that the purpose of the colonization journal was to disseminate information about the plan of state action and MSCS' colony rather "than to enter the arena of controversy in regard to abolition and colonization."[43] Whether willing to admit it or not, Latrobe and the MSCS were in fact practicing the same tactics other organizations used to promote their causes. The MSCS sent copies of the journal far beyond Maryland's borders and listed subscribers from numerous states. Thus the abolitionist attacks on the MSCS elicited a vigorous response.

The first issues of the *Maryland Colonization Journal* defined the Maryland plan in a way that distinguished it from pro-slavery and abolitionist factions. Latrobe hoped to promote "the real nature and merits of colonization on the Maryland plan," through the journal.[44] The effectiveness of the journal in winning converts to the Maryland plan is difficult to determine. What the records indicate, particularly the numerous letters from postmasters throughout the country, is that this tactic did not work very well. Hostility from abolitionists continued to be a problem and opposition actually increased from other groups as well. As a result, many subscribers refused to pick up the journals from their local post offices. Furthermore, just as the ACS had experienced free black animus toward its efforts, so too did the MSCS as slaveholders in the state came to oppose the Maryland organization. And worst of all, the legal apparatus

[43] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Elisha Whittlesey, September 14, 1836.

[44] *Maryland Colonization Journal*, May 15, 1835.

itself, seemingly poised to help the cause of colonization, worked against the objectives of the MSCS.

Free black opposition was the most vexing. African Americans viewed the United States, and in some cases Maryland, as their homeland. Most felt little if any attachment to Africa and had no desire to immigrate to that continent. African Americans exercised their claim to an American identity as abolition sentiment increased in the 1830s. After all, they had fought in the American Revolution and they had worked the land. They had sweat, bled, and died just as much as any white man; perhaps, some argued, even more. Africa was not the home of African Americans as they saw it; "our language, habits, manners, morals and religion are all different from those of Africans." As such, African American leaders decried colonizationists in general for denying their claim as Americans and for enlisting the aid of communities "to a plan which we fear was designed to deprive us of rights that the Declaration of Independence declares are the unalienable rights of all men." If colonizationists really wanted to help black Americans as they claimed, they should do it in America; colonization "cannot promise the least advantage to the free people of color."[45]

Latrobe recognized this feeling among the African American population early in Maryland's colonization effort, even before the society founded its own colony. But to him, it conflicted with what he believed were the inevitable interests of both blacks and whites. The best way to overcome the unfortunate attachment of blacks to America was to teach "Negro youngsters…at an impressionable age to consider Africa as their natural home," and then "they would look forward to emigration as adults." They should be taught African history with the

[45] "Address by Abraham D. Shadd, Peter Spencer, and William S. Thomas, July 12, 1831," in C. Peter Ripley, ed. *Black Abolitionist Papers*, Vol. III, The United States, 1830-1846. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 102-103.

understanding that it was there alone that they would be free. The suggestion that African Americans should be educated was not new; Thomas Jefferson had proposed that blacks be educated before they were colonized. Latrobe, however, was not suggesting that they be taught only skills that would better prepare them to create a new nation. Instead, education should instill a sense of pride or nationalism. This, he hoped, would surely remove the objections of African Americans to going to Africa.[46]

The mere proposal of educating black Americans met with little approval, even if it was to instill in them a desire to leave the United States, so the MSCS turned to other ideas to promote a favorable reception to colonization among Maryland's African American population. One of the primary draws was the promise of equal rights. As Latrobe made clear, settlers of Maryland in Liberia gained full political rights, something he felt they would never achieve in the United States. The MSCS also encouraged direct communication between the colonists in Maryland in Liberia and friends or family remaining in Maryland. The society regularly forwarded correspondence for its settlers. Latrobe believed that this was the most effective way to entice black Marylanders into emigrating. Slavery and racism had created a justified mistrust and skepticism of white colonizationists' reports about the colony, thus publications like the colonization journal and even the efforts of the society's traveling agent could not carry as much influence as one letter from a family member in Liberia. Latrobe even went so far to counter the general opposition among Maryland blacks as to allow them to pick a representative to go to Maryland in Liberia and report back to the community. The MSCS picked up the tab for this in

[46] Quoted in Peter Kent Opper, "The Mind of the White Participant in the African Colonization Movement, 1816-1840." (PhD. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1972), 33.

the hopes of increasing emigration.[47] Such efforts, however, translated into few converts among African Americans in Maryland.

MSCS representatives found the task of recruiting colonists increasingly difficult in this atmosphere and the society pushed for new ways to draw African Americans to Maryland in Liberia. Latrobe next suggested in 1837 that the society purchase or build a vessel for use solely by the MSCS. This would save the society money in the long term by allowing the MSCS to send expeditions whenever it pleased, and provide a direct commercial link with the colony. The trade carried on by the society was almost exclusively designed to offset the costs of colonization. A society-owned vessel would increase profits that could be used to fund the colonial government and transport colonists to Africa. Latrobe envisioned other benefits. "The prejudices of the colored people of this state, which have hitherto proved one of the most serious obstacles to emigration, will, it is confidently believed, receive a decided check, from the regular departure and return of the Liberian Packet." He further proposed that the crew (including the captain) be African Americans, this directly addressed charges abolitionists made about colonization. A regular line in which African Americans freely participated would encourage "worthy and intelligent colonists to embark, intercourse in trade:- will become more frequent between the colonists and their friends in this country;- adventurously small capitalists [will] become more common, and in this manner, confidence will gradually" replace "suspicion and distrust; and the idea of being sold as slaves into a southern market."[48] Unfortunately for Latrobe, the idea required far more resources than the society possessed in 1837.

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[47] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. Alexander Cowan to James Hall, July 22, 1847.

[48] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. January 7, 1837.

The cool reception among African Americans continued despite Latrobe's best efforts to make Maryland in Liberia appealing. In fact, few black Marylanders willingly made their real feelings about colonization known out of fear that they would face increasing oppression. Most African Americans wanted nothing to do with colonization. Some were willing to speak out regardless of the consequences. William Watkins, a long-time leader in the African American community and an opponent of colonization, made this clear as early as 1831. Watkins wrote to William Lloyd Garrison that African Americans would "rather die in Maryland under the pressure of unrighteous and cruel laws than be driven, like cattle, to the pestilential clime of Liberia, where grievous privation, inevitable disease, and premature death; await us in all their horrors."[49] Ten years later Watkins' opinion had changed little in regard to colonization and he was now "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 definitively' of our views and sentiments relative thereto would be regarded by them as of secondary importance." By 1841, given the increased vigor of MSCS efforts to resettle blacks in Africa, Watkins concluded that definitive opposition on the part of Maryland's black community would only cause prejudice "more virulent, and an increased impetus be given to persecution and proscription."[50] What was most frustrating about this for Latrobe was that the MSCS had tried very hard to promote Maryland in Liberia's benefits to the black community believing that it would change the minds of free African Americans.

[49] William Watkins to William Lloyd Garrison, May 1831, *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 99.

[50] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 3. William Watkins to James Hall, May 24, 1841.

Maryland colonizationists slowly learned that abolitionists in Maryland fostered the attitude they encountered among the African American community. With much dismay, the Maryland society discovered that

> upon arriving in a neighborhood to be visited, the agent would address himself at once to the free coloured people, and explain to them the design of colonization, and make statements in regard to Africa, its climate, soil and productions, and the privileges granted by the Society to those who emigrated to the colony. In most instances, the persons thus addressed, would hear with kindness what was told them by the agent, many would express a willingness to emigrate, and some would at once, put their names upon the list for the next expedition.
>
> In this situation would the agent leave them, and after completing his round, would return to assist those whom he had first visited and who proposed to emigrate, in making their preparations. But in every instance, he would find that an antagonist had been at work in his absence, and that the mind of the coloured people had in the interval been filled with ideas, which it was difficult, if not impossible to eradicate in the time that he could devote to the purpose; that calumnies and falsehoods, prepared with art, and suited to the prejudices of those for whom they were intended, had been uttered by persons, whom it was impossible to identify, and who could only be traced in their course, by the mischief they had done.[51]

The MSCS rarely identified the individuals that it charged with injuring colonization, but its leaders, Latrobe in particular, continued to note the effect they believed abolitionists had on their efforts in later reports.

Maryland's state courts also frustrated Latrobe's efforts, compounding what must have seemed a tidal wave of opposition. The 1831 law passed by the Maryland legislature stipulated that emancipated slaves must leave the state, preferably going to Liberia under the supervision of the colonization society. A similar provision applied to free blacks entering the state; they had to leave after ten days. What was often overlooked by nearly everyone but Latrobe, were provisions in sections 4 and 5 of the code. These sections allowed the courts to intercede if removal separated families, or if

[51] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. Sixth Annual Report read to the members December 1837.

manumitted slaves "deserve such permission on account of their extraordinary good conduct and character." So convinced was Latrobe of the virtue of his cause that he actually complained that the court was too liberal in the number of exemptions issued.[52] After inquiring as to the number of permits the county courts were issuing under these provisions of the law,[53] Latrobe discovered that between 1831 and 1841, masters emancipated 2,300 slaves in Maryland. Out of this number, the MSCS had transported only 627 from the state. Not all of that number went to Maryland in Liberia; 177 went to the ACS colony and a smaller number went to Haiti.[54] To Latrobe the message was clear. Slave owners were willing to emancipate their chattels, but the reason the MSCS settled so few in Africa was because the courts did not do their jobs. Instead, "the manumitted slave remains unnoticed in the community keeping the fact of his freedom as much as possible to himself and not disturbed by those who have no especial interest in doing so_ relying in fact upon his insignificance for exemption from the operation of the law."[55] Latrobe put the interests of colonization above the hopes of free African Americans to avoid exile. Circumvention of the law diminished the numbers of potential settlers for Maryland in Liberia.

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[52]"Act of Incorporation and By-Laws of the Maryland State Colonization Society: together with The Act of the General Assembly of Maryland, entitled An Act Relating to the People of Color in This State; To which are added The Constitution and Ordiances of Maryland in Liberia." (Baltimore: J. D. Toy, 1834), 6.

[53] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. D. Weisel to John Latrobe, May 24, 1841.

[54] *MSCS Papers*, XV. Pamphlets, reel 31. *Report of the Committee on the Coloured Population of Answers of the President of the Colonization Society of Maryland, in Obedience to the Order Adopted by the House of Delegates, on the 4th January, 1841*, 3.

[55] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 17. John Latrobe to William Coad, chair of committee on colored pop., House of Delegates, January 12, 1841.

Despite the MSCS' difficulties in defeating its enemies in Maryland, the Maryland plan gained in popularity in other states. The enthusiasm shown for independent state action in the latter half of the 1830s did not necessarily help the MSCS, but other state colonization societies copied the MSCS. In New York and Pennsylvania the colonization forces combined their resources to establish a third separate colony in West Africa at Bassa Cove. Latrobe's friend Robert S. Finley, who was employed by the New York Society, played an important role in this effort. By 1837, colonization societies in Virginia and Mississippi had also begun setting up independent colonies along the Liberian coast.[56] The popularity of the Maryland plan no doubt grew out of the fact that it focused colonization efforts within the boundaries of respective states, a strategy that provided the best alternative to keep the movement alive in the face of abolitionist attacks.

Giving greater impetus to the state plan was the growing violence against abolitionists in 1837. Violence toward abolitionists was not new in 1837; Garrison had been arrested and assaulted numerous times. But the killing of Elijah Lovejoy, editor of an abolitionist paper in Illinois, caught the attention of the nation. Some southerners lamented the loss of Lovejoy, because they feared he would become a martyr. The overall impact of the murder was a noticeable renewal of abolition efforts in the southern states. One Virginian, hoping his state would follow the precedent of Maryland, noted his surprise "that abolition operations were so extensive," In fact, Lovejoy's death seemed "to double their efforts in extending the doctrines they advocate, and giving

[56] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. January 15, 1837.

energy and tone to all their operations." Worse yet, he equated the abolitionists to crusaders in the eastern world who would not "easily be dissipated."[57]

The escalating tensions and newfound popularity of state action prodded the American Colonization Society to redirect its efforts in tandem with the MSCS. The increasingly rigid sectionalism emerging in the nation forced all those interested in colonization to redouble their efforts at pacifying the "fanatics" on each side and concentrating resources available to the several societies. The ACS first tried to accelerate colonization nationally by suggesting that Congress incorporate the organization on the example of Maryland. ACS president, Senator Henry Clay, presented the petition to the Senate of the United States on January 27, 1837, which would have made the ACS a government institution with access to funding that it desperately needed. It was not to be, however, as Calhoun led the opposition. According to James Carroll, Calhoun "thought the subject could not be agitated with benefit to any interest; and he hoped, therefore, it would not be acted upon." In short, Calhoun was proposing a gag on colonization petitions, and he carried the day with the help of northern doughfaces.[58]

The ACS also formulated other plans to regain its momentum. In March of 1837, the national organization's committee on auxiliary relations urged the managers to restructure the colonization movement by unifying all the societies with colonies in Africa under its leadership.

> The security, freedom, and happiness of the colonists obviously rest on union among themselves [and this] presupposes the harmonious co-operation of their friends and patrons in America. Accordingly, the Committee have framed a Constitution of General Government for the various settlements of Liberia, with a

[57] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 3. James P. Carroll to Ira A. Easter, February 15, 1838.

[58] *African Repository*, Vol. XIII. No. 2. February, 1837. 41-44.

> view to a reunion of the American Societies engaged in the colonization of Africa.[59]

Interestingly, the proposition for organizing the now numerous state organizations apparently came from none other than Latrobe. At its November 1836 meeting, the MSCS adopted a resolution creating a corresponding committee, consisting of Latrobe, Hugh D. Evans, and John J. Proud, whose purpose was to organize a convention to adopt a set of common laws for all the American colonies in Africa.[60] The notion of streamlining the relationship between the colonies along the Liberian coast was only the beginning of Latrobe's larger vision of turning the settlements into confederated states in a republic. The change in attitude by Latrobe reflected national debates in the United States. It also reflected Latrobe's desire to strengthen the colony, which he assumed would be yet another factor encouraging African Americans to immigrate to Liberia.

The ACS supported the concept of reunifying the movement, but went beyond what Latrobe intended. The ACS suggested that all organizations possessing colonies in Africa adopt a new constitution and become members of a federation headed by the ACS.[61] The constitution was immediately unpalatable to Latrobe and the MSCS. The document gave the governor of the colony at Monrovia, the original settlement, and considerable power. The governor of the ACS colony would hold powers stronger than those of the president in the United States, including the right to appoint government officials, to preside over the congress and vote on legislation, and to preside over the court system in Liberia. To Latrobe, such power resembled a monarchy more than a democratic government. More serious for the state societies, however, was a resolution by

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[59] *African Repository*, Vol. XIII. No. 3. March, 1837. 73.

[60] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. November 11, 1836.

[61] *African Repository*, Vol. XIII. No. 3. March, 1837. 73-74.

the ACS that gave it financial oversight and required the state societies to forward ten percent of their revenues to the ACS.[62] Latrobe had objected to a similar proposal at the time the MSCS was created; he was not about to accept it in 1837. While seeing the need for greater cooperation between the societies with colonies in Africa, the MSCS could not agree to the ACS proposal.

Latrobe countered the proposition of the national society within days, clearly showing his vision for the colonies. Latrobe suggested to his friend Robert Finley that the state societies unite and send delegates annually to a "central colonization convention, which should have power in all matters touching the general interests of the colonies in Africa…uniformity in fundamental Laws_a currency, a tariff and port charges_a flag_education." The colonies should also form a militia. Such cooperation, however, in no way diminished the right of state societies to govern their colonies, appoint officers, and manage affairs in the states. By making such changes, the State Societies could eventually transfer their powers to the colonists in Africa. The colonies "would there become State governments and the central colonization convention composed there of delegates from the different colonies, would become the general congress of Liberia." Nowhere in his plan did the ACS have a superior role. As far as Latrobe was concerned, the parent society was an equal, but certainly not deserving of more influence in a new confederation simply because it controlled the oldest colony.[63]

In the spring of 1837, neither side seemed able to find a common ground. Latrobe and his society wanted nothing to do with the plan of the ACS and even expressed ideas that alarmed the members of that society. The MSCS members, Latrobe wrote, acknowledged the debt owed

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[62] *African Repository*, Vol. XIII. No. 3 March, 1837. 73-79.

[63] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to Robert S. Finley, March 17, 1837.

the ACS for proving that colonization was possible. But it was a different world now; with the tensions in American society and politics so high, "the appropriate functions of the Society are at an end. The discordant views entertained among the friends of Colonization themselves throughout our wide country, forbid the idea of such an unity of sentiment and action in any general society as is necessary to entire success."[64] To Latrobe and the MSCS members, "the friends of colonization in different parts of the United States, are widely at variance, and cannot be harmonized. Nor is it necessary that they should be." Latrobe urged the MSCS to adopt the opinion that:

> so far from there being any value in a national society for the purpose of securing unity of opinion experience has shown that any attempt to do this would be attended with consequences most sincerely to be deprecated, and which would convert the annual meetings of the American Colonization Society into the arena for fierce, unyielding and dangerous discussions…but still, they are decidedly of the opinion, that the three societies should meet on this subject as equals; and that any system to be adopted should be the result of joint deliberations, and should be carried out, where necessary, by a joint action. The committee see no reason for the apportionment of power recommended in the constitution. The settlements of Monrovia owe their greater population to the fact of their having been the longest established, and not to any peculiar advantages belonging to them; for, indeed, there is much reason to doubt, whether the position of Monrovia is the best that can be selected, and whether, in time, Monrovia itself will not be surpassed in population and prosperity, by other settlements.[65]

Despite a heated exchange with the ACS, much of which found its way into the press, and after Latrobe himself concluded that the ACS served no further purpose, anymore, support for a colonization convention remained strong enough that the New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and American colonization societies all sent

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[64] *The African Repository,* Vol. XIII. No. 4. April, 1837. 121.

[65] Recommendation of a committee composed of John Latrobe, F. Anderson, Luke Tiernan, Peter Hoffman, John G. Proud, Wm. Crane. *MSCS Papers,* I. Minutes, reel 1. June 8, 1837.

representatives to Philadelphia in the summer of 1838.[66] John Latrobe endorsed whatever position the MSCS took regarding the convention, but he certainly was not supportive of any position giving advantage to the ACS. He made this clear to Thomas Buchanan before the convention met in September. Buchanan, a member of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society and organizer of the convention, supported reorganization so that the national society would exert "supervisory control in this country and the care of a general government for the colonies; while the whole business of sending out emigrants and regulating their local affairs shall be committed to the State Societies."[67] This was essentially the same stance the ACS took with the Maryland society in 1831, which caused the MSCS to sever its ties. Such a proposition was completely unacceptable to Latrobe, who responded quickly to Buchanan's ideas: "we think to associate the plan of a convention with the idea that it is to end in giving control of any kind to the Am. Col Soc would be running counter to all that we have heretofore been doing and connect with the plan of state action, which is now conciliating the South."[68] Buchanan wrote back on June 30, 1838 in a conciliatory tone, acknowledging Latrobe's argument; however, he still hoped that the ACS might at least represent the political union of the societies in the United States. Unity of any kind was certain to increase the international respect of Liberia's colonies and "ensure more generally the confidence of the American people than our present plans."[69]

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[66] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 3. Thomas Buchanan to John Latrobe, June 14, 1838.

[67] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 3. Thomas Buchanan to John Latrobe, June 14, 1838.

[68] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Thomas Buchanan, June 27, 1838.

[69] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 3. Thomas Buchanan to John Latrobe, June 30, 1838.

Although the position of the MSCS differed from that of the ACS, the softening of the stance of such men as Thomas Buchanan offered the possibility of a compromise that kept everyone's hopes alive. In September 1838, fourteen representatives from the four colonization societies holding colonies in Africa gathered in Philadelphia to discuss unification. The meeting turned sour very quickly when Latrobe proposed an alternate to a resolution presented by Judge Wilkinson of the ACS. The MSCS representatives, John Latrobe, William Stuart and William Crane, all objected to the latest version of a constitution drawn up by the ACS because it gave too much power to the ACS. Latrobe countered with three resolutions, which excited his colleagues to the point that no consensus could be reached, not even on adjourning the meeting. The three resolutions suggested that another convention be held at which the delegates from each society would create a plan regulating only the commercial concerns of the colonies. Opponents objected on the grounds that the resolutions went beyond what the other societies had authorized their representatives to sign. After a long and drawn-out discussion, the representatives decided to form a five-member committee charged with finding some agreeable terms of association. Latrobe was a member of this new committee, but the ACS held two of the five positions.[70] The Associated Colonies of Liberia in West Africa resulted from the efforts of the committee. Members of the association had to agree to all of the twenty-three articles, which aimed at easing trade between the colonies more than anything else. Showing the influence of Latrobe, the final provision asserted that

[70] *MSCS Papers*, VIII. Commissions and Reports, D. Reports of the Board of Managers, 1835-47, reel 17. Appendix of the Seventh posed of John Latrobe, F. Anderson, Luke Tiernan, Peter Hoffman, John G. Proud, Wm. Crane. *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. June 8, 1837.

[70] Annual Meeting, January 23, 1839, pages 18-32.

legislative power for the colonies resided with the individual societies in the United States; cooperation was not going to occur.[71]

Despite Latrobe's influence in shaping the parameters of the association, the MSCS effectively abandoned the idea within a few months. ACS representatives still insisted their society be the head of unified action and any representative body in Africa. Latrobe countered with the suggestion that representation of the societies be exercised through a governor-general in Africa who would enforce the laws made by the convention in America. Such a representative would be chosen by all the societies. The ACS insisted upon its prerogative and chose Thomas Buchanan. This was the final straw; Latrobe objected arguing that "The colonies are too far apart_too thickly populated_the intercourse between them too unfrequent to let him [Buchanan] act with energy, or even discharge his duties to all of them…the influence of this officer would only be a moral one for he would have no bayonets to back him and the moral influence of the state societies' laws by themselves would be as great as his."[72] In reality, Latrobe was stating a determination by the MSCS not to give up its sovereignty in Africa or the United States to the American Colonization Society.

Latrobe's intransigence made him the focus of controversy. Some delegates questioned Latrobe's motives. Perhaps, some suggested, his participation was a ploy to gain control over the whole enterprise. Clearly incensed, Latrobe defended himself by appealing to Thomas Buchanan, the very individual he claimed could not enforce convention decisions in the colonies. Latrobe denied any ulterior motives: "I had none when I offered the substitute for Judge

[71] *MSCS Papers*, VIII. Commissions and Reports, D. Reports of the Board of Managers, 1835-47, reel 17. Appendix of the Seventh Annual Meeting, January 23, 1839, 19-21.

[72] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Robert Finley, September 18, 1838.

Wilkinson's resolution_ our society you know seeks no alliances and I had fully stated my views in Baltimore when you were present." Latrobe felt that critics "did me great injustice" when they accused him of trying to assume control. Instead he felt the convention "was bringing about unconsciously the very State of things" that he was most anxious to avoid. Even though Latrobe felt he had been wronged, he did admit his regret in contributing to "the warmth" exhibited at Philadelphia.[73]

By January of 1839, it was official; the MSCS would not join the other three societies to form a single organization. In his annual report, Latrobe urged MSCS members to see that the plan "was wholly premature, and would afford no possible advantages, so far certainly as the Maryland colony was concerned that would compensate for the additional drain it would make upon the means sufficiently limited and the complication it would introduce into affairs which it is on all accounts desirable to keep simple."[74] The reality, despite Latrobe's public comments, was that Latrobe and the MSCS shared the responsibility for what had happened in Philadelphia. Nevertheless, Latrobe defended the decision by suggesting that the plan of action pursued by the other three societies would raise objections from slaveholders to colonization. Worse yet, the new constitution of the ACS allowed life members to influence the operations of the organization, which presented an opportunity for the ACS to be taken over by either northerners or southerners, provided they were willing to purchase enough memberships. If this happened, there would be no saving the Union. Therefore, the MSCS planned to continue its policy of independent state action.[75]

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[73] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Thomas Buchanan, September 28, 1838.

[74] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. Seventh Annual Report, January 1839.

[75] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. Seventh Annual Report, January 1839.

The failure to unite the colonies and societies suggested weakness in the colonization movement and only encouraged opposition to the Maryland effort. The MSCS was perceived to be the strongest of the societies because of the substantial funding it received from the state. But, after the convention fiasco, the MSCS was in fact at one of its weakest moments. The society had debts substantial enough that it sent no expeditions or emigrants to the colony in 1839. The society left Russwurm to fend for himself essentially, as Latrobe found it difficult even to send supplies to Maryland in Liberia. In such an atmosphere Latrobe was shocked to find that criticism from missionaries in Maryland in Liberia had made its way into the American papers in 1838. After investigating, Latrobe found that criticism of his colony came from missionaries other than just John Wilson. Unfortunately for Latrobe, this problem turned out to be one he could not easily dismiss.

As was typical for Latrobe, he attempted to solve the problem caused by missionary criticisms behind closed doors. He mostly wished to avoid any public dispute, which would further hurt the efforts of the MSCS. This was the last thing he needed after the very public dispute with the ACS in Philadelphia. Latrobe wrote to the ABCFM in Boston that Mr. Wilson was "mistaken about the colony," and that while he has a right to communicate his sentiments

> he should do it with more discretion than he is inclined to do_ otherwise the minister of Religion…may become to us the source of bitter mischief. How can it be expected that we should willingly afford countenance and protection to those who use the opportunities we afford to assail us in random communications to this country, expected to be published._ We have unfriend enough, without adding to them the missionary within our borders.[76]

[76] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Rev. John A. Vaughan, October 2, 1838.

Latrobe addressed Reverend Wilson too, and made it very plain that his letters home had caused "great pain" to himself and the society.[77] Latrobe's actions were clearly driven by his desire to avoid criticism of the MSCS and its colony. Colonization in general had critics enough with abolitionists and free African Americans. Latrobe further worried that criticism would cause him to lose the support his organization garnered from the state and numerous religious denominations.

The missionaries did not lie down for Latrobe. Wilson responded to Latrobe by elaborating the most serious accusations against the colonists and the movement in general. He asserted that the colonists actually injured the natives by their presence, that the colonists hated the natives enough that they would eventually drive them off the cape, and, most distressingly, that the colonies would probably engage in the slave trade were it not for the missionary presence.[78] Latrobe immediately appealed again to the missionary's superiors in Boston. Latrobe challenged the assertion regarding the trade in slaves. While he admitted that "the site of Monrovia was once a depot for the exportation of slaves," colonization "has blotted out a slave depot from the coast of Western Africa."[79] Despite his efforts, Latrobe achieved only a temporary peace between the missionaries and colonists. He could not control their reports, which continued to make their way into print. The MSCS had no alternative but to do as it had done with abolitionists a few years earlier; the society turned to its colonization journal to combat critiques coming from Africa.

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[77] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Wilson, November 21, 1838.

[78] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. J. Leighton Wilson to Latrobe, January 15, 1839.

[79] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to Rufus Anderson, November 29, 1838.

This incident with the missionaries brought a noticeable increase in abolitionist opposition to the MSCS. The traveling agent of the MSCS claimed that abolitionists followed him from one town to the next in Maryland, undoing all his efforts to gain supporters for the cause. In the north, opposition to colonization strengthened too. One member of the New Hampshire Colonization Society wrote that the best remedy for this in New England was for the MSCS to send someone who could, from experience, refute the objections abolitionists brought against colonization. The colonization society, he felt had made little effort to combat their enemies in the north. Latrobe and the Maryland society certainly had a full plate in Maryland and Africa, without responding to every form of opposition in New England. Nonetheless, the MSCS was losing the battle between colonization and abolition.[80]

Unfortunately for Latrobe, the struggle only became more difficult. By 1841 slaveholders in Maryland joined with abolitionists, free African Americans, and missionaries. A slaveholder's convention held in Maryland in the summer of 1841 demonstrated that there was clear opposition to colonization and abolition efforts among that class in Maryland. Some of those attending looked at colonization as a poison that must be countered with an antidote. The convention held by Maryland slaveholders in Annapolis and its publicity was a start. W.W. Bowie, one of the members attending the convention, questioned colonization outright, boldly asserting that each emigrant taken to Liberia by the state cost $5,000.[81] While Bowie acknowledged in later statements that the real expense of colonizing African Americans in Africa lay in purchasing the territory, paying for buildings and fortifications, and government expenses, the suggestion of such a cost had a political effect. Slaveholders realized the antidote

[80] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 3. E. K. Webster to James Hall, April 13, 1841.

[81] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. John H. Kennard to John Latrobe, January 29, 1842.

to the poison of colonization was in stressing the cost to the state. Once people learned how much was spent to settle colonists in Africa, slaveholders were certain that the public would demand elected officials repeal the state appropriation, and loss of state funds would all but kill the MSCS. The position outlined by W. W. Bowie overwhelmed those slaveholders who felt that the convention should publicly support colonization because it answered the riddle of "what is to be done with the blacks or with our selves and our children, it must be settled, and can be settled only by uniting upon colonization."[82]

The slaveholders' convention in Maryland caused considerable controversy in addition to unneeded problems for the Maryland society. The society's traveling agent, John Kennard, saw the effects of the convention more clearly than anyone in the MSCS. Kennard reported that in the wake of the convention even firm friends now questioned the cause of colonization. Abolitionists were taking advantage of the slaveholders' convention to "honestly or not, make us one in purpose and interest" with slavery.[83] Among Maryland's black community, a resident of Queen Anne's County reported, some now looked at colonization as a tool of slaveholders to strengthen slavery.[84] The reaction to mobilization by Maryland slaveholders was clearly interpreted in numerous ways by citizens of the state, but all affected the efforts of the MSCS by the summer of 1842.

It would have been very easy for Latrobe to abandon the cause of colonization given the renewed opposition to the movement. There was a rumor circulating that the MSCS intended to

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[82] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. John H. Kennard to John Latrobe, January 29, 1842; reel 27, *Maryland Colonization Journal*, Vol. 1.—No. 8, January 15, 1842, 118-119.

[83] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. John H. Kennard to James Hall, March 18, 1842.

[84] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. Enoch George to Rev. John Kennard, March 28, 1842.

"abandon both the cause of colonization here, and the colony itself at Cape Palmas." This was never an option for Latrobe. Instead he looked positively on the effects of the slaveholders' convention in Maryland, which confirmed the moderate course of colonization.

> The Board, I believe, (certainly Individually do) look upon the very excitement which has grown out of recent events in reference to the free colored population as most favorable to our cause. The tendency of excited parties is always to extremes: and hence in the discussions with which the newspapers were not long since filled it was contended on the one hand, that free black labour was essential to the prosperity of the State, and that all measures tending to drive off the free blacks were politically as well as morally wrong_while on the other hand it was contended that the sooner the free blacks were driven off the better and that it was slavery which was essential to the State, and that therefore it was proper to perpetuate the institution in Maryland.
>
> Now colonization is the middle ground_...it disavows all intention to coerce the free blacks, all right to interfere in any way with the property of masters in their slaves_ a property recognised and guaranteed by the law of the land. It appeals to the free blacks to remove on the ground that it is <u>their</u> interest as it is that of the whites that they should do so_ and having prepared an asylum in Africa they look to its being filled by the free blacks as well as by those slaves whose masters may manumit them…This is the place of colonization and it is believed that the present is the very time to prosecute it,_ for if you have a good cause excitement on the subject even though unfavorable to you is better than apathy…To abandon it now is the farthest from their thoughts.[85]

Now was the time, Latrobe believed, for the MSCS to be aggressive in promoting itself as the answer to tensions between North and South; to the conflict between abolitionist and slaveholder, and finally to the question of the status of African Americans in the United States. Furthermore, Latrobe responded to the charge made by Bowie who opposed colonization on financial grounds. Bowie missed the point, Latrobe charged; the purpose of the MSCS was not to carry every single African American from the state. Success could not be measured in sheer numbers. The MSCS had succeeded by removing "those willing to go." The numbers would in fact be larger were it not for

[85] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 17. John Latrobe to John H. Kennard, May 23, 1842.

"evil, and, unfortunately, controlling influences," of those opposed to colonization. Finally, the MSCS had succeeded because there was now "an outlet for emigration against the time when the free coloured man himself will admit that there is no alternative but removal."[86] The day was coming when all anti-colonizationists, be they abolitionists or slaveholders, would see they were wrong.

In the meantime, the MSCS struggled to continue its work. The society was able to make some headway on the idea of a regular vessel owned by the MSCS to run between the colony and Baltimore. But the challenges posed by Maryland slaveholders and attacks made by missionaries in the United States hurt the organization's efforts. The tenuous peace Latrobe brokered in 1838 had ended. New reports coming from the missionaries J. Leighton Wilson, Reverend A.E. Griswold, and Dr. Thomas Savage were much more damning. These reports focused on the high death rates in the Liberian colonies due to waning support from the societies.[87]

The implications of such negative press for the MSCS were significant as Maryland in Liberia now drew international attention. The complaints of Wilson reached beyond the United States. English missionaries working through the Wesleyan Church were also active in West Africa, and they too began to spread the word about Cape Palmas at a missionary convention in London based on the charges leveled by Wilson. Although these missionaries had no first-hand knowledge of the conditions in Maryland in Liberia, they spread the bad news in Europe. Latrobe's friend Thomas E. Bond, who

[86] *MSCS Papers*, VIII. Commissions and Reports, D. Reports of the Board of Managers, 1835-47. The Tenth Annual Report of the MSCS, 1842, 7-10.

[87] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. R.R. Gurley to James Hall, September 30, 1842.

attended the convention, urged Latrobe to respond. "You must," Bond asserted, "explain and refute. Your own periodical is too limited in its circulation to meet the necessity. If you make a clear case of it 'The Christian Advocate and Journal' is at your service."[88] Latrobe took the advice of his friend. First he reassured Bond that the charges were completely and "utterly false." In addition, the MSCS formed a committee to prepare a report from extracts of correspondence from the colonists to combat missionary charges. Latrobe intended it to be used as Bond suggested in journals other than the one published by the MSCS.[89] He also informed other clergymen that "I am perfectly aware of the statements that have been made by the gentleman you mention [missionaries Wilson, Griswold, and Savage], calculated, and I fear, intended, to injure the cause of colonization…I may be wrong: but if I am I have not yet had the first reason to suspect it." The truth, as far as he was concerned, was "at utter war with what has now been said of the relations of the colonies."[90]

After attempting to pacify representatives of religious organizations, Latrobe chastised the editors of papers publishing the reports from missionaries at Cape Palmas. Latrobe specifically went after the editors of the *New York Observer* for "the constant reiterations of the unfounded allegations, that our colony instead of assisting, as we humbly hoped it would do, in the great work of evangelizing Africa was an obstacle in its way." Nonetheless, the MSCS had refrained from attacking the missionaries publicly for

[88] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. Thomas E. Bond to John Latrobe, October 27, 1842.

[89] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Thomas E. Bond, November 8, 1842.

[90] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. John Latrobe to Rev. S. Cornelius, November 24, 1843.

their erroneous facts about Maryland in Liberia because it did not want to risk "offending the pious men who have as missionaries put their lives in peril for the Heathen's sake." He then asked that the editors give his organization space for an article refuting the allegations of the missionaries and justifying the new policy the MSCS instituted in the colony in 1843.[91]

Latrobe's actions were more damage control than anything else because they did not address the real source of the society's current problem. Latrobe had long supported the colonization cause along with that of spreading Christianity. He initiated the relationship of the MSCS with the missionaries in 1833. He was the one who suffered it to be policy for MSCS agents "to lend to missionaries all their countenance and aide._ We have granted them land and privileges; and we have borne and forborne when we have been sorely tried by the misrepresentation with which we have been repaid at times."[92] This would no longer be the case as Latrobe convinced the MSCS board to implement a change of policy regarding missionaries in Maryland in Liberia.

In December 1842, the MSCS instituted its changed policy for missionaries.[93] Latrobe then informed the ABCFM that the Presbyterian mission, led by none other than John L. Wilson, had to go. Latrobe explained that it was

> painfully and absolutely necessary for us to rescind the conveyance which the Presbyterian Missionaries have for the land they occupy at Cape Palmas and request their immediate removal from our territory unless the A.B.C.F.M. give such absolute and peremptory instructions to their agents as shall make them

[91] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Messrs Siney & Morse + Co. Editors of the N.Y. Observer, September 23, 1843.

[92] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. John Latrobe to Rev. S. Cornelius, November 24, 1843.

[93] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. December 10, 1842.

> conform to the laws of the civilized territory in which they now reside and prevent such occurrences as the painful one now referred to.[94]

This was not the only condition that would be applied to missionaries in the colony. Latrobe and the MSCS added another provision requiring that all white males over fourteen years of age residing in Maryland in Liberia longer than ten days take an oath acknowledging Maryland in Liberia as the official authority at Cape Palmas and submitting to the authority and decisions of the governor, John Russwurm.[95] This most certainly would have been a tough pill for John Wilson to swallow. Clearly, Latrobe was seeking to gain control over the situation in Liberia. The breach between the two organizations had grown too large by this time and the ABCFM could not, or would not, agree to the conditions demanded by Latrobe. The missionaries at Fair Hope station were leaving.

The MSCS' policy change caused serious repercussions in the United States. Latrobe had to justify his actions and those of the MSCS. Rufus Anderson greatly aided Latrobe in this matter as he reprimanded one of the missionaries, A. E. Griswold, for his conduct in the events leading up to separation with the MSCS. Anderson also secured a written apology from him, which he then sent to Governor Russwurm. The whole process, however, still left Latrobe jaded when it came to the missionaries in the colony. Writing Governor Russwurm, Latrobe stated his confidence that "You are aware of the views of the Board of Managers in regard to the value and importance of making the colony a religious community." Unfortunately, "white men, educated with the prejudice of this country," are "restive under a government whose powers are wielded by those whom they have been accustomed to consider their inferior…That such feelings are

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[94] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 17. John Latrobe to Rev. Rufus Anderson, December 8, 1842.

[95] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. January 24, 1843.

wrong all men must admit."[96] As this was the case, Latrobe concluded that "the cause of missions and colonization cannot go hand in hand at home. Ill designing white men will keep them apart."[97]

This line of reasoning did not carry as much weight at home as Latrobe hoped, and he was forced to confront the ill effects of the episode with the missionaries. Colonization agents in New England reported that abolitionists were "springing up" against the MSCS fiercely in the fall of 1843, which adversely affected the efforts of the New York Colonization Society and the American Colonization Society. Renewed resistance to colonization was certainly a sign of things to come, as the anti-slavery impulse would finally succeed in ending the gag rule in Congress. While the defeat of the gag rule symbolized a response from northern democrats against their characterization as doughfaces dominated by their southern brethren, it also symbolized renewed vigor of those opposing the MSCS and colonization generally.[98] As such, Latrobe needed to give "some explanation to meet the prejudice of the public mind!"[99]

The first ten years of Maryland's colonization efforts in the United States, like the first decade of colonization in Africa, were full of controversies and conflicts. Latrobe had to face the reality that slavery and the ultimate fate of black Americans were powerful forces that he could not fully reconcile within his colonization plans. Furthermore, the relationship between the

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[96] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Books, reel 17. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, May 10, 1843.

[97] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. John Latrobe to Rev. S. Cornelius, November 24, 1843.

[98] Opposition against the MSCS in the north was detailed by an agent of the ACS in a letter to Latrobe. *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. S. Cornish to John Latrobe, November 20, 1843; R. R. Gurley to James Hall, December 9, 1843. For the defeat of the gag rule in 1844 see Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 136-146.

[99] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. S. Cornish to John Latrobe, November 20, 1843.

MSCS and ABCFM proved just as difficult in the United States as it had been in Maryland in Liberia. There were, of course, factors existing in the United States that proved to be barriers to colonization. Indeed the challenges to colonization proved formidable in America and Latrobe adjusted his policies accordingly, but with limited success. The next decade of his presidency over the Maryland society proved no less difficult, and tested the true mettle of Latrobe's leadership. Latrobe's confidence in his plans and his vision led him to fight for the Maryland society until 1853, when his efforts and leadership won him national prominence as president of the American Colonization Society.

Chapter Six: Challenges Abroad and at Home, 1843-1848

The problems faced during the first decade of the Maryland State Colonization Society's existence seemed to be resolved by 1843. Latrobe had fought to resolve the issues raised by political debates over slavery in the United States, the emergence of abolitionists, opposition from both African Americans and the missionaries in Maryland in Liberia, and finally the problems of colonizing Africa. With the departure of the missionaries from the colony in 1843 and the absence of any major national conflict, Latrobe assumed he could now settle into the work they hoped would result in their ultimate objective—a racially homogeneous America. The peaceful climate of the early 1840s, should have offered Latrobe the opportunity to gain additional support for colonization and move Maryland in Liberia toward independence. However, the façade of peace in the states and in Africa was just that, as Latrobe soon discovered. The absence of conflicts and opposition turned out to be a lull in the continuing series of difficulties Latrobe was forced to navigate.

This chapter examines the next phase of Maryland's colonization effort between 1843 and 1848. At the beginning of this phase of Latrobe's activities, the colony found itself in greater danger than ever before. Within a few years, however, it was his beloved American republic that was in peril. By narrating the events on both sides of the Atlantic during this five-year span, Latrobe's evolving program of independent state action and his long-term vision for colonization, the United States, and Africa become clear. It was the events of this period that led him back to the national society in 1853 and motivated him to accelerate the political progress of Maryland in Liberia.

Latrobe's work in the United States as well as his career as a lawyer often overshadowed his efforts in Africa. But when problems arose, it was to him that the colonists appealed for help. Latrobe was often flexible and adaptive in his responses, taking advantage of the crisis with the missionaries to effect several legislative changes designed to solidify the authority of the governor. Latrobe gave the executive greater powers to enforce policies and he attempted to create a secondary police force responsive only to Russwurm. Latrobe emphasized his satisfaction with the changes when he told Russwurm that "I trust that the unfortunate difficulties…are happily terminated and at rest forever." Latrobe's hopes were soon crushed by a number of crises in the colony, which threatened its future.[1]

As 1843 drew to a close, Maryland in Liberia suffered from both chronic problems associated with food production and trade as well as a new threat—one not seen by the colonists or the MSCS before. Most of Maryland in Liberia's problems stemmed from the general inability to generate sufficient food supplies for the colony. After nine years and numerous attempts on the part of Latrobe to promote agriculture in Maryland in Liberia, the colony still depended on the indigenous people for basic foodstuffs. Poor harvests affected the settlers' relationship with the Grebo people as well as the economic prosperity of the settlement, which greatly concerned Latrobe.[2] Poor crop yields added tensions in other areas too. Acquisition of land had been an objective of the MSCS for many years, but a lack of funds as well as numerous other difficulties prevented Governor Russwurm from fully achieving this directive. Latrobe

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[1] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, May 10, 1843; Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 151-152.

[2] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. John B. Russwurm to John Latrobe, May 24, 1842, December 23, 1843; Harrison Ola Abingbade, "The Settler-African Conflicts: The Case of the Maryland Colonists and the Grebo 1840-1900." In *Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 66, Issue 2 (Summer, 1981), 93; Richard L. Hall, "On Afric's Shore," Book excerpt in *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (Summer 2002), 174-191.

urged the governor to never lose sight of this goal even though he understood that circumstances hindered the expansion he envisioned. Latrobe wanted as much coastal territory as the colony could procure for future expansion; it was part of his overall vision for what the African colonies could become in time. In the first ten years Russwurm succeeded only in purchasing the nearby Grebo village of Fishtown.[3]

The purchase and expansion of the colony's influence along the coast pleased Latrobe because it promised to provide commercial opportunities that could be used to accelerate colonization. No matter how desirable, expansion nevertheless created other problems. First, it hindered settler-African relations at Cape Palmas by creating unwanted competition. Extension of the colony weakened the trading position of the Greboes closest to Cape Palmas who traditionally acted as middlemen in coastal exchanges; it reduced the dependence of the colonists on the Greboes for food, and it strengthened the economic power of the MSCS on the coast. Ultimately, this competition served as the catalyst for settler-native conflicts throughout the region. The colonists almost always won out, however, as they took advantage of the traditional divisions between the various Grebo towns, which seldom cooperated with each other. This divide and conquer strategy put King Freeman at a disadvantage in dealing with Governor Russwurm and contributed to conflict among neighboring peoples competing for good land.[4] Expansion of the colony also thrust American settlers into competition with European powers, whose citizens, particularly British and French, traded up and down the coast. The European presence, commercial as well as military, further motivated the colony to gain control of as much

[3] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. John B. Russwurm to John Latrobe, July 31, 1843; III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to John B. Russwurm, May 10, 1843.

[4] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal*, June, 1845. Vol. 2.-No. 24, 369-370, 377-379; Abingbade, "The Settler-African Conflicts," 93-94.

territory as possible. A month before Russwurm negotiated the Fishtown annexation, he reported that French military officers had visited the coast not more than twenty miles from Cape Palmas to survey territories for French acquisition. This was an issue of concern for both Russwurm and the MSCS as all recognized that the establishment of a French post would hinder economic opportunities for the colony.[5]

Due to the deteriorating situation with the Greboes surrounding Cape Palmas, King Freeman decided to isolate Maryland in Liberia. This precipitated a series of events that brought the colony closer to war with the local population than it had yet been. It also foreshadowed the armed conflict that would eventually occur with the Greboes in 1857. Fed up with the colonists, King Freeman ordered a complete embargo of the colony. This was not the first time that the king had attempted such a tactic, but all his efforts prior to 1843 fell well short of subduing the colonists. The only result of his prior efforts had been the growing animus of John Latrobe, who by the 1840s instructed Russwurm to look for any opportunity to remove the king and his people from the immediate vicinity of Cape Palmas. Ironically, this was just the sort of policy toward the indigenous population that Latrobe lamented in the United States, but now seemed a necessity if his colonization plans were to succeed.[6] Most often the reason that Freeman failed to cow the colonists into submission was because the Greboes were divided. The American settlers always found a way to exploit this fact and trade with another Grebo town, which forced Freeman to capitulate.[7]

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[5] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. John B. Russwurm to John Latrobe, June 26, 1843.

[6] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, June 30, 1836.

[7] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. John B. Russwurm to John Latrobe, December 23, 1843.

In 1843, however, Freeman successfully united the Greboes against the Maryland colonists. Only the fortunate creation of a strong military presence in the area a year earlier saved Maryland in Liberia from possibly being exterminated.[8] On August 9, 1842, the United States and Great Britain had signed a treaty that, as it turned out, greatly aided the American colonies. Specifically, the Treaty of Washington (also known as the Webster-Ashburton Treaty) provided that both Great Britain and the United States "prepare, equip, and maintain…on the coast of Africa, a sufficient and adequate squadron, or naval force of vessels, of suitable numbers…not less than eighty guns."[9] The primary purpose of the force was halting the slave trade. The treaty turned out to be a godsend for Maryland in Liberia by the end of 1843.

The creation of an American military presence, known as the African Squadron, presented some unique opportunities to compensate for the colony's military limitations. Latrobe had desired a strong military presence in Maryland's colony for sometime. Yet the resources of the colony and limited manpower at Cape Palmas prevented him from actually creating the force he wanted in Africa.[10] The signing of the treaty provided a force that, while not directly concerned with the Liberian colonies, benefited them through a secondary directive issued by the Secretary of the Navy, Abel P. Upshur, to protect American commerce. Latrobe appealed to the secretary on behalf of the colony asking him to instruct his officers to act judiciously with the settlers in West Africa. Specifically, he requested that naval officers aid the fledgling government when colonial officials sought help, but that American forces should not

[8] Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 161.

[9] Quoted in Henry Wheaton, *History of the Law of Nations in Europe and America, From the Earliest of times to the Treaty of Washington, 1842*, (New York: Gould, Banks & CO., 1845), 699-700.

[10] Latrobe outlined this in a letter to Russwurm in 1839. *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, July 20, 1839, November 21, 1839.

act to enforce the law as they had during the recent conflict at the Fair Hope mission. Latrobe was fortunate in this regard, since the commander of the African Squadron, Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, interpreted his orders in a fashion corresponding to Latrobe's understanding of them, giving support where he could without being so overt that he violated the pronounced American policy of not holding colonies.[11]

Latrobe not only sought to profit from this new military presence, but he also urged Governor Russwurm to encourage the belief in Africa that the colonists could call on United States vessels of war. This idea was especially desirable in dealing with the Greboes who resisted the sovereignty of Maryland in Liberia. Latrobe cautioned Russwurm, though, that this must be done carefully as neither of them wanted the sort of direct military interference that had occurred in the dispute with the missionaries at Fair Hope. American intervention should be only at the request of Russwurm. Latrobe wrote Commodore Perry to lay out his view of the officer's mission in Africa; Perry agreed with his ideas on involvement in the colonies.[12]

Between the creation of the African Squadron and Perry's arrival at Monrovia, Africans to both the north and the south of Cape Palmas carried out three separate attacks on American traders. These traders were not connected to the colonies; nevertheless, one of the attacks was near enough to Cape Palmas to cause Russwurm concern, and he sought to profit from it. The attacks were on the merchant vessels, *Edward Burley, Atalanta,* and the *Mary Carver.* Perry was aware of them before he took his post and he fully intended to address them when he reached

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[11] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John H. B. Latrobe to Abel P. Upshur, December 21, 1842; John H. Schroeder, *Matthew Calbraith Perry Antebellum Sailor and Diplomat.* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 104.

[12] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. September 9, 1840; II. Correspondence Received, C. Letter Books, Foreign, reel 12. John B. Russwurm to John Latrobe, September 24, 2842, December 8, 1842, February 20, 1843; III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Commodore Matthew C. Perry, May 10, 1843.

Africa. On June 5, 1843, the new commodore of the African Squadron, Matthew C. Perry, set sail for his new post.[13]

The appointment of Commodore Perry as commander of the squadron pleased John Latrobe. He knew that Perry fully supported the cause of colonization. Perry had, in fact, been intimately involved with the colonies since their inception. On August 3, 1819 Perry took his post as a junior officer on the American war sloop *Cyane*. The vessel escorted the first group of colonists to Africa in 1820. It was Perry, so he boasted, who suggested Cape Mesurado as the most suitable spot to establish the American Colonization Society's first settlement.[14]

After Perry earned a command of his own, he carried the U. S. agents who supervised the transportation of recaptured African slaves back to Africa in 1823. Thus, Perry was no stranger to colonization or the colonies of Liberia. Well aware of this tie with Africa, Latrobe took the liberty of writing to Perry before he left the United States. The exchange concerned two subjects. Alluding to the conflict with the Fair Hope missionaries and the intrusion on the part of an American naval officer, Latrobe stressed the independence of Maryland in Liberia, claiming that it was not a dependency of the state government. The recent instance may have injured "our purposes in Africa," he informed Perry. Both Russwurm and Latrobe hoped that Perry would not freely interfere as other naval officers had done, but rather wait until asked to do so by the authorities on the spot. Secondly, although desirous of limited involvement on the part of the squadron in the colonies, both Russwurm and Latrobe pointed out the potential value of Perry's presence. Latrobe told the Commodore, "without having any particular request to make to you,

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[13] Schroeder, *Matthew Calbraith Perry*, 95, 104-105.

[14] Samuel Eliot Morison, *"Old Bruin" Commodore Matthew C. Perry, 1794-1858*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), 66; John H. Schroeder, *Matthew Calbraith Perry Antebellum Sailor and Diplomat.* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 25-26.

the object of this letter will be answered, if, by drawing your attention to the subject, our colony shall receive your countenance and support during the time you remain upon the coast."[15] Countenance and support indeed! Perry immediately expressed his "pleasure to cooperate harmoniously with the authorities. Having long been deeply interested in the cause of colonization I shall enter zealously into those measures which may best serve to carry out the great object of its friends."[16]

Russwurm wanted more from the new American commander than Latrobe. Russwurm felt that the United States government, specifically with military force, must address the recent attacks on American traders. To do otherwise would invite further aggression against Americans, which included the colonists. The American government limited its involvement in Liberia because of Constitutional issues that prevented the possession of colonies. No matter how white Americans viewed the settlers, Russwurm knew that indigenous Africans throughout the region of Liberia considered them all, black or white, Americans. Russwurm wanted considerable force used against those alleged to have committed the violence against the crews of the three ships, especially in the case of the *Mary Carver*, her crew having been massacred. "Mere burning a few villages will be nothing in their estimation," he told Latrobe. Russwurm did not specify what he thought was an appropriate punishment to Latrobe; that did not become clear until he met the Commodore face to face. In addition to punishing the attackers, Russwurm

[15] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Commodore Matthew C. Perry, May 10, 1843.

[16] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. Matthew Perry to John Latrobe, May 24, 1843.

also wanted assistance, military and strategic, from the Navy in preparing for a possible conflict with King Freeman.[17]

Neither Latrobe nor Russwurm were disappointed in their hopes that the African Squadron would serve the interests of Maryland in Liberia. The tactics that made Commodore Perry famous in Japan a decade after his appointment in the African Squadron were sharpened in Africa. One of the navy's primary assignments for Perry was to protect American commercial interests. Just like Governor Russwurm, Perry thought the proper place to begin that mission was to bring to justice those responsible for American deaths along the coast.[18] Perry arrived at Monrovia, the ACS colony, with a plan of action already in mind. By this point Maryland in Liberia was on the brink of war. That very well could have been the outcome were it not for Perry. The commodore interpreted aiding Maryland in Liberia as being consistent with his mission of protecting commerce and commanding respect among Africans for the American flag.[19]

The Cape Palmas Greboes had expressed their displeasure regarding the settlers, particularly regarding land claims, many times. The dispute in 1843 had many causes, only one of which was land. As far as the colonists were concerned this was yet another example of Grebo efforts to assert a claim on the land. Latrobe of course sided with the colonists who held fast to the interpretation that the Greboes gave up claim to all the territory except for the towns they inhabited and those fields under cultivation in 1834 when the original agreement was

[17] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. John B. Russwurm to John H. B. Latrobe, May 24, 1842.

[18] Schroeder, *Matthew Calbraith Perry*, 104.

[19] Schroeder, *Matthew Calbraith Perry*, 104.

concluded.[20] Latrobe in fact encouraged Dr. Hall to gain preemptive rights to all land bordering the colony. Based on this, the settlers successfully cowed the Greboes into submission each time they attempted to assert their rights, as they understood them. Latrobe praised his governor for his stern position on this point. In fact, Latrobe had abandoned his concern for the Greboes suffering a fate like that of the Five Civilized Tribes in the southeastern United States. Now he just wanted them out of the way. Governor Russwurm resolved these challenges every time to Latrobe's satisfaction. Nevertheless, this occasion was different; for the first time the colonists faced the Greboes who were united against Maryland in Liberia. This was the reason the Maryland settlement needed the assistance of American forces.[21]

Perry proceeded down the coast from Monrovia to Cape Palmas. After anchoring, the commodore was given a full report of events, not by the governor, but by the Reverend Samuel Hazlehurst, a cousin of John Latrobe, who had recently joined the remaining missionaries in the colony. Hazlehurst served as a courier for the governor because the Greboes prevented the colonists from reaching the ships, and he informed Perry of the grave danger to the colonists and his fellow missionaries at Half Cavally.[22] Africans at Half Cavally, southeast of Cape Palmas, had "broken up" Rev. John Payne's school and were at present threatening his family, reported Hazlehurst. Russwurm's letter expressed similar distress. The colony was under duress because King Freeman had "laid an embargo on all trade from Bush or elsewhere, prohibited all natives from working for us, or even carrying a note on board, raised the prices of rice, palm oil, and

[20] "Message from the President of the United States," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, Document Number 150, 31-32; Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 133, 159-161.

[21] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. John B. Russwurm to Matthew C. Perry, December 6, 1843.

[22] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Samuel Hazlehurst, May 11, 1842; "Message from the President of the United States," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, Document Number 150, 31-32.

fowls, to such high rates as are paid no where else; in fact, they wish to extort from us the most extravagant rates for every thing whenever they like."[23] Russwurm's grievances against Freeman were not new, as he well knew. What was clear in his complaints was the fact that the colonists were not able to dominate the Greboes for their own economic advantage. Interference by American military forces because the Greboes refused to work for the settlers at the price they wanted hardly justified action by Perry. However, Russwurm was fortunate that Perry was sympathetic to colonization because King Freeman's plans included more than an embargo. The colony was in more physical danger than Russwurm realized.[24]

Perry acted decisively to put the natives in "awe of the American flag" and rescue Maryland in Liberia as well as the missionaries at Half Cavally.[25] The commander determined to first make an example of all those responsible for the massacre of the *Mary Carver's* crew, then address the problems facing Maryland in Liberia. Perry instructed Russwurm to call for a palaver to be held on 8 December with Freeman and the other Grebo leaders. Perry would join the governor along with the captains of his four warships and Governor Roberts, the ACS governor who accompanied the commodore on his journey down the coast. Perry next dispatched one of his officers and a small boat to retrieve the Rev. Payne and his family.[26]

The leader of the African Squadron had already acted on behalf of American traders and had even taken steps to help Maryland in Liberia before he arrived at Cape Palmas. Perry's word

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[23] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. John B. Russwurm to Matthew C. Perry, December 6, 1843.

[24] "Message from the President of the United States," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, Document Number 150, 34-5.

[25] Schroeder, *Matthew Calbraith Perry*, 104.

[26] Matthew C. Perry to John B. Russwurm, December 6, 1843. In "Message from the President of the United States," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, Document Number 150, 33.

to Latrobe that he would act zealously on behalf of colonization was not an empty promise. As Perry cruised along the coast, he addressed the people of Sino and Blue Barra, those he believed responsible for killing crewmembers from the vessels *Edward Burley* and *Atalanta*. At both spots, Perry made a treaty in which the people issued formal apologies for the misdeeds and the leaders of both towns promised assistance to Maryland in Liberia in any direct confrontations with the Greboes.[27]

On 7 December 1843, Perry and his entourage landed at Cape Palmas and joined Governor Russwurm who then briefed the commodore on the current state of affairs with the Greboes. Once again he repeated his personal belief that an attack by the Greboes was imminent. In fact, the governor suggested that Perry should mount a preemptive offensive against King Freeman's people. Perry informed him that he could defend the settlement, but a direct offensive would violate the directives issued by the Secretary of the Navy. Direct offensive action of the nature Russwurm advocated would have exceeded Latrobe's wishes too; he wanted to avoid such an overt display on the part of the American government, which opponents of colonization could use to injure the movement in the United States. Perry preferred to use a show of force to bluff Freeman into submission to the governor's will. Perry assembled a force consisting of his four battleships, smaller armed boats and a detachment of marines that he would use to intimidate the Greboes the next day.[28]

The plan seemed like a good one, but an assault negated the impact Perry's force would have made at the palaver on 8 December. Russwurm hoped to use the presence of the African

[27] Schroeder, *Matthew Calbraith Perry*, 106-107.

[28] "Message from the President of the United States," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, Document Number 150, 34.

Squadron to his advantage, but the Greboes moved first. About three in the afternoon on 7 December a runner from the farthest outpost in the colony reported to the governor and the commodore that a contingent of armed Africans had attempted to pass the guards. When they tried to break past the guardhouse, the sentries fired on the Greboes and killed three of the men while causing the rest to retreat into the forest. The failure of the initial foray and the losses inflicted by the guards, most agreed, would demand a counterattack before sundown. Authorities in the colony, the militia, and Perry expected that this would be the case. Thus he and Russwurm, along with a contingent of marines, responded with a forced march to Harper, four miles from the cape where they reinforced the colonists defending the settlement. By the time these additional forces reached Harper the danger had passed; the Greboes would not attack again as King Freeman agreed to meet with Perry and Russwurm the next day.[29]

December 7, 1843 was an eventful day for the African Squadron and Maryland in Liberia. Later that evening Commander Joel Abbot, who Perry dispatched to Cavally, returned to Cape Palmas safely with the Reverend Payne and his family. Abbot reported to Commodore Perry what he learned on the mission. The news was less than encouraging and contributed to the concerns raised by the events earlier in the day at Harper. Payne's rescuers learned from the local population at Cavally, about ten o'clock in the evening of 6 December, that those hostile to the missionaries were acting on the instructions of King Freeman. Furthermore, "there is an extensive effort making for a general and combined resistance and warfare against the

[29] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. John B. Russwurm to John H. B. Latrobe, December 23, 1843; "Message from the President of the United States," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, Document Number 150, 34.

Americans."[30] It was then that Perry and Russwurm realized the extent of the danger facing the colony. This was not simply another effort to gain concessions from the governor. In some ways, news of a concerted effort on the part of the Greboes against the colonists and the preparation for full-scale war resembled the history of American Indian relations with frontiersmen in the Ohio Valley preceding the 1812 War when the Shawnee leader Tecumseh attempted to unite all Indians against white settlement.[31]

Perry and Governor Russwurm hoped to avoid this fate through the palaver held on 8 December 1843. At the gathering Perry listened to each side hoping to reconcile the two factions before an open conflict erupted. Russwurm began by listing the terms he wanted King Freeman to accept. The governor wanted the embargo lifted because it violated the original treaty signed when the colony began; second Freeman must agree not to "enter again into any combination against the settlers," nor could he prevent any Grebo from working for the colonists. Russwurm, in listing his charges, was not simply trying to protect the colony from future Grebo hostility. He also recognized the strength of the Greboes if they united, and thus sought to ensure they remained at odds with one another. Further, Russwurm sought to use this opportunity to achieve more of Latrobe's agenda, particularly that of moving the Greboes away from any territory controlled by the colony. If Freeman agreed to relocate his people, the MSCS would pay him an annual sum for the next five years. If he refused to leave, then the settlers must leave. This was necessary, he said, because the king had broken his word three times and Russwurm no longer trusted him. Although, the departure of the settlers was most likely very appealing to King

[30] "Message from the President of the United States," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, Document Number 150, 34-5.

[31] Allan W. Eckert, *That Dark and Bloody River*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1996).

Freeman that eventuality was unlikely. The most interesting aspect of this specific exchange was Russwurm's paternalistic tone and how similar his approach was to the tactics employed against Native Americans in the Southeast. He implied that there was no chance of success because Freeman had violated his trust and it was the king's fault that relations had come to the point that one of the two peoples must leave. Some of the speech he made at the palaver was simple rhetoric, as the colonists had no intention of leaving. But Russwurm's overall position also reflected the change in Latrobe, who was now willing to sacrifice the Greboes to carry forward his objective of ridding the United States of its black population.[32]

King Freeman acknowledged the laws to which Russwurm referred, but asserted his belief that the cause of the disturbance rested squarely on the settlers, not the broken promises of the Greboes. The king supported his argument by citing clauses from the same treaty, specifically the article requiring each party to punish, by death, any member that murdered another person. Freeman recalled the earlier incident in 1838 when Eben Parker shot and killed two African men. Russwurm ordered Parker's arrest but the local authorities failed to execute it. As a result of this failure, the friends of the deceased set fire to the town and killed Parker at his home. This incident was completely unrelated to the current situation, yet in his eyes, the inconsistency in carrying out judicial orders had voided the treaty from that point forward. As for the embargo against the colony, Freeman placed the blame directly on the governor and his determination not to pay more than a stipulated price. Further, Russwurm had personally insulted Freeman when he stated that he would "eat grass" before he paid the price the Greboes asked for their rice. This only served to inflame the anger of Greboes who were tired of being strong-armed by the settlers. At this point the commodore intervened, chastising the Greboes for

[32] "Message from the President," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 150, 36.

the embargo. They did, Perry agreed, have the right to do as they pleased with what they produced; this was free enterprise. They should, however, refrain from trying to prevent the colonists from trading with others. Perry's logic won over the leaders of the Cape Palmas Grebo, and they agreed to withdraw their long-standing complaints.[33]

Perry succeeded in ending the dispute without bloodshed yet Russwurm still held fast to the idea of buying out the Greboes should an opportunity present itself. Again he pushed Freeman to sell his remaining lands near Cape Palmas to the society. Freeman avoided the issue seeing that Perry was not inclined to interfere in this matter. Perry made it clear that such subjects were a matter for the civil authorities, not the United States Navy. His focus was on protecting the Americans on the coast, which he had done. Russwurm dropped the idea of removing Freeman and his people for the moment, but did not dismiss it from future discussions. Behind Russwurm's insistence on breaching the matter of native removal was Latrobe, who wanted the Greboes gone.[34] The removal of the Greboes from Cape Palmas remained a theme with Latrobe from this point until the colony became independent.[35] In one way, this episode demonstrated just how much Latrobe's own attitude had changed about what was most important. The experience of colonization in Africa demonstrated that enduring cooperation was not likely between the colonists and Africans. And, though he hoped to avoid the sorrowful tale of the "Five Civilized Tribes" of the southeastern United States from being repeated in Africa,

[33] "Message from the President," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 150, 36.

[34] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Corresponding Secretary's Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to John B. Russwurm, October 24, 1837.

[35] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John B. Russwurm to John Latrobe, December 23, 1843; III. Correspondence Sent, Corresponding Secretary's Books, reel 16. John Latrobe to John B. Russwurm, May 10, 1843, July 17, 1851.

the success of the colony was more important to his ultimate agenda of saving the American Republic.

Since the conflict with the Greboes of Cape Palmas appeared resolved for the time being, Perry and Governors Roberts and Russwurm turned their attention to punishing those responsible for the massacre aboard the *Mary Carver*. Aboard the frigate *Macedonian* the two governors and military officers determined that reparations must be exacted from Rockboukah, Grand Tabou, Bassa, and Grand Berriby, all well within striking distance from Cape Palmas. The evidence possessed by Perry, which included two detailed accounts of the massacre from Governor Russwurm, indicated that the residents of these towns were involved in the incident. Perry already planned to capture those individuals directly responsible for murdering the captain of the *Mary Carver*, try them and execute them. To send a message to the rest of the people and hopefully deter possible future violence, they also decided to demand monetary compensation for the vessel and its cargo amounting to $12,000. Each town was to pay $500 annually for six years. Should any of the towns fail to meet these terms, the territory would be given over to the colonization society as a trust for the families of the victims. Of course the inhabitants of the towns knew none of this. Furthermore, the legal basis on which territory could be ceded automatically to the Maryland State Colonization Society is unclear. Part of the reason Perry chose this plan of action was because the evidence he possessed was circumstantial; he did not have any eyewitnesses. Russwurm, for his part, suggested that the commodore consider burning the towns because he did not think the rulers of the towns would make restitution. Leveling

these towns would, interestingly enough, benefit the colony materially and be another step toward fulfilling Latrobe's designs.[36]

Governor Russwurm did not join the rest of the party in sailing east to Berriby to confront the accused. Perry and company arrived there on 11 December 1843. The scene must have been alarming for both sides; standing on shore were approximately 500 well-armed natives waiting for the Americans. Neither side appeared anxious to fight as the white flag was raised and representatives from each agreed to attend a palaver the following morning. On the 12th, Perry landed with a number equal to that of the armed men mustered by the Africans. Perry immediately deemed the king of Berriby, known as Ben Krako, to be a sinister old man. From there the events spiraled out of control; the commodore did not receive what he considered satisfactory answers to his inquiries. Angry, Perry demanded the truth about the events leading to the massacre on the *Mary Carver*. As the naval officer moved toward Krako, a shot was fired which started a mêlée. In the ensuing scuffle Krako sprang to his feet hoping to escape, but could not as Perry was clinging to his loincloth. Perry slowed the king long enough for another marine to club the man across the head with his musket stock.[37] The other soldiers engaged in gunplay for about an hour. The artillery, in the meantime, shelled the jungle behind the town to injure those fleeing into the vegetation and to give Perry's forces cover while they advanced on the town itself. Most of the residents had already fled by this point; nevertheless, the American forces set fire to the town.

The African Squadron suffered no deaths as a result of the fighting, but several marines were wounded. At least eight members of Berriby were killed and an unknown number

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[36] "Message from the President," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 150, 38-42.

[37] Schroeder, *Matthew Calbraith Perry*,108-109.

wounded. Krako died the next morning aboard a U. S. vessel from his injuries. In the following days, American marines burned four other towns in the vicinity before a peace treaty was signed. All told, at least fifty people died between 12 and 15 December.[38] Governor Russwurm was pleased with the outcome because it eventually gave Maryland in Liberia an opportunity to acquire more territory on the coast. Furthermore, he felt that the Berriby people "deserve all that they have received." It was fortunate that in the battle the commodore killed two of the "principle ones concerned in the murder."[39]

The effectiveness of the African squadron in its engagements with Africans added strength to the colonies on the coast of Liberia. No African familiar with the colonies doubted the military capabilities of Americans now. Perry had shown himself capable of making Africans bow to the interests he considered paramount to the United States while intimately linking U. S. military force to the colonies settled by African Americans. The colonists of Maryland in Liberia recognized that the African Squadron had probably saved them, if not from complete destruction, at least from a long war with a united Grebo people. Further, should the people near Cape Palmas not live up to their treaty obligations, the MSCS stood to benefit materially. The irony in this whole episode is that the U. S. military was protecting people in Africa that it would not have protected in the United States.[40]

Beyond this fact, the squadron helped ensure that the Greboes accepted the position of the colonists on land and trade. The governor strictly adhered to the 1834 treaty signed by King

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[38] "Message from the President," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 150, 43-44; *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 27. *Maryland Colonization Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 9, March 1844, 140.

[39] "Message from the President," Senate Documents, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 150, 58; *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. John Russwurm to John Latrobe, December 23, 1843.

[40] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 2. Samuel F. McGill to John Latrobe, January 13, 1844.

Freeman, which gave all the territory around Cape Palmas to the colony except the towns the Greboes occupied. With the threat of military force presented by the African Squadron, Russwurm could expand the colony by exercising the preemptive rights secured by Governor Hall. This was the legal basis for Russwurm's purchase of Fishtown to the west, and later of towns to the east. Finally, Perry's cooperation with Russwurm and the friendship exhibited at the palaver with King Freeman further entrenched in the minds of Africans the idea suggested by Latrobe, that the colonists could rely on American military intervention when necessary. The Greboes remained unaware that Perry would not initiate any offensive maneuver against them on behalf of the colony because it would violate his orders. But even had they known, Perry's vicious assault at Berriby made Freeman hesitant to take military action against the colony. Thus, in the future, they would have to weigh American naval force when considering any action against Maryland in Liberia.

Latrobe had long contended that an American naval presence would benefit the colonies and American commerce. Perry and the African Squadron proved him right. It was clear that the sailor had few qualms about giving his countenance and aid to the colonies. Latrobe would have liked to make this arrangement permanent. The protection of the colonies with American forces would secure a permanent market for American goods and should be "a matter of policy," stated Latrobe, "on the part of our government and of *justice* to the colonies themselves."[41] Commercial links to Africa were about more to him than markets for American manufactures; commerce, he believed, was the agent that would pull African Americans to Maryland in Liberia. Latrobe's intimate involvement with colonization skewed his opinion when it came to American

[41] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 27. *Maryland Colonization Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 16, December 1843, 84-85.

involvement in Africa, but he was also well aware of the growing presence of European traders in the region of Maryland in Liberia, which necessitated an American military presence.

Much of the peace Commodore Perry helped bring about in Maryland in Liberia soon dissipated. The problems facing the colony were twofold. The underlying causes of past conflicts with the Greboes remained unresolved despite Latrobe's best efforts. In addition, there were internal issues that the colonists wanted addressed.[42] Despite Latrobe's policies and efforts to promote agriculture, most of the colonists wanted more than a subsistence living earned from farming. Latrobe either failed to recognize this or did not want to accept it because it did not fit in his overall vision. The colonists tried to make the MSCS aware of their feelings on the matter in October of 1844, when one group of settlers filed their protests with the MSCS. Through Latrobe, they informed the board that agriculture in the colony was "poor and we have tried it—its true the 1st or 2nd crop of potatoes will produce tolerable good and after that we might as well plant them on the sand beach without measure."[43] Moreover, even when there was a surplus no market existed where they could sell their produce. The colonists complained further that "you say that we must cultivate the soil…and we still find that it will not give us a comfortable support all that we can raise on our farms is not sufficient to feed + clothe a man's family leaving out of the question the vast expenses yearly by repairing our houses." The petitioners urged the board of the MSCS to do something to help them. Further, they reminded the members of

[42] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. January 4, 1842; III. Correspondence Sent, reel 16. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, May 16, 1837, October 24, 1837, November 20, 1838; Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 152-153.

[43] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. "A Petition to the Maryland State Colonization Society, October 24, 1844.

African American slavery and suggested that Maryland would not have prospered "if it hadn't been for the labor of the colored man."[44]

The powers of the governor had been expanded to the point where they too became a source of complaint among the colonists. Most of what Latrobe instituted through Governor Russwurm was designed to carry out his vision for colonization, avoid future situations such as that experienced with the missionaries, and advance the colony toward its final goal—to become the independent state of Maryland in Liberia. Latrobe also gave Russwurm considerable latitude in trading on behalf of the society, and the society decided to begin levying a tariff on imports. These moves became a source of irritation for settlers, who often were unaware of Latrobe's goals. Not knowing the source of all the policies Russwurm instituted, the settlers saw the governor as a petty tyrant who was unsympathetic to their situation. Eventually, they sought to have him removed from power.[45]

Despite the grumbling of the colonists, Latrobe and the other members of the MSCS viewed their efforts in Africa as positive. Maryland in Liberia expanded physically as Russwurm began to acquire more and more land. By 1846, Russwurm had added the coastal towns of Tabou, Bassa, and Little Berriby to the colony, which only served to strengthen the monopoly on trade.[46] The independence of the Republic of Liberia in 1847 and its recognition by European nations only further encouraged Latrobe to accelerate his own timetable for Maryland in Liberia's proclamation. The "word Republic is a magic one" here and its influence

[44] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. "A Petition to the Maryland State Colonization Society, October 24, 1844.

[45] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. Samuel F. McGill to John H. B. Latrobe, September 6, 1848; John B. Russwurm to John H. B. Latrobe, April 17, 1849; Petition From Colonists, April 1849.

[46] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. John B. Russwurm to Dr. James Hall, January 1, 1846; John B. Russwurm to John H. B. Latrobe, January 24, 1846.

on emigration clear, wrote Latrobe to Russwurm.[47] The independence of Maryland in Liberia would be the final step in fulfilling Latrobe's vision for the United States and Africa. This last objective proved the most difficult for Latrobe, however, because of the situation in the United States. Challenges remained in the United States that had to be addressed if Latrobe's vision was to be achieved.

The crisis of the early 1840s in Africa had repercussions in the United States. Even before news of the most serious conflict to date with the Greboes reached America, criticism of the colony began to surface due to the departure of the missionaries. The negative publicity turned public opinion against the MSCS, particularly outside the state. For example, in New York, Reverend Leonard Bacon, once a member of the American Colonization Society, attacked the traveling agent of the MSCS, Reverend John M. Roberts.[48] Pointing to the recent conflict between the missionaries in Africa and Governor Russwurm, Bacon declared that it was the agents of the MSCS who were accountable for the moral and religious problems in the colony. Roberts had responsibility for recruiting emigrants who were not only suited for settlement in Africa, but also those most likely to succeed. Therefore, if the colonists failed, Roberts was to blame for many of the difficulties in the colony, according to Bacon. Ralph R. Gurley, long-time agent of the ACS, sadly reported to the corresponding secretary James Hall that Bacon's attack upon Roberts has "greatly disturbed some of our friends [and] may have among those who do not know him, nor the history of his connexion with the Society, an injurious influence."[49] The criticism was hardly fair; few of the agents, not even Latrobe, knew those who wanted to go to

[47] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, July 17, 1851.

[48] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. R.R. Gurley to James Hall, December 21, 1843.

[49] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 4. R.R. Gurley to James Hall, December 9, 21, 1843.

the colony well enough to anticipate their behavior once in Maryland in Liberia. Nor was this the first time such charges had been made. In fact, Reverend J. Leighton Wilson made similar accusations in his correspondence with Latrobe in 1837. Had Bacon known of the activities taking place in Maryland in Liberia described above he probably would have used them to further support his charge. The charges nevertheless hurt Latrobe's efforts to cull more support for colonization, particularly in New England.

Opposition from African Americans surfaced in Baltimore too in spite of MSCS efforts to counter critics. Objections to colonization were "so virulent and unrelenting" that friends of the MSCS organized a "Society of Enquiry" in Baltimore to directly engage African Americans in hopes that they would voluntarily leave the state. Black leaders sympathetic to the cause, especially Garrison Draper, agreed to contribute to the effort. The MSCS recognized Draper's support of colonization and offered him as much space in its colonization journal as he wanted. The MSCS also arranged for Anthony Wood, a Cape Palmas resident, to attend the first meeting. The MSCS had employed such methods before to promote its purposes, bringing colonists back to Maryland specifically to make appeals to the black community. However, such tactics had produced little fruit for the society.[50] These years were arguably some of the toughest for Latrobe and the Maryland society even though it was a relatively calm period in the conflict between slave states and free states. Nevertheless, the opposition of Latrobe managed to survive the missionary scandal, the opposition of abolitionists and African Americans challenges from slaveholders and all the problems of the colony.

[50] *MSCS Papers,*XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal,* October, 1844. Vol. 2.-No. 16, 242.

Finally, in 1845, Latrobe was heartened by new opportunities, which arose that promised to advance the colonization movement. The relatively peaceful climate of American politics coincided with the colony's steady rate of growth. The society also proudly announced an economic venture in 1845 on the part of several African Americans in Baltimore—the creation of the Liberia Packet. Latrobe had long envisioned a regular, society owned transport between Baltimore and Cape Palmas. The vessel, planned as early as 1837, fulfilled several objectives. Latrobe assumed that a society owned ship would reduce expenses and generate revenues that the MSCS could use to offset its costs. Latrobe did not look to commercial revenues for potential profits, but rather emphasized commerce as the means to further colonization. Combining the sailing venture with the expansion of the colony achieved by Russwurm in 1846 strengthened the colony's economic position and promised to prepare Maryland in Liberia for its move to independence in the future. Furthermore, Latrobe anticipated that a booming economy created by these endeavors in Maryland in Liberia would draw colonists, especially those being squeezed out of employment at the docks and shipyards of Baltimore by the swelling number of immigrants from Europe. This too would reduce the settlers' dependence on indigenous Africans. Finally, a regular line between the ports could facilitate communication and increase travel opportunities for African Americans to visit the colony before moving there. Increased trade, expansion of the colony, and the availability of testimonies from sailors who visited the colony on a regular basis would be effective weapons in countering the arguments of colonization's opponents. Unfortunately, the society never had the additional resources to make it happen before 1845.[51]

[51] Latrobe consulted ship-builders on the cost of such a venture. Whether a vessel was bought or built, the conclusion was much the same, the MSCS needed an additional $10,000 to obtain its own boat. *MSCS Papers*, I.

In 1845, a small group of African Americans from Baltimore gave new life to the effort to acquire a vessel. The society solicited investors again in the spring; to Latrobe's delight, these men provided the much hoped for revenue that made the Liberia Packet a reality. The operation, however, was not what he had initially anticipated. The packet belonged to the Chesapeake and Liberia Trading Company, a joint-stock venture started by a small number of Baltimore's African American community. The company had other help too, as the state incorporated the business and the MSCS guaranteed it at least $2,000 in freight annually. The ACS followed suit guaranteeing at least the same amount of business to the company.[52]

The state's actions regarding the Chesapeake and Liberia Trading Company were designed to give investors a degree of financial and legal protection from white businessmen. The Maryland legislature, as part of the act of incorporation, specified that the majority of the company's stockholders had to be African Americans. This, it was assumed, would give the venture more legitimacy and credibility among potential colonists and customers. Latrobe further proposed that African Americans operate the line. Latrobe wanted blacks for the ship's crew to help dispel the charges propagated by abolitionists that emigrants were sold into slavery after leaving the state. Due to the state's involvement, the Liberia Packet had both African American owners and crewmembers. This virtually guaranteed that white business interests

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Minutes, reel 1. January 7, 1837; XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal,* April, 1845. Vol. 2.-No. 22, 337-8.

[52] *MSCS Papers,* I. Minutes, reel 1. March 20, 1845; II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. William McLain to Dr. James Hall, February 14, 1845, March 25, 1845; XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal,* April, 1845. Vol. 2.-No. 22, 337-8.

would not be able to exploit the commercial value of the colonies in West Africa through the company.[53]

The state did tie the Chesapeake and Liberia Trading Company to the interests of colonization, however. While on the surface, the whole endeavor was legally separate from the colonization society, in reality the operations of the trading company were closely linked to the MSCS because the act of incorporation also dictated that a three-member commission oversee its activities. It was no coincidence that Latrobe, James Hall, and fellow MSCS member William Crane comprised that panel. Through this role the MSCS could ensure favorable rates of transportation for its emigrants as well as for merchandise it sent to the colony for its own trading purposes.[54]

The packet operated successfully over the next six years, but its operation did very little to raise emigration rates among Maryland's African American community. Latrobe, like many other colonizationists sought explanations for the society's inability to draw new colonists. Emigrants had more rights and freedoms in the West African colonies and more economic opportunities in Latrobe's mind. Combined with an increasingly oppressive environment in the United States, these factors should have generated a flood of colonists. Still colonizationists found it increasingly difficult to convince African Americans it was in their best interest or that Maryland's white citizens should continue to support the society. Agents reported that they often found less than favorable receptions awaiting when traveling the state. The fact was that

[53] In 1835 it was proposed that the MSCS allow white businessmen to invest in the colony—particularly by purchasing land—whereby plantation agriculture could be developed in Africa. The MSCS did not entertain the idea for long. *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. June 23, 1835.

[54] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. March 20, 1845; II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. William McLain to James Hall, February 14, 1845, March 25, 1845; XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal,* April, 1845. Vol. 2.-No. 22, 337-8.

the best efforts of colonizationists, even those more recognizable than Latrobe, did not appeal to African Americans. Therefore, members of the MSCS began looking inward, examining their own actions to determine why, in the face of such heavy discrimination and rising sectional conflict that would likely result in more social and economic pressure on African Americans, Maryland's black population did not flock to Maryland in Liberia.

The *Maryland Colonization Journal* published one answer to this question in January of 1847. An anonymous author suggested that colonizationists were in fact making their efforts more difficult because of the arguments that they used to promote the cause.[55] Most colonizationists started with an assumption that equality between the races was unrealistic. Latrobe argued that African Americans were capable of improving their condition if given opportunities for education, but prejudice proved too strong and widespread to achieve true social and political equality in the United States. This reasoning was steeped in the Jeffersonian thinking that was so influential in Latrobe's generation, particularly among men in the border South where the push for colonization as a means to preserve the republic was the strongest. Upper South Democrats like Latrobe as well as their political rivals, Whigs such as Henry Clay, wholeheartedly accepted the notion that if two free races existed, sooner or later, they must be separated or the republic would fall. This was one subject on which members of the two parties dominating national politics could find some common ground. The republic Latrobe envisioned had no room for African Americans.

Yet the situation was only getting worse. The annexation of Texas in 1845, followed by the Mexican War, further inflamed the debate over slavery and made the peaceful coexistence of

[55] *MSCS Papers,*XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal,* January, 1847. Vol. 3.-No. 19, 291.

free whites and blacks seem even less possible. However, some believed that this argument, made so often by Latrobe, had backfired. Rather than encourage emigration, it stirred the pride of African Americans to the point that they determined to stay no matter how oppressive American society became.[56] What seemed to Latrobe to be a pragmatic statement of reality actually created more enemies than he realized. Latrobe differentiated himself from the Deep South by looking to the extinction of slavery, while at the same time seeking to remove the greatest threat to the Union in his eyes—a second free race. For this he was a traitor to hard-line slavery supporters but "a Negro-hating colonizationist" to abolitionists.[57]

Latrobe recognized that colonization appealed to different people for different reasons, but this also created a problem. Latrobe's defense of colonization to white audiences aroused criticism from Baltimore's African American community. Arguments that supported the preservation of the American republic by separating the races constituted a poor sermon to preach to African Americans. Latrobe's rhetoric harkened back to arguments used by the federalists in winning support for the Constitution. A homogeneous population—essential for a republic—referred to a white culture. When he spoke at places such as the state house in Annapolis, for example, the audience was overwhelmingly white. These arguments resonated with his listeners even if their motives differed from Latrobe's.

Latrobe needed to craft a different message to reach African Americans, one that extolled the liberty they would have in Liberia as well as the possibility for self-determination. In fact, Latrobe's efforts through the MSCS had begun to deliver on such promises. From the beginning

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[56] *MSCS Papers,*XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal,* January, 1847. Vol. 3.-No. 19, 291.

[57] *MSCS Papers,*XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal,* May, 1849. Vol. 4.-No.23; William Freehling, *Road to Disunion*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 353-354, 422.

of the colony, settlers had a say in selecting officials, with the exception of the governor. They practiced law, used juries to judge the guilt or innocence of those accused of crimes, and pursued an education if not for themselves, then for their children. This was beyond the realm of opportunities extended to African Americans in the United States. Latrobe made no appeal to the civic pride of African Americans, because he did not want to invoke the feelings exhibited for the republic by some members of the black community. African American leaders recognized the contribution their people had made to the United States and they asserted what they believed their rightful claim to America—a claim that was as strong as any white man's. The settlers in Maryland in Liberia reminded Latrobe of this fact in justifying their demands for aid from the colonization society.[58] Furthermore, there were shining examples for African Americans to follow, examples that gave them a hope that, whether Latrobe understood it or not, supported the notion that equality was perhaps attainable. One of the best examples, in fact, came from Baltimore itself via Frederick Douglass, a former slave who fled the city and eventually gained his freedom as well as the friendship of white Americans in the North. Some colonists felt that this was a false hope, but it was hope nonetheless.[59] Still, Latrobe tried to be careful to emphasize that only in Africa could most blacks expect to enjoy the freedom and opportunity of Douglass.

Another area Latrobe needed to address was the growing opposition of slaveholders to state support for the MSCS. The society still depended on the state for a significant portion of its

[58] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. Petition form Colonists to the Board of the MSCS, October 24, 1844; C. Peter Ripley, ed., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, Vol. III The United States 1830-1846, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), "Address by Abraham D. Shadd, Peter Spencer, and William S. Thomas, July 12, 1831," 102-106.

[59] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. Samuel F. McGill to Henry Goodwin, March 15, 1845.

funding even after the successful launching of the Liberia Packet. While such ventures were partly intended to increase the revenues available to the MSCS, they fell far short of the total revenues needed to fund the colony's civil list. Slaveholders bristled at any perceived attack on their labor force. The issues they raised at the slaveholders' convention of 1841 eventually found a sympathetic ear in the House of Delegates. As Maryland colonizationists examined their progress, John Johnson, the chair of the Ways and Means Committee, notified Latrobe that slaveholders had finally succeeded in securing a motion to repeal the appropriation of 1832. The slave interest could protect their property by appealing to Americans' natural hatred for spending tax dollars on unnecessary programs.

To counter slaveholder opposition, Johnson asked that Latrobe, who had addressed the members in the past on this very issue, to come to Annapolis before a vote was called. The primary reason for the slaveholders' sudden success in challenging the continuing appropriation was that the state's public debt weighed against the "smallness of the apparent results as compared with the amount of money expended by the Society."[60] Latrobe defended the cause and urged that the state continue its support, as the colony was not yet able to stand alone. He had to counter some damaging facts, however. It was true that the society had not removed great numbers of African Americans, but the cost-benefit ratio was not so simple as slaveholders suggested. Maryland now had a moral obligation, he argued, to Maryland in Liberia. Abandoning the colony financially would cause considerable suffering among the colonists. A more powerful argument was that the state needed to continue its efforts through the MSCS because immigration from Europe would force African Americans out of the state in the future. There must be a place to send them; Maryland in Liberia and colonization served a future

[60] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. N. B. Worthington, January 10, 1847.

purpose, and past numbers were not indicative of the potential. Latrobe carried the day, and the motion to halt funding was defeated for another year.[61] Challenges against state funding resurfaced in 1847, but as before, the delegates amenable to colonization helped the MSCS prevent any cutbacks in funding. Still, the MSCS had transported only about 1,000 people to Maryland in Liberia, and a very small number of Marylanders went to Caribbean islands, though Latrobe discouraged this location as a destination for African Americans.[62]

National events were equally unsettling for the colonization movement. Texas, so far removed from Maryland physically, impacted the MSCS's arguments beginning in 1845 by bringing the extension of slavery into the national spotlight again. Latrobe urged state action as the safest means to address slavery, and that seemed adequate as long as no national crises emerged to threaten the Union. The debate over the annexation of Texas did just this by fueling contention over the expansion of slavery. As much as Latrobe wished to avoid the slavery debate, it was a divisive issue that polarized the nation and even Maryland. Texas illustrated this more than any of the previous controversies, the gag rule included, by upsetting the balance between the sections. The Upper South sought to diffuse slavery away to protect the Union while the Deep South saw such efforts as part of a general effort to deprive citizens of their rights, which undercut the desirability of sustaining the Union. The Texas controversy further

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[61] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to John Johnson, January 18, 1845.

[62] Latrobe reiterated that the state and the colonization society were preparing for the explosion of immigrants that was coming. As before, Latrobe's now annual trip to Annapolis had its desired effect and the appropriation remained safe for yet another year. It is worth noting, however, that the state extended its funding for the MSCS in 1852 and 1858. Latrobe could be quite persuasive in his addresses, but the national crises beginning in the later 1840s arising from the debates over territory taken after the Mexican-American War spurred Maryland's support for colonization. State funding did not cease until 1863 when it no longer seemed necessary to find a solution to the "Negro question." *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. 9th Annual Report, 1841; *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. N. B. Worthington to James Hall, January 10, 1847; John H. B. Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, (Baltimore: John Murphy and Company, 1885), 74, 84.

enraged the North where Americans already fumed about the 'slave power' that dominated their government.[63]

One result of the growing tension caused by debate over Texas, was a stricter control of slave and free African American populations. After the rebellion led by the slave Nat Turner there had been a general increase in proscriptive laws against African Americans, which continued long after 1831. Renewed political debate only added to these tendencies. Not surprisingly, Latrobe presumed that stricter regulations against black civil rights would increase the desire to emigrate as blacks perceived these laws as the beginning of social pressures that would force African Americans to leave the United States.[64] In Maryland, slave owners in counties with large numbers of slaves made concerted efforts to drive free African Americans out of these areas. While these attempts often succeeded in driving blacks from the counties of southern Maryland, often they went no further than Baltimore City. This migration pattern, along with the practice of selling slaves deeper into the South, reflected what was happening on a larger scale. Whites generally sought to avoid the possibility of being stuck with large black populations should antislavery politicians achieve a general emancipation.[65]

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[63] Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 353-355; Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*, (New York: W W Norton & Company, 1983), 39-40; Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 3-4, 9-10.

[64] One example of increasing hostility to African Americans that was noted in colonization journals happened in Ohio in 1847. John Randolph freed his 400 slaves provided they leave Virginia. The residents of Mercer County, Ohio met them at the border intent on keeping them out of the state by whatever means was necessary, the use of "the bayonet not excepted." *African Repository*, Vol. 30, January 19, 1847, 10.

[65] In several Maryland counties the number of African Americans was equal to or exceeded the number of white residents were Calvert, Charles, Kent, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, and Talbot. Charles and Prince George's counties had proportionally high black populations (Charles had 5,665 whites and 10,497 blacks while Prince George's had 8,901 whites and 12,648 blacks). J.D.B. DeBow, *Statistical View of the United States. A Compendium of the Seventh Census (1850)*. (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1854),220; *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. William Evans to James Hall, May 28, 1847; Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 353-355.

Maryland was a microcosm of the nation, which included several divisions within the south.[66] Maryland, for instance, was a southern state where some counties had few if any slaves, and thus little loyalty to the slave interest. In other counties slavery was declining, making it less important economically. But in the very southern counties, large slave populations remained and slavery was still deeply entrenched. Further complicating Maryland's politics was the rising economic and political strength of its northern urban centers, especially Baltimore. The biggest problem slave owners faced other than attacks from those opposed to slavery was the declining productivity of the soil. This was true in other areas of the South as well. Texas appealed to those tied to the slave plantation system in the Deep South or those in a state like Maryland who supported annexation because it would open new markets for them to dispose of their excess slaves. In fact, Maryland joined with Kentucky and Virginia as the biggest sellers of slaves within the United States between 1830 and 1860.[67]

The tumultuous atmosphere created by the annexation of Texas should have been expected as Americans discussed the possibility long before 1845. During the administration of Andrew Jackson some urged that he invite Texas to join the Union. Jackson avoided the issue; it was too politically sensitive in the 1830s, especially after his war on the bank. Jackson's position on issues such as tariffs, and his determination to destroy the Second National Bank led to the organization of an anti-Jackson political party. Anti-Jackson feeling was strongest in the North, and an effort to bring Texas into the Union after his war on the bank, a reduction in the tariff, and the gag rule in Congress would have risked irreparable division between the sections

[66] This interpretation is well examined by William Freehling in *The Road to Disunion*.

[67] Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle* Ground, xi-9; Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 353; Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 238.

of the United States. Questions about annexation, just as attacks on slavery, seemed to fade in the latter 1830s, which was what a colonizationist like Latrobe wanted because it allowed the societies to do their work in a less hostile environment. However, when the issue of Texas reemerged it revived the earlier intensity in part because it threatened to upset the national balance between free and slave states—something national politicians had worked to maintain since the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Texas was vital to the Black Belts of the south because it was fresh land, economically coveted, and a place where declining regions could sell off large numbers of slaves. The North saw this as yet another means of preserving or perhaps even increasing the national power of the slave interest. The annexation of Texas forced Latrobe to accept, grudgingly, that independent state action would not achieve his goals if such conflicts continued. In this sense Latrobe found himself in the same sinking ship as national politicians; they had to recognize that the Missouri Compromise could no longer keep slavery discussions out of Congress.[68]

Texas offered many things to the slave power. Nationally, the annexation of this huge western territory provided the opportunity to check the growing power of the North, which had made steady gains in the House of Representatives due to immigration. Slave interests had already lost their ability to significantly influence that body. Marylanders knew this well as their state's share of representatives steadily declined during the first half of the nineteenth century. There was also the Pacific Northwest to consider, as those territories would become states at some point in the near future. The saving grace for the South and the slave power before the addition of Texas had been the Senate. This check, however, depended on maintaining the balance between slave and free states, and on the unity of the Democratic Party faithful.

[68] Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 353-355, 422-423.

Southerners in the White House offered some comfort, but slaveholders were still worried. Texas and the five additional states that southerners hoped to carve out of its western tracts made slaveholders salivate. Not only would it save them economically, it would ensure their continued protection in America's political system, since most people recognized that the North would be unable to amend the Constitution regardless of its rapid population growth.[69]

For Latrobe, the safety valve of the West was not just for slavery. The West, including Texas, kept social pressure from causing an explosion of racial wars. Manifest Destiny also allowed the African colonies and their parent societies more time to gain strength; it was more time to prepare for the wave of emigrants all colonizationists anticipated. Maryland Congressmen agreed with this analysis and openly supported colonization because of it. Others suggested that the additional territory would soften the pro-slavery stance because it alleviated their fears of being hemmed in by the Free-soil movement emerging in the 1840s.[70]

Texas began another national debate that made any new territory a political issue and the intensity of the subsequent debate made it more difficult for colonizationists like Latrobe because abolitionists looked askance at any program that did not promise the end of slavery. Worse still for his program was the appearance of Free-Soilers who not only wanted slavery prohibited from new territories, they wanted all African Americans kept out. On the surface it seems that the Free-Soilers' platform would play into the hands of colonizationists. However, in fact it hurt Latrobe's cause because it further threatened slaveholders who interpreted the debate as an attack on their rights and opportunities to move or dispose of their property as they wished.

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[69] Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 422-423, 440-441; Holt, *The Political Crisis*, 42.

[70] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal*,February 1851, Vol. 5.-No. 21., 329-334; Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 347; Holt, *The Political Crisis*,53.

In the end, the Free Soil platform caused thousands of defections from both the Whig and Democratic parties in the 1840s, which only further divided the polity.[71]

The conflict with Mexico raised additional questions and prompted an anti-slavery response in August of 1846 embodied in the Wilmot Proviso. David Wilmot proposed to bar slavery from any territories gained from Mexico in the war. The resulting debate divided the country along sectional interests and destroyed the long-standing party unity of the Democrats. The division was most evident between Northern and Border South Democrats who opposed the annexation of new territory and the extension of slavery.[72] Latrobe had always been a strong supporter of the Democratic Party, especially during Jackson's administration.[73] Nevertheless, he would cross party lines if his conscience dictated; still he did not want to see sectional conflict. The debate caused by the Mexican cession and Pennsylvania Congressman David Wilmot's amendment was the worst thing that could happen for his vision for America.

The debate over the proviso confirmed Latrobe's long-held belief that slavery must be kept out of national politics. Southerners saw the proviso as an attempt to diminish their political influence over national policies. As a result, colonizationists had to operate in an even more hostile environment. The effects of the conflict were apparent to Latrobe. The society journal noted that the debate over slavery's expansion was so hot that none, whether from the North or South, could discuss the topic rationally. The sections of the country were too different in "character and circumstances" for any agreement now. The editorial echoed a line of reasoning

[71] Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*, 64-65.

[72] Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 424; Leonard, *The Slave Power*, chapter 7.

[73] Latrobe rarely crossed party lines, although he did, by his own admission, vote for a Whig candidate for a state office in 1838. Normally, he voted the Democratic ticket. Latrobe, Diaries, 1824-1840, no day or month entered, 1838.

that Latrobe had laid out over the years in supporting colonization. The issue of slavery had been settled by the Constitution—it was a subject for the individual states alone.[74] Latrobe was hardly unique in his position; the reasoning behind his position on slavery was widespread among southerners. The commentary was meant as a plea, a voice of reason advocating a 'middle ground' hopeful of calming the fury over slavery in national politics. Latrobe had made this same appeal in the 1830s during the first gag rule controversy. The overriding tone evident in his writings, however, suggests a new phase in his thinking as he sought to adapt colonization to meet the growing crisis that threatened to destroy the Union.[75]

Colonizationists beyond Maryland knew the significance of Wilmot's amendment. The proviso was of even greater consequence after statehood was proposed for California and New Mexico. Free Soilers had "been out generaled in the matter of Texas, but we had our Presidential candidate in the field, and could not desert him. At all even if we cannot do any good, we will not permit anybody else to do any."[76] Slaveholders felt likewise. Wilmot's provision to keep slavery out of new territories would effectively fence slavery in, and the addition of a free California would shift the political advantage even more in favor of the North at the Congressional level. As such, pro-slavery factions vowed to halt the proviso and prevent New Mexico from entering as a free state while anti-slavery forces attempted to ram the amendment through Congress. This, noted the national colonization society, violated the Constitution and the republican principles which had been the legacy of the revolutionary

[74] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal*, September, 1847, Vol. 4.-No. 3., 35-42; Holt, *The Political Crisis*, 49-50.

[75] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. John W. Wells to Dr. James Hall, January 6, 1848.

[76] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. Benjamin F. Taylor to Moses Sheppard, August 18, 1847.

generation. Further, northerners were not giving in this time; they were tired of the humiliation inflicted by the slave power and the Northern doughfaces that supported the South.[77]

Maryland colonizationists felt the effect of the escalation of tensions immediately. The debate radicalized both sides, commented one colonizationist in Virginia. While there had been public support for colonization before Wilmot's Proviso, that optimism quickly disappeared. Due to the feud over slavery's expansion, many whites in slave states now perceived colonization as a failure.[78] Some even went so far as to suggest that the general scheme of colonization had been premature. Some day, when the slaves were properly civilized, they would return to Africa as the bearers of civilization and Christianity.[79] Few colonizationists would have agreed. In Latrobe's mind, things were heating up to the point that colonization was an essential factor in maintaining peace.

Colonizationists generally denounced the efforts of some to force the proviso through Congress. Let it alone, many said publicly, and "all will be well."[80] The MSCS, as a matter of policy, had formerly refused to discuss slavery or abolition publicly or in its publications. But the editor of the MSCS journal, Dr. James Hall, abandoned this policy in 1849.[81] The move by Hall to address slavery in society publications illustrated the society's aggressive policy designed to push colonization as the means to remove the subject of slavery from national agitation. Politicians offered an alternative, the policy of popular sovereignty. Although Daniel S.

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[77] *African Repository*, Vol. XXV. No. 5 May, 1849. 155-156 Holt, *The Political Crisis*, 51-52.

[78] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 5. Henry Goodwin to James Hall, January 25, 1845; William Evans to James Hall, May 28, 1847; John Wells to James Hall, January 6, 1848.

[79] Freehling fully discusses this idea, which was set forth by Beverly Tucker, son of colonization supporter, St. George Tucker. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 485.

[80] *African Repository*, Vol. XXV. No. 5. May, 1849. 155-156.

[81] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal*,May 1849, Vol. 4.-No.23., 361.

Dickinson, Lewis Cass, and George M. Dallas had suggested popular sovereignty as early as 1847, it was Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas who maneuvered the issue through Congress three years later. One of the primary tenets of the compromise was that popular sovereignty would remove the issue of slavery from Congress. Let the residents of each territory decide. As a strong states rights' democrat, this compromise was acceptable to Latrobe; let the states decide had been his motto in colonization for nearly twenty years.[82]

Popular sovereignty seemed a saving grace for Border South Democrats like Latrobe who saw the issue of territorial expansion tear apart the Democratic Party and the nation. The notion of popular will determining the fate of slavery in a territory about to become a state appealed to Latrobe because it fit into what he based his colonization plans on since 1832. For nearly twenty years he proclaimed that the individual states were the only entities where slavery could be discussed safely. In the realm of colonization, support for a program that resulted in a compromise restoring balance between the sections seemed to be bringing the state and national societies together.

Though Latrobe's hopes were very high for the success of colonization in 1847 he had to weather more crises as the decade closed. The worst troubles in the colony seemed to have passed and the notion of popular sovereignty advocated in Congress as the guiding principle for turning territories into states promised to relieve sectional tensions. Furthermore, the proclamation of independence by the oldest Liberian colony in that same year seemed to have propelled unprecedented numbers of African Americans to consider moving to Liberia. The road to this point, however, had been difficult. Maryland in Liberia faced its most difficult challenge

[82] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal*,May 1849, Vol. 4.-No.23., 361; Holt, *The Political Crisis*, 57.

from a united Grebo people, and the fact of the matter was that Latrobe was powerless to do anything about it. Fortunately, for the MSCS and the settlers, the United States military was there to assist the colony in its worst dispute to date with indigenous Africans. Likewise, garnering support for colonization became a more difficult task after the annexation of Texas. Still, the MSCS had weathered all the storms between 1843 and 1847, and with the independence of Republic of Liberia, the expansion of Maryland in Liberia, the creation of a dedicated commercial link through the Chesapeake and Liberia Trading Company, and the emergence of the doctrine of popular sovereignty domestically, it looked as though Latrobe was quite an accurate prophet. Perhaps now it would become clear just what colonization, as he envisioned it, could achieve.

Chapter 7: The Last Years, 1848-1854

The year 1847 brought new hopes to colonization plans of the MSCS on both sides of the Atlantic. The independence of the former ACS colony and its recognition by European nations renewed interest among African Americans in colonization. The MSCS hoped to capitalize on the momentum the movement seemed to be building. National support for allowing the fate of slavery to be determined within the borders of territories and states suggested that sectional conflict might be resolved, enabling white America to accept the wisdom of Latrobe's program. The year 1847 marked a watershed of sorts in other ways for Latrobe as well. The MSCS was no longer in debt, its colony was growing, and the Liberia Packet provided a more consistent connection between America and Africa. All that remained for the MSCS was to initiate the process that would make its colony independent and Latrobe's final vision for Africa and America would be fulfilled. But colonization was neither simple nor easy. As Latrobe and the MSCS soon discovered, the goals of the settlers in Maryland in Liberia were not always compatible with the society's objectives. This chapter narrates Latrobe's last years with the MSCS as well as the process he orchestrated in making Maryland in Liberia independent in 1854. As in the last chapter, the MSCS dealt with colonization on two fronts. The positive conditions existing in 1847 quickly dissipated and Latrobe found crises threatening his plans again. He thus had to consider what objectives were most important to colonization's success. Ultimately, he made choices that demonstrated what was most important to him, which clearly were the policies that would most speedily help rid the United States of its racial conflict.

The independence of the Republic of Liberia in 1847 and its recognition by European nations was an event that Latrobe could not ignore. On one level it must have given him some

sense of satisfaction despite his differences with the ACS because he had been involved in that period of Liberian history as well. The most important effect of independence for the MSCS, however, was that it encouraged Latrobe to accelerate the timetable for Maryland in Liberia's proclamation of independence. Latrobe revealed some of his personal sentiments when he later wrote John Russwurm that the "word Republic is a magic one" here. Its influence on emigration was clear to Latrobe.[1] The independence of Maryland in Liberia would be the final step in fulfilling Latrobe's ideas for republicanism in Africa, an idea that became more developed as time passed. Accelerating the process, however, required ignoring certain articles of the constitution drawn up in 1834. The constitution adopted for Maryland in Liberia originally made population the determining factor in independence. That document provided that once the male population of the colony reached 5,000, the colony would automatically become a representative government and proclaim its independence.[2] This was abandoned as Latrobe moved to make the colony a republic in its own right so as not to lose out on the momentum of colonization in the United States. The proclamation of the independent Republic of Liberia seemed to renew interest in colonization. Though largely a decision by the MSCS, Latrobe stressed the need for the enthusiasm for the independence of Maryland's colony to appear to be an act initiated by the colonists, who, by and by, had no problem following along.

Latrobe had very specific plans about how Maryland in Liberia would proclaim its independence. Unfortunately for him, Latrobe found the process did not move quickly. There were several factors that contributed to the pace at which independence came. The war with

[1] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, July 17, 1851.

[2] Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 212.

Mexico halted communication with the colony temporarily in 1847. The colonists also were divided over the nature of the government they would have once independent. And finally, Latrobe himself was still forming his own ideas about the exact nature of government that would follow, thus the real process of independence took almost four years to begin. The real push for independence by Latrobe started in 1851. Latrobe determined that the colony was to be an independent republic first, and then he wanted it to form a confederation with the other Liberian nation and its dependencies "like the old colonies of Great Britain in America." The colonists, he told Russwurm, should then look forward to this union "as a general government of the United Republic of Africa." The United States should be the model. To Latrobe the society in Maryland was already engaged in achieving this goal, and he instructed Russwurm to begin preparations in Africa for independence and confederation.[3] Though initiating the process, Latrobe cautioned Russwurm not to proclaim independence too soon; he urged him to be patient until all the other preparations were complete. It is also noteworthy that Latrobe assumed that a confederation of the Liberian settlements would naturally appeal to all the parties. He would learn that not everyone shared his sentiments.

Latrobe recognized, nevertheless, that several tasks needed to be accomplished before the colony issued a declaration of independence. First, the colonists needed to write a new constitution. Naturally the American version should be the model, but Latrobe also suggested that it include a provision giving the MSCS preferences in sending immigrants. Second, he hoped that Russwurm could arrange a confederation with the Republic of Liberia ahead of independence. "It will give me unqualified pleasure to hear from you after you shall have visited

[3] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, July 17, 1851.

Monrovia that the confederation can be accomplished." Finally, he urged Russwurm to emphasize the need for all the colonies established by African Americans to devise their own representation in a Congressional body. The details of representation should be decided as a subject "of African or Liberian nationality," rather than one determined by the societies here.[4]

There was one possibility in the move to independence that Latrobe hoped the colonists would not entertain. Some of the settlers of Maryland in Liberia favored annexing the colony to the Republic of Liberia as a county. This seemed the easiest method in attaining independence; it further seemed the most acceptable option to the leadership of the new nation. Latrobe strongly opposed this fate for the colony even though he himself began working more closely with the ACS in the early 1850s. Annexation was not advisable, in his mind, because it would negate the boost he hoped independence would give to immigration from Maryland; it would also cause the state legislature to rescind the annual appropriation, which he hoped to continue for transportation. Furthermore, handing the colony over to the older settlement as a dependency would be offensive to all those who worked to establish the colony. Finally, annexation would result in the Maryland settlement losing its most industrious colonists to Monrovia's commercial advantages and the liberty the settlers enjoyed. What Latrobe feared was that these citizens would become absentee landlords—the system that "has destroyed Ireland." Instead, full independence secured the colony against such a fate by "giving dignity and importance to

[4] It may be recalled that representatives from the ACS, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York discussed this in Philadelphia in 1838. The fact that no agreement could be reached among the societies then probably led Latrobe to suggest the settlers' work it out. These instructions were in a private addendum to the following correspondence: *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, July 17, 1851.

Maryland in Liberia," Latrobe believed. Nothing but the "Republicanism of the United States of Africa will guarantee the independence of Cape Palmas and the Maryland colonists.[5]

On the surface Latrobe's stance on independence seems very contradictory. Latrobe opposed confederation of the colonies in any way in 1838 when other colonizationists and several other societies proposed the idea in Philadelphia. Now it appeared that he was in fact suggesting what had been proposed thirteen years earlier. What had changed in Latrobe's thinking? First, the independence of the ACS colony had motivated his sense of urgency in making the Maryland colony independent. Second, he realized that this one word sparked a new interest in African American emigration as evidenced by the rising numbers leaving for Africa, although increased emigration also resulted from the tensions in America. Whatever the cause, Latrobe wanted Maryland to benefit from the increase in emigration. Latrobe's emphasis on independence and confederation on the model of the United States reflected his vision and desire to realize his goals in America. Latrobe showed that he would sacrifice some policies and even the Greboes to make colonization work because he believed he was fighting to save the American republic. He also never hesitated to change his course when necessary to ensure success for colonization. On the one hand, willingness to adapt his program demonstrated how he was like many other antebellum Americans. Latrobe believed in the republic and its preservation, but also in its superiority as the best type of political system. This was why he opposed annexation, and why he supported both independence as a republic and the notion of a United Republic of Africa. Latrobe's evolution as a colonizationist, his changing and sometimes contradictory policies, nevertheless reflected a consistency in that he never ceased to act in a

[5] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to John Russwurm, July 17, 1851; John Latrobe to Samuel F. McGill, October n.d., 1851.

manner that he believed would ultimately realize his vision—a white republic in the United States and the spread of Christianity and western civilization.

Latrobe and the MSCS's hopes for seeing the colony become an independent republic suffered a significant blow during 1851. Governor John Russwurm, in whom Latrobe had placed so much faith and trust, passed away during that summer. Russwurm suffered from repeated illnesses, and he died unexpectedly before he could carry out any of the diplomatic overtures designed to create a confederation of colonies as Latrobe instructed. This too delayed the process because Russwurm was most intimately aware of all the ideas Latrobe had for the colony's future. Dr. Samuel F. McGill succeeded Governor John Russwurm as the executive officer in Maryland in Liberia. The choice seemed a natural one to Latrobe; McGill had been a long-time friend of his, the society had paid for his education, and he was an employee of the MSCS and confidant of Russwurm. However, McGill did not share the vision of Latrobe and Russwurm, and this delayed independence for the colony as well.[6]

Latrobe was unaware of the difference of opinion McGill held regarding independence, and the MSCS was in a bind of sorts because Russwurm had initiated the electoral process for the selection of government officials. Thus he instructed the doctor to take over the colony until those elections could be held. The most important task for McGill, Latrobe said, was "to get the consent of the Republic [of Liberia] to a confederation—to get rid of the idea of a county." McGill disagreed with Latrobe on this issue and had even made plans to leave Maryland in Liberia for Monrovia before Russwurm's death. Furthermore, he was not afraid to voice his concerns about a confederation as outlined by Latrobe. McGill's actions confirmed the fears of

[6] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Samuel F. McGill, October, 1851.

Latrobe that the most skilled settlers may leave the colony. More important was McGill's open support for annexation, which led many colonists to conclude that this was Latrobe's desire for the colony.[7]

The colonists formed at least three factions on approaches to the MSCS's move toward independence. One group, sympathetic to McGill, desired the Republic of Liberia to annex Maryland in Liberia as a county, thus making one Liberian state. The second group wished the colony to become an independent republic in its own right, and form an alliance of sovereign nations with its sister colonies. The third faction sought independence and confederation with the Republic of Liberia as states. This segment appeared the strongest of the colonists, not simply because it was the model preferred by Latrobe, but also because more colonists endorsed this plan. However, even these settlers expressed a number of concerns that they hoped to see addressed before independence.

The annexationists addressed the MSCS first to explain their reasons for supporting this plan. In short, they desired annexation because they assumed that the position of the colony relative to trade, international status, and civil benefits, particularly education, would be strengthened by the connection of the colonies, one of which had already been internationally recognized as a republic. McGill threw his weight to this group, arguing that the older colony would never agree to a confederation with Maryland in Liberia as Latrobe proposed. Furthermore, foreign merchants paid no heed to the colony as it was, and a change in name

[7] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 6. Samuel F. McGill to John Latrobe, January 9, 1851, September 25, 1851; William A. Prout to John Latrobe, September 23, 1851; *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Samuel F. McGill, October, 1851.

would do little to alter this fact at Cape Palmas.[8] William Prout, one of the more prominent citizens favoring confederation, countered that McGill's willingness to annex the colony as a county under any terms would destroy the freedoms the colonists enjoyed. The danger in annexation as a county, as Prout and his supporters saw it, was in losing the legislative freedom that they enjoyed during the seventeen-year existence of Maryland in Liberia. For this reason, independence and confederation as two states was most appealing to William Prout; it required little fundamental change and would retain all the powers currently exercised by the colonists.[9] Other colonists raised questions relating their concerns about the changes that independence may bring. What, they asked, would become of the society's property and possessions? Would they have to continue the prohibition of alcohol? Members of the group raising these questions also expressed concern that they would not have a say in whatever action the MSCS took. Given that it was their future, such questions were justified.[10]

McGill's open support of annexation infuriated those colonists already suspicious of their new governor. Specifically, some questioned his motives and whether or not his actions really benefited the colony. William Prout informed Latrobe that he believed McGill was using his position as governor to illegally acquire society-held lands at very cheap prices, from which he would be able to reap immense profits after independence. This, determined Joshua Stewart, was not only an abuse of his power and a conflict of interest, but it was particularly offensive

[8] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 6. Annexationists to John Latrobe, September 25, 1851; Address from a Committee of the Citizens of Cape Palmas on the subject of the Independence of the Colony, November 15, 1851.

[9] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 6. William A. Prout to John Latrobe, September 23, 1851.

[10] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 6. Annexationists to John Latrobe, September 25, 1851; Address from a Committee of the Citizens of Cape Palmas on the subject of the Independence of the Colony, November 15, 1851; William Prout to John Latrobe, January 6, 1852.

because McGill had no authority to do anything in the colony as far as he was concerned because he had resigned the position of governor. It was only an appeal from Latrobe that kept McGill in the executive post until the elections were held. Stewart, unaware of this fact, boldly announced that the colonists would not budge until Latrobe responded to the accusations and addressed their concerns. A representative committee of colonists conveyed them to the board in November of 1851.[11]

Latrobe's position was quite clear on independence, as was his position on the questions posed by the colonists. The property of the MSCS would be transferred to the new state, and alcohol, in his opinion, should remain illegal. As far as the future state, his response to the colonists was firm. Independence and confederation as two states was what he wanted. "No Republic one and indivisible, ever stood, or can stand," he declared, and "the Federation of States…is the only plan consistent with permanent freedom." County annexation, he agreed, would require Marylanders to give up power, and this should never be done; it is the "precursor of a dictatorship, an Empire, and a despotism. Freedom, Republican freedom in Africa, can exist only through the agency of confederated states…united as a constitutional republic…consolidation may give you a Louis Napoleon yet."[12] Latrobe encouraged individual colonists to follow his plans through short notes to specific people; this offered the best chance for retaining their personal freedoms. Until this process was completed, however, he asked that the colonists trust in the MSCS leadership and obey Governor McGill, if for no other reason,

[11] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 6. Address from a Committee of the Citizens of Cape Palmas on the subject of the Independence of the Colony, November 15, 1851; Joshua Stewart to John Latrobe, January 7, 1852.

[12] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to William A. Prout, January 7, 1852.

than out of respect to the society. Latrobe did not address the charges regarding the governor's land deals in any of his dispatches.[13]

While he urged the settlers to obey the governor, Latrobe privately challenged McGill's contention that the older republic would never agree to confederation. Latrobe boldly declared that Monrovia would not "dare to refuse a treaty." Latrobe demonstrated a degree of megalomania when he proclaimed to one Marylander that "I can have our colony declared independent as 'The Republic of Maryland in Liberia' and then it will be seen" what the Republic of Liberia will do. "I tell them this, and threaten them with the voice of the family of nations!!! of which they are one." Latrobe intimated that international pressure could be brought to bear on the older republic to bring about a confederation that followed the model of the United States. This "will be," Latrobe bluntly stated, "the confederation I want."[14] This was indeed a bold statement considering the fact that the United States would not recognize the existing republic, yet alone a second one he was trying to create. Nevertheless, Latrobe explained to McGill that he considered the matter not from the "parental fondness of my own notions," but as "an old lawyer of some experience should do." The parental tone of the letter is nonetheless there. Latrobe had spent the last twenty years intimately involved in every aspect of the colony's existence. Ultimately, Latrobe found McGill's arguments unconvincing, and, he explained, saw no reason to change his position from that outlined in his October 1851 dispatches. In short, Latrobe intimated that the Republic of Liberia must unite with the Maryland colony in a

[13] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to William A. Prout, January 7, 1852.

[14] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Thomas R. Hazard, Baltimore, January 6, 1852.

constitutional government like that of the United States or go the way of France, an "empire until it falls into despotism."[15]

By this point Latrobe and the MSCS managers surely realized that they needed to act soon before divisions between the colonists threatened their plans. During the course of the summer and fall of 1852, the MSCS prepared for the colony's independence. In its July session, the Board of Managers directed Latrobe to address a letter to the "Secretary of the Navy in reference to the advantages presented by Cape Palmas as a rendezvous for our Squadron while cruising on the Coast of Africa, and to call attention to the benefits conferred upon the colony by frequent visits of our National vessels."[16] One purpose of this was commercial, but Latrobe had other objectives in doing this that tied into his plans for independence. The actions of the African Squadron had in fact benefited the colony on several occasions and Latrobe hoped this would continue. Continuing the appearance of protection for the fledgling nation was important in its relations with indigenous Africans. His efforts, he informed McGill, happily have paid off as the Navy agreed to "extend its countenance to your colony as well as to its elder sister, and with the treaty with the later, which cannot well be refused, relations may be established leading ultimately it is hoped to a close political union as suggested."[17] Latrobe had succeeded in doing two things, keeping up the appearance of the United States Navy protecting the colony, and creating a situation in which he could use this relationship to apply pressure on the older colony to confederate with Maryland in Liberia.

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[15] Latrobe's reference here was to the 1848 revolution in France as well as other European countries. *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Samuel F. McGill, January 6, 1852.

[16] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. July 27, 1852.

[17] *MSCS Papers*, III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Samuel F. McGill, November 20, 1852.

In November of 1852, the MSCS publicly announced its plans for the independence of Maryland in Liberia. The MSCS members decided that it was in the best interests of the colony to terminate its relations with the MSCS. The members, however, expressed the same desire as Latrobe to see all the American settlements in Africa form a union "similar in its general principles to that under which the United States have grown and prospered." Their feelings on the importance of the settlements confederating reflected the experiences of the United States in its ongoing sectional crises. "It is much to be apprehended, that ill feelings, jealousy and rivalries will spring up, leading to results which cannot be too strongly pictured or deprecated" should there be no cooperation under a constitution. Nevertheless, the Maryland colonizationists also realized that they could not make union a condition before declaring Maryland in Liberia independent. Thus the leadership of the MSCS determined to "aid the colonists in organizing for themselves a separate and Independent government," one on which the colonists would vote. The Board of Managers then directed Latrobe to communicate the desires of the society to the governor and ordered an election so the settlers could begin fully determining their own future.[18]

Latrobe added his thoughts to the official communication of the society. Latrobe reiterated his feelings that McGill was incorrect regarding annexation. The independence of Maryland in Liberia as a republic was actually just the beginning. "I desire that you should know this." "I have fancies which are yet immature," but I have my "eye embracing the whole line of coast." Two republics united would not only benefit the settlements in Africa, it would also help those in the United States trying to persuade Congress to recognize the colonies.

> All this can be avoided by uniting the whole west coast of Africa in one republican government_ composed of separate sovereignties_then, alone, will the power of using one section of the coast against another section, be lost to the

[18] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. November 20, 1852.

> nations, who, utterly regardless of the great issues involved in colonization call out to lift high the gates that the king of commerce may go in and question, now, is, how best to form this one Republican government_ and the answer is_ copy_copy_copy in Africa, what has been done in America. This, my dear Sir, is common everyday sense. Did not S. Carolina plume herself in the day of Secession, on her ability to let in the Goods of England at her own rates, and so absorb the trade of the Union!!! a notion rash, idle [and] impracticable, only because of the confederation, or union, that made secession treason. Take care in Africa, to have the same safeguards, addressing you now, as one holding the opinions I know you entertain.[19]

Latrobe's words captured the sentiments of the majority of the colonists. The settlers' enthusiasm for the plans of the society, reported McGill, had driven a new wave of land clearing and planting of farms as well as the desire of the colonists to form a constitutional convention.[20] Latrobe's vision for Africa was becoming a real possibility.

By the time that the colonists responded to Latrobe's communications and held their elections, he had already accepted the leadership of the American Colonization Society. Though officially no longer affiliated with the MSCS, he no doubt took pleasure in learning that the colonists voted unanimously for independence as he proposed. McGill reported that the colonists were now preparing for another vote to select delegates for a constitutional convention and to choose commissioners to go to Baltimore for a conference with the board. Together they would create a new constitution and nation.[21]

The process moved rapidly. The colonists completed a constitution by June of 1853 and sent it to the MSCS in Baltimore along with their representatives. The two representative bodies amended the constitution together and the commissioners returned to Maryland in Liberia to put

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[19] *MSCS Papers*, I. Minutes, reel 1. November 20, 1852; III. Correspondence Sent, Latrobe Letter Book, reel 17. John Latrobe to Samuel F. McGill, November 20, 1852 (two letters by the same date).

[20] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 6. Samuel F. McGill to John Latrobe, December 15, 1851, January 28, 1853; William Prout to John Latrobe, February 6, 1853.

[21] *MSCS Papers*, II. Correspondence Received, reel 6. Samuel F. McGill to John Latrobe February 9, 1853, February 15, 1853.

it before the voters. In May of 1854 the voters, nearly unanimously voted for the new constitution. On 6 June 1854, the Republic of Maryland in Liberia held its first election of officers. So the colony begun twenty years earlier became a nation.[22]

The independent state of Maryland in Liberia began with little fanfare in the United States and without the involvement of one of the most influential men in creating the tiny nation. So too, ended John Latrobe's tenure with the Maryland State Colonization Society. The organization continued to exist well into the American Civil War, though its primary purpose was now aiding education and emigration from Maryland to Africa. Latrobe had worked to make the settlement a success, and a model of American society and government. It was by no means an easy task as Latrobe shared the challenges that the colonists faced in addition to those posed by critics of such an effort in the United States. Ultimately, much of what Latrobe suggested as well as what he did for the colony seemed contradictory. However, he succeeded for a short period, in creating an entirely new and independent republic on the coast of Africa. It was to be, however, a fleeting dream. The Republic of Maryland in Liberia endured only until 1857, when a war with the Greboes forced the state to join its older, sister republic as a county.[23]

In examining Latrobe's push for the independence of Maryland in Liberia, the situation in the United States played a role as well. It also led Latrobe back to his roots with the ACS. As Maryland in Liberia transitioned to a new period of its history, so too did the colonization movement in the United States. Just as independence in Africa was necessary for Latrobe's

[22] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 27. *Maryland Colonization Journal*, Vol. 7.__No.15. August 1854, 225-227; Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 219-223.

[23] Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 219-223.

colonization plans to succeed in Africa, his move to the ACS was necessary to meet the changing situation of American society.

As it turned out, the draw of the word Republic, as Latrobe interpreted it, was only part of what led to increased interest in African Americans returning to Africa. War with Mexico from 1846 to 1848 and the resulting territorial expansion set in motion a phase of sectional conflict that accelerated the rate of emigration, which Latrobe wanted to take advantage of by proclaiming the MSCS colony independent. That process did not go as smoothly as he anticipated. The conditions in the United States, while helpful in raising immigration rates to Liberia, altered the relations of colonization societies too. One result of sectional conflict on colonization between 1847 and 1850 was a return to friendly relations between the state and national societies. Latrobe returned to national society meetings and communication between the societies resumed, possibly in hoping to create an amicable relationship with the ACS that would prove helpful in confederating the Maryland colony and the Republic of Liberia. However, Ralph R. Gurley, long instrumental in the efforts of the ACS, was not convinced by Latrobe's change of heart. Although he never called Latrobe out by name, Gurley asserted his belief that Latrobe's plan was not the "best mode of carrying forward the scheme." Latrobe's independent state action did not meet the current need in the United States and it would in fact only succeed in transferring sectional tensions to the colonies in Africa if they united them in a republic like America.[24]

Despite Gurley's doubts in regard to Latrobe's ideas, Texas, the war with Mexico, territorial cession, Wilmot's Proviso, and California statehood not only tore at the nation, they brought the national society and the MSCS closer out of necessity. Most colonizationists

[24] *African Repository*, February, 1850, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, 55.

realized by 1850 that they needed to cooperate in a new way to accelerate transportation of emigrants and restore faith in colonization as a scheme that could render sectional conflict over slavery unnecessary. In this process, Latrobe ascended to the leadership of all of the colonization efforts after the death of Henry Clay. Supporters of the ACS decided in January of 1853 that they wanted a leader who worked for the cause rather than one who was a figurehead easily recognizable by white Americans. The crises of the latter 1840s convinced Latrobe of the propriety for this change as well as the need for returning to a national plan of action. The events in Kansas and Nebraska only confirmed this fact. Latrobe transformed his view of colonization and its ultimate purpose and applied it beyond the state of Maryland over the next few years. His efforts made him one of the most prominent figures in colonization before and after the Civil War.

The change in feelings between Maryland colonizationists and the national society was only one of the effects that the crises over the extension of slavery had on the movement. Annual emigration from America to Africa rarely surpassed a few hundred before the crises. For instance, in 1847 the ACS transported only 129 colonists to its colony; Maryland transported even fewer. The only exception in migration numbers was the statistical spike after the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831. In the immediate aftermath the number of people applying for transportation to Liberia exceeded the resources of all the societies combined. Even so, colonizationists managed to muster enough to send over 700 colonists to Africa before the momentum created by the white backlash faded.[25] The sectional conflict of the latter 1840s had a similar effect; this one proved more lasting, however. The rise in the number of colonists was

[25] Tom W. Schick, "A Quantitative Analysis of Liberian Colonization from 1820 to 1843 With Special Reference to Mortality," Journal of African History 12 (1971), 47.

noticeable after 1847. Combined with the hostile environment in the United States, emigration multiplied more than five times. By 1853, the number of colonists leaving for Africa neared 800.[26] The number of colonists the MSCS was sending to its colony had slowed to a trickle by this time, perhaps because they did not feel obliged to leave.[27] Most interesting was the fact that emancipated slaves from black belt states made up a significant portion of the colonists, supporting the notion that some southerners feared an end of slavery without a resolution to the race problem.[28] Just as had happened in the wake of Turner's Rebellion, emigration from 1848 through the early 1850s rose to the point that the ACS could not accommodate all who wished to leave the United States.

The crises had still other effects that colonizationists, especially Latrobe, took pleasure in hearing. Though politicians reached a compromise in 1850, it seemed clear to some that slavery would end in the foreseeable future. Some Congressmen from the black belt states proposed in 1850 that the federal government establish a regular fleet of at least four steamships to run from American ports to Liberia. The pretext for this was to carry mail between the two continents; British shipping carried most of the mail at the time. There were secondary benefits, however, for commerce and colonization.[29] Other political action followed in state legislatures. In their 1850 sessions, both Virginia and Indiana publicly endorsed colonization. Virginia followed its

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[26] *African Repository*, March, 1854, Vol. XXX., No. 3, 73.

[27] During the period from 1848 to 1853 the MSCS transported fewer than 300 colonists to Maryland in Liberia. *MSCS Papers*, X Manumissions & Emigrants, D. Emigrants, reel 27. 1. Record of Emigrants.

[28] For example, the April 1849 issue of the *African Repository* reported that an ACS vessel carried 142 former slaves from Mississippi. The July 1849 issue noted the departure of a vessel from Savannah, GA that carried 181 colonists, of which over one-third was manumitted slaves. *African Repository*, April 1849, Vol. XXV, No. 4, 118-120; July 1849, Vol. XXV, No. 7, 218.

[29] "Remarks on the Colonization of the Western Coast of Africa, by the Free Negroes of the United States, and the Consequent Civilization of Africa and Suppression of the Slave Trade." (New York: W. L. Burrough's Steam Power Press, 1850), 4.

endorsement with an appropriation of $30,000 for the use of the ACS and, to encourage emigration, the state levied an annual tax on all free African American males. Tax receipts were targeted at defraying the costs of colonization, but more importantly the tax illustrated the increased pressure being applied to oust African Americans. In Indiana the legislature instructed its national representatives to push for a national policy against the slave trade and a policy requiring colonization. Well-known, long-serving politicians joined in this push too. Daniel Webster stood before the rest of his Congressional colleagues and recommended that the central government fund colonization. Webster proclaimed his willingness "to incur *almost any degree of expense* to accomplish that object."[30] While such acts must have pushed some African Americans to leave the United States, they were also proof of Latrobe's contention that whites would pressure blacks to the point of a racial explosion. However, they violated one of Latrobe's more consistent positions, that emigration needed to be voluntary. This was a practical consideration really, because the MSCS relied on the help of clergy. A forced removal would draw criticism from those with humanitarian concerns and stiffen African American resistance to his efforts.

The atmosphere for colonization had shifted. Indeed, in this context Latrobe's efforts to make Maryland's colony independent appear to have been a sounder decision. More white Americans appeared ready for the plan and willing to listen to Latrobe. Latrobe became one of the most recognizable colonizationists. After 1851, he began to speak at venues outside of Maryland. His speeches emphasized his growing attachment to a national system of colonization. Addressing the annual meeting of the ACS in January of 1851, he stated that twenty-five years ago "we were laughed at as visionary enthusiasts…Nearly all men now admit,

[30] "Remarks on the Colonization of the Western Coast of Africa, 18-19.

that the two races, white and coloured…must ever be separate and distinct." The experience of those years has also shown that "education and refinement make no difference…where both [races] are nominally free, that in whose hands are the political power and superior position, will exercise a tyranny over the other in proportion to the occasions of collision between them." The recent act of Virginia was ample proof that this was true.[31] Discussion of slavery, in Latrobe's estimation, was disastrous not only for white Americans, but for African Americans. The only saving grace for the country was the vast West yet to be filled. Westward migration prevented the true crisis by relieving competition between immigrants and African Americans, particularly in urban centers like Baltimore. Once the west was filled, African Americans would have to leave the United States.[32]

Like other national figures, Latrobe also pushed the importance of commerce in carrying out colonization. The emphasis on economics served many purposes, some of which have been previously explored in this study. On the surface Latrobe's emphasis on commerce supports his vision for America's economic future. However, his support for trading ties between the two continents as well as the directives and policies he tried to implement in Liberia were designed, so he thought, to be attractive to potential colonists who faced bleak earning potential in America. Not only should the government establish a "bridge of boats," the Liberia Packet established in 1846 being an example, the United States had an obligation to recognize the independent Republic of Liberia. By doing so the country could have favored trading relations with Liberia, which not only would increase the value of the economic exchange, but also would

[31] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal*, February, 1851. Vol. 5.-No. 21., 330.

[32] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal*, February, 1851. Vol. 5.-No. 21., 332.

lead to mass migration among African Americans. The interpretation of political economy by Latrobe was strongly influenced by his understanding of history. No colonization in history, he argued, was successful without commerce. Neither government monies nor charity would make it work; commerce "is to take to Africa the coloured people of America."[33]

As Latrobe became more recognized nationally in the colonization movement and as sectional tensions rose, he came full circle. Both the push for independence and his return to the ACS make sense when analyzed in the context of what was occurring in Africa and the United States. He dealt with the problems posed by the reality of colonization in Africa, opposition from abolitionists, slaveholders, and African Americans, financial crises, and even division within the colonization movement. Increasing sectionalism and the tensions caused by the debate over slavery gave added weight to Latrobe's long-held position. The reasons that motivated him to join colonization as a young man still held sway over him, but the nation seemed in more danger than ever before by 1853. Colonization remained the only method of saving the republic and he was more involved in it than any other man now that long-time proponent Henry Clay had passed away. Latrobe came to realize that slavery could not be removed from the public conscience or national politics through compromise. Colonization was now a political necessity—one beyond that of party affiliation. Colonization was about the happiness of man and nation.[34]

At the same time, he realized that state action, as valiant as the effort in Maryland had been under his tutelage, could not overcome sectional jealousies. Now was the time that

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[33] *MSCS Papers*, XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal*, February, 1851. Vol. 5.-No. 21., 333.

[34] *MSCS Papers* XII. Newspapers, reel 28. *Maryland Colonization Journal*, February, 1854. Vol. 7.-No. 9., 144.

colonizationists throughout the nation must be diligent in strengthening the ACS to remove the flood of emigrants that he anticipated in the wake of the recent crises. The independence of both the Republic of Liberia and Maryland in Liberia would further accelerate the process. Latrobe also emphasized commerce as the one medium capable of pulling African Americans from the United States to Liberia. Thus, Latrobe slowly returned to his roots in the national society, where he felt he could do the most good for the movement and the Union. Latrobe's efforts domestically showed more than anything else his desire to save the nation. He was willing to stand up for his ideas, but he would also alter them to meet the changing conditions of nineteenth century America and to meet the challenges posed by the debate over slavery.

Conclusion

John Latrobe once wrote that colonization was a thread that could be traced throughout his life. Ironically, it is a thread that few know about as history has followed the alternate strand—that of John Latrobe, lawyer for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. This study has attempted to trace at least part of the fabric that intertwined him with colonization. John Latrobe, was drawn to the subject of colonization because it was one of the first national movements in the United States and it involved many of the most famous men of his youth. He chose at a young age to become intimately involved in the effort to colonize African Americans in Africa and remained active in the cause for the rest of his days. One of the central questions this study has sought to answer is why he did so. The answer is found by breaking down his role in the colonization movement into three epochs.

In the formative years of his life, the influences on Latrobe were such that he was deeply concerned with the future of the American republic. Associations with men whose public lives revolved around the future of the United States imbued Latrobe with the republican values that almost all of his generation shared. These values were instrumental in motivating him to devote more than seventy years of his life to colonization. His efforts provide an example of his generation's passion for social reform as well as its willingness to compromise. His generation was not simply born into the most democratic nation in history, but also it was a nation where democratic institutions opened more and more to white males regardless of class, birth, education, or wealth. His generation was critical for another reason—it was the first after the American Revolution. As such, Latrobe held a strong allegiance to the new nation; he was taught to value what it stood for and to preserve it by any reasonable means necessary. This was perhaps the purest of the motives that led him and many other people to support colonization.

Latrobe particularly adopted the notions of republicanism espoused by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. His generations' belief that the United States would only survive if its people were free and homogeneous was more often than not the unifying factor in the beginning of the colonization movement. As an eighteen year old returning home from West Point, labels such as pro or anti-slavery, abolitionist, and even humanitarian did not fit colonizationists, as Latrobe knew them. The man who brought him into the ACS, Robert Goodloe Harper, was a republican first. The belief that two free races could not work in a republic brought Latrobe along with many other more prominent white Americans together in joining the movement they thought offered the best chances of remedying this reality for the betterment of both races in North America.

American society in Latrobe's young adult life, however idealistic, did not function as he hoped. There were underlying tensions that split both white America and the colonization movement. In the schism between Marylanders and the ACS, Latrobe played a significant part. The ideas that divided colonizationists and led to the creation of independent state societies represented the divide in white American society caused by the failure to reconcile freedom and slavery. Further, they reflected the conflict between states' rights and federalism. But they also laid bare the problems faced by the colonization movement because the emergence of radical abolitionism made slaveholding members of the movement suspicious of colonizationists who had different motives. Latrobe recognized in this change that the Missouri Compromise of 1820 could not hold the conflict between the sections of the United States forever; that was perhaps nowhere more evident than within Maryland. The controversy over slavery and the struggle to determine the ultimate fate of African Americans also convinced him that any discussion of slavery in national politics was bound to hurt the nation. Thus he devised a variation within

colonization that he believed would accelerate emigration to Africa and defuse the most obvious source of sectional conflict—slavery. The separation of the Maryland society from the American Colonization Society was the ultimate reflection of his plan for solving the problems of the United States while making Africa part of the world, as he understood it. Some have contended that because of this desire to remove slavery from national political debate, colonization was a failure in diffusing that conflict. This study contends, however, that colonization, particularly as Latrobe viewed it, did not propose to end slavery though it was a possible outcome.

The founding of Maryland in Liberia in 1834 was an extension of that effort. It resulted from Latrobe's efforts to make colonization a state issue. However, the difficulties of starting a new colony in Africa were many, and these forced Latrobe to reconcile his assumptions about colonization and Africa with his long-term objective of making America solely a white man's home. Still, Latrobe was idealistic and naïve in one sense because he tried to blend his personal values with that goal. His desire that indigenous Africans not fall victim to the same atrocities that befell Native Americans could not be maintained along with his vision for Africa. Likewise, his desires to spread the gospel through a strong missionary presence in the colony served only to cause him, the governor, and the colonists more headaches. Just as his position changed regarding the Greboes, so he was ready to sacrifice his desire to spread religion to achieve his ultimate goal of removing African Americans from the United States.

Yet the realities of colonization in Africa were not the only factors that forced Latrobe to change MSCS policies as well as his personal beliefs. Now well established professionally, and known as a colonizationist in many areas of the country, Latrobe had to navigate an increasingly complicated and divided domestic front as the issue of abolition and the expansion of slavery reentered national politics in the mid-1830s. One result of the contentious debate over slavery in

the 1830s was that Latrobe spent much of his time defending the cause of colonization and attempting to persuade others how it fit within notions of republicanism held by many Americans. The effectiveness of such efforts is difficult to gauge, but what was clear was Latrobe's use of republicanism to appeal to white Americans regardless of political party affiliation, religious persuasion, or economic status. It was this argument, and a foreshadowing of Rudyard Kipling's 'white man's burden' that appealed to people.

Between 1840 and 1845 colonizationists experienced the calmest period in the United States for their operations since the movement formed in 1816. Yet it did not last because Texas, the war with Mexico, and westward expansion let ugly sectional divisions loose in America. The intensity of the feud after 1846 and the promotion of the Wilmot Proviso returned Latrobe to his roots in the final era of his involvement in the Maryland colonization effort. More emphatically the sectional conflict of the late 1840s forced Latrobe to sacrifice still more of his ideals, values, and goals in order to hold onto the one kernel that meant the most to him—a white, republican United States. He returned again to the national society and a national program in an effort to reunite white America before it split apart permanently. This marked the beginning of a new phase in Latrobe's life of colonization, which this study only begins to explore.

As the era of Maryland colonization came to a close, Latrobe directed the MSCS's colony to independence. The direction he provided in making the colony independent represented what remained of his original vision for Africa. The fact that he thought about a United African continent put him well ahead of his time. But like so many of Latrobe's notions, the United States of Africa was lost as crises in Africa and America that threatened his chances for success in removing African Americans. Latrobe's willingness to sacrifice some principles in order to gain elsewhere was symbolic of his generation's compromising to prevent larger

conflicts. Yet it also presents a not so rosy profile of Latrobe. He was not involved in colonization because he was a humanitarian first as some suggest, though he did not hesitate to use the rhetoric about how the end result would be the happiness of both races. His desire to reduce the number of African Americans in the United States makes him a racist in the purist sense of the word, but that descriptor does not make him unique in Antebellum America. Labels serve little purpose in explaining why Americans supported colonization because more than one could be applied to colonizationists. Latrobe knew this when he commented that members joined for good and ill purposes. He was concerned about humankind and religion, but they were the subsequent benefits of the program not the factor motivating him in colonization. If a label must be applied to the movement it should be republican. Latrobe was trying to solve THE question of nineteenth century America: What will be the final fate of the black man? The question was most meaningful in the sense that Latrobe understood it. In his mind the United States could not continue as it existed in his lifetime, and the Civil War undoubtedly convinced him that he had been right.

In the end, Latrobe contributed significantly to the history of Liberia and the United States in ways that are often overlooked. Most focus on him as the famous lawyer from Baltimore or as the son of an internationally recognized architect, or the namesake of a town in southeastern Liberia's Maryland county, but few have acknowledged his passion for colonization. The lack of success of colonization in remedying the ills of American society in the nineteenth century should not overshadow his contributions. Nor should we dismiss what he did simply because Latrobe's views on race made him like many other white Antebellum Americans. Latrobe symbolized a generation in flux dealing with institutions, which most men, if honest with themselves, could not reconcile within the context of the freest government in

world history. Latrobe worked to preserve it while attempting to answer the most difficult question of all in a race conscious society.

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