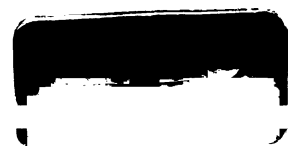
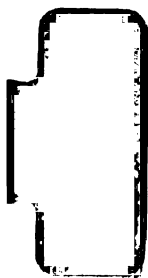


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**THE LIMITATIONS OF FREE BLACK COMMUNITIES AND POST-
COLONIAL NATIONALISM: A COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF THE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA AND MONROVIA, LIBERIA BLACK
COMMUNITIES, 1817-1870**

By

John Wess Grant

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

2006

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ABSTRACT

THE LIMITATIONS OF FREE BLACK COMMUNITIES AND POST-COLONIAL NATIONALISM: A COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF THE RICHMOND, VIRGINIA AND MONROVIA, LIBERIA BLACK COMMUNITIES, 1817-1870

By

John Wess Grant

This dissertation compares the socio-economic development of free persons of colour in Richmond, Virginia and Monrovia, Liberia. Similar traditions of intergenerational poverty developed in these communities due to their long-standing connections with American slave systems. Early 19th century changes in Virginia manumission law compelled Richmond free coloureds to engage in the both expensive and time-consuming project of buying relatives out of bondage. These free coloureds often formed “stranded families,” consisting of free coloured and enslaved members, until the funds for family member purchases could be raised. The logic that stranded families adopted, in relation to the myriad of problems posed by slavery, prevented them from accumulating “real” wealth and/or participating in the Liberian emigration movement. The impact of the American interstate slave trade on Liberian population growth, the commercial and agricultural sophistication of indigenous Africans, high settler mortality rates, settlers’ pre-emigrant status, and the orientation of the Liberian economy precipitated a long tradition of poverty amidst Black settlers in Monrovia. Both of these cases demonstrate that poverty in these communities were more often the result of external as opposed to internal factors.

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This dissertation is dedicated to Leslie and the consummate Grace of My Creator

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the process of completing a dissertation, one often accrues many debts. My case is no exception. I would like to thank my advisor and graduate committee for their constant support and patience during this demanding process. I would also like to thank the archival staffs at the Library of Virginia, Virginia Historical Society and Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia, the Library of Congress in Washington DC, the University of Indiana School of Musicology in Bloomington, and the Forah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone for providing me with the documents I needed to complete this project. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Leslie Campbell Grant, Eric Duke, Meredith Roman, and other colleagues at MSU for the intellectual stimulation needed to bring many of the ideas presented in this study to fruition.

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Preface

Laws crafted to preserve slavery in the early 19th century U.S. limited the political and socio-economic success of the free coloureds in Richmond, Virginia, and wedded their community to a tradition of poverty that was reproduced in Monrovia, Liberia. I defend this position by historicizing the development of the free coloured urban communities in Richmond and Monrovia, 1817-1870. Virginia's restrictive Black Laws severely limited the opportunities of Richmond free coloureds, while emigrants to Monrovia experienced fewer legal obstacles. A comparison of these communities, linked by their participation in the American Colonization Society's (ACS) African Colonization Movement (1817-1865), offers a new historical foundation for examining the process of Black community building and its struggle for recognition in broader societies. Moreover, this study provides a micro examination of how free coloureds constructed urban communities inside and outside of systems of political, economic, and legal exclusion in the 19th century. I evaluate the rate of political and socio-economic success in these communities by comparing White external legal influence with internal free Black community building variables such as the strength of their religious/secular institutions, local economy, types of employment, and Black opportunities to acquire, transfer, and capitalize on property across generations. The purpose of this both timely and important project is to establish a foundation for future comparative researches on the nature of trans-generational poverty in

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early and late 19th century Black Diaspora communities, as it relates to the problem transnational immigration.

I establish and defend the thesis posited above in five chapters. Chapter one examines why free coloureds in Virginia were exposed to the expatriation movement, orchestrated by the ACS and its auxiliary organizations. My comparison of free coloured experiences in five New World slave societies shows that the variables of timing, demography, economy, geography, military structure, and mortality helped create the unfavorable conditions Virginia free coloureds lived under. Therefore, they were more susceptible to being drawn into the ACS' expatriation movement in the U.S. Chapter two describes the context in which the Richmond free coloured community emerged. This community developed in the midst of a society where the enslavement of Blacks became an important instrument that White Virginia's used to create freedom for themselves. Therefore, the Richmond free coloured minority was compelled to create alternative modes of freedom by establishing their own institutions and navigating the complicated waters of manumission. Chapter three explains how Virginia Black Laws spawned the creation of Black families composed of free coloreds and slaves. The internal logic of these stranded families helped to undermine the Liberian emigration movement and spawned a culture of Black poverty in Richmond. Chapter four describes the Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric White supporters of the ACS in Richmond used to recruit free coloured emigrants. It also discusses how Richmond's stranded families, the growth of the interstate slave trade (1830-1860), and Black Laws contributed to the failure of this

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recruitment strategy. Lastly, chapter five describes the West African milieu in which the Monrovia Community took root, before examining how emigrants' pre-settler status, American slavery, high emigrant mortality rates, and the orientation of the Liberian economy inhibited the development of this Black Diasporan city.

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Chapter 1

THE FREE COLORED¹/ WHITE SLAVEHOLDER RELATIONSHIP: VIRGINIA FREE COLOURED CONDITIONS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

The free coloured communities in 19th century Richmond, Virginia and Monrovia, Liberia were the product of slave societies. It would thus be useful to examine variables that influenced the orientation of the free coloured/White slaveholder relationship in several slave societies. This comparative approach serves as one way to explain the socio-economic outcomes of free coloured communities in slave societies and generate answers to other questions related to the development of the Richmond and Monrovia free coloured communities. For example, what variables had the most influence on creating the conditions experienced by free coloureds populations in New World slave societies? Second, how did some free coloured populations come to enjoy higher levels of class mobility and political influence, while others became increasingly more

¹ I do not use the term Free Coloured in the pejorative sense in this essay. I use it here and elsewhere to describe the ambiguous political place persons labeled as such occupied within a slave society. The dark color of their skin signified that they did not have the political prerogatives of White male property holders, even if they were property holders themselves. Hence, color precluded them from becoming liberal or "free" subjects in the classical sense. That was unless they were able to reverse the demographic and military disadvantages that encouraged White slaveholders to create these kinds of castes in the first place. This was achieved in some Caribbean locations at the expense of dismantling the slave societies that endorsed the political term of Free Coloured, although cultural notions of Free Colored identity survived the end of slavery.

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socially and economically marginalized over time? Third, what was the relationship between the marginalization of some free coloured populations and their vulnerability to state sponsored expatriation movements?

This essay will address these and other questions by describing the conditions free coloureds encountered in the Caribbean, Brazil, and Virginia. Seven specific variables tended to distinguish the conditions that one free coloured community encountered from those faced by another. Each of these overlapping variables fell under three major categories: economic development, demography, and security. The economic variables entailed the type of cash-crops grown; the level of free colored commercial activity in rural areas; and the access free coloureds had to cash-crop producing lands and slaves. Demographic factors included enslaved, White, and free coloured mortality rates; and the enforcement of race-based sexual regulatory laws. Last were the security variables that involved the time and place of settlement; the frequency of slave rebellions; and the level of free coloured military participation. These variables will first be subjected to a conceptual analysis. I will then use Silvio Duncan Baretta & John Markoff's projection of the relationship between violence monopolies and civilizations to enrich my analysis of the Brazilian, Jamaican, St. Dominguean, Cuban, and Virginia slave societies. Five major conclusions have been reached with the application of this two-pronged analytical approach. First, slaveholders made more socio-economic concessions to free coloureds in slave societies that bore two major features: high slave/White mortality rates and slave majorities. Second, free coloureds that inhabited these societies were

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exponentially less likely to be drawn into state sponsored expatriation movements than if they lived in places with the opposite demographic profile. Third, slave societies that lacked the White majorities to enforce the law were more likely to harbor economically powerful free coloured classes, who played a leading role in colonial military forces. Military service was after all a way for free coloureds to establish important social contacts needed to improve their socio-economic status and prove their loyalty to the slave society. Fourth, slave societies where slaveholders granted free coloureds appreciable levels of social and economic privileges were more likely to self-destruct, because it became nearly impossible for them to maintain the racialized social hierarchies upon which these societies were based and the military allegiance of free coloureds at the same time. Fifth, the destruction of a slave society was almost certain when it harbored a slave majority and a free coloured class that was numerically, militarily, and commercially competitive with White slaveholders. Each of these conclusions suggests that free coloureds were a clear and present danger to the legitimacy of most New World Slave Societies.

The Master/Slave and the Free Coloured/White Slaveholder Relationships

To put this whole discussion in comparative perspective, I address the relationships that held slave societies together. Foremost among these was the relationship between slaveholders and slaves. Recent interpretations in the debate over the nature of the master/slave relationship have encouraged scholars to incorporate the subject of free coloured/White slaveholder relations

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into the broader discussion on New World slave societies. Contemporary culture and community studies on New World slavery² have done this by relegating the idea of the slaveholder as an absolute ruler over his or her slaves to the category of myth. Renewed interests in the subject of slave resistance, along with the emphasis scholars have placed on the issues of culture, space, and time have also contributed to a more nuanced description of the master/slave relationship.³

Previous descriptions of this relationship grew out of the Enlightenment portrayal of history as a discernable phenomenon moving in a upward progressive line, marked by successive stages of human social development from a state of mystic superstition (or barbarism) to one of cognitive Truth (or civilization). From this vantage point, early studies on slavery attributed any changes within New World slave systems to impersonal politico-economic forces, which were beyond the control of the people living in them. The late 20th century

² Richard Price and Sidney Mintz, The Birth of African American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective (Reprint: 1976: Boston, Beacon Press, 1992); Christopher Morris, "The Articulation of Two Worlds: The Master-Slave Relationship Reconsidered," The Journal of American History, Vol. 85, No. 3. (Dec., 1998), pp. 982-1007; Eugene Genovese, Roll Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); John Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation life in the Antebellum South (New York, Oxford University Press, 1972) and Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977) ; George P. Rawick, From Sundown to Sunup: The Making of the Black Community (Westport, Conn., Greenwood Pub. Co. 1972); Herbert Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976); Sterling Stuckey, Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Lawrence Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Margaret Creel, A Peculiar People: Slave Religion and Community-Culture Among the Gullas (New York: New York University Press, 1988); Michael Tadman, Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989); Walter Johnson, Soul by Soul : Life Inside The Antebellum Slave Market(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

³ CLR James, The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution (New York: Dial Press, 1938); Raymond A. Bauer & Alice H. Bauer, "Day to Day Resistance to Slavery," The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Oct., 1942), 388-419; Herbert Aptheker,

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shift toward incorporating the conceptual trope of human agency into the study of New World slave societies laid the groundwork for new interpretations of the master/slave relationship. This relationship has recently been described as a series of negotiations, wherein slaveholders made a range of concessions to enslaved persons in exchange for their labor and overall cooperation. Indeed, this *negotiated relationship thesis* has prompted changes in the content and terminology used to describe the players in slave societies.⁴ It has also been used to counter characterizations of slaves as mindless objects, who were dominated by the will their owners.⁵ As soothing as this new interpretation may be to contemporary Liberal sensibilities, sponsored by modern day nationalist promoters of cultural pluralism, this thesis has implied that planter organized violence was secondary to the cultural and material issues that masters and slaves came to an agreement on.⁶ Therefore, the point of planters using organized violence to extract the labor of several generations of enslaved

American Negro Slave Revolts (New York: Columbia University Press; London, P.S. King & Staples, Ltd., 1943).

⁴ Debra Gray White pushes this issue by recasting slaves as enslaved persons and masters as slaveholders. Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I A Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South (Reprint of 1985 edition: New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

⁵ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime (New York, London: D. Appleton and Company, 1918); Stanley Elkins, Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959); Robert William Fogel and Stanley Engerman, Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery (Boston, Little, Brown, 1974).

⁶ Ira Berlin, Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1998); Phillip Morgan, Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Low Country (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1998).

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With the exception of Sally Hadden's work on Slave Patrols (2001), the most influential scholars working on English North American slavery have tended to down play down the theme of planter organized violence in the history of New World slave systems. This methodological approach has inadvertently hidden other important relationships that were forged to hold slave societies together

⁷ The Atlantic World signifies an international socio-political complex, which connected commercial operations conducted in West Africa, Western Europe, South America, the Caribbean, and North America. See Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism (New York and Oxford, 1983), chapter 1; Phillip Curtin, The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History (Cambridge, Eng, and New York, 1990); and John Thornton, Second Edition, Africa and Africans and the Making of the Atlantic World (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge, University Press, 1998). Eric Williams and Robin Blackburn have written two of the best comprehensive books detailing the enormous influence slavery had on the development of the Modern Western Empires in the Atlantic World. See Williams, Capitalism & Slavery (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1944); Blackburn, The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800 (London; New York, Verso, 1997). Texts that recognize organized violence as a central theme of slavery include John Hope Franklin, The Militant South, 1800-1861 (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard Press, 1956); Kenneth Stampp, The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South (New York: Knopf, 1956), see chapter "to stand in fear"; Herbert Gutman & Ira Berlin, Power and Culture: Essays on the American Working Class (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987); James Oakes, Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South (New York & London: W.W. Norton, & Company, 1990); Loren Schweninger, "Slavery and Southern Violence: County Court Petitions and the South's Peculiar Institution," The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 85, No. 1/2 (Winter-Spring, 2000), 33-35; and Sally Hadden, Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001). See also the work of Edward Ayers and Phillip Schwartz; Edward Ayers, Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19th century American South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Philip Schwarz, Twice Condemned: Slaves and the Criminal Laws of Virginia, 1705-1865 (Union, N.J.: Lawbook Exchange, 1998) & Slave Laws in Virginia (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996); For broad descriptions of the influence of slave plantations on the development of culture see Sidney Mintz, Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History (New York: Penguin Books, 1985); and Antonio Benitez-Rojo, The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1992), 3-5.

⁸ This new way of interpreting the master/slave relationship is clearly an outgrowth of the ongoing reaction to Stanley Elkin's assertion that planter violence operating in "closed" slave systems like the ones in the U.S. created docile slaves. Raising planter violence as a central issue meant that one had to characterize slaves as mentally deficient "Sambos" at the same time. In spite of the fact that North American colonial historians have steered us away from the myth of North American slave societies being "closed societies," the aversion to incorporating planter-organized violence into the comprehensive histories of North American slave societies has persisted.

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from the view of laymen observers. Among these were the relationships between free coloureds and White slaveholders, slaves, and non-slaveholding Whites, non-slaveholding Whites and slaves, and slave holding free coloureds and White slaveholders. Also unexplored were relationships between slaveholding free coloureds and non-slave holding Whites. The list of relational combinations grows longer if one integrates the analytic variables of gender and ethnicity. Weaving this multitude of relationships into the histories of New World slave societies would provide us with a deeper understanding of the high level of cultural sophistication needed to keep these violent societies together. In the following discussion, I focus concerted attention on the relationship between free coloureds and White slaveholders.

The master/slave relationship has received more comprehensive treatment than the relationship between free coloureds and White slaveholders,⁹ but the latter was often as significant in preserving New World slave societies as the former. Although this trend undoubtedly reflects the dominant role slaves and White slaveholders played in the maintenance of Atlantic World plantation economies, free coloureds were often central players in this business as well. Scholars have long recognized free coloured/White slave holder relations as an issue that influenced the formation of families, manumission rules, and defense forces used to guard slave societies against slave rebellions and foreign

⁹ David Cohen & Jack Greene, Neither Slave Nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); Jane Landers, Against the Odds: Free Blacks in the Slave Societies of the Americas (London: Portland, Ore.: Frank Cass, 1996); David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, et al., Beyond Bondage: Free Women of Color in the Americas (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

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invasions. Discussions on how free coloureds used their place in these security forces to enhance their own socio-economic mobility within a slave society are less developed. The act in itself of free coloureds being employed by Whites to suppress slave rebellions revealed the limits of planter power.¹⁰ Therefore, the issues of mobilizing reliable security forces, slave rebellions, and free coloured socio-economic mobility were often linked. For example, free coloured soldiers in Jamaica, St. Domingue, and Brazil became major players in their slave societies' social and economic orders during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, while less military oriented free coloureds in Virginia and Cuba were recruited to participate in state sponsored deportation movements.¹¹ An examination of how free coloureds helped guard these slave societies from internal and external enemies does explain how slaveholders in Virginia were able to weaken the bonds between themselves and free coloureds, an act that contributed to the growth of the Richmond and Monrovia free coloured communities. Chapters two three, and five show that although free persons of

¹⁰ See John Garrigus, Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Stewart King, Blue Coat or Powdered Wig : Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint Domingue (Athens : University of Georgia Press, c2001); Ira Berlin, Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South (New York: The New Press, 1974), pp. 124.

¹¹ The deportation movement in the U.S. was directed by the American Colonization Society, while the one in Cuba was carried out by the Captain-General's office. The movement in the United States was much more comprehensive in its scope than the one in Cuba. The one in Cuba sought to expel all free coloureds that had entered the colony from other places. Furthermore, free coloureds who had left Cuba were not permitted to return. As in Virginia and other Southern States, new manumittedes were supposed to leave Cuba after they had been liberated, unless they could prove that they had an important trade, were married, had children, and had accumulated as least "30K pesos." See Gwendlyn Mildred Hall, Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba (Reprint: 1971: Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 130-131; Early Lee Fox, The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840 (Baltimore, 1919); P. J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement, 1817-1865 (New York, 1961).

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colour in Richmond and Monrovia were separated by thousands of miles of ocean, both groups mounted similar community building attempts that were wedded to New World slave societies and the relationships between free coloureds and White slave holders in them. Free coloreds in Richmond struggled to forge community in a rapidly industrializing Virginia City, while the Blacks in the West African colony of Liberia depended on emigrants supplied by American slave societies to build their community at Monrovia.

Free coloured participation in slave society militias and police forces corresponded with the level of White planters' security demands. Foreign invasions and incidents of slave resistance such as insurrections, acts of sabotage, and conspiracies were among planters' major security concerns. They responded to these issues by forming militias and police forces assigned to the task of monitoring subversive slave activity, so planters themselves could concentrate on expanding the geographic reach and economic profit of their own plantation enterprises. There was after all no guarantee of stability in the high stakes business of slave plantation agriculture. Aside from problems such as pests, droughts, and fires, a successful slave revolt could render useless all of the time, money, and energy planters invested in converting slave labor into wealth. Without this wealth it would have been nearly impossible for many White males to establish the patriarchal families they held dear. It was from this wealth that White patriarchs derived their power to persuade their dependents (i.e. wife, children, and slaves) to observe the race and gender norms these families used to distinguish their class position from those assumed by other groups in the

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¹⁶ Brenda Stevenson, *For Myself and the Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 268-269.

¹⁷ Hazel Carby, *Novels, Readers, Reviewers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 10-11.

society.¹² Formulating reliable procedures to guard and increase the wealth of these families thus became one of the obsessions of slave holding patriarchs. This entailed making arrangements for the smooth transfer of wealth from one generation of patriarchs to the next, while insisting that their spouses and children adhere to socially prescribed race, class, and gender norms parallel to the roles they were supposed to play in their families and in a slave society. Meanwhile, the subordinate labor position of female and male slaves required them to observe alternate gender roles of their own creation, or dictated to them within the households of slaveholding patriarchs.¹³ Seizing control over public violence was the first step in creating this kind of social order. This meant that planters and the state agencies they established had to have the final say on how and when violence was exercised in the territories they claimed sovereignty over.

Violence Monopolies and Slave Societies

Many of the writings on New World slavery prior to the 1960s and 1970s do not incorporate discussions of how race and class influenced the formation of planter violence monopolies. Culture and community scholars of the latter generation have taught us much about slave families, communities, agricultural expertise, underground trade networks, and religion, but they remain silent on the

¹² Brenda Stevenson, Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), Chapter 1; Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy, editors, Over the Threshold : Intimate Violence in Early America (New York : Routledge, 1999) 268-286.

¹³ Hazel Carby, Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1987), chapter 2.

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issue of planter violence. One way to approach this issue would be to take at face value the writings of some planters such as George Fitzhugh who claimed to be the architects of slave labor systems that did not require the use of violent tactics.¹⁴ Various episodes and varieties of slave resistance in North America and the Caribbean did however indicate that violence monopolies were needed to keep slaves enslaved.¹⁵ Michael Craton described the different levels of violence slaves used to resist planter regimes in the British West Indies, but he was silent on the issue of planter counter measures. David Geggus' investigation of Jamaican slave responses to the St. Dominguean slave rebellion offers a more balanced view of the interplay of slave and planter violence in a slave society. His findings imply that the planter violence monopoly in Jamaica was a shared enterprise, wherein White metropolitan regulars and free coloureds were employed to prevent a resurgent Maroon threat and a St. Domingue styled slave rebellion from occurring there. The interactions between Jamaican free coloureds and White slaveholding authorities in this context demonstrate how the former could use the security vulnerabilities of a slave society to enhance their level of socio-economic mobility. For example, White Jamaican planters' need for free coloured military support in the Second Maroon War (1795) compelled the former to grant free coloureds the right to testify against Whites in court. Meanwhile, slaveholders in Jamaica protected themselves from potential slave uprisings in their costal areas by paying White metropolitan regulars. Without the White

¹⁴ Alan Galloway, editor, Voices of the Old South: Eyewitness Accounts, 1528-1861 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 391-404.

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regulars, they would have had to depend more on free coloureds for military support than they already did. The consequences of an increased military dependency on free coloureds would have meant surrendering more civic privileges to them—privileges that might have compromised the integrity of the Jamaica's racial hierarchy. Geggus' example also implies that every time White slaveholders solicited military support from free coloureds they moved one step closer to bargaining away Whites' near exclusive right to accumulate slave plantation property and the enormous wealth advantage that came with this right. Keeping the parts of a shared violence monopoly together was thus a tricky business in places like Jamaica, because it gave free coloureds the opportunity to advance their socio-economic position as a result of the constant pressure placed on these systems by enslaved majorities. Consequently, full access to military participation became an important socio-economic bargaining chip for free coloreds; that was if the right conditions existed for them to acquire and capitalize on this powerful bargaining issue. Even though White slaveholders were often aware of this danger, especially in the wake the St. Domingue slave rebellion (1791), they often could not avoid sacrificing civic privileges to free coloureds and simultaneously handle the massive security problems that accompanied the management of societies charged with the responsibility of containing slave majorities.

Military service alone was not a pancea for free coloureds hoping to elevate their status in slave societies. There was instead a range of overlapping

¹⁵Sylvia Frey, Water From the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

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variables that determined their socio-economic outcomes. These were the timing of settlement, the type of cash-crops grown, the mortality rates of the slave, White, and free coloured populations, the frequency of slave rebellions, the enforcement of race based sexual regulatory laws, the level of free colored rural commercial activity, the access free coloureds had to cash-crop producing land and slaves, and the presence of slave majorities. Free coloureds able to establish themselves as independent farmers in rural areas before White owned slave plantations dominated the land were in the best position to boost their socio-economic standing in a slave society. Furthermore, free coloureds living in slave societies composed of slave majorities and non-reproducing White minorities were far more likely to achieve this end than free coloureds living in slave societies with naturally reproducing White populations and majority or minority slave populations. Slave societies with naturally reproducing White male populations were able to meet their security needs, while other slave societies had to depend on the assistance of free coloureds.

To maintain the racially stratified orientation of a slave society White slaveholders had to limit the socio-economic mobility of free coloureds, without reducing it to the point where free coloureds would be unwilling to help protect the society. Limiting the number of avenues that slaves could use to move into the ranks of free coloureds thus became one of White planters' top priorities. This entailed drafting laws designed to constrain inter-racial sexual relationships, free coloured military participation, the reach of manumission by last will and testament, deeds of emancipation, and acts of self-purchase. When most or all of

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these manumission avenues were left open, free coloured populations tended to increase rapidly and challenge the numerical supremacy of coexisting White populations. It was therefore dangerous for White authorities to leave all of these manumission channels open and expect racial identities to have any real relevance in the context of a slave society. However, in many cases these White authorities did not have much of a choice. Closing most or all of the avenues to manumission in certain situations could undermine the safety and commercial productivity of a slave society, especially in places where White slaveholders simply did not have enough White manpower to meet the security or subsidiary commercial needs of a colony. Some White slaveholders in this position resorted to enacting policies that limited free coloured access to productive property and leadership positions in colonial militias—a course of action adopted by planters in English Jamaica and Spanish Cuba. St. Dominguean and Brazilian planters' heavy reliance on free coloured soldiers dissuaded them from enacting similar policies. Inter-colonial warfare, endemic disease, and frequent slave rebellions in their 18th century histories persuaded St. Dominguean and Brazilian planters to adopt this lenient position as well. Cuba's late bloomer status as slave society in the 19th century and Virginia's greatly reduced level of exposure to these kinds of problems in the late 17th and 18th centuries, left planters in these societies with the option of placing stricter limits on manumission and free coloured access to productive property. If we were to stop our analysis here, it would seem that all slaves and free coloureds had to do was wait for manmade or natural disasters to occur in order to improve their socio-economic position within any given slave

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society. As coherent as this proposition seems, it does not fully explain why the level of free coloured socio-economic mobility increased, decreased, or stagnated in different slave societies over time. For this reason we must now turn to the problem of slave societies' demographic composition.

Slave Society Demography and Free Coloureds

The demographic composition of the slave societies under review cannot be understood apart from the issues of endemic diseases, intercolonial warfare, the type of crops produced, and the level of free coloured allegiance to White slave holding classes. Three trends were reflected in the demographic make up of North American, Caribbean, and Brazilian slave societies. With the exception of Cuba, Caribbean slave societies consisted of slave majorities, non-naturally reproducing White minorities, and naturally reproducing free coloured minorities. This was a common demographic feature of slave societies committed to the capital/labor intensive business of sugar production. Slave societies that were not continuously involved in sugar production tended to follow a different demographic path. For example, Brazilian commerce changed from sugar to mining to coffee and sugar over the course of its colonial (1500-1821) and independence (1822-) histories. Brazil's demography thus consisted of a free coloured majority, a substantial slave minority, and a White minority. Lastly, the slave societies in British North America cultivated crops that were far less capital and labor intensive than the sugar produced in Brazil and the Caribbean. The demography of these slave societies tended more to consist of naturally

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reproducing slave minorities or majorities, White minorities or majorities, and free coloured minorities. Endemic diseases, intercolonial warfare, and the ambitions of a few White men that tried to monopolize the majority of land also contributed to the unfavorable demographic situation for White planters in the Caribbean and Brazil. Free coloureds in these places, as opposed to those in North America, were more likely to defend the “right” of property in slaves for two reasons: disproportional White male-to-female sex ratios, and various security weaknesses put free coloureds in a better position to make socio-economic gains by establishing family ties with affluent Whites or serving in the military. Free coloured support for slave regimes became even more pronounced when White slaveholders expanded their territorial domains slower than free coloureds acquired productive property and increased the size of their populations. On the other hand, free coloureds living in slave societies with naturally reproducing White populations and slave minorities were more resistant to the idea of property rights in slaves, because they had fewer opportunities to increase their influence over colonial military affairs, augment the size of their populations, and acquire productive property in land and slaves faster than Whites in places like Virginia and Cuba. Free coloureds in Cuba and Virginia therefore had to wait for White majorities to realize that they could no longer reconcile their pursuit of material independence with the idea of property rights in slaves. Conflicts that ensued between free soil and slave soil advocates could then be used by free coloureds to advance their own socio-economic interests. These wars did not however go so far as to discard the racial hierarchies that existed under slavery.

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For example, Cuban coffee planters joined forces with slaves and free coloureds in the “Ten Years War” (1868-1878), while advocates of Free Soil Republicanism waged war with Democratic slavocrats over the type of labor that would be used in newly acquired U.S. imperial territories (1850-1865). The conflict in Cuba continued to play out in two other wars that were slow to combine the notions of anti-racism and anti-colonialism, while the Northern architects of the American Civil War were only willing to train Black troops to defend the ideals of White Free Soil Republicanism.¹⁶ These Free Soil supporters of federal Union in the U.S. never inserted an anti-racist plank into their Reconstruction program, because the cultural legitimacy of American nationalism had become bound to ideological racism.¹⁷ This proved to be disastrous for the descendants of pre-emancipation free coloureds and post-emancipation freedmen who did not possess the capital to avoid from sliding into a new system of wage slavery.¹⁸

The integrity of the free coloured/White slaveholder relationships in Brazil, St. Domingue, and Jamaica were wholly different from the ones in Cuba and Virginia. Indeed, the orientation of these relationships contradicted the ethnocentric logic posited in Frank Tannenbaum’s Slave and Citizen (1946). According to Tannenbaum’s logic, the relationship between free coloureds and

¹⁶ Rebecca Scott, Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1869-1899 (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); Ada Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before The Civil War (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); James Huston, Calculating the Value of the Union: Slavery, Property Rights, and the Economic Origins of the Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

¹⁷ See Chapter 2, fn. # 7.

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White slaveholders should have been more similar amongst Anglo colonies (i.e. Jamaica and Virginia) than between Latin (i.e. St. Domingue, Brazil, and Cuba) and Anglo colonies, because Anglo and Latin jurists held different positions on how masters should treat their slaves. If this were true, free coloured populations in the Latin colonies such as those in Cuba, Brazil, and St. Domingue should have played host to proportionally larger free coloured populations than those in Jamaica and Virginia. Virginia satisfies the standards of Tannanbaumian logic, but Jamaica does not. Indeed, Jamaica was more similar to Brazil in that the free coloured populations in these slave societies grew to be proportionally larger than the White populations by the 1820s.

Table 1

Brazilian Free Coloureds

Ethnic Category	1786	1805	1808	1821
Whites	65664	78035	106684	136,693
Free Mulattoes	80309	92049	129656	152,921
Free Blacks	42739	48139	47937	53,719
Slave Mulattoes	20376	24997	15737	22,788
Black Slaves	153759	163784	133035	148,416
Totals	362847	407004	433049	514,537

Source: A.J.R. Russell, "Colonial Brazil," in David Cohen & Jack Greene, editors, Neither Slave Nor Free (Baltimore and London, 1972), 97.

¹⁸ See Roger Ransom & Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of

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Jamaica's free coloured population was also proportionally larger than those in French St. Domingue and Spanish Cuba. Hence the moral and legal institutions Europeans brought with them to their New World slave colonies had less of an influence on how fast free coloured populations grew compared to other factors. For example, planters needed as much slave labor as possible to meet the demands of the consumers buying their crops, and enough free coloured military support to suppress subversive slave activity* in places where Whites were frequently unavailable for military service. Protestant or Catholic Christian ethics were thus discarded or modified to aid planters in their attempts to satisfy these needs, not the other way around. In the mean time free coloureds were often involved in providing planters with the muscle they needed to enforce the laws and codes of ethics they actually honored when imperial measures conflicted with their interests.

As much as colonial authorities would have liked to meet their security needs with Whites only, high White immigrant death rates, imperial warfare, episodes of slave violence, and absenteeism precluded this type of policy in many slave societies. For example, free coloureds in Jamaica, Brazil, and St. Domingue played a leading role in these slave societies' armed forces.¹⁹

Emancipation (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

* The logical conclusion of such activity was outright revolt. But slaveholders were concerned with corraling lower levels of subversive behavior (i.e. petit maroonage), before slaves had the opportunity to escalate it to the stage of open revolt.

¹⁹ Gad J. Heuman, Between Black and White: Race, Politics and Free Coloureds in Jamaica, 1792-1865 (Westport, Conn. : Greenwood Press, 1981), 7; A.J.R. Russell, "Colonial Brazil," in David Cohen & Jack Greene, editors, Neither Slave Nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of New World(Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 97.

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Regulating public violence was no less a problem in the Virginia and Cuban slave societies, but a key demographic feature set these slave societies apart from those in Brazil, Jamaica, and St. Domingue. Virginia and Cuba were slave societies that harbored naturally reproducing White populations. Therefore, the police and military forces in these colonies consisted primarily of White recruits. Notions of White cultural superiority were thus more easily enforced in these places. If large numbers of free coloureds had been involved in these security agencies, notions of White supremacy would have been less sustainable. In addition, the White-Creole²⁰ populations in Virginia and Cuba outnumbered that of free coloureds and slaves.

The demography of Virginia and Cuba in fact helped revolutionize the free coloured/White slaveholder relationship in these places compared to the pre-existing ones in Caribbean and Brazilian slave societies. This trend was revealed by White slaveholders depending less on free coloureds for defense in Virginia and Cuba than in Jamaica, St. Domingue, and Brazil. Virginia's demographic history was by far the most unique of the five colonies. Virginians drew the bulk of their defense support from White males early on, because Euro-ethnic indentures and English planters were in the majority. By the time Virginia planters switched from indentured servitude to slave labor at the end of the 17th century, there were enough White women immune to endemic diseases to birth enough White males needed to fill the ranks of the Commonwealth's militias. Meanwhile, the English colonists dealt with the problem of runaways by establishing treaties

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with native tribes living on the Commonwealth's western and southeastern peripheries. A Black military culture therefore never really developed in colonial Virginia, as was the case in the other four colonies reviewed here. Although White Spanish regulars dominated the military forces in Cuba by the early 19th century, Cuban free coloureds had already established a strong military tradition two centuries earlier. White authorities tried to ban the coloured militias in Cuba (1844) in the wake of the Conspiracy of the Ladder, but threats made by U.S. imperialists and local *independistas* prompted the Crown to resurrect them. This is one of many examples showing how external or internal pressures imposed on a slave society could convince White colonial officials to bargain with free coloureds for the sake of holding a slave society together.²¹

Still, the presence of White majorities in colonial Virginia and Cuba placed them in a better position to impose their ideas about race on all persons of color, whether they were slaves or free persons of color. Cuban free coloureds' long tradition of military service to the colony gave them a slight advantage over free coloureds in Virginia, who were unable to create a similar custom. Reliance on free coloureds for military support in the 17th and 18th centuries and planter reactions to the unfolding Haitian Revolution explains this result in Cuba. Cuban free coloureds used this time to establish a military culture strong enough to resist attempts made by a new class of White-Creole Cuban slaveholders to repress it. White Cuban slaveholders did, however, succeed in preventing the

²⁰ Creoles were persons born in the colonies, as opposed to persons born in Old World countries in the Eastern Hemisphere.

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²² Gwendlyn
Domingue, p.
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²² *Ibid.*

free coloured minority from taking the next logical step in their socio-economic lives, which was to become independent property owners. They accomplished this by effectively occupying the majority of the islands' productive lands as Cuba made the transition from military outpost to slave society. Virginia's free coloured population grew rapidly in late 18th and early 19th century, but this demographic event occurred much too late to counter White slave plantation expansion into the colony's western Piedmont region. Virginia free coloureds were thus more likely to scratch out a subsistent living in vast rural areas where their population densities were fragmented and weak, or migrate to the cities to find work and shelter.²²

The lives of free coloureds in Virginia cities bore many of the same characteristics as free coloured groups in the Caribbean, although internal free coloured class divisions were more prevalent in the latter location. Because slaves dominated labor forces in rural areas, free coloureds often sought wage employment in cities. A large segment of urban populations in the Caribbean were children of White men and Black women, but these biracial residents were rarely members of free coloured elite families who had access to formal educations and/or generous property inheritances. Most free coloureds in the Caribbean were therefore more likely to interact with Afro-Creole slaves than Whites in much the same way that Virginia free coloureds interacted with Afro-

²¹ Gwendlyn Mildo Hall, Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba (Reprint: 1971:Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), 118, 150.

²² Ibid.

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Creole slaves in its cities. Virginia and Caribbean free coloureds diverged on the issue of group politics as well. Caribbean free coloureds were far more divided than free coloureds residing in Virginia's Tidewater cities. For example, there were influential factions led by persons like Julian Raimond in St. Domingue and John Campbell in Jamaica who wished to attain full civic privileges and preserve slavery, while others were more anxious to see the death of the institution.²³ Class divisions thus existed within the ranks of free coloureds and between free coloureds and slaves—a problem that proved to be a disaster for all persons of colour in Jamaica when its emancipation period began.²⁴ The cultural associations of racism discussed below were however more instrumental in creating these class rifts between slaves and free coloureds, and free coloureds and free coloureds by binding the legal concepts of color and civic privilege together.

The primacy and the socio-economic problem of color in slave societies

²³ Arnold Sio, "Marginality and Free Coloured Identity in Caribbean Slave Society," Slavery and Abolition, Vol. 8, issue 2 (September, 1987); 166-182.

²⁴ Gad Heuman, "White Over Brown Over Black: The Free Coloureds in Jamaican Society During Slavery and After Emancipation," Journal of Caribbean History, Vol. 14, 1981. I use the term "policy" in conjunction with the word Emancipation here, because it is important to understand that the notion of codified Emancipation and Freedom were not one and the same. Freedom was and is a historical process of struggle between groups of persons trying to implement their own ideas about what they think it means in the societies in which they live. Thomas Holt, The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1992), chapters 1-2; Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott, Beyond Slavery : Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship In Postemancipation Societies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c2000). Emancipation is an imperial term that implies that a state has the right to both enslave and free persons. Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts demonstrate how the term is manipulated to foster imperial colonies in Africa in much the same way that it was used to transform slaves into peasant labor forces in the Americas. Miers and Roberts, The End of Slavery in Africa (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, c1988), introduction.

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Free coloureds were the physical embodiment of where the ideological fault lines of racism fell in slave societies. Combinations of the term color (i.e. black, pardo, moreno, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, terceron, cuarteron, or mestizo) with colonial legal concepts of freedom served as a way to mark the civic disabilities of persons bearing these labels in slave societies. Family connections, wealth, formal education, military service, and Christian conversion were all secondary to color in determining the arrangement of slave society hierarchies. For example, there were free coloureds that owned land and slaves for commercial purposes, but the political imperative of White planters to maintain racial hierarchies overrode the mutual class interests of White and free coloured slaveholders. Planters established the foundation for these racial hierarchies by limiting mainstream political participation to Whites. White planters then used these hierarchies to secure political prerogatives for themselves, deny the same to the enslaved, and assign free coloureds to the category of political outsider.

Under these conditions, it would appear that free coloureds were “Neither Slave Nor Free.” However, if we recognize freedom as an idea wedded to an ongoing historical process that involves different groups trying to implement what they think it means in particular places and at particular times, our discussion must turn to the issue of how coercive power was used to establish the terms of freedom in slave societies. Varying degrees of police/military power had to be imposed on the everyday lives of groups marked with the labels free colored, slave, and White. Otherwise, these identity tropes would have lost their meaning

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as social demarcating devices in slave societies. Key to this whole process of identity making was the legal transformation of the female womb into a mediator of class distinction and racial classification. Strictly speaking, slave society governments recognized the color and class of mothers to be commensurate with the color and class of their children. Although this policy was less beneficial to planters in the Caribbean and Brazil than those in North America, it did prevent many people from using an interracial sexual relationship to escape chattel bondage. For example, the children of White men and enslaved black women were not automatically free at birth.

Color in this sense was not a paltry expression of impotent prejudices. Instead, it was a form of property²⁵ that had a tremendous influence on the level of socio-economic mobility and political power a person could expect to access in any given slave society. Recognizing color as a form of property explains why the political prerogatives assigned or withheld from persons with White skin or dark skin had to be guarded at all costs. For example, White planters in post-Seven Years War St. Domingue tried to restrict the number of socio-economic privileges allotted to its highly mobile free coloured caste and tax the practice of manumission out of existence, even though free coloreds were their most important source of defense against slave rebellions, maroons, and foreign invasion.²⁶ These legal maneuvers reflected the attempts made by slave society officials to protect the property of Whiteness from which most privileges

²⁵ Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," Harvard Law Review, Vol. 106, June 1993, No. 8; 1720-1769.

associated with high-end wealth accumulation enterprises (i.e. sugar plantations) and political prestige emanated. We might also add that the property of Whiteness influenced one's level of access to affluent marriage partners, credit, arms, land, slaves, and judicial recognition. White colonial authorities thus made it a priority to close as many of these privileges off to free coloureds as possible, in order to fix certain racist cultural associations upon the public mind of slave societies. Among these were dark skin and physical weakness, White skin and physical strength, White skin and political potency, dark skin and political impotence, White skin and material prosperity, dark skin and material poverty, White skin and intellectual superiority, dark skin and intellectual inferiority, dark skin and moral depravity, and White skin and moral rightness.

Scholars have discussed how planters used slave codes and black laws to maintain these cultural associations, by ebbing the flow of civic privileges to enslaved and free coloured persons. High White immigrant death rates and frequent episodes of slave unrest could however corrupt the everyday relevance of these cultural associations by providing free coloureds with the opportunity to level physical critiques against them. For example, a large number of free coloureds living under these conditions had maintained several generations of family outside of servitude, proven themselves in armed conflict, accumulated wealth, acquired formal education, and established long traditions of faithfulness to Judeo-Christian values. As more and more free coloureds experienced success in these areas, the less tenable the whole idea of racial hierarchy

²⁶ Laurent DuBois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), chapter 3.

became. To compensate for this credibility gap in some of the most volatile slave societies, a select number of free coloureds were secretly admitted into White society.²⁷ This strategy took pressure off the slave system by increasing the number of White allies in places where their numbers were few and strengthened the public presentation of cultural norms that informed racial hierarchies. Another strategy used by White planters was to make it extremely difficult for free coloureds to acquire as much productive property as Whites. Land tenure laws in Cuba and Jamaica were extremely successful in achieving this end. White authorities in St. Domingue and Brazil, who depended more on free coloreds to meet their security and subsidiary commercial needs avoided implementing similar policies. Jamaican planters had a leg up on those in St. Domingue and Brazil in that they were able to balance free coloured troop support with that of White regulars, but the fact that Jamaican planters had to rely on free coloured troops at all still opened up opportunities for Jamaican free coloureds to seize socio-economic privileges unbeknownst to free coloureds in Cuba and Virginia. This partially explains why racial identities in Brazil, St. Domingue, and Jamaica were persistently more tri-partite than those in Cuba and Virginia. St. Dominguean Whites tried to implement a more rigid system of racial ordering, by using the public media to depict free coloured women as greedy arbiters who used their intoxicating sexual powers to separate naïve White men from their fortunes, but the high degree of free coloured female competency in property

²⁷ Mavis Christine Campbell, The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society: A Sociopolitical History of the Free Coloreds of Jamaica, 1800-1865 (Rutherford [N.J.] : Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, c1976).

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management and St. Domingue's long tradition of miscegenation and inter-racial marriage became a potent counterpoint to this propaganda.²⁸

Because racialized cultural associations had their limits, it was never enough to label persons as White, free colored, or slave. Rather, the entrenchment of color as a social organizing instrument required those seeking power in slave societies to coordinate their public violence regulatory systems (i.e. militias) with the implementation of specific cultural norms and reliable ways of producing enough wealth to patronize these norms for generations. If one of these methods of socializing a population was ever compromised, the system was likely to collapse. In regard to the New World slave societies under review, color was the point around which public violence regulatory systems were organized, and it served as a benchmark for cultural cohesion. Furthermore, when violence was combined with the commercial use of slave labor it had consistently proven to be a reliable way to accumulate wealth. Of the three, White planter attempts to exercise a monopoly over public violence in these systems was the most significant. The process of establishing in-group versus out-group behavioral (or cultural) norms in the society would have been impossible without controlling public violence first. Moreover, whole economies based on slave labor would have devolved before they had the chance to become self-sustaining culturo-economic systems. One such incident of slave society devolution occurred in Louisiana (1729). An alliance of native majorities

²⁸ John D. Garrigus, "Redrawing the Colour Line: Gender in the Social Construction of Race in Pre-Revolutionary Haiti," Journal of Caribbean History, vol. 30 (1 & 2), October 1996; 29-50.

living on the colony's periphery joined forces with enslaved Africans to end the advance of French sugar plantations in this region.²⁹

Baretta, Markoff, Slave Societies and Violence Monopolies

A violence monopoly is a security mechanism used to create and maintain human societies by stabilizing public violence within a social context long enough for cultural norms distinguishing civilization from barbarism to be implemented and reinforced over the course of several generations. From this vantage point, Silvio R. Duncan Baretta and John Markoff, describe civilization as a political space controlled by persons able to effectively monopolize violence in that space. Furthermore, it is only when a single "protection racket" supplants other forms of public violence that social norms can be implemented that distinguish those exercised by an in group (or the civilized) from those practiced by an out group (or barbarians).³⁰ The identity of barbarians in this social framework is informed by their experience in what Baretta and Markoff call the *frontier* or a space where no single group controls violence. Frederick Jackson Turner and

²⁹ Gwendyln Mildred Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1992), chapter 4; Daniel Usner, Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783 (Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press) 67-75.

³⁰ Silvio R. Duncan Baretta & John Markoff, "Civilization and Barbarism: Cattle Frontiers in Latin America," Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 20, No. 4 (October 1978); See Lane's essays in Venice and History (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966). They are "National Wealth and Protection Costs, The Economic Meaning of War and Protection, Force and Enterprise in the Creation of Oceanic Commerce, and Economic Consequences of Organized Violence."

Vasily Osipovich Kliuchevsky offered similar descriptions of *frontier*.³¹ For example, Turner wrote:

Up to our own day American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West. The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development... Limiting our attention to the Atlantic coast, we have the familiar phenomenon of the evolution of institutions in a limited area, such as the rise of representative government the differentiation of simple colonial governments into complex organs; the progress from primitive industrial society, without division of labor, up to manufacturing civilization. But we have in addition to this a recurrence of the process of evolution in each western area reached in the process of expansion. Thus American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area. American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its few opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the Great West.³²

The concept of land expansion lay at the heart of Kliuchevsky's description of *frontier* as well. He however recognized land expansion in pre-Revolutionary

³¹ For full text representations of the Turner thesis see "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Annual Report for the Year 1893, American Historical Association, Washington, 1894, pp. 199-227; "The Problem of the West," Atlantic Monthly, LXXVIII, 1896, pp. 289-297; "Contributions of the West to American Democracy," Atlantic Monthly, LXXXIX, 1903, pp. 83-96; "Pioneer Ideals and the State University," Indiana University Bulletin, VII, 1910, pp. 6-29; "The West and American Ideals," Washington Historical Quarterly, V, 1914, pp. 243-257; George Rogers Taylor, editor, The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History (Boston: Heath, 1956); Ray Allen Billington, The Frontier Thesis: A Valid Interpretation of American History? (New York, 1966). V.O. Kliuchevsky portrayed the frontier in a much different way. Where Turner had argued the frontier led to the expansion of democracy and liberty, Kliuchevsky believed expansion precipitated "unfree labor." See Vasily Osipovich, Kliuchevsky, "Proiskhozhdenie krepostnogo prava v Rosii," Russkaia, mys', nos. VIII, pp. 1-36; X, pp. 1-46, 1885. Reprinted in Opyty I issledovaniia, Moscow, 1912, pp. 212-310. Cf. "Engleman, Die Leibeigenschaft" in Russland, Dorpat, 1884.

³² Frederick Jackson Turner, The Significance of the Frontier in American History (1893) <<http://history.acusd.edu/gen/text/civ/turner.html>> 28 July 2006, 9:54am.

Russia as a vehicle for labor oppression as opposed to freedom and individualism that Turner argued was the outcome of American expansionism. The Turnerian and Kliuchevskyian interpretations of the historical relationship between a frontier and civilization moves in one direction—from frontier to civilization—even though the author's draw different conclusions about the outcomes of expansion. The work of Baretta and Markoff recognizes a more flexible relationship between the two concepts. That is, a civilization can as readily become a frontier as a frontier can become civilization.³³ The analytical value of Baretta and Markoffian projection of frontier and civilization is that it enables one to observe historical processes as they move backwards and forwards between states of frontier and civilization, while keeping track of a multitude of variables influencing the construction and deconstruction of both. This differs greatly from the Turnerian and Klischevskyian projections that assume interactions between frontiers and civilizations have a “natural” or inevitable historical outcome. Baretta and Markoff's projection is more useful because they replace the catalyst that drives the Turnerian and Klischevskyian systems known as “free land,” with the concept of violence monopoly. Because violence monopolies are often well hidden from public view, they have often been dismissed as playing a lesser role in historical processes. However, Baretta and Markoff identify this security mechanism as a prerequisite of civilization that cannot be ignored. If we extrapolate on this idea, it becomes apparent that civilizations

³³ Turner characterized the frontier as “free land,” which enabled Americans to organize the democratic institutions that become the lynchpin of American nationalism. Wherein Kliuchevsky interprets “free land” as the source of a national system of unfree labor in Russia.

as such can never maintain a constant state of legitimacy without establishing violence monopolies first and then retooling them to meet growing security threats. This means that civilizations must constantly refurbish their violence monopolies to assert and reassert their legitimacy in the eyes of the publics they claim jurisdiction over. Organized violence therefore becomes the pad from which constructed and reconstructed notions of civilization are launched and ultimately sustained over time.

Incorporating the Baretta and Markoffian notion of violence monopoly into the discussion on the orientation of the free coloured/White slaveholder relationship serves as one way to explain why Jamaican, St. Dominguean, and Brazilian free coloureds represented the balance of socio-economic power in their slave societies, while those in Virginia and Cuba never achieved this kind of influence. The slave societies discussed in this essay were civilizations committed to protecting the culturally constructed principle of property rights in slaves. Meanwhile, slaveholders activated this principle in real time to organize large-scale agricultural operations specializing in the production and distribution of cash-crops such as sugar, coffee, tobacco, and indigo. It was also imperative for planters in St. Domingue, Jamaica, Brazil, Virginia, and Cuba to exercise a monopoly over public violence in order to keep these enterprises profitable. Passing laws designed to regulate the behavior of slaves and free coloureds and keep their commercial projects afloat was not enough. Planters had to commit themselves to finding ways to defend their slave and land investments against slave resistance, even if it meant disobeying imperial laws. Elsa Goveia's

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analysis of laws in Spanish, French, and Dutch slave colonies makes an important contribution to this discussion. She argued that there was a big difference between principles stated in colonial slave codes such as the *Code Noir* and *Siete Partidas* and the actual methods slaveholders used to regulate slave behavior. Time and time again, planters violated imperial laws that were supposed to protect slaves against extreme forms of abuse. Most of these violations occurred in settings where planter demands for slave labor outpaced their level of capability to control slave majorities with non-violent methods. One might argue that the existence of slave majorities in themselves predicated the use of violent controls. Under these conditions White planters in St. Domingue and Cuba employed slave regulatory tactics just as violent as those used in English Jamaica and Virginia.³⁴ Because English metropolitan officials tended to give slaveholders in their colonies more leeway in scripting their own slave codes, the violent tactics planters used to regulate slave behavior in these places bore fewer contradictions with the law. These tactics included the use of slave patrols, militias, whippings, starvation, and other forms of torture. In other words, slaveholders in the French, Spanish, and English New World functioned in accordance to a similar logic when it came to the issue of regulating slave behavior. Moreover, the way slaves and free coloureds were treated in these societies depended on the level of coercive power White planters had at their disposal. Ideas about morality and imperial law were at best secondary issues. If free coloureds were needed to meet security or commercial needs in a colony,

³⁴ See Franklin Knight Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century (Madison, Wisconsin University of Wisconsin Press, 1970); Gwendlyn Mildred Hall, Social Control in Slave Plantation

numerous avenues for slaves to access manumission or free coloureds to increase their socio-economic standing were opened. When free coloured prosperity showed signs of becoming a threat to the principle of property rights in slaves, White planters attempted to close these avenues. Closing these avenues once they had already been opened was however nearly impossible, especially in colonies that did not have self-replicating White military forces. The option of placing rigid limits on manumission and free coloured socio-economic mobility in these places was less desirable, unless White planters were willing to take on the expense of hiring White metropolitan regulars. It was after all extremely risky for White planters to enact laws placing severe limits on free coloured socio-economic mobility, when they needed them to defend the colony against slave majorities. This course of action chosen by the White planter minority in St. Domingue proved to be a major disaster.³⁵

Societies (Baton Rouge, 1996).

³⁵ Elsa Goveia, "The West Indian Slave Laws of the Eighteenth Century," in Verene A. Shepard & Hilary Beckles, Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader (Kingston, Oxford, Princeton: Ian Randle Publishers, James Currey Publishers, and Marcus Wiener Publishers, 2000), 580. ; Authur Stinchombe attributes the growth and prosperity of free colored population in Caribbean slave societies to the lack of an expanding sugar economy. Where sugar agriculture was strong, he claims, free colored populations declined, the codifications of racial hierarchies became more repressive, and the composition of this caste was far more endogamous. Lastly, Stinchombe claims that the expansion of a slave society's sugar economy transforms the legal systems into a far more repressive social entity. This flies in the face of Tannenbaum's notion that it was the legal tradition of a given slave society that determined the level of social repression. Sintincombe's sugar economy argument breaks down in the face of the work of John Garrigus and Stewart King on pre-Revolutionary St. Domingue. Garrigus' work reveals that there was a robust indigo trade in the South, facilitated by free coloreds, while King details a prominent coffee plantation culture dominated by free coloreds in the northwest. These economic enterprises were created and maintained in spite of sugar being the dominant cash crop in pre-Revolutionary St. Domingue. Therefore, we have to be just as sensitive to issues like free coloreds in the military and their reproduction rates as we do to the development of sugar, racism, and free colored family structure. See Frank Tannenbaum, Slave and Citizen (New York, 1946); Arthur L. Stinchcombe, Sugar Island Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment: The Political Economy of the Caribbean World (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, c1995), chapter 6; John Garrigus,

The Problem of Regulating Sexual Behavior in Slave Societies

The sexual appetites of White slave owners in colonies where slave and free coloured women outnumbered White women, security problems, and high death rates among White immigrants complicated the implementation of miscegenation and inter-racial marriage laws in slave societies. These laws were designed to protect racial hierarchies bound to the institutions of marriage and patriarchal family. In addition to maintaining racial hierarchies, these institutions limited the distribution of wealth in slave societies. Children produced by White men and black slave or free coloured women posed a threat to these racial hierarchies. White fathers in these relationships were encouraged in some instances to bequeath their biracial children property, money, and access to a formal education. The offspring of black men and White women represented a greater threat to these hierarchies because colonial laws often designated them as free persons. Because they were free persons, these children assumed a position in society that theoretically improved their prospects of acquiring private property than the children of White men and black slave women. Marriages between White women and black men also threatened the belief that only White men were destined to become patriarchs. This explains why White male leaders of some slave societies established policies and law enforcement structures to discourage these kinds of unions. For example, Virginia policy makers outlawed

"Blue and Brown: Contraband and Indigo and The Rise of a Free Colored Planter Class in French St. Domingue," The Americas, Vol. L(2), October 1993. 233-263.

miscegenation and interracial marriages to prevent the sexual or conjugal relations of Blacks and Whites from disrupting the Commonwealth's racial hierarchies. All of the other British North American colonies pursued the same legal course in their 17th and 18th century histories. High White mortality rates convinced authorities in the Caribbean and Brazil to adopt alternative methods towards the problem of sex across the colorline.³⁶ Long established traditions of sex between White men and slave or free coloured women made it nearly impossible for them to replicate the Virginia model. Miscegenation was therefore legalized or eliminated as a law enforcement issue in the Caribbean and Brazil.³⁷ Some White authorities in the Caribbean instead concentrated on limiting property ownership to White men by forbidding these males to marry their free coloured concubines. Placing limits on how much property biracial children were allowed to inherit from their fathers was another major strategy used to stop free coloureds from moving into the planter class.³⁸ The risk of alienating large numbers of free coloureds, which made up the majority of the St. Dominguean and Brazilian security forces, discouraged White authorities in these places from adopting a similar policy. Planters in Virginia and Cuba avoided having to make similar compromises with free coloureds because they were able to rely on White soldiers.

³⁶ Kevin Mumford, "After Hugh: Statutory Segregation in Colonial America," The American Journal of Legal History, Vol. 43, No. 3 (July, 1999) 280-305.

³⁷ Carl Degler, Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States (New York: MacMillan, 1971).

³⁸ Douglass Hall, "Jamaica" David & Greene, Neither Slave Nor Free (Baltimore, 1972).

In spite of whether or not the governments in New World slave societies approved of miscegenation, sex between White males and black females or black males and White females created the first generation of free coloureds in Brazil, Jamaica, St. Domingue, Cuba, and Virginia. The rest were slaves who climbed into the free coloured ranks via wills, deeds of emancipation, military service, or self-purchase. The socio-economic outcomes of free coloureds, however, depended less on how they became free coloureds and more on the slave society they lived in. The brief colonial histories that follow will address this and the other related issues raised earlier.

Brazil

Brazil emerged from a territory that was a frontier for much of the 16th and 17th centuries. The Carib and Awarak speakers in the north, the Tupi-Gurani in the east, the Ge in the southeast, and the Pano in the west near the “Amazon River Valley” were the most visible indigenous groups that called this place home before Pedro Alvares Cabral arrived in what is now Bahia. Approximately 3.5 million indigenous persons lived in pre-colonial Brazil, just as the first Portuguese privateers made attempts to convert this territory into a way station between its American and Asian trade networks. The Portuguese did succeed in defeating their French competitors early in the 16th century, but would find it more difficult to transform indigenous land and labor into profitable sugar enterprises. Their inability to subdue the peoples residing in the interior had the affect of limiting the planting of Luso-culture and sugar agriculture in the territories near the coast.

Previously established Portuguese colonies at Madeira and Sao Tome furnished Brazilian enghenos managers with the knowledge to produce sugar on the outskirts of what are now Salvador and Rio De Janeiro, but their attempts to force entire indigenous populations to work on these estates failed. Numerous cases of indigenous death by disease, runaways, and attacks were all factors that limited the spread of Portuguese sugar agriculture. To compensate for the labor shortage African slaves were imported, which prompted Brazil's transition from a frontier to a slave society.³⁹

The rise in sugar values and African slave imports were both watershed moments in Brazil's colonial history. Between 1570-1650, Brazil imported 225,000 African captives to work in a sugar industry powered by African, Indian, and Portuguese labor. Although these early sugar enterprises did not employ thousands of slaves and cover thousands of acres, like the plantations that became the trademark of the Euro-Caribbean, they were efficient enough to support a colony. African slave labor also helped Brazil surpass the value of all other Portuguese sugar colonies. By 1614, the value of sugar sold out of Brazil had exceeded that harvested in Madeira and Sao Tome combined, between 1507 and 1600.⁴⁰ As astounding as the colony's early success was, it did not come without new security threats: the probability of slave rebellions increased as the number of African slave imports began rivaling the number of Portuguese

³⁹ Robin Blackburn, The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800 (London & New York: Verso, 1997), 165.

⁴⁰ Blackburn, The Making of New World Slavery (London & New York, 1997) 168, 172-173; Richard Dunn, Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1972).

immigrants arriving in Brazil; Brazil's dependence on fresh supplies of slaves from Angola encouraged Portugal's competitors to attack this part of its maritime trade; and endemic disease in conjunction with the extremely labor intensive process of sugar production fostered a working climate where thousands of slaves died prematurely as their owners demanded more replacements.

Handsome profits generated from the sale of Brazilian sugar in North American and Northern European markets, along with the ready supply of slaves delivered to the colony, powered the early remnants of a larger system that became the "Way of Death" for many African captives.⁴¹ In response to this growing phenomenon, enslaved Africans that arrived in Brazil resisted these conditions by running away, forming maroon societies, and organizing open revolts.

These internal security problems were compounded by other external threats at the peak of colonial Brazil's commercial success. The chief external threat posed by the Dutch would leave the Portuguese colony suspended between the states of an autonomous slave society and a politically unstable frontier. After the Dutch successfully undercut Portuguese dominance in the trade with Asian spice merchants, metropolitan investors in the Netherlands made the decision to exploit the weaknesses of the Brazilian system in the Americas. Breaching the Spanish monopoly over the New World bullion trade was the highest priority of Dutch West India Company (WIC) investors. So when state sponsored agents of the WIC invaded Brazil in the early 17th century, the larger objective was to use Brazil as a satellite colony to supplant Spanish

⁴¹ Joseph C. Miller, Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

dominance and establish a New Netherlands Empire. Building on their earlier success in slowing the flow of slave-mined silver from New Spain to European markets, agents of the WIC invaded and occupied Northeastern Brazil, while they also disrupted the Portuguese end of the West African slave trade in Angola. For the next century following this series of events Brazil ceased to be one of the dominant sugar planting colonies in the New World. During the period of Dutch rule (1630-1654), many Portuguese planters moved their sugar producing enterprises South. From this vantage they were able launch a series of military campaigns against the Dutch that often involved free coloureds and manumission hungry slaves. Dutch unwillingness to invest in long-term sugar planting ventures, Portuguese planting successes in the South, British aid, and the aforementioned military pressures eventually forced the collapse of the already capital depleted Netherlands authority. The timing of the Dutch collapse in the 1650s did not, however, improve the prospects of Portuguese sugar planters that wished to reclaim their dominant share in the New World sugar industry. By the time the Dutch withdrew from Brazil in 1654, British planters in the Leeward Islands had already begun establishing themselves as the chief suppliers and innovators of sugar production in the Atlantic World. This distinction then passed to the sugar colossus established at French St. Domingue in the 18th century, before the Haitian Revolution allowed Cuba to seize it in the 19th century.

As Brazil struggled to regain its commercial footing in the last half of the 17th century periodic inter-imperial conflicts, low White immigrant survival rates,

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and White Brazilian men's tendency to have children with slave or free coloured women nurtured a tradition of White Brazilian dependence on free coloureds for defense. The development of this tradition was marked by the critical military role free coloureds and some slaves played in the Dutch-Portuguese War of the 1640s; the driving back of the Dutch at the "Battle of Tabocas," (1645); and the repelling of the French Invasion of Rio De Janeiro (1710).⁴² Unlike 18th century Jamaican planters, who relied more on metropolitan British regulars, Portugal did not have the military resources to guard Brazil against a multitude of internal and external enemies. White Brazilian authorities therefore armed persons of colour to preserve property rights in slaves. Because this decision forced the Portuguese to abandon rigid ideas about racial exclusivity and slavery, free coloureds chose to enhance their socio-economic mobility within the slave society rather than close ranks with slaves. This explains why many free coloureds and slaves (on rare occasions) became the owners of slaves themselves.⁴³ The granting of this privilege to free coloureds and slaves was an outgrowth of Portuguese immigrants' unwillingness to take on their share of the colony's military responsibilities.⁴⁴ Portuguese immigrants were often so focused on trying to make their mark in the high return sectors of mining or cash-crop agriculture that the lion share of security issues were handled by free coloureds.

⁴² Peter Voeltz, Slave and Soldier: The Military Impact of Blacks in the Colonial Americas (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993), 24-25.

⁴³ Mieko Nishida, "Manumission and Ethnicity in Urban: Salvador, Brazil, 1808-1888," The Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Aug. 1993), pp. 361-362.

⁴⁴ Cohen and Greene, Neither Slave Nor Free, 96.

Meanwhile, the relative number of free coloureds surpassed that of White Portuguese emigrants.

The development of Brazilian cities and the diversification of the country's economy contributed to free coloured population growth. As the British and French colonies replaced Brazil as the dominant sugar producers in the late 17th and 18th centuries, the first large scale mining operations were established in Brazil at Minas Gerais. The heavy use of slave labor in this economic sector stimulated urban development. More importantly, the wages slaves earned from their jobs in these new cities permitted them to buy their way out of slavery through the *carta de alforia* system. In contrast, rural slaves without this advantage in Brazil and the Spanish colonies were unable to access manumission under their respective *carta de alforia* and *Cartacion* systems. Some urban slaves used small amounts of gold and diamonds smuggled away from the mines to secure a *carta de alforia*; others worked as blacksmiths, stonemasons, carpenters, barbers, waiters, warehouse hands, or on the streets as peddlers. Still others used their membership in brotherhoods to navigate the turbulent waters of manumission. Lastly, there were the numerous cases of the old or infirmed released on their own recognizance because they could no longer satisfy the labor demands of their owners. All the while military service remained a way for rural and urban slaves to access manumission.

Enslaved women who were more often shut out of higher paying skilled jobs and excluded from the brotherhoods, pursued different paths to manumission. For example, some used their bodies as prostitutes, by renting the

back rooms of shops to convert male sexual desires into wages to secure manumission, while others acquired a *carta de alforia* by will. It was in fact more common for enslaved women to access manumission by will. Inheritances conveying land, money for education, and/or slaves could be included with these forms of manumission, but these cases were far less common than the popular literature on mulattoes would suggest. The subject of mulatto elites acquiring both wealth and status in this way has indeed been a major object of fascination in the literature on Brazil, in spite of the fact that most Brazilian free coloureds did not fall into this category. Other would be slaves bypassed the *carta de alforia* system altogether by running away and living outside of the slave society. The maroon societies that these escapees organized such as “calhambolas or mocambos” and “quilombos” represented the high end of this kind of self-emancipation activity in Brazil.

The above examples illustrate the methods slaves used to attain or obtain manumission in Brazil, but it is important to acknowledge that manumission was not commensurate with the freedoms possessed by White males. If free persons of colour disobeyed White authorities, their manumissions could be revoked. Furthermore, all persons of color were presumed to be slaves by public officials “whether or not [they] could produce a carta de alforia.”⁴⁵ Many slaveholders were indeed extremely antagonistic to the idea manumission, because slave labor powered the Brazilian economy. Manumission was however never abolished, because of the leading role free coloureds played in the military, the

⁴⁵ A. J. R. Russell-Wood, “Colonial Brazil” in Cohen & Greene, Neither Slave Nor Free, 92.

extensive family ties that existed between slaves and Whites through sexual interaction, and the dominance of free coloureds in the 19th century “petty job” market. These jobs included raising livestock, growing garden goods for sale, tending small shops, producing handi-crafts, peddling small wares, and there were a substantial number of free coloured “boatman.” Large numbers of independent free coloured farmers and artisans had also made inroads into the property owning classes of Minas Gerais.⁴⁶

The circumstances of free coloured workers who had emerged from slavery were far less stable in colonial Brazil than they became in the independence period. A major obstacle faced by slaves purchasing their freedom partially explains this trend. Most self-purchasers, who represented the majority of manumission cases in cities, did not have the capital to enter the high wealth yielding sectors of the Brazilian economy precisely because they spent so much time and money securing their manumissions. Mining and cash crop agriculture were the major businesses of this kind, which were located in areas outside of cities. Free coloureds in these rural areas tended to be the peddlers of small wares, fish, and meat or they labored in slave security jobs such as “overseers, slave catchers, and public whippers.” More prestigious artisan trades in urban areas came under the control of all-White guilds, which left barbering and midwifery as the only major “skilled professions” for free coloureds to enter in great numbers. Even though free coloureds could be found working in a variety of

⁴⁶ Russell-Wood, “Colonial Brazil,” pp. 84-98; Carl Degler, *Neither Black Nor White* (New York, 1971), 44; Herbert S. Klein & Francisco Vidal Luna, “Free Colored in a Slave Society: São Paulo and Minas Gerais in the Early Nineteenth Century,” Hispanic American Historical Review, 80.4 (2000); 913-941.

occupations, their chances of securing stable forms of employment remained precarious for much of the colonial period. One scholar described free coloureds living in this context as persons who often “drifted from employment to casual labor, and from casual labor to the large numbers of beggars and prostitutes who plagued every town and city...”⁴⁷ This trend, however, changed when Brazil made a comeback as one of the largest New World cash-crop producers after the fall of French St. Domingue. By the late 1820s and early 1830s many free coloureds of mixed-racial heritage could be counted as members of the slave and land holding classes. Free coloureds had also in the early 19th century assumed a dominant role in the Brazilian fishing industry, subsidiary rural commerce, barbering, painting, urban skilled trades, and the arts. Meanwhile, free coloreds surpassed the number of Whites and slaves in many regions, even as the level of slave imports increased and plantation agriculture expanded in Brazil. Some scholars have attributed this trend to the openness of Brazilian Latin legal institutions to manumission. However, the extremely low rate of manumission in rural areas versus high rates in cities where free coloured labor was an indispensable part of these economies, the reliance of White Brazilian men on slave or free colored women for sex and on free coloured men for military support tends to suggest otherwise. In short, the high level of openness to manumission and free coloured socio-economic mobility in Brazil was related to three major issues: White dependence on free coloureds in its slave security labor occupations (i.e. soldiers, overseer, slave catchers, etc...) and urban skilled

⁴⁷ Russell-Wood, “Colonial Brazil,” 103, 107; Degler, Neither Black Nor White, 84.

trades; and the lack of Portuguese White female immigrants which spawned a tradition of relationships between White men and slave or free coloured women.

The relatively strong economic and military role free coloureds played in Brazil tended to have more in common with the experience of free coloureds in St. Domingue than in any other case examined in this essay. Why then did things did not spiral out of control between free coloureds and White slaveholders in Brazil as it had in St. Domingue? After all, frequent slave rebellions in the 1820s and 1830s⁴⁸ and the free colored's struggle for "equal rights" ⁴⁹ during the Balaiada Civil War posed major threats to slave regimes in central (i.e. Bahia) and northern (i.e. Maranhao) Brazil. One could respond to this question by noting that free coloured military support, the larger size of territories committed to slave labor in Brazil, the ethno and class-centric orientation of internal rebellions, and the increasing level of free coloured socio-economic mobility in its cities, were all factors that helped White Brazilian slaveholders withstand the type of slave rebellions that shocked the French and British Antilles into the policy emancipation era.⁵⁰ Moreover, free coloureds in Brazil tended to focus more on

⁴⁸ Joao Jose Reis, Slave Rebellion in Brazil, The Muslim Uprising of 1835 Bahia (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

⁴⁹ Nancy Pricilla Naro, Blacks, Coloureds and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latin America (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2003), p. 147.

⁵⁰ Appreciable numbers of free coloureds in 19th century Brazil had come to dominate many of the urban trades, while military service and interracial family ties continued to be a source of socio-economic mobility for them as well; a few were even co-opted into the higher echelons of Brazilian government service. Hence, race continued to inform notions of enslavement in Brazil, but interracial family ties were eclipsed by race in a society harboring free coloured majorities. Herbert Klein, "Nineteenth Century Brazil," in Cohen & Greene, Neither Slave Nor Free, 92.

winning liberal reforms than on developing revolutionary programs.⁵¹ Free coloureds on the neighboring Jamaican colony pursued a moderate political path as well, but the pressure of slave revolt destabilized the colony's violence monopoly long enough for a small group of free coloureds to achieve full civic recognition.

Jamaica

Spaniards were the first group of Europeans to encounter the territory out of which the English colony of Jamaica was carved. After experiencing little success in locating valuable minerals, the few Spaniards remaining in this territory turned to raising livestock for profit before English soldiers conquered the island in the mid-17th century. The English were slow to transform this frontier into a colony resembling the one at Barbados. Fifty years of English occupation in fact passed without firm controls being established over public violence. Part of this colonizing delay stemmed from the different cultural ideas about prosperity harbored by the first waves of English settlers. For example, Anglo-soldiers recognized the island as place to launch raids against ships carrying bullion mined by slaves on the Spanish mainland; indentured servants of various Euro-ethnic backgrounds envisioned it as a place to revive a tradition of small holders that had been eliminated by the enclosure acts in England; then there were a few

⁵¹ Meanwhile, anti-independence Whites attempted to use slaveholder fears of "Haitianism" from rearing its ugly head in Brazil and to drive White anti-colonial liberals and moderates back into the political orbit of the Portuguese monarchy. Although this discursive strategy did not work in the effort to restore direct Portuguese rule over Brazil, it laid the groundwork for subsequent national "Whitening" policies that posed new problems for enslaved persons moving into the ranks of free coloureds at the end of the 19th century. Thomas Flory, "Race and Social Control in Independent Brazil," Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Nov. , 1977), 199-224.

planters that had their sights set on replicating the type of large-scale sugar enterprises piloted by the planters in Barbados. Local conflicts between these groups, disease, “starvation,” natural disasters, and the existence of maroons struggling to gain a share of the island’s resources were all factors that made it impossible for an English violence monopoly to be established in Jamaica. The raiding tactics maroons used to gather supplies and enslaved women were a particular problem for White planters trying to create a civilization based on African slave labor.⁵²

Pirates were the dominant commercial class in Jamaica, long before sugar planters assumed this position in the 18th century. These freebooters were far more interested in trading for, or stealing, Spanish bullion than investing in risky sugar planting ventures. Sugar plantations required far more capital to get started than local privateers had at their disposal. Nor did they have the patience to wait the usual three years that it took for these kinds of enterprises to generate profits. Hence, many of the merchant-privateers in Jamaica waited until they had accumulated enough capital to invest in the expensive machinery, land, and slaves needed to get sugar plantations up and running.⁵³ Until this new generation of planters became the dominant political players in the 18th century, English coercive power did not extend far beyond Port Royal. Meanwhile, Jamaica’s first colonial governor set about the task of building a slave society by

⁵² Barbra Klamon Kopytoff, “The Early Political Development of Jamaican Maroons,” William and Mary Quarterly, Third series, Volume 35, Issue (Apr., 1978), 287-307.

⁵³ Nuala Zahedieh, “Trade, Plunder, and Early Development in Early English Jamaica, 1655-89,” in Verene A. Shepard & Hilary Beckeles, Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader (Kingston, Oxford, Princeton, 2000), 179-190.

awarding ten acres of land to family heads for every family member (which included slaves) they brought to the island. Other planters accelerated the process by pushing small farmers off the most fertile lands, which left them to reside in rural areas with few natural allies. The difficulty of maintaining a self-replicating White population on the island was then made worse by an earthquake in 1692. This natural disaster sent a large portion of Port Royal spiraling down into the sea, killed hundreds, and dealt a serious blow to the reign of the privateers. Into this commercial power void stepped the sugar planters and cattle raisers who became the political and economic pace setters for the next one hundred and fifty years. However, a French invasion, disease, and slave rebellions would continue to thwart English attempts to control violence and foster self-sustaining White populations. Jamaica thus remained a frontier for much of the 18th century. White planters' inability to lessen the frequency of open slave rebellion in Jamaica with public rapes, militias, patrollers, and clandestine police forces, along with the ongoing presence of autonomous maroon societies had much to do with this colony's constant state of political instability.⁵⁴ The purpose of these security agencies, financed by the Jamaican colonial government, was to protect the investments that Englishmen made in sugar agriculture. This business remained profitable through the end of the 18th century, but the rising cost of corralling the subversive activities of runaways, rebels, and maroons always placed the Jamaican slave society at risk of total collapse.

⁵⁴ Trevor Burnard, "Theater of Terror: Domestic Violence in Thomas Thistlewood's Jamaica, 1750-1786," in Daniels & Kennedy, Over the Threshold(New York, 1999), 237-253.

Seventeenth and early eighteenth century agriculture in Jamaica was the preserve of small holders that produced crops on plots no bigger than “five to six hundred acres” and mixed African slave and White indentured labor.⁵⁵ White populations were far more numerically competitive with those of other non-White groups before the arrival of big sugar in the mid-18th century. The estates of the new generation of sugar planters employed thousands of slaves on thousands of acres while simultaneously displacing White small holders and indentures. Crucial to the success of this both cultural and agricultural revolution was the formation of the Royal African Company, which supplied slaves to Jamaica and other British West Indian sugar islands. Meanwhile, a colonial government was organized to stabilize the internal affairs of this island, which became the most productive sugar colony in the first British Empire. Among the biggest problems the planter government faced were the frequent slave rebellions that transpired on the island and the continued potency of the major maroon societies.⁵⁶

Free coloureds were thus urged by the planter-dominated government to participate in the colonial defense establishment that included large numbers of British regulars. Because the regulars were as susceptible to death by disease as other immigrants coming to the island, free coloureds became the most numerically stable source of defense on the island. The great extent to which free coloureds participated in the first and second Maroon Wars also supports this

⁵⁵ Mavis Christine Campbell, The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society: A Sociopolitical History of the Free Coloreds of Jamaica, 1800-1865 (London: Associated University Presses, 1976), 18.

⁵⁶ Michael Craton, Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1982), 336.

point and demonstrates how the formation of a violence monopoly in a slave society with a slave majority and a non-naturally reproducing White minority could quickly become a shared racial enterprise. The tradition of free coloureds (blacks and mulattoes) serving in Jamaican militias developed in tandem with the common practice of procreative sex engaged in by White men and slave or free coloured women in the late 17th century. Undoubtedly, the numerically deficient supply of White men able or willing to participate in the militias helped nurture these overlapping traditions in a place where White planters had to develop creative methods to prevent outside imperial enemies, slave rebels, and formidable maroons colonies from usurping their political and economic power. For example, all free coloured men between the ages of “15 and 60” were required to serve in the militia by the end of the 17th century. Then as White slaveholder problems with runaways, slave rebellion, and maroon raids expanded in the 18th century, free coloureds became deeply entrenched in a defense culture committed to preventing the colony from being over taken by those who opposed the principle of property rights in slaves. Evidence detailing the raw numbers of free coloureds involved in the militias of White slaveholders helps to illustrate the power of this reality. By the end the 18th century, free coloureds represented the majority of infantry soldiers in the “Kingston militia,” and forty percent of all militia troops in the colony;⁵⁷ the rest were White regulars. This joint military enterprise under the direction of White slaveholders was often still not enough to guarantee victory over the despised maroons. For

example, free coloureds, “half-black Mosquito Indians,” select numbers of slaves, and White militiamen fought these subversive societies to a stalemate in the first Maroon War (1700-1739). The consequent treaty assured maroon societies formal recognition by White planters, in exchange for the promise of maroons to retrieve runaways and defend the White plantation regime against slave rebellions and other subversive maroons. This treaty dramatically changed the previously contentious tone of Maroon/White slaveholder relations in one fundamental way. It transformed certain groups of maroons into a new form of free coloured caste in that they voiced a commitment to the preservation the White ruled slave society, but they gained a kind of recognized sovereignty at the same time.

The crucial role free coloureds played in putting down the Tacky slave rebellion (1762) reflected a similar commitment to preserve the slave society, but they were not able to use their high level of military participation effectively to retrieve certain socio-economic privileges that had been taken from them by the colonial government in the early 18th century. They instead waited to pronounce their demands when they were called to serve in the Second Maroon War (1795). By the time free coloureds were once again asked to defend the White ruled slave society against this new internal threat, the free coloureds on the neighboring island of St. Domingue had used the internal disruption of slave rebellion to win all the rights extended to French citizens. The fact that White planters in Jamaica faced a similar disruption, albeit this one was posed by

⁵⁷ Peter Voelz, Slave and Soldier: The Military Impact of Blacks in the Colonial Americas (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993), 115.

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Maroons, it was enough to convince them to take a free coloured petition that demanded the right to testify in court against Whites and inherit unlimited amounts family property seriously. In this way, the specter of the free coloured's triumph at St. Domingue and Jamaican planter desires for free coloured troop support in the second Maroon War compelled them to grant part of the demands articulated in the free coloured petition. Testifying against Whites in felony cases was allowed as long as free coloureds could show proof of baptism. Meanwhile, White colonial authorities continued to use the strategy of privately admitting small numbers of free coloureds into White society to boost free coloured loyalty in the colony. They also toyed with the idea of recognizing all mestizes (half quadroon and half black) as Whites as well.

The actions of Jamaican colonial authorities chronicled above exemplified the kind of logic White slaveholders were compelled to use when they were trying to handle security threats and maintain the racial order; this included a White minority, free coloured minority, and slave majority. White members of the Assembly may have preferred to avoid the task of making socio-economic concessions to foster free coloured loyalty, but the officials in the British Colonial Department suggested Jamaican planters challenge themselves to do so anyway. Colonial Department officials recommended that Jamaican planters implement reforms designed to strengthen free coloured fidelity to the slave society, or face the prospect of losing metropolitan military support. To alleviate the Colonial Departments fears over security, the Jamaican Assembly continued with piecemeal admissions of free coloreds into the White strata, which ultimately

posed a serious problem for both Whites and the free coloureds awarded this special privilege. The security problems of this absentee landlord society were thus never really solved. What the White political authorities did instead was drive a wedge between wealthy and less affluent free coloureds. Like the White slave holding class over in St. Domingue, White planters in Jamaica were willing to pay a high price to keep the majority of free coloureds out of mainstream politics. This strategy produced a pyrrhic victory for the White planters over free coloureds, while slaves searched for weakness in the system as they operated below the radar of planter political maneuverings. Jamaica finally unraveled in December of 1831, when small groups of enslaved men and women organized by Black Baptist leaders attempted to drive White planters and free coloureds off the island and retain what remained for themselves. This Baptist War initiated the slow death of slavery in Jamaica and the rest of the British West Indies. However, the unresolved problem of freedom would continue to play out in the political struggle between Whites, Browns, and Coloureds, at Morant Bay (1865), and during the proto-nationalist labor strike of 1938.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The sources used to construct the narrative following note # 47 include the following books and articles: Thomas Holt, The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938 (Baltimore & London, 1992), Chapter 1; Gad J. Heuman, "White Over Brown Over Black: The Free Coloureds in Jamaican Society during Slavery and After Emancipation," The Journal of Caribbean History, Vol. 14 (1981): 49-69.; David Geggus, "The Enigma of Jamaica in the 1790s: New Light on the Causes of Slave Rebellions," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., Vol. 44, No. 2 (Apr., 1987), 274-299; Gad J. Heuman, Between Black and White (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), Chapters 1 & 2; Campbell, The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society (London, 1976); Richard Dunn, Sugar and Slaves (New York & London, 1972); Verene A. Shepherd, "Life Stock and Sugar: Aspects of Jamaica's Agricultural Development from the Late Seventeenth Century to the Early Nineteenth Century," in Verene A. Shepard & Hilary Beckeles, Caribbean Slaver in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader (Kingston, Oxford, Princeton, NJ, 2000), 253-264.

St. Domingue

The New World's most comprehensive episode of slave and free coloured rebellion against White domination spared Haiti of the prolonged Black anti-colonial struggle that ensued in 19th and 20th century Jamaica. However, this "Turbulent Time" that awakened a whole hemisphere of slave plantation colonies to the danger of highly mobile free coloureds was long in the making. The territory out of which French St. Domingue was carved oscillated from frontier to civilization to frontier to civilization several times between the 15th and 18th centuries as various groups failed and succeeded in establishing violence monopolies in this location at different times. Christopher Columbus and crew were the first Europeans to encounter this island occupied by a large population of Awarak speakers in the late 15th century. A century later, this island bore the scars of Spanish conquest and had become a graveyard for tens of thousands Arawaks forced to work in the copper and sugar industries of Hispanola. Spanish windfalls in the newly emergent bullion commerce shifted the colonizing focus of the Iberian Empire toward the South and Central American mainland in the 16th century. As a result, their Greater Caribbean colonies became supply stations for ships traveling to and from the mining operations in New Spain. The sugar enterprises at Hispanola meanwhile deteriorated as the supply of Indian slave labor dried up. During this period of slave labor scarcity other goods such as ginger, cacao, and livestock became the major trade commodities produced on the east side of the island. French filibustiers and boucainiers were the first to take advantage of Spanish military vulnerabilities in west Hispanola by

establishing themselves on the nearby island of Tortuga. Spaniards made a few attempts to dislodge them from this location, but their failure to do so encouraged the freebooters to settle on a part of the west island they called St. Domingue. Their subsequent victory over the Spanish at Cartagena, coupled with the signing of the Rhyswick Treaty (1697), established St. Domingue as a well guarded French imperial outpost from which raids against Spanish ships could be launched. Early attempts at small-scale tobacco agriculture were made there, but Virginia planters had already seized a near monopoly over the Atlantic World market for this commodity. Indigo and sugar planting thus became the major focus of St. Dominguean planters.⁵⁹

The introduction of sugar into the agricultural economy of St. Domingue (1690-1705) was a major watershed in the colony's history. As the earlier colonial projects in the British Leeward islands revealed, commercial sugar production had a tendency to accelerate the importation of African slave labor. Therefore, those hoping to profit from this crop on a grand-scale accepted the drastic changes in the demographic orientation of societies committed to development of slave plantation economies and the major security risks that accompanied them. More specifically, White planters indulging in sugar agriculture had to adjust to living along side enslaved majorities who were violently reduced to a condition that made them enemies of the slave society their labor was being stolen to sustain. As in Brazil and Jamaica, White planters in St. Domingue solicited the support of free coloureds to hold off their enemies (i.e. slaves, maroons, and

⁵⁹ Robin Blackburn, The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800 (London & New York, 1997); Laurent DuBois, Avengers of the New World: The Story of the

outside imperial predators), while they concentrated on getting large-scale agricultural projects up and running in territories where they had few White allies. Manumission policy articulated in early versions of the *Code Noir* reflected this need to recruit enough people dedicated to protecting St. Dominguean planters' property in land and slaves. As early as 1721, adult White males (twenty years and over) were permitted to manumit slaves without the permission of their parents. The consequent enlargement of the free coloured population prompted the repeal of this law and new tax levies placed on most forms of manumission. These strategies did not however stop the robust growth of the free coloured population. Sexual and conjugal relationships between White men and slave or free coloured women and tax exemptions on slaves manumitted to man different defense agencies made these anti-manumission policies virtually impossible to enforce. The second and third generations of free coloureds and slaves capitalized on this demographic weakness by reproducing their population at a rate that rivaled the unstable White immigrant population in St. Domingue.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, White planter's lust for higher and higher sugar profits spawned the growth of slave populations that dwarfed the number of free coloureds and White populations combined. For example, slaves represented "90 percent" of the total population in St. Domingue by 1789.⁶¹ Aside from its slave majority, its geographic-planting history posed other problems for the White

Haitian Revolution (Cambridge & London, 2004), 15-28.

⁶⁰ Laura Foner, "The Free People of Color in Louisiana and St. Domingue: A Comparative Portrait of Two Three-Caste Slave Societies," Journal of Social History 3 (1970), 415. Hall, Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies (Baton Rouge & London, 1996), p. 122-123.

⁶¹ DuBois, Avengers of the New World (Cambridge & London, 2004), 39.

planter elite in St. Domingue. Sugar production in areas South and East of Cap Francais expanded too slowly to prevent rival free coloured minorities from developing robust coffee and indigo planting enterprises in the Western and Southern provinces. The failure of White planters to insert their commercial tentacles into these zones also enabled free coloureds to establish several familial generations outside of servitude who experienced higher and higher levels of socio-economic mobility. Mountainous areas deemed unusable by White sugar planters of the Northeast and West became the major locations of free coloured coffee production. By the time a substantial number of less affluent Whites entered the coffee business in the mid-18th, free coloured dominance over this agricultural sector had already been established. Meanwhile, several families in the Western zone, including the one headed by Julian Raimond established a large underground indigo trade with other Caribbean islands that White French colonial officials did not have the power to stop.⁶²

Free coloureds charged with protecting the sugar plantations from maroons and White ruffians operating in the highland areas, used these opportunities in military service to make connections with creditors who helped them purchase the land and slaves they needed to plant farms in these areas. Similar to free coloured populations in Jamaica, Cuba, and Brazil, St. Dominguean free coloreds “functioned as an intermediate class, standing between slave and free and between black and White, ” or as a “bridge or buffer between them.” However, free coloureds on the other Caribbean islands did not

⁶² John Garrigus, “Blue and Brown: Contraband and Indigo and The Rise of a Free Colored Planter Class in French St. Domingue,” The Americas, Vol. L(2), October 1993. 233-263.

often rise above the level of small estate owners, peasants, or urban workers employed in an economy's service sector. Large numbers of St. Dominguean free coloureds, on the other hand, could be found in the ranks of independent farmers and urban skilled and unskilled wageworkers.⁶³

The precarious creole position that St. Dominguean free coloreds occupied, influenced both their commercial and civic outlook on life in the French colony. For example, they were primarily short-term investors that speculated in the island's real-estate and slave markets with the long-term goal of maximizing profits generated from the lands they acquired. Their first priority was to acquire a small plot of land to firm up their place in a society dominated by the ideas of private property, color, and status. Those who acquired their first property in land, slaves, or both through marriage or inheritances had a leg up on those born as slaves. Many St. Dominguean free coloureds emerging from the ranks of slaves never advanced far beyond this state. Those who did often had little access to credit. To compensate for this commercial disadvantage, they employed much more aggressive capitalist strategies than the ones used by aspiring *grande colons* (White planters). Aspiring *grande colons* bought lots of land and slaves, and held on to this property with the hopes of reaping windfall profits by producing sugar for foreign markets. Although the value of their land and slaves may have increased during this waiting period, allowing them to sell portions of both for a profit, they placed all their prosperity hopes in being able to sell the sugar they produced at a higher price than it cost to start and maintain their

plantations. Part of the revenues generated from these plantations would then be used to pay off debts, while the rest would be reinvested in the property or pocketed for private use. The few persons who succeeded in the risky business of sugar planting were able to retire to a life of relative ease in the courts of the French metropolitan society. Most however failed and died in ruin or descended into the ranks of the unpropertied *petit blanc* class.

Free colored capitalist investment strategies had as much to do with their desire to distinguish themselves from the island's slave majority as it had to do with the very nature of them being creoles. As in the case of other creoles, St. Dominguean free coloureds did not really intend to leave for France when they made their fortunes. It was thus in their long-term interests to use military service to both advance and protect the socioeconomic privileges they hoped to enjoy. After all, the militia was not just an institution designed solely to keep the growing slave population in check, or to prevent interlopers salivating over the island's unprecedented commercial value from foreign invaders. Rather, the military was a place to establish social and commercial contacts that could be used to elevate one's position within the French colonial order. Military service also gave free coloreds political leverage because they were often more willing to serve than their White counterparts. If protection was needed, Whites had to negotiate with free coloreds. This meant that Whites could not just make demands without granting some concessions to free coloureds first. And still we can go further on this issue. The experience that many of the coloured volunteers (*Chasseurs-*

⁶³ Stewart R. King, Blue Coat and Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary St. Domingue (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2001), King, xiii-ix, and xi.

Volontaires) accrued from their participation in the last phase of the American War for Independence and other hemispheric conflicts may have proved to be a crucial asset to those who later participated in the Haitian Revolution.⁶⁴

What we do know is that St. Dominguean free coloureds lived within the ranks of planters, entrepreneurs, peasants, and soldiers—all categories that often overlapped. At best free coloureds were second tier planters, falling behind the White sugar planters; at worse they fell within the peasantry. Most free coloureds, who were able to amass wealth, did so with the capital advances of White fathers or patrons. Because the means of attaining wealth were intertwined with producing cash crops for foreign markets, free coloureds invested in slaves and land. Unlike White absentee landlords, they managed their own estates for two reasons. First, it was more efficient, compared to those run by the overseers of White absentee landlords. Second, they were not afforded the privilege of entering French metropolitan society. The last major tendency among St. Dominguean free coloureds (i.e. artisans, the peasants, and coffee planters) was to establish residence outside the immediate sphere of wealthy White sugar planters of Cap Francais.

In spite of the relative superior level of socio-economic success St. Dominguean free coloureds experienced in the early to mid-18th century, the 1760s marked the beginning of their legal nadir. Following the French defeat in the Seven Years War, a special tax was levied on manumissions; restrictions were placed on free coloureds wishing to enter high end professions such as

⁶⁴ Carolyn E. Fick, The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1990).

medicine, pharmacy, surgery, and law; they were banned from taking the names of White family members; and they were forbidden to imitate the cultural aesthetics that defined Whiteness such as wearing certain types of clothes and traveling in carriages. By the time the first phase of the French Revolution was well underway, even the most affluent free coloureds such as Julien Raimond found themselves between a political rock and hard place. Under increasing financial pressure to settle a ballooning national debt generated from its failures in foreign wars, Old Regime layovers permitted the passage of these laws that for the first time raised racial interests above those of class. Meanwhile, talk of an autonomous St. Dominguean provincial assembly, consisting of only *grande et petite blancs* representatives, threatened to undermine all of the remaining rights held by the *gens des colour*. On top of this the St. Dominguean planter lobby convinced the new National Assembly to reject a free coloured proposal for full enfranchisement in the Revolutionary government, in spite of their military importance. The seemingly progressive National Assembly caved in response to the planter lobby by giving all Whites in St. Domingue control over domestic policy. However, a slave revolt in the summer of 1791 gave the free coloureds new political life that had been stolen by the French Revolutionary government. More importantly, at a time when the National Assembly needed to consolidate a free coloured/White planter alliance for the sake of defending the island against the slaves, it chose instead to worship at the altar of racism. Thus, free coloureds became the unlikely allies of the Amis des Noir who were more interested in the gradual abolition of slavery in the French Caribbean colonies than lobbying for

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free coloured suffrage.⁶⁵ Free coloureds did manage to secure citizenship a year after the legendary revolt had nearly turned St. Dominguean social order upside down, but the increasingly more radical final stages of the Haitian revolution relieved free coloureds of slave property they hoped to keep and continue their socio-economic climb in a slave society that was no more.

Cuba

Cuba was the last of the major Atlantic World slave societies, mainly because its royal Spanish benefactor had pursued other commercial interests in the New World before the 19th century. After the Spanish conquests of the Aztec and Inca Empires in the 16th century, the Spanish Crown had relied on a few well-regarded monopolies to govern and organize bullion-mining operations in South and Central America. French and English monarchies made a concerted effort to grab a share of this Spanish dominated bullion market, until small groups of entrepreneurs convinced them to support profitable plantation agriculture and slave trading ventures with markets in West Africa, the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. This shift toward plantation agriculture accelerated the rise of the French and English colonies in the New World. Spain was therefore compelled to sit on the sidelines as a second tier colonial power as British and French subjects expanded their respective Empires' spheres of influence in North America and the Caribbean. Prior to and following the Spanish War for Succession, Cuba served as the strategic halfway point for the bullion

⁶⁵ Laurent DuBois, Avengers of the New World (Cambridge & London, 2004), Chapter 3.

transported from the New Spain provinces in Mexico and Peru for much of the 17th and 18th centuries.

In this period, Cuba would have been the most unlikely of the Iberian colonies to lead a resurgence of Spanish power in New World commerce, especially since cash crop production had surpassed mining as the surest way to amass power in the Western Hemisphere. Tobacco was the first cash crop produced in the Southern villages of the Cuban interior, but a local monopoly prevented the expansion of this type of agriculture there. Meanwhile, Virginia moved ahead to seize the dominant share of this Atlantic market in the 17th and 18th centuries. Cuba would therefore remain a military outpost until a series of late 18th century developments on the mainland, in the Caribbean, and in West Africa helped transform this island into a full-fledged slave plantation society. The major happenings associated with this process were the collapse of the Spanish South American Empire, the transference of Portuguese Fernando Po to Spain that offered the new Cuba a reliable supply of African slaves, the violent demise of the sugar planters at St. Domingue, and the increased militarization of Cuba under the Bourbon reforms.⁶⁶ Aside from the destruction of St. Domingue, the

⁶⁶ A general outline of these issues can be found in Robin Blackburn, The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848 (London & New York: Verso, 1988); Robin Blackburn, The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800 (London & New York, 1997). Numerous authors have contributed to a robust debate on Cuban social and economic transformation between the 18th and 19th centuries. Sherry Johnson attempted to revise the previous contention that sugar, slavery, and St. Domingue initiated the social transformation of Cuba. She argues that the Bourbon reforms encouraging stringent military changes in Cuba were bought lock stock and barrel. The high rate of marriages between Spanish peninsulars and Cuban Creole women proved to be a decisive part of the transition from colonial outpost to slave society. See Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, "Silver, Slaves, and Sugar: The Persistence of Spanish Colonialism from Absolutism to Liberalism," Latin American Research Review – Vol. 39 (2), 2004, pp. 196-210; Sherry Johnson, The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001; Knight, Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century (Madison, 1970). Manuel Moreno Franginals, El Ingenio (Havana: Editorial de

enhanced military capabilities of Cuba proved to be a major watershed in the formation of this Caribbean slave society. That was Cuba already had a firm metropolitan military establishment in place before its sugar revolution had matured. Therefore, Cuban officials were in a much better position to handle the dramatic increase of African slave imports and the frequent episodes of open slave revolt that had often accompanied this trend on other sugar producing islands.

Before the late 18th century developments listed above contributed to the political and economic transformation of the island and the size of the free coloured population was second only to the White population. Meanwhile, urban as well as rural slaves were able to take advantage of the *Cartacion* system, which allowed slaves to buy their freedom after they agreed with their masters on a set purchase price, known as a *carto*. The arrival of big sugar in Cuba at the end of the century changed this trend by choking off rural slave prospects of ever being able to raise the money for a *carto*.⁶⁷ Even those slaves that managed to secure a *carto* still had to pass other forms of inspection to have them honored by White public officials. For example, slaves were required to provide evidence of how they raised the money for a *carto*, and convince their owners to speak favorably of them before local “justices” who had the final say on manumissions. Outright individual emancipations granted by slaveholders in Cuba were also

Ciencias Sociales, 1976); Dale Tomich, “World Slavery and Caribbean Capitalism: The Cuban Sugar Industry, 1760-1868,” *Theory and Society* 20 (1991): 297-319.

⁶⁷ Rebecca Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985); Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*, 130-133;

restricted to slaves who had informed on slave conspiracies, saved “the life of a White person,” slave women rearing six or more children, and slaves with a “thirty year” record of “faithful service.” Spanish law even limited the extent to which slaves could exercise freedom earned by way of manumission. Were the concepts of manumission and freedom really synonymous concepts in Cuba then? According to the *Codigo Negro Carolino* (1785), a “freeman” was required to live in a Spanish village where he could be absorbed into one of its coerced labor forces.⁶⁸ This would have made the “freeman” free in name only. Then there were the free coloureds who might have wished to exercise their freedom as independent farmers, but could not because of the near stranglehold White creole families had over land ownership in Cuba, under the Mercedes land tenure system. Free coloured men and women in Virginia, Jamaica, Brazil, and St. Domingue were in fact more likely to become independent landowners than those living in the Cuban slave society. This explains why large numbers free coloureds lived and worked in cities such as Havana, Mantanza, Pinar, del Rio, Trinidad, Cienfeugos, Santiago de Cuba, and Puerto Principe where higher paying jobs and manumission were easier to come by. In these cities, free coloureds were well represented in provisional trades such as “masons, wagoneers, cooks and grocers, butchers, entertainers, laborers, shoemakers,

⁶⁸ Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies*, 124-125.

seamstresses and tailors,” while higher wage careers in medicine, law, education, and the priesthood remained closed to them.⁶⁹

Aside from the provisional trades mentioned above, the only surest way of socio-economic mobility for free coloureds had been through military service and the culture often associated with it.⁷⁰ Two major happenings, however, challenged the relevance of this military culture and the limited socio-economic benefits that came with it for soldiers. First, the short-lived British occupation of Havana during the Seven Years War and the collapse of New Spain compelled Spanish officials to send most of the Crown’s troops stationed in the Americas to Cuba. Second, Spanish imperial policy and the capital of a few creole families was used to develop large sugar plantations that kept appreciable numbers of free coloureds off profitable rural lands. The result was the importation of large numbers of slaves from Spain’s newly acquired West African depot at Fernando Po. Within a matter of thirty years, slaves replaced free coloureds as the second largest group in the colony behind a growing White creole majority—a demographic scenario similar to the one unfolding in late 17th and early 18th century Virginia. Then as the Haitian Revolution engulfed St. Domingue, scores of White French slaveholders immigrated to Cuba where they helped establish the coffee industry on the east island. This development along with news about the Revolution stimulated a widespread fear about the destabilizing role free coloureds might play in Cuba and in the other major slave societies that

⁶⁹ Franklin Knight, “Origins of Wealth and the Sugar Revolution in Cuba, 1750-1850,” The Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 57, No. 2 (May, 1977), 231-253 & “Cuba” in Cohen & Greene, Neither Slave Nor Free (1972).

dominated the commerce and politics of the Atlantic World. This fear had a double-edged effect on the crafting of Spanish imperial policy toward free coloureds as well. First, Crown officials erected a series of slavery reform policies designed to discourage free coloured resistance. Second, the Crown colony implemented a policy that blocked many free coloureds from entering Cuba and called for the deportation of others that had emigrated to the colony. Attempts were also made to shut down the free coloured militias after the Aponte Rebellion and Conspiracy of the Ladder incidents, which revived old fears about the spread of Haitianism on the island. For example, pardo (black) and moreno (mulatto) militias were banned in 1844 before being reactivated ten years later. In the face of these hostilities, free coloureds tended to take advantage of the high labor demand in the cities in the mid-19th century and slowly develop a both politically and race conscious community informed by the growing influence of Afro-Cuban *cabildos*.⁷¹

The Afro-Cuban *cabildos*, which began as simple mutual aid societies, grew in both size and influence after the 19th century slave reforms were enacted to guard Cuba against a St. Dominguesque slave rebellion. For example, slave codes established during the forty years following the St. Domingue uprising legalized "slave marriages," sought to improve slave working conditions, allowed *cabildos* to organize social activities for rural and urban slave laborers, and

⁷⁰ Herbert Klein, "The Colored Militia of Cuba 1568–1868," in Caribbean Studies 6:2 (1966): 17–27.

⁷¹ Phillip Howard, Changing History: Afro-Cuban Cabildos and Societies of Color in the Nineteenth Century (Baton Rouge: Louisiana Press, 1998).

permitted a much larger number of slaves to actually access the *cartos*. These reforms helped to both enlarge the size of Cuba's free coloured population and the membership roles of Afro-Cuban *cabildos*. By the mid-19th century, *cabildos* could be counted among the most ardent supporters of independence and Black freedom movements in Cuba. All the while *cabildos* continued to observe their original purpose, which was to "preserve cultural identities and *protect* members from inhospitable structures and forces of their host country." Specific *cabildo* activities of this kind included welcoming new arrivals who had experienced the trauma of the Middle Passage, burying their dead, and providing poor-relief to the destitute.⁷²

The *cabildos* were anything but stagnant organizations content with resting on what they had already accomplished. They would in fact demonstrate a capacity to both evolve and aide in the deconstruction of oppressive Spanish colonial legal and social institutions that it had taken metropolitan officials and Cuban Creole planters at least a century to build. The power of the ruling Spanish regime in Cuba emanated from its heavy reliance on the African slave trade, its sugar and coffee plantations, violent techniques used to control large slave populations, and the discourse of "race war" used to dissuade discontented White planters from participating in anti-colonial rebellions. *Cabildos* responded to these pressures by transforming themselves into forums of political resistance engaged in the broader ideological struggles between capital and labor, racism and anti-racism, and colonialism and anti-colonialism.⁷³ A touch of irony

⁷² Howard, Changing History, (Baton Rouge, 1998), p. xvi, Chapter 1.

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surrounded these community organizations that would find no peer in the older Virginia colony to the far North. Although the slave reform policies implemented in Cuba were intended to prevent the spread of Haitianism, they actually helped increase the influence of the Afro-Cuban cabildos that played an important role in mobilizing troops for anti-racist independence struggles against Spain in the late 19th century.

Virginia

The process in which a fort hastily constructed off the banks of the James River was transformed into the Virginia colony involved much of the same uncontrollable violence associated with the planting of the Brazilian, Jamaican, St. Dominguean, and Cuban colonies. Algonquian speaking peoples that occupied the territories between the Potomac and Powhattan Rivers posed the gravest threat to the Europeans in this setting. By the time the English arrived in the early 17th century, native affiliates of the Powhattan Confederacy had already staked out their own vision for how they wanted this landscape to be used, had assigned names to parts of this vast country, and developed time tested methods to prosper in this context. What the English encountered was a highly organized indigenous civilization, with its own violence monopoly, language, farming, hunting, and sophisticated trading networks that extended as far north as what is now known as the Great Lakes region. The first wave of English newcomers recognized indigenous place names and paths of travel as valid to their own

⁷³ Ada Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

commercial interests, but they still envisioned transforming this space into something resembling the Spanish bullion colonies they envied. Replicating the Spanish model required these English interlopers to set up ore mining and sugar producing enterprises, which would be powered by indigenous labor. To extract indigenous labor, they dreamed of establishing systems of tribute and debt-peonage like the Spanish had done. This would demand the use of the same divide and conquer tactics that paved the way for the Spanish colonies. There was however one major problem. The English faced a Powhattan Confederacy that was too militarily prepared and agriculturally self-sufficient to go the way of the Aztec and the Inca Empires that had preceded them. English reliance on the indigenes for food, persistently high death rates among the foreigners, and two major wars with the Powhattan Confederacy was the situation the first and second waves of English fortune hunters encountered. These colonists would be forced to develop alternative methods of colonization or perish.⁷⁴

The establishment of tobacco agriculture in early 17th century Virginia, which combined indentured labor with plantation production, proved to be their salvation. This system of cash-crop agriculture was tailor made for a social environment where most English farmers had less capital than the men who organized the sugar plantations in the Caribbean. In addition, there were two reasons why the first generation of Virginia tobacco farmers were not interested

⁷⁴ April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Inter-Colonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), chapter 1; J. Frederick Fauz, "An Abundance of Blood Shed on Both Sides": England's First Indian War, 1609-1614" in Kevin R. Hardwick and Warren R. Hofstra, *Virginia Reconsidered* (Charlottesville & London: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 16.

in owning large numbers of Creole or African slaves. First, English attempts to use slave majorities at Providence Island (near Nicaragua) and Tortuga (near Hispanola) in the 1630s were monumental failures. Second, there was not much of market for African slaves outside of the Caribbean zone, because the majority of planters in Virginia could not afford them. Even the few Virginia planters who bought slaves on the inter-colonial market in the second half of the 17th century developed a reputation for being bad credit risks. Most Virginia farmers thus came to depend on indentured labor and the acquisition of tobacco lands to accumulate wealth during the first fifty years of the colony's history.⁷⁵ It was not until the second generation of planters at Barbados demonstrated the extremely profitable use of slave labor on their sugar plantations in the 1650s and 1660s that a few affluent Virginia planters considered making the switch from White indentured to African slave labor. The high cost of head rights, shortages in indentured labor, the fall in tobacco prices, and the immigration of Barbados planters and slaves to Virginia in the last thirty years of the 17th century were all factors that influenced this transition. The last factor was perhaps the most important. Before the arrival of the Barbadian planters, Virginia had not adopted formal policies designed to promote hereditary bondage. By the 1660s, the first

⁷⁵ D.W. Meinig, The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History, Vol. 1, Atlantic America, 1492-1800 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Rhys Issac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982); Morgan, Slave Counterpoint (Chapel Hill & London, 1998); Berlin, Many Thousands Gone (Cambridge & London, 1998); Alan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake (Chapel Hill and London: Omohundro Institute of American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by The University of North Carolina Press, 1986); Kathleen Brown, Goodwives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power, in Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill and London: Omohundro Institute of American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by The University of North Carolina Press, 1986); Edmund Morgan,

policies linking the status of newborns to the status of their enslaved mothers and the elimination of Christian conversion as a way to avoid enslavement set the Commonwealth on the path towards becoming a slave society. Soon slaves were imported directly from West African factories, before creole slave reproduction rates stabilized in the early 18th century.⁷⁶ It was at this point that creole slaves became the majority agricultural work force, just as clusters of free coloureds made their homes in the counties of Virginia's Southside and Eastern Shore regions.

Like the first generations of free coloreds in the Caribbean and Brazil, free coloureds in Virginia were the products of mixed sexual relations. A key feature however distinguished the plight of these free coloureds from those in Brazil and the Caribbean. The parents of the first Virginia free coloureds were often slave or indentured black males and indentured White females.⁷⁷ Furthermore, these children were not accepted as free members of colonial Virginia. Rather, White state and church officials worked together to reduce them to the status occupied by indentured laborers. But their periods of indenture, known as binding out, were anywhere from twenty-three to twenty-six years longer than those assigned to Whites. This legal provision was related to the fact that Virginia had already developed a White majority that did not need free coloured subsidiary

American Slavery American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975).

⁷⁶ April Lee Hatfield, Atlantic Virginia: Inter-colonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 147-148; Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," American Historical Review, Vol. 85, No. 1 (Feb., 1980), pp. 44-78.

commercial or military support. Therefore, White planters took steps to limit their socio-economic prospects in other ways. For example, they were banned from military service early on, and were appreciably marginalized in the colony's economic affairs. The greatest wage earning opportunities for this caste would be in cities such as Richmond, Petersburg, and Norfolk as slave plantations came to dominate business in the countryside in the 19th century.

Even if a few free coloreds established a strong socio-economic position prior to the dominance of slave based plantation production, positive White and slave population growth tended to undermine their successes. It was in this way that the stabilization of natural reproductive rates on the English North American mainland by the early to mid-eighteenth century revolutionized the relationship between White slave owners and free coloureds. In these societies free coloureds were not indispensable in the maintenance of the slave based plantation culture. Therefore, states dominated by members of the planter minority had no vested interests in employing free coloureds as soldiers or policemen to control slave populations when there were enough White slaveholders and non-slave holders willing to take on this burden, in the form of militias and patrols.⁷⁸ Because this socio-economic bargaining chip was not available to free coloureds of the English North American colonies, the power of planter ruled states could be used to obstruct free coloured population growth, their rate of wealth accumulation, access to means of physical protection (i.e.

⁷⁷ Paul Heinegg, Free African Americans of North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina from the colonial period to about 1820 (Baltimore, Md. : Clearfield, 2001), introduction.

arms), and enforce anti-interracial marriage and anti-miscegenation laws. More specifically, anti-miscegenation and anti-interracial marriage sexual regulation laws were used to transform White female bodies into the only reproductive sites liberal freedom.⁷⁹ Under these conditions, the possibility of free coloureds ever-achieving full civic recognition as in the cases of St. Domingue and Jamaica was out of the question. How do we characterize the predicament of Virginia free coloureds compared with those encountered by other groups of free coloureds in Atlantic slave societies? Herbert Klein's characterization of them as living a "A World Apart" from the ones in Cuba, Jamaica, St. Domingue, and Brazil applies to Virginia free coloureds. It was not slave codes in these societies alone that nurtured the socio-economically disadvantaged conditions Virginia free coloureds experienced. Rather, it was an assortment of issues, outlined at the beginning of this essay. These were timing and place of colonial settlement, the demographic representation of slaves, Whites, and free coloureds, the speed at which White ruled slave plantations expanded, the level of free coloured participation in security agencies, and the substance of anti-miscegenation and anti-interracial marriage law enforcement. In sum, the Virginia plantation complexes along with its slave system expanded faster in its 17th and 18th century period of colonization

⁷⁸ Hadden, Slave Patrols : Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), chapters 1 & 2.

⁷⁹ Kathleen M. Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Martha Hodes, White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South (New Haven: Yale University Press, c1997); John R. Williams, "After Hugh: Statutory Race Segregation in Colonial America, 1630-1725," The American Journal of Legal History, Vol. 43, No. 3. (Jul., 1999), pp. 280-305.

than the wealth and size of its free coloured populations. Meanwhile, the naturally reproducing White population in Virginia carried slavery as far west as Virginia's Blue Ridge and Shenandoah Valley counties. The remaining indigenous groups in the southwest and southeast participated in this colonial enterprise as well. Leaders of the formidable Cherokee Nation and Pasquotank groups to the south of the colony were prodded to return runaways in exchange for weapons and promises to not increase the number of White settlements. These Anglo-Native agreements, more often honored by the Pasquotanks than the Cherokees, prevented White slaveholders from having to contend with the serious threat that maroons posed to the slave societies in the Caribbean. Slaveholders in Virginia were not spared of slave rebellions entirely, but they were able to depend on the colony's White male majority to confront outbreaks of slave violence. Consequently, Virginia free coloureds did not have the opportunity to create a military culture that could be used to extract socio-economic privileges from the White slaveholding elite. These free coloureds would instead have to devise alternative methods to improve their socio-economic position in places like Richmond. Finding stable forms of employment and keeping their families together were also among their primary concerns, as the prospect of outright removal became an issue with the formation of the American Colonization Society in the 19th century.

Chapter 2

The RICHMOND FREE COLOURED, 1800-1860

Your petitioner is not insensible to the blessings of liberty, but to be driven even for this great possession to a separation from every friend and natural connexion [sic] upon earth, to sunder every habit and association which years have fostered and matured, she regards as a condition for which even life or freedom can scarcely constitute an equivalent and where she considers the multiplied difficulties everywhere to the reception of persons in her situation, she can view that freedom which is turned to her subject of those difficulties as little better than a cruel mockery... Under this view of your Petitioners situation she humbly proves that Tenar Hope her mother who in obedience to the will and with a portion of the effects of the late Ceasar Hope has purchased your petitioner, may be permitted to manumit and make her free, exempt from the hard condition of perpetual exile; and that as a free woman your petitioner, may be permitted to remain within this commonwealth.¹

Judith Hope's decision to petition the Virginia Legislature was a popular Strategy Richmond free coloureds used to contend with the real danger of family separations. These cases revealed how Black Richmonders struggled against the terms of freedom that White Virginia slaveholders accepted. White Virginia slaveholders recognized the enslavement of Blacks as a precondition of liberty, while Richmond free coloureds viewed slavery as an obstruction to their freedom. Richmond free coloureds were therefore more concerned with keeping their families together than they were with securing the classical liberal privilege of individual liberty. Whites were far more preoccupied with the latter, since the absence of enslavement in their lives made family security a social given. In

¹ Virginia Legislative Petitions, V, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

addition, free coloureds who purchased enslaved relatives usually held them as nominal slaves until White authorities granted these prospective manumittedes permission to remain in the state; otherwise, free coloured family members held them indefinitely as quasi-free persons. Cases of this kind illustrated how purchasing an enslaved relative could quickly turn into a chess match, requiring a high degree of both skill and patience. These cases also highlighted the different ways freedom was made in one of the American South's premiere cities.

The Virginia slave system frequently placed Richmond free coloureds at risk of being re-enslaved or channeled into an undeclared system of indentured servitude. Periodic crises in Virginia's long relationship with chattel bondage did however offer free coloureds small windows of opportunity to impose anti-slavery ideas about freedom when the Commonwealth experienced brief periods of political deconstruction. Four overlapping crises stood out in this regard: the low tobacco prices in the 1760's that produced bankruptcy levels of debt for Virginia planters; the outbreak of a war for independence in the 1770's; the threat of slave rebellions like the ones that quickened the demise of slavery in the Caribbean, arriving in North America during the early 19th century²; and the emergence of

² At a moment when information about real and imagined cases of slave rebellion spread quickly throughout various portions of the Atlantic World, Virginia planters were very concerned about slave rebellion ideology arriving on their shores. Thomas Jefferson's realpolitical approach to diplomatic relations with St. Domingue was just one reflection of these fears. See Tim Matthewson, "Jefferson and Haiti," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (May 1995), pp. 209-248; James Sibury, "Saint Domingue in Virginia: Ideology, Local Meanings, and Resistance to Slavery, 1790-1800," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (August 1997), pp. 531-552; Aptheker, *Negro Slave Revolts* (Nashville, 1967); Julius S. Scott, "The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the era of the Haitian Revolution" (Thesis (Ph. D.)—Duke University, 1986); David P. Geggus, "Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean," in David Barry Gaspar et al., *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 1-50; For those

African Colonization as a solution to gradual abolition and rapid free coloured population growth. White exclusionists or deportationists envisioned African Colonization as a state security measure before and after the Nat Turner Rebellion. Then there was a small faction of mostly Quakers that believed in the feasibility of incorporating free coloureds and slaves into the body politic. When slavery became more entrenched in the 1830s, these Quaker incorporationists moved into the camp of deportationists.³ The most successful strategies Virginia slaveholders used to overcome the challenges listed above entailed the conversion of enslaved farm laborers into “slave hires” and establishing the Commonwealth as the biggest speculator market for slave labor in the United States. These strategies were a success due to the increased demand for slave labor in rapidly industrializing Virginia Tidewater cities and in the growing cotton states of the Lower South. Along the way Virginia became the undisputed leader of the interstate slave-trade in the Upper South, which furnished the cotton and sugar planters of the Lower South with the thousands of slaves they needed to replace depleted labor forces.⁴ These new ways of profiting from slavery in Virginia also increased the range of opportunities for Whites to widen the wealth

works exploring the effects of slave rebellion in the British Caribbean see Craton, Testing the Chains (Ithaca [N.Y.], 1982); Thomas Holt, The Problem of Freedom (Baltimore, 1992), chapter 1.

³ See Lacy K. Ford, Jr., “Making the ‘White Man’s Country’ White: Race, Slavery, and State-Building in the Jacksonian South,” Journal of the Early Republic Vol. 19, No. 4, (Winter, 1999), pp. 713-737; Gordon E. Finnie, “The Anti-Slavery Movement in the Upper South Before 1840,” The Journal of Southern History, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Aug., 1969), 319-342; and Thomas D. Hamm, Hicksite, “Quakers and the Antebellum Nonresistance Movement,” Church History, Volume 63, No. 4 (December, 1994), 557-569.

⁴ Michael Tadman, Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South (Madison, Wis. : University of Wisconsin Press, c1989), 121-125; Adam Rothman, Slave

gap that they created between themselves and Blacks after the Commonwealth founded its slave labor system in the mid-17th century.

Glaring wealth divisions between the majority of Blacks and Whites in Virginia did not exist before 1650. Indeed, the farming successes of a few free coloured families out on Virginia's eastern shore suggested that the Commonwealth might morph into racial democracy, ruled by small-scale freeholders.⁵ This possibility died when the wealthy architects of the Virginia "plantation revolution" (1660-1740) converted a hodgepodge of Afro-Creole slaves and indentured tobacco workers into slave labor forces distinguished by their dark skin. Meanwhile, these White planters transformed Black laborers into a major source of wealth and freedom for themselves and subsequent generations of less affluent slaveholders. White yeomen benefited from this revolution as well, when the Commonwealth's affluent planters and/or northern businessmen began extending them the credit they needed to establish their own slave plantations. The freedom of yeoman farmers henceforth depended on the credit advanced by these elites, and the economic prosperity of all of these classes was based on the productivity of Black enslaved laborers. The rise of Richmond's merchant, manufacturing, and slave trading classes was the inadvertent handiwork of the plantation revolution as well. For example, Richmond slave traders and manufactures used the slave surpluses rural planters began generating in the late 18th century to launch their own enterprises

Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 2005).

in the early 19th century. Although these three classes were often at odds during many of the new century's political contests, they all agreed on prolonging the life of slavery in Virginia by using slaves as labor or capital to generate profits.

Richmond therefore became a sponsor of a racial hierarchy similar to those established in other Virginia counties, towns, and cities. This hierarchy consisted of planters, manufacturers, merchants, slave traders, White yeoman, White immigrant workers, free coloureds, enslaved domestics, and slave hires.

Racial slavery in Virginia then received important institutional support from a larger American society striving to quell the material anxieties of White workers in the 1830s. At this moment, Whites from all levels of what was a fragmented American polity participated in a Cultural Revolution that used a variety of cultural "Whiteness" ideas to create a new iteration of American Nationalism. Pre-existing ethnic, gender, and geographic identities were thus exchanged for what Barbara Fields would agree was an ideological form of racism used to meet the political ends of the United States government and the "people" it represented.⁶ Four major signs highlighted this Cultural Revolution that transpired on both sides of the Mason Dixon line. First, racial violence and segregated living patterns became social norms in Northern cities. Second, minstrelsy became the

⁵ Allan Kulikoff, Tobacco and Slaves (Chapel Hill, 1986), Chapter 1; T.H. Breen, "Myne Owne Ground" : Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676 (Reprint, 1980: New York : Oxford University Press, 2004), 68-109.

⁶ Fields comes to the conclusion that racism is an ideology rather than a "transhistorical" phenomenon. Therefore she replaces the ahistorical term of race with the empirical variable of racism that functioned in lock step with various class interests. See Barbara Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward. Ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 143-177; "Of Rogues and Geldings," The American Historical Review

country's most popular form of artistic expression and vehicle of cultural demarcation. Third, ideological racism was fully integrated into American foreign policies that advocated western expansion. Finally, nearly all American states disfranchised Blacks before the Civil War.⁷ These developments marked the arrival of "Whiteness" Nationalism in the U.S., supported by the principle of racial dictatorship exercised at every governmental level.⁸ This form of government combined classical liberal ideals (such as free markets, republican-constitutional government, and democratic electorates) with far more ambiguous notions of racial chauvinism. At the time this new "Whiteness" Nationalism changed voting eligibility requirements in most states from property ownership to skin color in the 1830s, most Northern states were still engaged in the slow process of abolishing

December 2003 <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/108.5/fields.html>>(17 Jun. 2006).

⁷ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* (Winter 1992); 251-74; Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850: The Shadow of the Dream* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, c1981); Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago] University of Chicago Press [1961]); Ira Berlin, *Slave Without Masters: The free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1975), 190-192; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: the Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1981); David Roedigger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (Reprint, 1991: London ; New York : Verso, 1999); Eric Lott, *Love and Theft : Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1993); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (London ; New York ; Verso, 1990); Michael Goldfield, *The Color of Politics: Race and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York : New Press : Distributed by W.W. Norton & Co., c1997).

⁸ Racial dictatorship is a form of rule whereby one group designated as racial outsiders are coerced into adhering to the social, political, and economic protocols of those labeled as racial insiders. George Fredrickson described a similar phenomenon in what he called herrenvolk democracy. See Michael Omi & Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States, From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York & London: Routledge), 65-69; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind : The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (Reprint 1971: Middletown, Conn. : Wesleyan University Press ; Scranton, Pa. : Distributed by Harper & Row, 1987).

their slave labor systems.⁹ Meanwhile, the earlier plantation revolutions in Virginia and the Carolinas had already erected a body of statute laws in the mid-17th century designed to transform slavery into a permanent precondition of freedom and the basis of Southern identity.¹⁰ It could thus be argued that definitions of freedom in the so-called North and South both emerged from institutions driven by racial slavery. The only difference was that Southern planters continued to build on the American tradition of using slavery to manufacture freedom after its War for Independence, while the racist ideology of free labor became the lynchpin of political mobilization in areas previously designated as part of the Old Northwest Ordinance and territories north of what became the Missouri Compromise.

Against this social backdrop where White Virginians used slavery to make freedom for themselves, Judith Hope and others of her tenuous status developed alternative ways to make freedom for themselves and press their ideas into the Virginia legal record when such opportunities arose. All Richmond free coloureds were not opposed to using violent strategies to radically stake their claims to freedom, as demonstrated by free colored participation in Gabriel's failed revolt (1800). However, their lack of access to firearms, the absence of a free coloured military tradition in Virginia, and their overall disadvantage in numbers made this violent approach less feasible. The story of Richmond free coloureds was therefore one of persons struggling to forge community and hold on to the limited

⁹ Lacy K. Ford, "Making the White Man's Country White: Race, Slavery, & State-Building in the Jacksonian South," Journal of the Early Republic, Vol. 19, no. 4 (Winter, 1999); pp. 713-37.

¹⁰ Morgan, Slave Counterpoint (Chapel Hill, 1998).

number of freedoms opened to them in a slave society. Their story also explains how their chances of becoming independent proprietors or exercising the option of emigrating to Liberia was extremely limited by the dynamics of the slave society they inhabited. Richmond free coloureds were not however mere “slaves without masters” or “masterless slaves.” Rather, they were a group fully engaged in an ongoing struggle over the terms of freedom in a rapidly expanding nation that was divided into White free and slave labor political interest groups.¹¹

Aside from cash crop producing lands, slaves were the main commodity proprietors used to measure their level of wealth and personal independence in 18th century Virginia. Hence when tobacco prices failed to stabilize in the 1760s, these landholders publicly expressed their fears of sinking into permanent debt to British creditors and losing all of their personal independence as a consequence. Most wealthy planters managed to hold on to their property during this anxious period, but they feared the day when they might share the fate of many others who had been compelled to sell their lands and slaves to settle debts. Some critics blamed the diminishing returns of Virginia slave plantations on planters’ insatiable appetite for expensive houses, furniture, and other refined goods imported from Europe. Others blamed this state of affairs on what they perceived to be the predatory tactics of British merchant/creditors, who had once been hailed as allies. Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington were among the hardliners to adopt this position, and eventually



supported the cause to cut political ties with the British metropolitan government.¹² The Post-Seven Years War parliamentary taxes placed on colonial property and declining slave and tobacco values also prompted the maturation of a political independence movement in Virginia. The result was a war with the 1st British Empire, which diminished the already limited amount of control rebel planters exercised over their slave labor forces.

Virginia's slaveholding rebels found it increasingly difficult to prevent thousands of slaves from liberating themselves by running away, when the focal point of the war shifted to the British Southern colonies in 1778. Exiled Virginia colonial governor, Lord Dunmore contributed to this liberation movement when he issued a Proclamation designed to starve rebel planters of their unfree labor forces. Dunmore's Proclamation promised emancipation to all slaves and indentures who deserted their rebel owners and closed ranks with British authorities. The Virginia war government tried to limit the damage of the Dumore Proclamation by allowing free coloureds to serve in rebel militias, but this countermeasure failed to stop slaves from running away to join British forces in places such near Yorktown and Richmond in the early 1780s.¹³

¹¹ Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men (Oxford, 1995), "Free labor: the Republicans and northern society," Chapter 1.

¹² T.H. Breen, Tobacco Culture : The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution (Reprint Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 160-203. Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press), Chapter 6; Emory Evans, "Private Indebtedness and the Revolution in Virginia, 1776 to 1796" William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., 28 (1971), 363, 368-69.

¹³ Ira Berlin, Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America (Cambridge, Mass. & London England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 257-260; Sylvia R. Frey, Water From the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age

Three years after Dunmore released his Proclamation, Ceasar Hope appeared in public records as the slave of one of Yorktown's wealthiest slaveholders. Hope used the disruption of war to secure his own manumission. He accomplished this with the advocacy of his owner's mistress and by rejecting the colonial governor's offer of emancipation. Hope found it usual that Dunmore refused to manumit any of his own slaves. After securing his manumission, Ceasar purchased his son Aberdeen and moved to Williamsburg, where he earned a living as a Barber.¹⁴ In Williamsburg the public paper trail related to Aberdeen ended, while records showed Ceasar moving on to join hundreds of other free coloureds that migrated to Richmond from Virginia Southside counties during and after the war. These migrants no doubt envisioned Richmond as a place to find steady work and security at a moment when the Southside was being transformed into a new haven for slaveholding planters. Prior to the war, the Southside's population was relatively diverse, consisting mostly of free coloureds, White ex-indentures, and a smattering of European immigrants. Unlike the Virginia Northern Neck, Tidewater, and Piedmont subregions, the Southside was the home to very few wealthy planters and large slave labor

(Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), Chapter 3; Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the American Revolution (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 19-32.

¹⁴ See "York County Legislative Petitions, 29 Oct. 1779, Vi; Virginia Gazette (Pinkney) 9 Dec. 1775; William Walter Hening, ed. The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia ... (13 vols.; New York, Richmond, and Philadelphia, 1809-1823), 10:211; Williamsburg Personal Property Tax List, 1784; and York County Deed Book 6, pp. 171-72. Hope also emancipated Tenar, his wife, in 1805, and in his will asked that his executor, Edmund Randolph, purchase and free his children Nelson and Judith. This was not done and by 1819 Nelson had died. Judith was purchased and freed by her mother and had to petition the legislature to remain in the state. See Henrico County Deed Book 7, 1803-06, p. 205; Richmond City Hustings Court Wills 1, 1810-16, p. 165; and the petitions of Judith Hope dated 21 December 1819 and 11 December 1820" in Michael Nichols, "Strangers Setting Among Us: the Sources and Challenge of

forces. Successive waves of White outward migration between the late 18th early 19th centuries dramatically changed the demographic orientation of the Southside. Federal census data in fact showed that Blacks (enslaved and free) made up two- thirds of the Southside population in 1810.¹⁵

Soil exhaustion in the Tidewater along with improvements made in the Southside transportation system contributed to the birth of the Black majority in this Virginia sub region. Hundreds of free coloureds and others masquerading as freepersons responded to this trend by moving to Richmond and other cities established close to the rivers connected to the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean. Females listed as Richmond city family heads represented the majority of free coloureds settling in Richmond at this time (1782-1810).¹⁶ Many of these migrants were the offspring of White female indentures and indentured or enslaved black males. Others were the children of male or female slaves who had won manumission in the courts based on claims of Indian heritage, White maternal heritage, prior free status in the Caribbean or Latin America, or having been illegally bound out by White Virginia residents.¹⁷ The majority of free coloureds found in these and other cases lived in rural areas before the Civil War. Cities such as Richmond, however, experienced high free coloured growth

the Urban Free Black Population of Early Virginia, " The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography; 108 (2), 2000;

¹⁵ David Hackett Fischer and James C. Kelly, Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement (Charlottesville : University Press of Virginia, 2000), 135-201.

¹⁶ Paul Heinegg, Free African Americans of North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina, From the Colonial Period to About 1820, Volume I, Fourth Edition (Baltimore, Maryland: Clearfield Company, Inc. 2004) <<http://www.freeafricanamericans.com>>(17 Jun. 2006)

¹⁷ Helen Tunnicliff Catterall, Judicial Cases Concerning the American Negro Slavery, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926-1937).

rates from internal migration before and after strict limits were placed on manumission in the 1830s.¹⁸

The turn of the century Richmond Ceasar Hope arrived in was a far cry from the post-1812 capital city that would host scores of “manufactories,” canals and rail lines, a bustling river born trade, and streets teaming with hundreds of people. When he came to Richmond it was still in the throws of urban transition. The Richmond identity was thus still deeply wedded to a slowly disappearing British colonial order where plantation-oriented counties rather than towns were the centers of political and economic power in Virginia. Whether this was by design or chance was less important than the fact that Virginia planters such as William Byrd and their English creditors accumulated great wealth from this environment void of urban commercial competitors. Therefore, Richmond’s early reputation was that of a “backwater” town where farmers brought annual yields of tobacco to be inspected before sale. Richmond was also known for the biannual fairs it hosted, when men came to buy or sell goods, socialize, settle disputes in court, and gamble. Indeed, the first Richmond town plots were carved out of fifty acres handed over to the colonial Assembly to settle the old gambling debts of William Byrd II, who inherited one of the Commonwealth’s largest estates. The sale of this land was originally advertised as part of a larger plan to build “cities in the Air” off the James and Appomattox Rivers. However, the lack

¹⁸ John H. Russell, The Free Negro in Virginia, 1619-1865, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, ser. XXXI, no. 3 (Baltimore, 1913); Luther Porter Jackson, Free Negro Labor and Property Holding in Virginia, 1830-1860 (New York, London: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1942); Michael L Nicholls, “Strangers Setting Among Us: The Sources

of investment over the course of its first fifty years prevented Richmond from shedding its image as a marginal tobacco depot.

The long slow process of urbanization began when Delegates of Virginia's war government moved the Commonwealth capital from Williamsburg to Richmond (1779). Although this new capital featured notoriously bad roads and inadequate accommodations for large groups of travelers, it was selected because Delegates believed it to be more "safe and central than any other town situated on navigable water." Hills surrounded Richmond on three sides, which made it easier for a small militia to defend than the coast based city of Williamsburg. This advantage was however not enough to stop British units from burning most of the town to the ground in one of the war's latter conflicts (1781). When the smoke finally cleared, the town's new munitions foundry, mill, and magazine had all been destroyed.¹⁹

After the war, some recognized the reconstruction of the capitol as an opportunity to resurrect Greco-Roman republican sensibilities in Richmond. Thomas Jefferson participated in this movement by commissioning a French architect to draw up plans for a new capitol-building modeled on the Maison

and Challenge of the Urban Free Black Population of Early Virginia," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol.108, Iss. 2 (2002).

¹⁹ Hening, Statutes at Large (1819-23), vol. 10: 85-89, 317-18; Samuel Mordecai, Richmond in By-Gone Days: Being Reminiscences of an Old Citizen ... (Richmond, VA: George M. West, 1856.); Dabney Virginius, Richmond: The Story of a City (Garden City, N.Y. : Doubleday, 1976) Harry M. Ward, Richmond during the Revolution, 1775-83 (Charlottesville : Published for the Richmond Independence Bicentennial Commission by the University Press of Virginia, 1977.); Louis Manarin & Clifford Dowdey, The History of Henrico County (Charlottesville : University Press of Virginia, 1984); Norman C. McLeod, Jr., "Free Labor in a Slave Society: Richmond, Virginia, 1820-1860," (Ph.D. Diss., Howard University, Washington, DC 1991) James Sidbury, Ploughshares Into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia, 1730-1810 (New York : Cambridge University Press, 1997); Midori Takagi, Rearing Wolves to Our Own

quarree of Nismes located in the South of France. This structure was designed to do more than house the three branches of Virginia government. Jefferson argued that it would also “improve the taste of my countrymen,...increase their reputation,...[and] reconcile to them the respect of the world and procure them it's praise.”²⁰ Public investment in the capital building, a new prison and other structures coincided with improvements made in the town's transportation systems and the rise of a local manufacturing sector. Ceasar Hope and other free colored migrants would have been more familiar with this Richmond. They would have also been present to observe a growing number of slaves traveling to Richmond from residences in nearby counties such as York, Mecklenburg, New Kent, Amelia, Charles City, Norfolk, Surry, Goochland, King George, Prince George, Accomack, Hanover, Dinwiddie, and Chesterfield.

Wealthy tobacco planters adjusted to the problem of low tobacco prices, during the mid-eighteenth century, by releasing the majority of the slaves who participated in this migration to work in Virginia cities. Slave hiring was however a labor trend in Virginia that began in rural areas. The unstable market for tobacco before the war encouraged these planters to commit larger portions of their land to wheat agriculture. Large slave labor forces previously mobilized for tobacco planting were thus no longer needed. A slave surplus was thus generated in areas formerly dedicated to tobacco planting. To preserve the value of these new excess pools of slave labor, wealthy planters rented them to poorer farmers that

Destruction Slavery in Richmond, Virginia, 1782-1865 (Charlottesville : University Press of Virginia, 1999).

sought additional hands during seasonal wheat harvests. When tobacco prices finally stabilized in the 1790s, the use of slave hires had already become a common feature of Virginia agriculture. This new institution of slavery was incorporated into the business strategies of Richmond manufactures over the next twenty years. Hundreds of male slave hires became the majority of laborers in the city's manufactories in this period. Others worked in skilled occupations such blacksmithing and carpentry.²¹

Among the Black artisans that made frequent trips to Richmond was the slave of a Henrico County proprietor, who had been assigned the name of Gabriel. Gabriel was a blacksmith who became dissatisfied with the low wages he received in a climate where town merchants were in the position to regulate the growth of Richmond's skilled labor market. Gabriel and his followers attempted to change this order of things by kidnapping the governor and seizing a fresh shipment of arms that was scheduled to be delivered to the capitol arsenal in Richmond. They then planned to hold the governor and the surviving White residents of Richmond hostage until all slaves in the state were released from bondage. Most of the free coloureds and slaves recruited by Gabriel and his followers lived near Richmond, which limited the scope of the rebellion. Gabriel however believed that divisions between White Republicans and Federalists in Richmond were deep enough to stymie any attempts to suppress the invasion of the city before his insurgents had achieved their political ends. The Gabrielites

²⁰ Julian P. Boyd and Others, editors, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1950-), 534-35.

also counted on Republican planters and white Richmond workers' unwillingness to aid any cause involving the city's Federalist merchants. The Gabrielites were eventually proven wrong on both of these strategic planning points, but two other problems actually foiled the revolt. First, one of the slaves Gabriel had tried to recruit made the plot known to his white owner. Second, the Henrico County area experienced its most violent thunderstorm on record, on the night before the Black insurgents had planned to march on Richmond. This failed revolt stoked White fears about the arrival of Haitianism in Virginia and highlighted the dangers of allowing slave hires to roam freely between the countryside and the city.²²

Although scholars of Gabriel's Virginia cite no evidence of Black female slave involvement in the revolt, it was unlikely that conspirators never interacted with these women. Enslaved female domestics were after all at times more numerous than enslaved male hires in Richmond.²³ These enslaved women were often the property of White Richmond families whose next of kin owned slave plantations in Piedmont or Tidewater counties. The slaveholding culture nurtured in these rural areas was thus moved to Richmond when the members of these white families pursued their business and/or political ambitions in the city. Enslaved male hires held advantages over their female counterparts in relation to

²¹ Kimball, American City, Southern Place: A Cultural History of Antebellum Richmond (Athens : University of Georgia Press, 2000).

²² Douglas R. Egerton, "Gabriel's Conspiracy and the Election of 1800," The Journal of Southern History, Vol. 56, No. 2 (May, 1990), 191-214; See also Phillip J. Schwartz, "Gabriel's Challenge: Slaves and Crime in Late Eighteenth Century Virginia" Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XC (July 1982); Sidbury, Ploughshares Into Swords (New York, 1997).

²³ Marianne Buroff Sheldon, "Black-White Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1782-1820," The Journal of Southern History, Vol. 45, No. 1 (February, 1979), 28.

the issues of socio-economic and physical mobility. Male slaves were more likely to garner higher wages due to the greater number of skilled occupations open to them. These occupations afforded them more opportunities to raise the money to buy themselves and/or members of their families out of slavery, thereby elevating their socio-economic status. However, preliminary data on slaves purchased by free coloureds shows that the women in this caste were more likely to purchase relatives than men. Occupation types therefore may not have been an important determinate in such purchases, especially when one considers that most Richmond free coloured women worked the same jobs as enslaved women. The data does show that the types of jobs enslaved women held did limit their physical mobility. Midori Takagi estimated that one third (1666 of 5000) of Richmond's enslaved women secured employment outside of the homes of their owners as laundresses, caterers, and seamstresses, while fewer than five percent of these women worked in factories where the majority of laborers were enslaved males.²⁴ Consequently, most enslaved females in Richmond spent the majority of their working lives under the close supervision of their immediate owners. Relationships forged by female slaves and slaveholders in Richmond were therefore more like those established between slaves and slaveholders in rural areas.²⁵

²⁴ Midori Takagi, "Female Slave Participation in the Urban Market Economy: Richmond, Virginia, 1780-1860," Working Paper No. 8 (Published by the Center on Women, The University of Memphis, 1994).

²⁵ Kimball, American City, Southern Place (Athens, 2000), 124-158. Kimball takes his cue from Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black & White Women of the Old South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 70-81. Genovese challenges Suzanne Lebsock's interpretation of gendered values predominating in urban spaces, promoting

The nature of slave hiring afforded a higher degree of mobility for Richmond's enslaved male population. Slaves who hired out their labor to temporary employers often traveled great distances to participate in these renter-tenant arrangements. Owners therefore tried to reduce the risk of them running away or pocketing the proceeds of these transactions by granting them certain incentives. These incentives included opportunities to purchase their manumission, earn extra pay for extra work, negotiate their own labor contracts with prospective employers, make their own housing arrangements, and determine how they spent their time between hours designated for work and sleep.²⁶

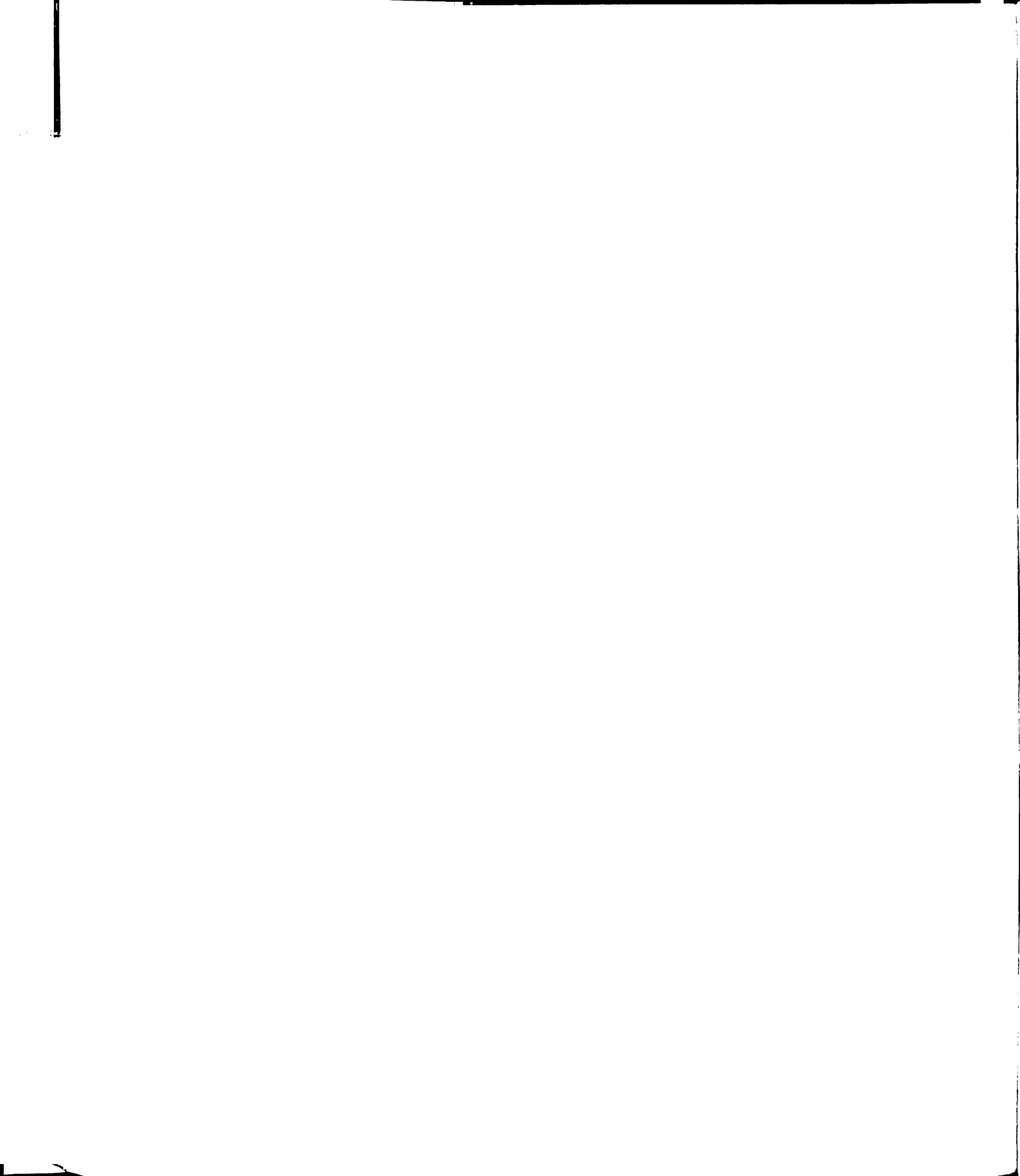
As in the case of previously discussed Brazilian and Cuban cities, the urban orientation of Richmond's labor market offered slave hires more opportunities to secure wages high enough to purchase their manumission than existed for slaves in rural areas. These self-purchased ex-slaves comprised a

a greater degree of benevolence between the former and the latter. Rather, Genovese claims that the cultural mores inspired by maintaining a slave society dictated the terms of the relationship between slaves and slaveholders, be it rural or urban. Other important texts in the larger discussion of urban versus rural forms of slavery include the following: Robert S. Starobin, Industrial Coal, Iron, & Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland & Virginia, 1775-1865 (Wesport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979); Charles Dew, Bond of Iron: Master & Slave at Buffalo Forge (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994); Suzanne Gerhing Schittman, "Slavery in Virginia's Tobacco Industry, 1840-1860" (Ph.D. Diss, University of Rochester, 1987); Richard Wade, Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820 (1964); and Claudia Goldin, Urban Slavery in the American South: A Quantitative Analysis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). The higher numbers of free colored women in Richmond than free colored men not unique. Free colored women outnumbered men in Virginia, especially in its towns. See Curry, The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850 (Chicago, 1981), 8-10; Jane Riblett Wilkie, "The Black Urban Population of the Pre-Civil War South," Phylon, XXXVII (September 1976), 250-62; Wilbur Zelinsky, "The Population Geography of the Free Negro in Ante-Bellum America," Population Studies, III (March 1950); 386-401. Note #30 of Chapter 4 in Suzanne Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860 (New York : Norton, c1984), p. 99.

large portion Richmond's free coloured community after 1830, which was also comprised of freeborns and slaves manumitted by last will and testament. Although the proportion of free coloureds in the city averaged ten percent of the city's population between 1800-1860, one third of their families contained enslaved members by 1830. In the same year, forty-six percent of the free coloureds in Richmond had experienced this kind of slave holding arrangement. These figures demonstrate a high degree of interaction between slaves and free coloureds, reinforced by evidence of them intermarrying, sharing living space, working in the same places, and attending the same churches. Richmond free coloureds and slaves used these forums of interaction to forge a Black community unlike the more color/class conscious free coloured communities in the urban areas of the Lower South.²⁷ Richmond free coloureds were thus more

²⁶ Johnathan D. Martin, Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), Chapter 2.

²⁷ Marie Tyler-McGraw and Gregg D. Kimball, In Bondage and Freedom: Antebellum Black Life in Richmond, Virginia (Richmond, VA, Chapel Hill, NC: Valentine Museum; University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 9. See E. Horace Fitchett, "The Origin and Growth of the Free Negro Population of Charleston, South Carolina" in Lacy Shaw, Jr., Not a Slave! Free People of Color in Antebellum America, 1790-1860 (New York: American Heritage, 1995), 77-90; Fitchett, "The Status of the Free Negro in Charleston, South Carolina, and His Descendents in Modern Society: Statement of the Problem," Journal of Negro History, Vol. 32, Issue 4, (October, 1947), 430-451; Robert Olwell, "Manumission and the Genesis of a Free Black Community in South Carolina, 1740-1790" in Landers, editor, Against All Odds (London, 1996). The issue of the Charleston color caste is described in greater detail by Michael P. Johnson and James Roark, Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984 & No Chariot Let Down: Charleston's Free People of Color on the Eve of Civil War (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984). See also Peter Wood, Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974); Thomas Ingersoll, "Free Blacks in a Slave Society: New Orleans, 1718-1812," William and Mary Quarterly, vol. 48, 2 (April, 1991), 196-197; Kimberly Hanger, Bounded Lives: Free Blacks in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803 (Durham & London: Duke University, 1997); John Blassingame, "The Negro in Antebellum New Orleans: Background for Reconstruction" in Lacy Shaw, Jr., Not a Slave! (New York, 1995), 98. For a broader perspective on Black and Free Black life in New Orleans, see Blassingame, Black New Orleans, 1860-1880 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); H.E. Sterkx, The Free Negro in Antebellum Louisiana (Rutherford, Madison, & Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972), 160-199.



focused on the often-contradictory tasks of improving their socio-economic condition and finding ways to extract their relatives from bondage than organizing a community based on the stratification variables of color and wealth. The story of Judith Hope's parents, Ceasar and Tenar, sheds light on this important topic.

The fact that Caesar Hope's wife, Tenar, was still enslaved when the two married was a common feature of Richmond Black families. More significantly, mixed status couples like the Hopes encountered a set of special problems. Shielding spouses and children from the prospect of sale and adapting to an ever-growing body of racially restrictive laws were serious challenges for the heads of these families that were stranded between the political borders of enslavement and manumission. These challenges, foreign to white families, constricted the capacity of free coloured families to accumulate property or seek a greater degree of liberty by moving to another place. Like white Richmonders, free coloureds in Richmond recognized property ownership as a symbol of independence, stability, and happiness.

The circumstances of stranded families, however, compelled the free coloureds in them to balance their quest for property with the equally important pursuit of protecting their families against the pitfalls of enslavement. Ceasar's attempt to balance these two imperatives of the stranded family began when he and his wife Tenar bore two children, instead of raising the money for her manumission first. Judith and Nelson Hope were thus born as the property of persons who were not their biological parents, which rendered them vulnerable to being sold in a state where the overwhelming majority of slaves experienced this

consequence at least once in their lifetimes.²⁸ Unlike enslaved tobacco factory workers such as Henry Brown and Burrell Mann, who lost their children and spouses to the city's slave market, Ceasar possessed the high wage skills of a barber. These highly marketable skills improved chances of raising the money to buy his family, but this advantage did not diminish the difficulties associated with this extremely taxing venture. Purchases of this kind were both expensive and time-consuming endeavors that automatically reduced a low wage earning family's capacity to accumulate "real" assets, unless they were willing to temporarily risk losing their enslaved relatives to the slave market. For example, Ceasar was employed in one of the highest paying occupations opened to free coloureds in Richmond, but it still took him six years (1799-1805) to raise the money to buy his wife out of bondage and to buy a piece of land. Tenar was purchased first because this move eliminated the chances of the couple bearing more enslaved children.* Ceasar's decision to buy Tenar first was obviously a strategic one, being that it provided him with a "free" living heir eligible to inherit his property. If Ceasar had died without manumitting his wife, the state could have claimed his property by *escheat*, because slaves were not eligible to inherit property. The purchase of Tenar also eliminated the prospect of spousal separation, but failed to resolve the issue of Judith and Nelson's continued enslavement.

²⁸ Tadman, Speculators and Slaves (Madison, Wis., 1989), chapter 4.

* Enslaved children were financial liabilities to mixed status couples such as Ceasar and Tenar Hope. The clock on the time they had to raise money to buy these children out of slavery began ticking as soon as they were conceived. Wilma King, Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America (Bloomington, Ind. : Indiana University Press, 1997).

Two years before Ceasar filed a will expressing his intent to purchase and manumit Nelson and Judith, the Virginia legislature passed a law requiring all slaves emancipated after May 1, 1806 to leave the state within twelve months or suffer the penalty of re-enslavement. Ceasar, who had already reached the point of “old age,” died soon after this document entered the public record. His premature death left Tenar with the awesome responsibility of manumitting their children with the meager wages generally paid to Black washerwomen. Part of Tenar’s burden was then lifted, in a case of strange luck, when Nelson suddenly died. Tenar raised the money to buy Judith by the time she reached her teens, but she refused to file for her daughter’s public manumission papers until the legislature allowed her to remain in Virginia. Tenar responded to this stopgap in the manumission process by holding Judith as a nominal slave. The first petition Judith’s counsel submitted to remain in the state was rejected because she was unable to convince the legislature that she had performed a “meritorious act” worthy of this privilege. Informing on a slave rebellion, providing an indispensable service to the white community, or saving the life of a white person were the only sure ways to meet this standard. Though her second petition was probably accepted after the legislature agreed to submit her case to a local court for further review, her case underscored the difficult challenges stranded families faced in a society deeply committed to the principle of property rights in slaves.

Judith Hope's bid for permission to remain in the state was probably successful due to the logic Virginia legislators applied to manumission before the Civil War. Their main priority on this issue was to contain the growth and socio-economic mobility of the free coloured population. Richmond was a particularly challenging place to accomplish these goals, because the combined free coloured and slave populations equaled the number of Whites until the 1850s (see table 1).²⁹

Table 1.

Slaves, Free Coloureds, and Whites in Richmond Population, 1800-1860

Year	Slaves	Free Coloureds	Whites	Slaves and Free Coloureds	Free Coloured % of Black Population
1800	40%	11%	49%	51%	21%
1810	39%	12%	49%	51%	24%
1820	36%	10%	53%	47%	22%
1830	40%	12%	48%	52%	24%
1840	37%	10%	53%	47%	20%
1850	36%	9%	55%	45%	19%
1860	31%	7%	62%	38%	18%

Source: Second through the Eighth Population Schedules of the U.S. Federal Census, Richmond City, Return of the Whole Number of Persons With the Several Districts of the United States...(Washington, 1802), 69-70.

The expansion of the free coloured caste was deemed antithetical to maintaining a labor system of racial bondage. Virginia slaveholders and their

²⁹ This pattern of racial population distribution was comparable to most other Southern cities and would have probably continued if it had not been for the large number of European immigrants settling there during the 1850s. See, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves: Urban Workingmen in the Antebellum South," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 88, No. 5 (Dec. 1983); 1175-1200; Kimball, *American City Southern Place* (Athens, 1999); Wade, *Slavery in the Cities* (New York, 1964).

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allies tended to characterize free coloureds as a naturally subversive population that threatened to undermine the stability of the state-sponsored slave system. Containing the free coloured population was therefore a central part of the strategies Virginia slaveholders used to preserve their principle of property rights in slaves. The legal groundwork for free coloured containment and slavery expansion was established in the Commonwealth's colonial era, which legislators in the 19th century continued to build on. Among the colonial precedents were those that transformed black female bodies into factories of slave labor, outlawed sexual relations between white indentured women and black indentured or enslaved men, prevented white indentured servants from becoming an unfree labor source for free coloureds, eliminated Christian conversion as a way for slaves to pass into the ranks of free coloureds, and weakened free coloureds and slaves' capacity to defend themselves by designating violent conflicts with Whites and baring firearms as criminal acts. Legal measures requiring manumitted slaves to leave the Commonwealth (1691) and establishing the notion of "meritorious act" as the standard for manumission (1723) represented two of the three most important pillars of free coloured containment policy. The third involved forbidding "Free Negroes and Mulattoes from entering the state" (1793), which was partly due to the shocking reports disseminated by newspapers about the slave rebellion unfolding at St. Domingue.³⁰ The devaluation of slave labor (1760-1790) in tobacco agriculture, the popularity of "natural rights" political doctrines, and the high number of slave runaways during America's first war with

³⁰ June Purcell Guild, Black Laws of Virginia: A Summary of the Legislative Acts of Virginia Concerning Negroes from the Earliest Times to the Present (Richmond, VA: Whittet, 1936), 94.



Britain compelled Virginia policy makers to revise the Commonwealth's position on manumission. This new manumission policy allowed slaveholders to manumit slaves without having to worry about removal costs (1782). Manumitted slaves were also no longer required to leave the state. Under these new terms, the free coloured population experienced rapid growth until the St. Dominguean slave revolution and Gabriel's failed revolt in Richmond encouraged lawmakers to turn back the clock on manumission. In this process, extreme modifications were made to the 1691 statute in 1806³¹, while the 1723 statute was fully restored in 1816. This new revision (1806) of the previously revised manumission policy (1782) threatened manumitted slaves with the penalty re-enslavement if they failed to leave the state within one year of receiving their free papers, and shifted the cost of removal to the manumitted slaves themselves. Enforcing this law in places like Richmond was a whole other matter. Acts (1793, 1801) requiring free coloureds to register with county and district authorities were supposed to make it easier for law enforcement officials to identify violators of the 1806 law and expedite their removal.³² Anecdotal evidence found in Richmond newspapers suggests that the famed 1806 law was rarely enforced.³³ Unfortunately, this information does not clarify how free coloureds actually responded to the law. For example, we know that Richmond Blacks filed scores of petitions with the legislature and area courts to remain in Virginia after they were manumitted. This

³¹The Code of Virginia. Second Edition. Including Legislation to the Year 1860 (Richmond: Printed By Ritchie, Dunnavnt & Co, 1860).

³² Purcell, Black Laws of Virginia (Richmond, VA, 1936), 95.

information suggests that the threat of the law's enforcement loomed large in the decision making process of Richmond free coloureds, which contradicted the narrative spun by Whites who were dissatisfied with its lack of enforcement.

Virginia Legislative petitions serve as a rich body of evidence upon which to base tentative conclusions about free coloured responses to the 1806 law. These petitions on the whole reflect Virginia policy maker desires' to limit free coloured population growth, and simultaneously avoid trampling on free coloured property rights. Reason suggests they chose this middle course of intervention to protect their own property rights as well. These documents reveal the logic Virginia Legislators used to separate acceptable requests to remain in the state from those deemed unacceptable. Cases approved involved free coloureds with aging parents, free coloureds who held property, aged manumitted women unlikely to have children, and free coloureds who provided services recognized as indispensable to the white community. Circumstances outlined in the petitions of Thomas Brewster, Elvira Jones, Milley, Salley Dabney, John Hopes, Robert Brown, John Elson, Dolly Woodson, Phillip Robertson, and Clara Robinson satisfied one or more of the above standards, while those of John and Mary Graham, Samuel White, Phil Hembro Gallego, Betsey and John Black, and Wilson Morris were summarily rejected.³⁴ William Morris might have satisfied

³³ Raymond Bennett Pinchbeck., Virginia Negro Artisans and Tradesmen (Richmond, VA: The William Byrd Press, 1926), 66; Gerald Mullin, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (New York: Oxford, 1972), 83; Wade, 244-245.

³⁴ Loren Schweninger & Robert Shelton, Race, slavery, and Free Blacks [microform]: Petitions to Southern Legislatures, 1777-1867. (Bethesda, MD : University Publications of America, c1998), Reel 16. Accession # 116680403; Reel 17, Accession # 11681407; Reel 17, Accession # 11681408; Reel 18, Accession # 11681902; Reel 18, Accession #11682304; Reel 18, Accession 11682202; Reel 18, Accession #11682610; Petition of Sally Dabney to the General Assembly, 20

these standards if he had not been the husband of a free coloured wife who bore him two female children. In this case, three women possessing the potential to add to the free coloured population outweighed the fact that Morris was a property holder. In contrast, Hezekiah Starr's ex-slave Milley, Salley Dabney, and Dolly Woodson offered evidence of their infertility to prove they posed no threat to the Legislature's goal of free coloured population control. Then there were the cases of Samuel White, Phillip Robertson, and John Hopes who possessed no free coloured reproductive power at all. These men were the husbands of enslaved women and fathers of enslaved children. Consequently, the Virginia Legislator did not object to their pleas to remain in the state with their families.

Outcomes associated with the petitions filed by John Winston and Elvira Jones were the only ones in Richmond city to contradict the logic applied in the other manumission cases. Winston may have been permitted to remain in the state with his enslaved wife and children, but his choice to comply with the 1806 law by moving to Philadelphia shortly after he was manumitted damaged his chances of being reunited with his family. By removing to Philadelphia, Winston faced a more strictly enforced law in Virginia that barred free coloureds from re-entering the state once they left. Elvira Jones was only anomaly in this entire group of cases under review. Like William Morris, Jones was a property owner and a parent of two free coloured children. In spite of her reproductive power as a free coloured woman, her bid to remain in the state was successful. Unlike

December 1834, Legislative Petitions, Richmond City, VSA; Schweninger & Shelton, Race, Slavery, and Free Blacks (Bethesda, 1998) Reel 18, Accession #11683608; Reel 20, Accession #11683626; Reel 20, Accession #11683717, reel 20; Reel 21, Accession #11683831; Reel 20, Accession #11684007; Reel 22, Accession #11684703.

free coloureds with enslaved relatives, slaves who had a chance to secure manumission and keep their nuclear families together in the process were often more willing to leave the state in compliance with the 1806 law. Such was the case of the slaves of Izard Bacon who were “anxious to leave the state rather [than] remain in this present situation.”³⁵

All of the above cases indicate that persons of colour pursuing manumission were ever mindful of the 1806 law, and carefully plotted their course in relationship to it. Moreover, the Samuel White, Phillip Robertson, and John Hope cases enrich our understanding of how free coloured persons with enslaved family members were far less likely to migrate out of the state or emigrate to Liberia. The freedom they might have secured by choosing to emigrate to Liberia was too high a price for them to pay when it meant severing ties with family members. Unlike some white fathers with mixed race children, the very meaning of freedom for free coloureds was intertwined with the preservation of their families. Therefore, free coloureds with enslaved relatives confronted the new manumission law with this purpose in mind, while continuing to exercise their rights to marry, accrue limited amounts of property, and petition in local courts.³⁶

Richmond free coloureds also struggled to adjust to a broader body of laws designed to constrain their physical and socio-economic mobility. More specifically, these laws established a separate legal sphere for free coloureds

³⁵ Schweninger & Shelton, Race, Slavery, and Free Blacks, Reel 18, Accession #11681611.

that overlapped with the slave code. The list of state codes was both long and tedious. State officials levied a tax on free coloureds that was used to pay for colonizing of them elsewhere. Law enforcement officials were permitted to enter their homes when free coloureds were suspected of possessing firearms or engaged in illegal assemblies. Free coloureds were prohibited from purchasing slaves except for relatives. They barred free coloureds from buying designated “poisonous” medicines. Counties and cities kept records describing free coloured places of residence and physical profiles. Free coloureds convicted of a felony could be enslaved or deported. They were required to carry free papers on their persons or suffer the penalty of imprisonment. Free coloureds were hired out like slaves if they could not afford to pay fees incurred when they spent time in jail. Anti-slavery activities such as assisting runaways carried the penalty of prison time. Sailors caught without a permit could be placed in jail until their ships departed. Attending formal education institutions was deemed illegal. Free coloureds were forbidden to barter or sell “agricultural products” without a license granted by a “respectable White person” Lastly, sex between free coloured men and white women was designated as a criminal act.³⁷ Other state measures were designed to discourage slaveholders from manumitting their slaves. One of them shifted the cost of maintaining impoverished ex-slaves to their former owners. Another demanded that persons manumitted by will remain enslaved until all

³⁶ Peter Onuf S. Onuf, “Every Generation an “Independent Nation”: Colonization, Miscegenation, and the Fate of Jefferson's Children,” The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., Vol. 57, No. 1 (Jan., 2000); 165-166.

³⁷ The Code of Virginia (Richmond, 1860), 242, 492, 809-810, 815, 510, 520-21; Richmond Code p. 438, 71, 76, 1828-1829 p. 25, c. 21 & 2 1833-4 p. 81, c. 68 & 10.

debts charged to an owner's estate were paid.³⁸ As the politics of anti-abolitionism became ever more charged in the 1850s, Richmond adopted free coloured containment ordinances that imitated or expanded on those laws passed on the state level. Richmond ordinances that forbade Blacks to walk or smoke on grounds near government buildings reified their place outside of the political mainstream. Other ordinances infringed on free coloureds' capacity to launch entrepreneurial enterprises without White oversight. Rigid restrictions were placed on free coloureds opening cook shops or "ordinaries." Renting apartments to slaves was outlawed. Free coloureds were not allowed to sell medicines or alcohol to slaves. They were required to notify white authorities if they left the city. Last were the ordinances revoking their right to assemble even when it involved attending Sunday worship services. For example, free coloureds or slaves were not supposed to remain in church more than thirty minutes after Sunday service ended. Violators were supposed to be thrown into jail and suffer the penalty of public whipping.³⁹

Whether or not each of these containment laws were strictly enforced mattered less than the fact that they were activated at moments when Whites felt most threatened. This practice coincided with the tendency of city leaders to augment the size of law enforcement budgets during periods of intense racial antagonism. These periods would include Gabriel's Conspiracy (1800), the War

³⁸ The Code of Virginia (Richmond, 1860), 511.

³⁹ Richmond (Va.). The Charters and Ordinances of the City of Richmond, with the Declaration of Rights, and Constitution of Virginia (Richmond Virginia: Ellyson's Steam Presses, 1859), 193-201, 218-219, LVA. Richmond, Virginia.

of 1812, Turner's revolt (1831) and the increased circulation of immediate abolitionist literature in the 30s, 40s and 50s.⁴⁰ Police became especially physical with Blacks when they were suspected of planning a rebellion. The terror tactics used against Blacks in the wake of the Turner rebellion were particularly telling. One witness described this scene where...

Slaves were whipped, hung, cut down with swords in the streets, if found away from their quarters after dark. The whole city was in the utmost confusion and dismay; and a dark cloud of terrific blackness, seemed to hang over the heads of the Whites. So true is it, that 'the wicked flee when no man pursueth.' Great numbers of the slaves were locked in the prison, and many were "half hung," as it was termed; that is, they were suspended to some limb of a tree, with a rope about their necks, so adjusted as not to quite strangle them, and then they were pelted by the men and boys with rotten eggs.⁴¹

Salaries and the number of day patrolman and night watchmen were increased during these situations, providing new opportunities for white men within the city's lower strata to earn a living in the business of controlling "Negroes." The city's business mentality toward law enforcement, however, encouraged reductions in police pay and overall numbers when the perceived threat of Black insurrection was low and the city encountered periods of economic recession (i.e. 1819 & 1837).

Even during the periods where anxieties about Black unruliness were the highest, police resources were often insufficient to deal with the level of crime

⁴⁰ Louis Benard Cei, "Law Enforcement in Richmond: A History of Police-Community Relations, 1737-1974" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1975) 1-43

⁴¹ Henry Brown & Richard Stearns, Narrative of Henry Brown, Who Escaped from Slavery Enclosed in a Box 3 Feet Long and 2 Wide; Written From a Statement of Facts Made by Himself With Remarks Upon the Remedy for Slavery by Charles Stearn (Boston: Brown & Stearns, 1849), 38-39.

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that accompanied increases in the Richmond population. This explains why police took on fewer cases of individual free coloured removal, which were delegated to the Richmond and later Virginia Colonization Societies. The police instead focused on cases involving runaway slaves, robberies, arson, assault and battery, prostitution, the use of “foul language” in public, and other violations that hardly ever rose to the level of felony crimes (i.e. murder, rape, aiding runaways, etc...).⁴² James Sidbury has interpreted the high number of brushes slave hires had with the law, along with their frequent appearances in gambling dens, “tippling houses,” and ordinaries as signs of a people living in a state of quasi freedom. City authorities’ inability to stop them from hiring themselves out, limit their housing to factory owned dormitories (1852), and prevent white owners of small business from selling slaves and free coloureds contraband goods has been used to support the quasi-free argument as well.

The high demand for black labor in the city overrode the willingness of white proprietors to comply with black laws, leaving them to pursue freedoms that were inaccessible to Blacks employed in rural areas.⁴³ However, the experiences of Richmond’s Black female slaves, who comprised half of the slave population tells a more nuanced story. Most of these women lived under conditions similar to those experienced by enslaved agricultural workers, which was ostensibly a world apart from the experience of slave hires.

⁴² “The Mayoral Docket,” Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia; Richmond, VA; City Sergeant, Section 1 Register, 1841-1846, Richmond Virginia, Virginia Historical Society, Mss3R4156b1.

⁴³ U.B. Phillips was the first to posit this argument. Richard Wade, James Sidbury, Marie Tyler McGraw and Gregg Kimball and others have since advanced it.

The high demand for Black labor in Richmond's expanding base of tobacco factories suggests that floor managers would have been encouraged to grant non-violent incentives in the form of slowing the pace of work or extending cash payments to workers to increase output. Otherwise, their laborers would have found other employers during the city's annual spectacle when "niggers from all parts of the country" came "to let themselves" out.⁴⁴ Henry Brown's stint as an enslaved tobacco worker suggested the contrary. He described a scene of intense twelve to sixteen hour workdays where tobacco leaves were stemmed, twisted, and packed into hogsheads. Meanwhile, the specter of violent reprisals against Black workers suspected of sloughing off on the job was ever present. In one case he described...

a colored man, who had been in the habit of singing religious songs quite often, was taken sick and did not make his appearance at the factory. For two or three days no notice whatever was taken of him, no medicine provided for him, and no physician sent to heal him. At the end of that time, Mr. Allen ordered three strong men to go to the man's house, and bring him to the factory. This order being obeyed, the man, pale and hardly able to stand, was stripped to his waist, his hands tied together, and the rope fastened to a large post. The overseer then questioned him about his singing, told him that it consumed too much time, and that he was going to give him some medicine, which would cure him. The poor trembling man made no reply, when the pious Mr. Allen, for no crime except that of sickness, inflicted 200 lashes upon the quivering flesh of the invalid, and he would have continued his "apostolic blows," if the emaciated form of the languishing man, had not sunken under their heavy weight, and Mr. Allen was obliged to desist.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Gault, John to Sam Gault, letter, 1853. 1 p. Mss2G2365a1., Vihi.

⁴⁵ Narrative of Henry Brown... (Boston 1849), 43-44.

In conjunction with the real threat of plantation style physical abuse that black workers encountered in factories, the Richmond slave market was another source of coercion in their daily lives. Slave trading eclipsed the annual sales of tobacco, flour, coal, and iron manufactories making it the most profitable industry in Richmond. Meanwhile, it subsidized the businesses of local jailers, grocers, clothing retailers, newspapers owners, and rental property owners who sponsored its existence along with the slave traders themselves. Their combined effort created the largest urban slave-trading center in the Upper South, and secured the investments of the fifty percent of the city's White family heads who owned slaves. From the perspective of free coloureds and slaves, this market always held the potential to disrupt their families. The high prices paid for slaves in Richmond also tempted many an opportunist to kidnap free coloureds and sell them as slaves. The slave trade and incidences of free coloureds being sold into slavery so offended white Quakers that they appealed to the state legislature to pass laws tailored to abolish both in 1802.⁴⁶ The strong support among Richmond's white citizenry for slavery prohibited the passage of anti-slave trade legislation. Virginia Legislators later passed a law forbidding the sale of free coloureds under the penalty of death. This measure did not however stop amateur slave traders such as Thomas Williams from testing the boundaries of this law. Williams had bought Manual Dodson in Washington City and tried to sell him in Richmond before the daughter of his deceased owner could fulfill the

⁴⁶ Quakers were the most virulent opponents of the slave trade and the "selling of free people of Color," who raised these issues in petitions to the state legislature. Though the state passed legislation that proscribed the death penalty for persons attempting to sell free coloureds into

willed terms of Dodson's manumission. Manual Dodson had been the slave of Elizabeth Magruder, a resident of "Washington County in the district of Columbia" in 1839. In her will, Magruder left Manual and his sister Mary to her niece. The will instructed that Manual and Mary be kept as slaves for no more than twenty-seven and fifteen years respectively. After they had completed these terms, they were to be released from bondage. To avert the potential of any foul play, Magruder appointed George Watterston as her executor who was supposed to make sure the terms of Mary and Manual's manumissions were honored. When Elizabeth Hamilton, Magruder's niece died before Manual and Mary were released, Dr. Charles Hamilton—Elizabeth's surviving husband, placed Manual in the Washington City Jail. Hamilton claimed he had the right to do this because there were fourteen years left in Manual's indentured contract held by his deceased wife. Manual was subsequently sold to a slave trader, Thomas Williams on 14 November 1839. Williams then took Manual to Richmond where he intended to sell him. Along the way, Manual questioned Williams about Magruder's will. Williams told Manual that the will had been "done away with by act of congress" and he had bought him outright for "life." Manual was not however returned to Washington City or manumitted. Henrico County officials later apprehended Williams, and Manual was hired out for a year to pay for his clothes and lodging fees. When the case finally came to trial Williams contradicted his original statement made to Manual by telling the court that he had purchased the Manual for \$262.50 cents with the understanding that he

slavery, there is evidence such remedies were rarely applied to these cases. See Schweninger & Shelton, Reel 16, Accession #s 11680207, 11680202, and 11681708.

would be released 19 June 1854. This statement of course recognized the terms scripted out in Elizabeth Magruder's original will. Manual's witnesses, on the contrary, claimed that Williams had stated the he was "on his way to New Orleans"—home of the biggest inter-state slave market in the Lower South. When Judge Robinson of the superior court of Henrico and Richmond finally heard the case in April of 1841, he delivered a mixed decision. Thomas Williams was ordered to post a bond of \$1500 in order to reacquire the services of Manual Dodson as a slave hire. If he complied, he could hirer Manual out in Washington City or Henrico County until 19 November 1854. Until he satisfied this requirement, Henrico County authorities would continue to hire Manual out until the aforementioned date, when he would receive his manumission under the conditions of Elizabeth Magruder's will. The purpose of this action was to pay for the jail fees Manual accrued under the auspices of the Henrico/Richmond superior court.⁴⁷ This and the above evidence demonstrates the integral role the Richmond slave market played in the lives of free coloureds and slaves living in or traveling to the city.

The spatial relationship between Richmond's slave market and the city's Black community also illustrated the coercive influence the former had on the latter. The first major cluster of free coloureds lived near the intersection of Broad and Madison streets and in the area known as Oregon Hill. Bacon's Water Branch, Navy Hill, and Shockoe Creek, north of Oregon Hill, enclosed the second cluster. The third significant haven for free coloureds and slaves lay within the

⁴⁷ See *Williams v. Manuel*, SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA, 40 Va. 639; 1843 Va. LEXIS 12; 1 Rob. 639.

parameters of Leigh, Fifteenth, Twenty-Sixth, and Clay Streets.⁴⁸ This location was the main site of Richmond's slave trading houses, frequented by local and out of town buyers mostly from the cotton growing states of the Lower South. Fifty-nine separate establishments traded local and rural slaves in this part of the city by 1856.⁴⁹ Slaves were regularly paraded through the streets before arriving in these holding areas, which were in clear view of the Blacks living and working nearby. After slaves were brought to these houses the business of slave trading became a secret affair, wherein exchanges of slave property were made in closed meetings attended by selected groups of buyers and sellers. C. Abner, who was in Richmond on business, described one of these meetings in a letter to one of his Charleston associates:

At Richmond I ...visited the slave pens and auction sales and I have never looked upon a more [aggravating?] sight, young girls are first on the stand, and undergo the most indecent examinations and questioning, they are made to march up and down the room, with their clothes above their knees, so that a gang of slave traders can see the motion of their limbs, dirty fingers at first put into their mouths to see if their teeth are good, and if they are promanced[sic] "sound kind" the bidding commences, and the girl is sold to the highest bidder, I saw several sold, to go to the cotton fields of the far south, at these sales, the slaves are treated more like brutes, than human beings made in the image of God about 200 slaves, left Richmond the time we did, to go to their new homes at the south—⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Elsa Barkley Brown and Gregg D. Kimball, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond," Journal of Urban History, Vol. 21, No. 3, (March 1995) 299-301.

⁴⁹ Ralph R. White & Philip Schwarz, Seeing the Scars of Slavery in the natural environment: An Interpretive Guide to the Manchester Slave Trail Along the James River in Richmond (Richmond: James River Park System, 2002).

⁵⁰ Abner, C. , "Slave Pens in Richmond," November 18, 1859, Vihi, Mss2Ab722a

Once sold, most slaves were organized into chain or rope linked coffles, before they were marched hundreds of miles overland to obscure and prominent trading stations further south. Railroad cars and ships were also modes of travel for the slaves leaving Richmond through the trade, but the overland coffle remained the most common.

Richmond slave trading's *raison d'etre*, which eventually undermined the Liberian emigration movement, was the extreme profitability of slave speculation. Indeed, more slaves were sold in Richmond during periods when tobacco prices were highest in Virginia. This evidence has persuaded one scholar to argue that planters in the Upper south sold most of their slaves for profit rather than to avoid bankruptcy.⁵¹ Lower Southern planters simultaneously sponsored this speculating mentality through their willingness to pay top dollar for Upper Southern slaves. Established and upstart slave traders used the high prices generated by this speculators' market to convince sellers to send their slaves to Richmond. One of these traders was James B. Hargrove, who worked out of the city's St. Charles Hotel. Hargrove offered the following information to a potential seller:

Families are selling well provided the child or Children are likely—I would advise you to send your girls down at once as the market is poorly supplied—with good Negroes at present – and all those young and likely seen selling at fair prices—you would loose nothing in my opinion by sending your girl, down. Should we think it just to hold them a while after getting here.

⁵¹ Tadman, chapter 4.

They would improve and would be ready to take the best fit of the rise. Should this be any over present prices—which I think doubtful...⁵²

Table 2.

Estimation of Richmond Slave Sale (1852)

Boys—4 feet \$425	Do. 4 Feet 3 inches \$450	Do. 4 feet 6 inches, \$ 475
Do. 4 feet 9 inches \$ 500	Do. 5 feet 550 \$600	Do. 5 feet 6 inches, \$600
Do. 6 feet, to \$700		
Girls—4 feet \$375	Do. 4 feet 3 inches, \$400	Do. 4 feet 6 inches, \$400
Do. 4 feet 9 inches, \$ 500	Do. 5 feet, \$550, \$600	Do. 5 feet 2 inches, \$620
Do. 5 feet 6 inches, \$700	Do. 6 feet, \$700 to \$ 775	
No. 1 Men from \$900 to 1050	Second rate, from \$700 to \$850	
No. 1 Women from \$750 to \$850 extra \$900--		

Source: Hargrove, James B. Richmond [blank] 185 [blank] : Dear Sir: I beg leave to inform you I have taken the auction room under the St. Charles Hotel ... for the selling to slaves ... / Very respectfully, James B. Hargrove. Special Collections ; West Side ; Broadside 1852 .H27 FF

Richmond slave traders like Hargrove were involved in the ongoing process of buying slaves cheaply from rural sellers before they resold them to local or Lower Southern planters. As the demand for slaves increased in the mid-1850s, the single slave-trading firm of Dickson and Hill was reported to have racked up two million dollars in sales in 1856. When the total slave sales from other Richmond firms were added, the figure for that year increased to four million dollars. The amount of these slave sales represented twice the value of all Richmond real

⁵² Jame B. Hargrove, Richmond [blank] 185 [blank] : Dear Sir: I beg leave to inform you I have taken the auction room under the St. Charles Hotel ... for the selling to slaves ... / Very respectfully, James B. Hargrove. Special Collections ; West Side ; Broadside 1852 .H27 FF.

estate in 1860 and more than twenty times the value of property owned by the city's free coloureds.⁵³ Slave sales in Richmond also rivaled those made by Richmond's sprawling network of "manufactories." These comparisons strongly suggest that slave trading was the most highly developed business in the city.

It's just as important to realize that the slave trade in Richmond was part of a larger territorial expansionist movement, dedicated to increasing the size and political influence of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. The promoters of expansion often controlled the U.S. Presidency, seats in Congress, seats on the federal bench, and seats in state and territorial legislatures. Moreover, American expansionism was nearly as old as the republic itself, drawing upon the energies of numerous private supporters. Pro-slavery expansionism was initiated by the Louisiana and Florida purchases, before this anglo-centric movement culminated with the conquest of southwestern territories that had been the property of Mexico (1844-1846). As yeast is to undeveloped bread dough slavery was to the American expansion movement. Indeed, slavery expansion encouraged the proliferation of a Southern identity that equated the acquisition of land and slaves with the pursuits of freedom, independence, and happiness. Meanwhile, textile manufactures and transportation magnates in the American northeast and Europe provided slaveholders with the access to distant markets and capital they needed to spread this Southern brand of freedom. Consequently, free persons of colour and slaves were often pulled into a series

⁵³ Tadman, 63; Frederic Bancroft, Slave Trading in the Old South (Baltimore, MD: J.H. Furst Company, 1931), divided by free coloured property values found in the book of Luther Porter Jackson.

of conflicts waged between advocates of anti-slavery freedom and pro-slavery freedom. The brand of anti-slavery freedom free coloureds recognized was however unique, because it rejected notions of inherent racial inferiority that were accepted as gospel by many white abolitionists and pro-slavery theorists.

The failure of the Gabriel Conspiracy and the Nat Turner revolt to destroy the dominant form of Southern freedom compelled Blacks like those in Richmond to devise alternative liberation strategies. Black Richmonders's method of attaining liberation included elements of Gabriel's republican-integrationism and Turner's messianic-millennialism, but they resisted the temptation to use violence to achieve this end.⁵⁴ They instead focused on establishing institutions that served the interests of their community. Among these were families, churches, schools, and the Burial Society. Churches were the most significant institutions patronized by Richmond's Black community, surpassed only by their families. First Baptist, located at the corner of Broad and 14th streets was the church home of most of the city's Black Christians during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. An All-White staff of ministers was recognized as the official leadership of this church, but slaves and free coloureds represented the majority of the membership. The lack of central authority at First Baptist was another important matter at this church, because it opened opportunities for members of the Black

⁵⁴ Douglass Egerton, Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, c1993); Steven B. Oates, The Fires of Jubilee : Nat Turner's Fierce Rebellion (New York : Harper & Row,1975).

majority to secure leadership roles. For example, First Baptist appointed five Black exhorters and ordained preachers at a moment when Methodist evangelicals were retreating from their previous anti-slavery position and other Baptist churches were reconfirming their proslavery stance. White Methodist and Baptist preachers had in the mean time already crafted a theology that reconciled slavery and racism with their doctrines of Christian worship, which contributed to the growth of biracial/segregated congregations. Blacks living in non-slaveholding northern cities responded to this race first theology by creating their own churches and denominations such the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) and African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) traditions. Black Richmonders who were fed up with the disadvantages of segregated worship at First Baptist pursued a similar course. They described their frustrations in an 1823 petition that requested permission to establish a separate church:

It has been the misfortune of your petitioners to be excluded from the churches meeting Houses and other places of public devotion which are used by White persons, consequence of no appropriate places being assigned for them, except in a few Houses and they have been compelled to look to private Houses, where they are much crowded and where a portion of their Brethren are unable to hear or partake of the worship which is going on. Your Petitioners consisting of free persons and slaves, have been for some time associated with the Baptist Church, a list of their members consisting of about 700 persons has been submitted for the inspection to the Head of the Police of the city and no objection has been by him made to their moral character.⁵⁵

In spite of the endorsements this venture received from the mayor and law enforcement officials, the Virginia legislature refused to allow it to proceed.

⁵⁵ Schweninger & Shelton, Reel 18. Accession # 11682302.

The slave conspiracy in Charleston a year earlier (1822), which allegedly drew support from the AME church, undoubtedly influenced Virginia's decision to deny free coloureds the right to found a separate church in Richmond.⁵⁶ Plans for a separate church were then hampered by the Turner rebellion (1831), which renewed white suspicions about the connection between separate black churches and slave insurrections. While advocates of this movement waited for public opinion to change on this issue, First Baptist officials continued to punish more Black members than Whites for moral infractions and complied with the state's new pieces of legislation outlawing Black assemblages and preachers.⁵⁷

Ten years after the hysteria following the Turner rebellion died down, members of Richmond's first, second, and third Baptist churches combined their resources to help create the city's first semi-autonomous Black church. Their decision to support this project was more so an act of expedience than benevolence. White leaders at First Baptist were simply no longer able to "discipline" or tolerate the "culture" that "colored people" brought to the church. Black members at First Baptist had also become too numerous for First Baptist officers to segregate and maintain a biracial congregation at the same time. As a remedy, the white members of First Baptist sold their building to the Black majority at half the cost of its market

⁵⁶ Douglas R. Egerton, He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey (Madison Wisconsin, Madison House, 1999); John Lofton, Denmark Vesey's Revolt: The Slave Plot That Lit a Fuse to Fort Sumter (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1983); Richard C. Wade, "The Vesey Plot: A Reconsideration," Journal of Southern History 30, Issue 2 (May, 1964); 143-161 ; Robert S. Strobins, ed., Denmark Vesey: The Slave Conspiracy of 1822 (Englewood, Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1970).

value. The founding of Richmond's First African Baptist Church was the outcome of this negotiation. Members of the African church raised half of the money necessary to buy the building, while the white Baptist churches granted them a three thousand dollar loan to cover the rest.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, First Baptist constructed a new building for its remaining white members at the intersection of Broad and Twelfth streets.⁵⁹ To alleviate any remaining fears of First African Baptist becoming a forum for slave insurrections, the white officers of First Baptist required the African church to comply with the Virginia ban on black preachers and relinquish their right to hold title to church property. First African Baptist reluctantly agreed to these terms, but retained their right to choose the white pastor and thirty members serving on their deacons' board responsible for meting out church discipline, organizing church finances, and establishing committees for special projects such as poor relief.⁶⁰

Under the direction of pastor Robert Ryland and these deacons, the First African Baptist Church (FABC) membership nearly tripled in size after only fifteen years of existence (see Table 3). Without excluding members who died, members lost to slave sale, members dismissed for moral indiscretions, and members who left to form the city's two other major Black Baptist churches, FABC served the worship needs of 3,832 people,

⁵⁷ "First Baptist Minutes," [n.p.] The Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁵⁸ "The Minutes of the African Baptist Church of Richmond: Constituted A.D. 1841," 92, ViHi, Richmond Virginia. Hereafter FABCM.

⁵⁹ Robert Ryland, "Reminiscences of the First African Church," American Baptist Memorial 14 (September 1855); 262-63.

1841-1865,⁶¹ and became the leading extra-familial Black institution in Richmond.

Table 3.
Baptisms at First African Baptist

Year	Baptisms	Year	Baptism
1842	618	1849	185
1843	388	1850	173
1844	71	1851	151
1845	101	1852	72
1846	321	1853	54
1847	170	1854	62
1848	37	1855	42
Total	2382		

Source: Ryland, "Reminiscences of the First African Church," pp. 262-264.

Compared to the attempts Black Richmonders made to found schools, the FABC's rise to prominence was relatively uncontroversial. Three major reasons explained why Whites were less hostile to the idea of an African church than they were to Black institutions of formal education. First, Ryland's reputation as a the president of the Baptist Richmond College and as a slave holder dispelled White fears of the FABC becoming a breeding ground for slave insurrections. Second, a committee

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 264.

of eighteen members from the city's three White Baptist churches was assembled to oversee the affairs of the FABC. Third, Ryland promoted a proslavery theology similar to one created by Baptist and Methodist preachers after the American War for Independence. The main tenants of this theology were as follows: God sanctioned slavery as part of His plan to bring order to the world, created inherent differences between Blacks and Whites, and opposed emancipation because it destabilized human communities.⁶² Promoters of this theology naturally recognized slaveholders as the stewards or fathers of enslaved families, appointed by God to oversee their welfare. These ideas countered the "secular theory of natural rights" incorporated into most state constitutions and acted as a foundation for popular "slavery as a positive good" theories in the 19th century.⁶³ Racism was an integral part of the belief systems embraced by proslavery theologians and staunch supporters of secular "natural rights" doctrines. The only major difference was that proslavery theologians did not necessarily support programs of migration or emigration as viable Black liberation solutions. Ryland and other proslavery theologians assumed Blacks would be liberated in an unseen otherworldly realm known as Heaven. Therefore, they encouraged Blacks to accept the rule of White slave owners in the material world they inhabited. From Ryland's

⁶¹ Ibid, 262, John T. O'Brien, "Factory, Church and Community: Blacks in Antebellum Richmond," The Journal of Southern History, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Nov., 1978), 526.

⁶² Sylvia Frey recognizes William Capers and Richard Furman as the pioneers of this theology. See Frey, 264-265.

⁶³ Ibid, 271.

perspective, things of this “world” were based on the fleeting concepts of “birth, color, wealth, station, social position, [and] intellectual polish,” while the more lasting extra-worldly objectives of a human life could only be achieved through the pursuit of “moral excellence” and “eternal glorification.”⁶⁴ Ryland outlined these ideas in his Scripture Catechism for Colored People that prescribed a different method of religious instruction for Blacks and supported the principle of property ownership in slaves for Whites.⁶⁵ Ryland’s loyalty to slavery did not however go so far as to forbid members of the African church from consulting biblical scriptures on their own. Many FABC members therefore developed strong reading skills,⁶⁶ and helped revive a more public campaign to promote Black literacy in Richmond that had been driven underground by the 1830s. Whites did not “pull down” the Church for this reason, although the schools established by Christopher McPherson and Joseph Sheppard had met this violent end. A few Whites did however condemn the African church in the press as the mother of subversive secret organizations like the Union Burial Society and other illegal Black assemblies.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Ryland, “Reminiscences...,” p.265.

⁶⁵ Robert Ryland, Scripture Catechism for Colored People (Richmond: Harrold and Murray, 1848), 128-131, 139, The Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, VA.

⁶⁶ Robert Ryland, “First African Church,” in H.A. Tupper, ed., The First Centry of the First Baptist Chcruch of Richmond, Virginia1780-1880 (Richmond: Carlton McCarthy, 1880), 252-253.

⁶⁷ The Union Burial Society (UBS) was a particular concern because it represented one of few Black organizations in Richmond that held title to communal property. Unlike the First African Baptist Church, the UBS had no white oversight. See “Constitution of The Union Burial Ground Society, January 23, 1848” in Union Burial Society, City of Richmond Papers, 1831, 1841, 1848-1851, Library of Virginia, No. 22514, Richmond Virginia; Richmond Enquirer, July 1, 1958;

Any misgivings White authorities had about Blacks learning to read were not supported by the figures listed in the 1850 and 1860 censuses for Richmond city. For example, the overwhelming number of Richmond free coloureds (over the age of 30 in 1860) were illiterate (905). Skilled free coloureds workers were the persons most likely in this cohort to possess the ability to read. However, they like the majority of factory workers, seamstresses, washerwomen, and other less skilled workers were illiterate as well. In light of this evidence, it would be accurate to interpret FABC as a place where the hope for comprehensive Black literacy was preserved until more public attempts addressed this problem after the Civil War.

Meanwhile, First African Baptist members focused on building a Christian community that relied on its democratic constitution to serve the interests of the membership. Power at First African Baptist flowed back and forth between the church's Deacons assigned to manage the church's internal affairs and the larger congregation that elected them. This republican mode of democratic power distribution struck an important balance between the authority exercised by the Deacons who were mostly free coloured males and the congregation comprised mostly of enslaved men and women. The congregation gave Deacons the power to adjudicate matters of church discipline, while retaining the right to hold

Richmond Daily Dispatch, August 24, 1858; Richmond Republican, July 30, 1852; Daily Dispatch, June 19, 22, 1858 and April 11, 1860 covers the issue of black secret societies.

them accountable to the same standards.⁶⁸ It was therefore not uncommon for FABC Deacons' Board members to be disciplined by the congregation for moral infractions while simultaneously using the authority vested in them to suspend or exclude members from fellowship in cases involving delinquent debt payments, fighting, drunkenness, gambling, and adultery. In this regard, the Deacons that were assigned to oversee member behavior in each of the city's major wards served as the church community's moral policemen, judges, and juries. Their approach in meting out punishment to members charged with a moral violation was far from draconian, especially in instances where slavery precluded strict compliance with the moral standards of the church. For example, the Deacons Board agreed not to "censure" Betsy Lloyd if she chose to remarry because her enslaved husband had been "remove[d] to New Orleans."⁶⁹

Deacons spent most of their time dealing with issues related to member's moral behavior, but they were just as concerned with the matter of church autonomy. After seven years (1841-1848) of making payments on the loan the White First Baptist churches advanced them to buy the building, the Deacons Board at FABC drafted a resolution demanding three coloured members be appointed to the then all White board of

⁶⁸ On two separate occasions Deacons were called to account for what members perceived to be abusive behavior. Blacksmith, Gilbert Hunt, felt so pressured by his conflict with members that he offered to resign his post, which was later rescinded. A petition signed by 336 members was issued charging Wilson Morris with using abusive "language" toward two other Deacons in public. Morris offered a letter of resignation, and the church accepted it. See FABCM, 136, 202-203, 205.

⁶⁹ FABCM, 166.

trustees that held title to the property.⁷⁰ This resolution caused such a public stir that Sidney Baxter, Attorney General of Virginia, sent a letter to the Deacons Board urging them to reconsider their position. Baxter argued, “that it would be inexpedient to make any portion of the trustees persons of color and that it might endanger the title to the property.” Facing the possibility of total dissolution, FABC members agreed to allow three White men at First Baptist to hold the title to the FABC property in trust.⁷¹

The power the state government used to dissuade FABC Deacons from seeking some control over the property its members paid for exposed the limits of this Black institution’s power. Although the white public tolerated individual Black property ownership, they resisted the idea of Black communal property ownership because they believed these arrangements encouraged unlawful assemblies and slave insurrections. This position held by white Richmonders did not however prevent the FABC from assisting its members in other ways, which chipped away at the primacy of slavery in Richmond. The cases of “Brother Thomas Allen” and “Brother Noah Davis” were good examples. Allen, a slave, convinced the Deacons Board to subsidize his manumission while he prepared to preach “the gospel to the heathen” in Africa. Although the FABC did not have the cash to purchase Allen at the price of \$600 that a Richmond

⁷⁰ FABC, 137.

⁷¹ FABC, 142, 146-7.

court set for him in an estate settlement, they encouraged him to request donations from “friends” in “Manchester, Petersburg, Norfolk, and Fredericksburg” parishes. This network enabled Allen to raise the money for his manumission, but his request to become a missionary in Africa was rejected by an organization in Boston because they lacked the funds to send him. Allen thus resolved to resettle in New Bedford, Massachusetts where he managed to secure employment in the fall of 1843.⁷² Davis, an enslaved preacher, received similar assistance from the FABC. In his case, the Board resolved to take up a “collection” on the second Sunday in January of 1850, where the proceeds were to be used “to redeem his wife and children from bondage.”⁷³

The aid the FABC granted enslaved preachers’ in their manumissions was less controversial than the attempts Blacks made to promote literacy in Richmond. Whites after all perceived formal education as a harbinger slave insurrection. Even before the Nat Turner rebellion rekindled Jeffersonian fears of a winner take all “race war” in Virginia, White opposition to Black education in Richmond had already attained a high level of support. Occupations requiring literacy were thus closed to most Blacks with hopes of translating these skills into higher wages and levels of socio-economic independence. Two failed attempts made by free coloured men to establish schools for local free coloured boys reflected this trend.

⁷² FABC, 47, 79.

As early as 1811, former slave, Christopher McPherson posted a letter in a Richmond newspaper soliciting support for a school whose mission was to instruct free coloured boys in the “pure principles of Morality and Religion.” Under increasing White pressure, the paper’s editor pulled the ad and McPherson was censured in court for fomenting a public “nuisance.” The actual school McPherson wanted to found never really got off the ground, but he remained hopeful about the future prospects of advancing his radical ideas. McPherson believed that the Christian apocalypse was close at hand. Therefore, “the people of colour throughout the United States” needed to be properly educated in the ways of the Biblical faith to avoid being consumed by the fires of the impending judgment.⁷⁴ Indeed, McPherson’s cosmology bore many similarities to the presumably suicidal course of action pursued by Nat Turner and his followers in South Hampton, Virginia. While Turner believed he and his followers had been selected by God to issue the deathblow to slavery by ushering in the Messianic age with the sword,⁷⁵ McPherson hoped to use the pen to prepare Blacks for the coming Divine Revolution that came to him in a dream. McPherson also used the mathematical skills he acquired while working as a clerk for several prominent white men in Virginia to predict when the Messiah would return to collect the souls of the faithful.

⁷³ FABCM, 176.

⁷⁴ Virginia Argus, Richmond, Virginia, March 2, 1811.

⁷⁵ Oates, The Fires of Jubilee (New York, 1975), 36-41.

McPherson and Turner's visions of Messianic redemption never materialized in their life times. Therefore, they were compelled to face the consequences of a system committed to suppressing the efforts of Black subversives. Turner and his followers were hunted down, apprehended, and put to death, along with hundreds of other unsuspecting slaves in the pandemonium that followed the Southampton revolt. McPherson's demise was much slower and humiliating. Although he had established a reputation as a property owner, a clerk with flawless record keeping skills, and a leader of one of Richmond's more affluent free coloured families, his disagreements with White Richmond authorities resulted in him being checked into an insane asylum in Williamsburg. He was later released under his own recognizance and returned to Richmond, but his message of the coming millennium never gained traction in the city. Once again, he became embroiled in a series of court battles, wherein members of the White public accused him of disturbing the peace. By the time McPherson died in 1816, he had so infuriated White Richmond jurists that they deliberately blocked the execution of his will. Two of McPherson's enslaved children were therefore left without the money to expedite their manumissions, and the rest of his surviving relatives were denied their right to make claims on his estate.⁷⁶ His demise demonstrated how

⁷⁶ Edmund Berkley, Jr. "Prophet Without Honor Christopher McPherson, Free Person of Colour," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 77/1 (April, 1969) 179-190.

tenuous were Black property rights, particularly when one questioned the legitimacy of slavery.

Joseph Sheppard's campaign to establish a separate school in Richmond met the same end as McPherson's, although his plans were considerably less ambitious. His school was designed to prepare young boys to be effective leaders in Liberia. Sheppard apparently acquired his education in Petersburg where he lived for eleven years before relocating to Richmond. After three years of preparation, Sheppard moved boldly to solicit funding and pupils for his new school, described in the following ad:

I beg leave to tender to my patrons my grateful thanks for past encouragement, while, by increased thanks for past encouragement, while, by increased exertions and by the known character and the utility of my school, both to individuals and society, I hope to merit future support. Having at considerable cost, compared with my condition, built a tiny residence on 18th street, sufficiently distant from the center of business, a commodious schoolhouse, and having every convenience that could be expected for my prescribed circumstances for the accommodation of a respectable school of free colored pupils, I now flatter myself that my exertions to serve my colored brethren will be duly appreciated by them.

I would cordially invite to this institution the friendly attention of those gentlemen who charitably hope they are fostering for Liberia callow chiefs and embryo statesmen. By your love for your country, by your consideration for degraded man, encourage an institution which has for its object no less the honor of society than individual happiness—the elevation of the free people of color from mental thralldom, from degradation. In this school are taught English Grammar, Mercantile Arithmetic, Geography and Mensuration, with the necessary subordinate branches of education.

Terms—\$ 3.75 payable quarterly in advance.

Those who live remote from the city may be accommodated with board, for six decent boys, on liberal terms.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Bernard J. Henley, "Joseph Sheppard's school for free blacks" In: The Richmond Literature and History Quarterly. Richmond, VA. v.2, no.1 (Fall 1979), p. 44-45. Quote was taken from the Richmond Constitutional Whig January 5, 1828.

Sheppard's efforts were not enough to keep the school solvent. Moreover, White hostilities forced him to close its doors during the first year of its existence. He along with several other free coloured colleagues from Petersburg therefore left for Liberia in 1829.⁷⁸

As well intentioned as the efforts of Sheppard, McPherson, and other individual free coloureds were in promoting Black literacy, illiteracy remained the norm rather than the exception for this group during the last two decades preceding the Civil War. This was in addition to the earnest efforts Whites made to suppress Black education and retain Blacks as unfree laborers. Scholars who have charted the development of Black Education prior to 1861 have already discussed the problem of widespread Black illiteracy in this era. Why most Richmond free coloureds stayed and exposed themselves to these conditions, rather than migrating or emigrating to other places, is still however somewhat of the mystery. There were small groups of Richmond free coloureds who migrated to other states as far North as Detroit, Michigan or emigrated to Liberia with the hope of affording their children more educational opportunities and better job prospects. Why then did the majority of Richmond free coloureds stay? Samples of literacy and occupation data drawn from censuses and city directories shed some light on this important question, when combined with evidence on Richmond stranded families. Perhaps free coloureds simply did not earn enough to move their families out of

Richmond, especially in cases where free coloured families contained enslaved relatives.

The suppression of the McPherson and Sheppard experiments reduced Black education in Richmond and narrowed the scope of free coloured employment options to those that did not necessarily require literacy. Free coloureds of mixed racial heritage and those listed as barbers, blacksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, and tobacconists were more likely to have reading and/or writing skills than Blacks working in semi or low skilled occupations. Most adult free coloureds fitting the mulatto/high trade skill profile were however illiterate as well, while the majority of pupils listed as students in Richmond's normal and secondary schools were White. The majority of Richmond free coloureds, irrespective of color, were thus channeled into semi or low skilled forms of employment. Consequently, the wages Richmond free coloureds earned were closer to those of slave hires than those acquired by the members of the city's White working class.⁷⁹ Free coloured factory hands, washerwomen, day laborers, and seamstresses were the most numerous of all non-White workers. Of the four hundred and twenty-four adult free coloureds listed in an 1852 directory, sixty- four percent of them were employed in low

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ The only subtle exception to this trend were the large number of Irish immigrants pouring into the city during the 1850s who occupied many of the same jobs and residences of free coloureds. See Kimball, Chapter 1.

wage/low skilled occupations. The other thirty-six percent of free coloureds were employed in semi or high skilled occupations listed below:

Table 4.

Richmond Free Coloured Skilled Occupations

Skilled Free Coloured Occupations	No. of Free Coloureds
Baker	3
Barber	21
Blacksmith	18
Boot and Shoemaker	1
Bread and Cake Shop	2
Bricklayer	5
Carpenter	16
Confectioner	3
Cooper	3
Fruiterer [sic]	3
Gardner	2
Grocers	7
Painter	1
Plasterer	5
Porter	8
Shoemakers	22
Snack House	1
Tanner	1
Teamster	4
Wheelwright	2
Musician	1

Source: "Free Coloured Housekeepers..." in William L Montague, *The Richmond Directory and Business Advertiser, for 1852 Containing The Names Residences, Occupations of Business of the Inhabitants of Richmond: Also, a Variety of Other Information, Necessary and Useful* (Richmond, VA: J.W. Woods, Printer, Balt., 1852), pp. 139-149.

One third of all free coloured workers in this sample were washerwomen, followed by laborers (20%), and seamstresses (15%).

Data compiled from the 1860 census showed that the majority of Richmond free coloureds continued to occupy low skilled/low wage forms of employment preceding the Civil War.⁸⁰

The data above along with other evidence on free coloured slaveholders in Richmond contradicts the more progressive assessment historian Luther Porter Jackson and neutral position Philip Schwarz has taken about the condition of Virginia free coloureds prior to the crisis of the 1860s.⁸¹ The overwhelming tendency of Richmond free coloureds to occupy low skill/low wage jobs, along with evidence of many of them holding or purchasing enslaved relatives suggests that free coloured excess incomes were invested in slaves rather than in real-estate or other wealth accumulating assets. Furthermore, a preliminary list compiled from census free and slave schedules shows that there were more free coloured slaveholders in Richmond in 1860 than there were in 1830.

Hence, Richmond free coloureds were actually becoming *incrementally*

⁸⁰ Ibid; National Archives Microfilm Publications, Microscopy No. 432, Populations Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Roll 951, Virginia, Henrico County (Washington, DC: The National Archives and Records Service General Services Administration, 1964); United States Department of the Interior, 8th Census, 1860/ Virginia Free Schedules, Vol. 12, Henrico, Roll. 295.

⁸¹ Jackson argued that high rates of manumission and increases in free coloured property ownership between 1830 and 1860 marked this period as an era of economic progress for Virginia free coloureds, in spite of the political repression they encountered. Jackson cites 50 property owners in Richmond with property totaling \$18,435 in 1830, and then 211 accumulating property valued at \$184,971 in 1860. This represented a thousand percent increase in the value of the property they owned. Jackson, Free Negro Labor & Property Holding in Virginia (New York: Appleton, 1942), 142-143, 150-152, 197-199; Jackson's argument is strengthened by the fact that less than 1% of free coloureds owned property in 1830 (50/7555), while 8% (211/2576) of the city's free coloureds had moved into the ranks of property owners by 1860. See also John H. Russell, The Free Negro in Virginia, 1619-1865 (Reprint, 1913:New York: Dover Publications, 1969); Ira Berlin Slaves Without Masters (New York, 1975); and Philip Schwarz, "Emancipators, Protectors, and Anomalies: Free Black Slave Owners in Virginia," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (July 1987).

poorer over the course of these three decades rather than richer. This projection is particularly surprising in light of the fact that free coloureds were permitted only to purchase relatives after 1832; less so if one considers Carter G. Woodson's lists of free coloured slaveholders. The Woodson lists show that Richmond free coloureds' tradition of purchasing relatives was at least thirty years old. Deeds also show that manumission deals like the one Taylor Lomax cut with J. Samuel G. Gathright [sic] to purchase "coloured woman slave...Milly" were common over the entire course of Richmond's antebellum history:

Know all men by these presents that J. Samuel G. Gathright Junior of the City of Richmond in the State of Virginia - In consideration of the *three hundred dollars* to him in hand paid by Taylor Lomax a coloured man of the same City; Slave bargained sold and delivered unto him the said Taylor Lomax, a coloured woman slave, named Milly about twenty-six years old-being the same woman that now resided in the family of George Melttert-And I do now hereby bind and oblige myself to warrant and forever defend the said slave Milly against claim of all persons whatsoever-In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this fifth day of April on the year one-thousand eight hundred and twenty eight [next Line] [signed] Samuel Gathright, Jr. [Next Line] City of Richmond Tourt: In the Office of the Court of Hustings for the said City, the 5th day of April 1828 [Next Line] This bill of sale was acknowledged by Samuel Gathright Junior a party thereto and thereupon admitted to Record- [Next Line] Examined Teste Thomas C. Howard Clerk.⁸²

Jackson's thesis holds for the city of Richmond, 1830-1860, only if one excludes this and other evidence.

Evidence presented thus far shows that Richmond free coloureds took aggressive steps toward the end of building their own institutions. The rapid development of these institutions was however undermined by the pro-slavery

⁸² "Richmond City," Hustings Deeds No. 27, 1828-1829, Film 0100, Reel 14, pp. 22. LVA, Richmond, Virginia.

political agenda promoted in Richmond. The principle of property rights in slaves was the lynchpin of this political program, which linked Black labor servitude to notions of White freedom, independence, and happiness. Free coloureds like Ceasar and Tenar Hope were thus left with the unenviable task of reconciling their desires to achieve expanded anti-slavery concepts of freedom, independence, and happiness with the reality of their own family members being enslaved. Richmond free coloureds would therefore be compelled to buy relatives out of slavery to maintain the integrity of their families. This protectionist strategy proved to be a recipe for poverty, and inadvertently placed Richmond free coloureds at variance to the Liberian emigration movement. These and other issues related to Richmond free coloured families are addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

STRANDED FAMILIES IN RICHMOND AND THE PROBLEM OF LIBERIAN EMIGRATION

Stranded families, which by definition consisted of enslaved and free coloured members, were on the cutting edge of the Black freedom struggle in antebellum Richmond. Their experiences illustrate the socio-economic minefield that Richmond was for many free coloureds and slaves before the American Civil War. More specifically, members of stranded families spent the lion share of their productive energies negotiating the obstacles of the Virginia slave society rather than accumulating “real” property. Most Black Richmonders were therefore unable to exercise the option of emigrating to Liberia or amass wealth in a society where access to the instruments of state power (i.e. police forces, militias, prisons, and tax revenues) often depended on the capital resources one possessed. The way these Black Richmonders interacted with the Virginia slave system had an enormous influence on this result. Census and other public records show that the choice Virginia legislators made to impose stricter limits on manumission in the early 19th century increased the number of stranded families in Richmond and perhaps in other parts of the Commonwealth. Moreover, these

stranded families undermined American Colonization Society (ACS) efforts to enlarge the size of the settler population in Liberia.

Much of this result had to do with the fact that Richmond free coloured members of stranded families lived in a context where White political authorities changed the actual meanings of manumission and emigration from liberation to separation. In response to this change, free coloureds filed petitions with the Virginia legislature to transform the meaning of manumission back into a form of liberation, thereby preserving the integrity of their families. And as long as members of their families remained enslaved, these free coloureds would continue to reject emigration as a practical liberation solution. Even fewer liberation options existed for Richmond free coloureds who found themselves demoted in status by the Virginia legal system. For example, it was not unusual for poorer free coloureds to be drawn into an unofficial system of indentured servitude in instances where they could not afford to pay jail charges. Then there were free coloureds involved the risky business of buying themselves and/or close relatives out of slavery. Because these transactions took years to complete, the free coloureds doing the buying inadvertently removed themselves from the pool of possible emigration candidates. A broader study on how these kinds of local emigration inhibitors influenced Black responses to Liberian Colonization in the Upper South would explain why advocates of Liberian emigration failed to attract enough settlers to achieve the country's economic, diplomatic, and cultural goals.

This chapter will thus attempt to move the literature on Liberian Colonization¹ in this direction, by using the case of Black Richmond to show how the vicissitudes of life in a slave society functioned as a major roadblock to Liberian emigration.

At least one-third of the free coloureds in Richmond were members of what I call stranded families as early as 1830.² The most common variations of these families included a free coloured husband, slave wife, and no children; a free coloured husband, slave wife, and slave children; a free coloured wife, a slave husband, and no children; a free coloured wife, slave husband, and slave

¹ The primary debate on Liberian colonization has focused on whether the American Colonization Society was a pro or anti-slavery organization. Although the parameters this debate were established by anti-colonization abolitionist and pro-colonization polemicists in the 1830s and 1840s, they have not been altered by contemporary scholarship. See William L. Garrison, Thoughts on African Colonization (Boston, 1832); Samuel Cornish and Theodore Weld, The Colonization Scheme Considered in its Reflection by the Colored People (Newark, 1840); William Jay, An Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization Society and Anti-Slavery Societies (New York, 1835); Edmund Ruffin, The African Colonization Unveiled (n.d.); G.B. Stebbins, Facts and Opinions Touching the Real Origin, Character, and Influence of the American Colonization Society... (Boston, 1853); and Charles Stuart, A Memoir of Granville Sharpe (New York, 1836); Archibald Alexander, A History of Colonization on the West Coast of Africa, (Philadelphia, 1846); Fox, The American Colonization Society; Frederick Freeman, Yardee: A plea for Africa in Familiar Conversations on the Subject of Slavery and Colonization; Ralph R. Gurley, Life of Jehudi Ashmun, Late Colonia Agent in Liberia (Washington, 1835); and Thomas Hodgkin, An Inquiry into the Merits of the American Colonization Society and a Reply to the Charge Brought Against it with and Account of the British African Colonization Society (London, 1833); Carter G. Woodson, The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters Written During the Crisis, 1800-1860 (Reprint of 1926 edition: New York: Russell & Russell, 1969); Amos Beyan The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State: A Historical Perspective, 1822-1900 (Lanham : University Press of America, 1991.); and Douglas R. Egerton, "It's Origin is Not a Little Curious": A New Look at the American Colonization Society." The Journal of the Early Republic, 5(Winter 1985), 468; Early Lee Fox, The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840 (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1919); Staudenraus, P.J., The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865 (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961); and George Frederickson, The Black Image in the White Mind : The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914 (Middletown, Conn. : Wesleyan University Press ; Scranton, Pa. : Distributed by Harper & Row, 1987, 1971.).

² Many free coloureds shared homes with one or more families. Others were listed as members of larger extended families in the 1840, 1850, 1860 censuses. Therefore, the current estimated percentage of free coloureds in stranded families I use is modest. Carte G. Woodson, Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830, together with Absentee Ownership of Slaves in the United States in 1830 (Negro University Press, 1924) & Free Negro Heads of Families in the

children; a free coloured wife, a free coloured husband, and slave children; and a free coloured woman and slave children. Rarely were the variations of these stranded families ever fixed. They were in fact always subject to changes prompted by acts of slaves buying themselves, free coloureds buying enslaved relatives, and slaves being manumitted by an owner's last will and testament. One major factor suggests the hesitancy or inability of free coloured members of these stranded families to emigrate to Liberia in fewer numbers than those in families composed solely of free coloureds. If free coloured members of stranded families emigrated to Liberia, they always faced the prospect of having to leave enslaved relatives behind. The fact that many stranded families were entangled in the process of raising the money to buy enslaved family members out of bondage discouraged emigration as well. Finally, there were slaves who wished to climb into the ranks of free coloreds and emigrate to Liberia, but the cost of manumission was often far too high for them to achieve this goal.

The way most emigrants traveled to Liberia also explains why free coloured members of stranded families passed on the idea of emigration. Most emigrants traveled to Liberia in family units, which meant Liberian emigration was essentially a family emigration movement. Therefore, the enslaved members of stranded families would have had to be released first before the free coloured members of these families seriously considered emigrating to Liberia. Scenarios of this kind were rare in the Richmond wing of the Liberian emigration movement, because White slaveholders who were unwilling to release them for this purpose

United States in 1830 together with a Brief Treatment of the Free Negro (Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc., 1925).

owned many of the slaves in these families. Most capital poor free coloureds in these families thus chose to stay in Richmond with their enslaved family members.

The experiences of Burrell Mann and Lott Cary provide a sense of the context Black Richmonders operated in by illuminating the socio-political borders of enslavement, manumission, and emigration they attempted to negotiate or traverse. For example, Mann drove himself to secure his own manumission and emigrate to Liberia, although he ultimately remained trapped behind the political border of enslavement. Cary too lived a large portion of his adult life under the yoke of slavery, but he did find a way to buy his way out of bondage and play an important role in the founding of Liberia. Most free coloureds in Cary's peer group were not however able to use manumission as a segue to emigration or as a platform to enhance their socio-economic mobility. They instead struggled to carve out lives for themselves between the porous borders of enslavement and manumission. This was especially true in Virginia where White slaveholders possessed more power to regulate the lives of free coloureds than the slaveholders in the Caribbean and Brazilian slave societies.

Three important variables contributed to the unfavorable situation that most Virginia free coloureds were compelled to live in. First, Virginia had always employed a relatively small number of slaves to produce the state's most profitable cash crop—tobacco. Therefore, Virginia never had to contend with the problem of frequent slave rebellions that plagued the slave societies in the Caribbean and Brazil. Second, Whites and slaves in Virginia consistently

surpassed the free coloureds in the demographic area of natural population growth. Meaning free coloureds as a group in Virginia never achieved the kind of numerical equality with the White population that proved beneficial to other free coloured communities in the slaveholding Atlantic World. Third, the superiority that Whites managed to achieve in numbers over free coloureds allowed them to exclude free coloureds from participating in their law enforcement organizations, which were organizations designed to guard the Commonwealth against slave rebellions and foreign invasions.³ In light of these factors, Virginia was able to

³ Frank Tannenbaum's Slave and Citizen (1946) claimed that slaves were better treated in slave societies ruled by Euro-colonial empires in the Americas affiliated with the Catholic faith. It was therefore no coincidence in Tannenbaum's estimation that manumission policies were far more flexible in Spanish, Portuguese, and French slave societies than in English ones. A growing body of secondary literature on slave societies in the New World, produced in the last thirty years, has implied that the flexibility of manumission was less the result of European policies. The flexibility of manumission was rather an outgrowth of a series of overlapping factors such as the type of crops grown, mortality rates among the slave, white, and free coloured populations, the rate of free coloured military service, the probability of slave rebellions, and the speed at which free coloureds were able to acquire cash-crop producing lands before all white planter regimes dominated these areas. New and older interpretations have contributed this historiographic move away from the Tannenbaum thesis. See Jack Greene & David Cohen, Neither Slave Nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); Jane Landers, Against the Odds (London, 1996); Gad J. Heuman, Between Black and White: Race, Politics and Free Coloureds in Jamaica, 1792-1865 (Westport, Conn. : Greenwood Press, 1981); Arnold Sio, "Marginality and Free Coloured Identity in Caribbean Slave Society," Slavery and Abolition, Vol. 8, issue 2 (September, 1987); David Barry & Darlene Hine, editors, Beyond Bondage: Free Women of Color in the Americas (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Peter Voelz, Slave and Soldier: The Military Impact of Blacks in the Colonial Americas (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993); CLR James, The Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution (New York: Dial Press, 1938); Herbert Aptheker, American Negro Slave Revolts (New York: Columbia University Press; London, P.S. King & Staples, Ltd., 1943); Richard Dunn, Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1972) Gwendlyn Mildred Hall, Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba (Reprint: 1971:Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996),130-131; Rebecca Scott, Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1869-1899 (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); Ada Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Elsa Goveia, "The West Indian Slave Laws of the Eighteenth Century," in Verene A. Shepard & Hilary Beckles, Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader (Kingston, Oxford, Princeton: Ian Randle Publishers, James Currey Publishers, and Marcus Wiener Publishers, 2000); Arthur L. Stinchcombe, Sugar Island, Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment : The Political Economy of the Caribbean world (Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, c1995), chapter 6; John Garrigus, "Blue and Brown: Contraband and Indigo and The Rise of a Free Colored Planter

build a slave society over the course two and half centuries that did not have to make any major socio-economic concessions to its free coloured inhabitants. Free coloureds thus came to occupy a marginal place in the Commonwealth's social order. The utter force of this reality was no more apparent than in the "slave city" of Richmond.

The manufacture of tobacco was the top industry in 19th century Richmond, which was supplied by an expanding network of plantations located in Virginia's Tidewater and Piedmont regions. Indeed, slaves represented the dominant labor force in Virginia's rural and urban tobacco producing sectors. And it was in the urban setting of Richmond that Burrell Mann's story took shape. Proprietor, John Cosby, bought and hired out Burrell Mann to work in a tobacco factory "attached to the Methodist Church, on union hill" in 1830. After seventeen years of service, Mann indicated his desire to "get" his "freedom" and work as a missionary in Liberia. As a missionary he planned to "preach the Gospel to the heathens" of Africa "all for the Sake of Christ and the Glory of his people in that continent[sic]." Otherwise, these "heathens" would be left in the wilderness without friend to tell them "what they must do in order to go to heaven when they died..."⁴ Mann thus worked in earnest between the spring of 1847 and summer of 1849 to realize his dream, which entailed coordinating the logistics of

Class in French St. Domingue," The Americas, Vol. L(2), October 1993. 233-263; Carl Degler, Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States (New York: MacMillan, 1971); Mumford, Kevin. "After Hugh: Statutory Segregation in Colonial America." The American Journal of Legal History, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Jul., 1999) 280-305; and Robin Blackburn, The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800 (London & New York: Verso, 1997).

his own manumission with his owner's frequent trips out of town and the schedules of ships that frequently departed Virginia for Liberia. He started by appealing to the local Methodist Church where he served as a lay preacher, the Methodist Missionary Society, the American Colonization Society in Washington D.C., and several northern pastors for the money to buy his way out of slavery. When this direct approach failed, he used more creative strategies to raise the money. For example, he agreed to be the slave of ACS officials if they bought him from his current owner or become the slave of anybody who bought him and allowed him to pay off the debt with the money he earned as a slave hire. To prove his loyalty to potential benefactors, he also promised to enliven support for the ACS in Richmond by selling copies of the *African Repository* to its residents⁵ and take many Black Richmonders to Liberia contingent on his own purchase. Gracy Ann Clark, who was a manumitted slave and mother of two, the Brown family, Sterling Ruffin, the slaves of Francis G. Taylor in Hanover, the Cold Family, and William Joiner [Joyner] were just a few of the persons Mann guaranteed to deliver to Liberia.⁶ When these methods failed, he turned to the Black community for support. Though he could not get anyone in the Black community to grant him all the money he needed, he did receive a promise from the First African Baptist Church that they would repay anyone who would put up the money for his manumission. He also wrote to the Liberian government for financial assistance, but received no reply.

⁴ Bureel Mann to Ralph R. Gurley, Richmond, Virginia 21 June 1847; Bureel Mann to Ralph R. Gurley Richmond VA October 4th 1847.

⁵ Bureel Mann to Ralph R. Gurley, Richmond VA October 17th 1847.

Mann's case illustrates just how "hard" it was "to Raise money for Such a purpose."⁷ Especially, in a city where slave hires were highly valued for the rent revenues and status they brought to their owners. Details related to Mann's specific situation shed important light on this reality. First, he was a married man with a slave wife and slave children compelled to give away all of his earnings to his owner that were at most \$80 a year. This was in addition to the \$39/year Mann he was given to rent a room located on "Cary Street number 14 Street, leading to Mayos Bridge, at Mr. Hiram, B. Dickisons Tobacco, Factory."⁸ Second, Mann's owner raised the asking price for his manumission from the \$300 he had paid for him in 1830 to \$450 in 1847, after telling Mann he would only be charged "half" of his market "value."⁹ Cosby was also careful not to promise to hold the purchase price at the present level of \$450, meaning it might have been raised at a later date. Thus, explains why Mann's numerous letters to the ACS Treasurer, Ralph R. Gurley bore an extremely urgent tone. Third, Mann provided no evidence of having any free coloured family members or White allies that were willing to aide his cause, aside from the White pastor of First African Baptist Church and president of Richmond College, Robert Ryland. Short of

⁶ Ibid, November 28, 1847.

⁷ Ibid, November 9th 1847.

⁸ Ibid, March 28th 1848.

⁹ Therefore, it would have taken Mann over five and half years to purchase himself, if his owner allowed him to keep all of his yearly earnings. Mann was acutely aware of the fact that by his owner denying him his wages, it was impossible for him to save enough money for manumission. In February of 1849, he notes that if someone had been kind enough to advance him the money for manumission in spring of 1847 he would have been able to accumulate \$250 for repayment by Christmas of 1850. Because this was never done, he remained trapped in a situation where he would "always" be hired out and his master would "get the money." See Burrell Mann to R.R. Gurley, Richmond VA February, 14, 1849, p. 198.

making a large donation of his own, Ryland had agreed to broker the sale once the manumission money was raised. Fourth, Mann opposed the idea of picking up extra work to finance his own purchase because he feared this might prompt his owner to sell him to one of the local slave traders, in a city that harbored the largest urban slave trading center in the Upper South.¹⁰ Being that his wife and children were eventually sold into this market demonstrates that his fears were not unfounded. All of these complications forced Mann to change his plans to travel to Liberia in January 1848 to the summer of that year, until he stopped listing probable dates of departure in August of 1848. All the while Mann's owner continued to "Call for his money."¹¹

Mann became so despondent about his circumstances that at one point he confessed that "I must say that I never knew the value of being free before; for had I been a freeman I would have been in Africa long ago & would not be troubling the Good citizens of America as I now do."¹² His level of frustration rose steadily over the course of 1848 to the point where he began entertaining thoughts about running away. It was for this reason that he asked Gurley, "will the American Colonization Society take a person who goes from a Slave State, to a free One, and Colonize, That person, or persons in Liberia? Secondly Will they treat emigrants of this discription[sic] as well as they do others?" Due to the challenges of having to prepare his wife and children to escape with him, he

¹⁰ [Bureel Mann to Ralph R. Gurley, Richmond VA (Sept ?) 18th 1847; Bureel Mann to Ralph R. Gurley, Richmond VA October 4th 1847; Bureel Mann to Ralph R. Gurley, Richmond VA October 10th 1847. See also the work of Bancroft, Tadman and Gumestad on the interstate slave trade.

¹¹ Bureel Mann to R.R. Gurley Richmond VA November 9th 1847.

decided against this course of action. He instead hoped Boston and Richmond Methodists would come up with a plan to get the money for his manumission; even as the “Selling of” his “beloved Wife” and the “scattering” of his “children to the four winds of heaven” introduced a new set of “Heart Breaking Circumstances” into his life.¹³ In spite of the fact that he had just lost his family, he refused to “Weep to stay in any part of America. But to go home to my forefathers Land? The Triumph of God, I trust will bring my Wife and children together at the day of judgment at which time Sinful parting will be done away.”¹⁴ Based on this strong conviction, Mann believed it was only a matter of time before his prayers about manumission and emigration would soon be answered. His response to news about his owner’s decision to lower his purchase price to \$400 reflected these feelings. There was, however, no evidence that the ACS authorities or Methodist churchmen to whom Mann wrote ever intervened on his behalf to solve this problem. Whether he eventually decided to runaway or achieved manumission by some other means is unknown. Mann’s absence on Liberian emigration rolls post 1849 does however suggest that he never realized his dream of working in the “mission fields of Africa.”

Lott Cary’s experience occupied the opposite end of the enslavement-manumission-emigration continuum. Unlike Mann, Cary used his job as a shipper in one of Richmond’s premier tobacco factories to traverse the borders of enslavement and manumission before he became one of the most influential

¹² Ibid, December 6, 1847.

¹³ Ibid, January 2, 1849,195.

settlers in Liberia's early colonial history. This progression did not occur overnight, rather it unfolded over the course of seventeen years. Cary was born a slave on the Charles County plantation of William Christian, located approximately thirty miles south of Richmond, Virginia. As an adolescent, his owner hired him out to work in Richmond's Shockoe tobacco factory (1804). While in Richmond he married a slave woman who bore him two children. He initially turned to drink to cope with the harsh realities of enslavement, until a Christian conversion experience coupled with his choice to join Richmond's First Baptist Church convinced him that there were other solutions to the problems of earning a living, raising a slave family, and saving the money needed to buy himself and his family out of bondage. These religious experiences had other telling affects on him as well, such as, encouraging him to learn to read, develop his own written interpretations of Biblical scripture, and exceed the labor expectations of his White supervisors at the Shockoe factory. Indeed, his improved work performance also captured the attention of some of the city's most affluent tobacco merchants. One of which was the President of the Richmond Branch of the Bank of the United States, who later recommended that Cary serve as a middleman in what was anticipated as a potentially lucrative tobacco trade with Liberia.¹⁵

The next few years in Richmond were bittersweet for Cary in that by 1815, he finally saved enough money to secure manumission for himself and his

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ James B. Taylor, Biography of Elder Lott Cary, late Missionary to Africa (Baltimore, Armstrong & Berry, 1837), 10-13; African Repository and Colonial Journal, October 1825.

children. His wife had however died two years before, which rendered it impossible for her to enjoy the same reward. Following her death, he married for a second time and was appointed to the position of lay preacher at First Baptist Church, where Black members of this congregation greatly outnumbered Whites. In this new role Cary established a reputation for being a hands-on minister, wherein he was known to concentrate his efforts on trying to help solve the everyday problems confronted by free coloured and enslaved parishioners. He also amassed a considerable amount of influence at First Baptist. This was in spite of the fact that the church was officially led by a group of White ministers who conducted their everyday affairs in compliance with the laws governing Virginia's slave labor system.¹⁶

Cary's life underwent many changes between the time he entered the Richmond city limits and left for West Africa with his family in 1821. He had married twice, fathered two children, purchased his freedom, purchased his children, and become a preacher. Yet, he conceived a broader destiny for free persons of colour in the U.S., also shared by a few other Black men at First Baptist. This group formed an organization designed to send missionaries to Africa, with the assistance of one of First Baptist's White Sunday school teachers. The African Missionary Society (AMS) was the product of their efforts. Thus, when the American Colonization Society (ACS) was founded two years later, the members of the AMS and Cary were already prepared to make the trip

¹⁶ Ibid; Ralph Gurley, "Sketch of the Life of the Rev. Lott Cary," printed in Life of Jehudi Ashmun Late Colonial Agent in Liberia: with an appendix containing extracts from his journal and other writings, with a brief sketch of the life of the Rev. Lott Cary (Washington : James C. Dunn, 1835).

to West Africa in 1821. In his farewell address (1821) to the Black members of the First Baptist Church, he summarized the mission's motives:

I am about to leave you; and expect to see your faces no more. I long to preach to the poor Africans the way of life of salvation. I don't know what may befall me wether [sic] I may find a grave in the ocean, or among the *savage men*, or more savage wild beast, on the Coast of Africa; nor am I anxious what may become of me. I feel it my duty to go; and I very much fear that many of those who preach the gospel in this country, will blush when the Saviour [sic] calls them to give an account of their labors in this cause, and tells them, ' I commanded you to go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature (and with the most forcible emphasis he exclaimed) The Saviour [sic] may ask--Where have you been? What have you been doing? Have you endeavored to the utmost of your ability to fulfill the commands I gave you-- or have you sought your own gratification and your own ease, regardless of my commands.¹⁷

Many Blacks were no more strangers to laboring in the tobacco factories of Richmond than Cary, but very few had the means at their disposal to negotiate the borders of enslavement and manumission as he did. Hence, they carved out lives for themselves on the middle ground between the borders of enslavement and manumission. Stranded families were one of the most common types of Black family in Richmond that symbolized this kind of in between living. Moreover, these families were an outgrowth of the major changes made in Virginia's manumission policy in the early 19th century.

As the American War for Independence drew to a close in the early 1780s, Virginia policy makers agreed not to interfere in cases where individual slaveholders wished to manumit their slaves. This policy was soon changed

during the Haitian revolution (1791-1804) that unfolded in conjunction with Gabriel's failed revolt in Richmond, Virginia (1800). In response to these major challenges to slavery, the Virginia Assembly passed a law that required all slaves manumitted after May 1, 1806 to leave the state within one year or suffer the consequence of re-enslavement.¹⁸ Though the effectiveness of this law remains a subject of debate,¹⁹ the law in itself did influence the choices made by Black Richmonders trying to prevent their families from being torn apart by manumission. The law also bred a new crop of stranded families that were poised to resist Liberian colonization for the sake of holding these mixed status units together. The stories of Jacob Prosser, John Winston, Nellie Holmes, and Oscar Taliaferro shed important light on this development.

The experience of Jacob Prosser (1815-1821) was both similar and different from those of Burrell Man and Lott Cary. Like Cary, Prosser was permitted to keep a percentage of his wages that he used to buy his way out of slavery. Although Cary had been a tobacco shipper and Prosser was a Drayman,

¹⁷ Taylor, Biography of Elder Lott Cary (Baltimore, 1837); African Repository and Colonial Journal, October 1825.

¹⁸ The Code of Virginia, 46.

¹⁹ In Luther Porter Jackson's masterwork on free coloureds in pre-Civil War Virginia, he argues that the 1806 law was virtually ineffectual based on the fact that more slaves were granted manumission in Virginia after it was passed than in the previous period (1782-1805). A sharp decrease in the growth of the free coloured population compared to a sharp increase in the growth of the white population does however suggest that the 1806 law working in conjunction with other anti-free black laws effectively solved the problem of free colored population growth, which was the over arching purpose of this body of laws. The demography for antebellum Richmond reflects this trend as well. See Luther Porter Jackson, Free Negro Labor and Property Holding in Virginia, 1830-1860 (New York and London, D. Appleton-Century Company, 1942); Cramer, Black Demographic Data, 1790-1860: A Source Book (Westport Connecticut, 1997); Takagi, Rearing Wolves to Our Own Destruction (Charlottesville, 1999.); Norman C. McCleod, "Free Labor in a Slave Society: Richmond, Virginia 1820-1860" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Howard University, 1991); Second through the Eighth Population Schedules of the U.S. Federal Census.

neither of them would have been able to raise the money for manumission if they had not been allowed to keep some of the money they earned on their jobs. Mann's unsuccessful attempt to achieve the same end accentuates this reality. After Prosser crossed the hurdle of manumission, he submitted a petition to the Virginia Legislature requesting permission to remain in the state with his enslaved wife. The state granted his request. Emigration was however taken off the table as a feasible liberation option for the Prossers, because the wife of this family unit remained enslaved. So as in the case of Burrell Mann, the Prossers continued to live in Richmond.²⁰

John Winston was not as fortunate as Prosser. Winston, who had been the slave of Izard Bacon in nearby Henrico County, was released from slavery by last will and testament. Unlike Prosser, Winston had neither the property nor the White allies most petitioners relied on to strengthen their bids to remain in the state. Winston's lawyer described a scenario where his client was compelled to leave the state and "sacrifice his domestic happiness, by quitting his Wife and two children whom he most ardently and tenderly loves—without whom society, he finds it impossible for him to be happy." Instead of giving up, he lived in Pennsylvania for one year before asking the Virginia Legislature to permit him to be reunited with his enslaved family in Richmond. The Delegates of the Virginia however rejected his request in January 1821.²¹ So, by default Winston and his family remained in the United States as the first Liberian settlement was being established at Monrovia.

²⁰ Schwenger & Shelton, Reel 17. Accession # 11681502.

Nellie Holmes' story bore many similarities to those of Prosser and Winston, with the exceptions that she was a woman, with a enslaved husband, and had three free coloured children. Holmes had saved the money to purchase herself before giving birth to her children. Her former enslaved status had, however, influenced her decision to begin to have children rather late in her adult life. By the time she had finished given birth to her last child, she had reached the age of fifty. Finding work and raising these three children at a late age was only one of her many problems. She also had to confront the issues of her children's deeds of emancipation not being issued until 1832 and that her husband remained enslaved. To solve these problems that threatened to tear her family apart, she requested that she and her children be allowed to remain in Richmond for nine years with her husband until her children grew to an age when it would be easier to support them. She also believed this would be a sufficient amount of time for her husband to buy his own freedom. When this nine-year grace period passed she believed her family would be in a better position to "remove to Liberia with every prospect of happiness and comfort..." If permission was denied they would be "separated" from all that was important to them and forced to live among "strangers" who might not have this family's best interest in mind. Although the first petition was rejected in 1833, the Virginia Assembly submitted her second petition to the Courts of Justice in 1836.²²

²¹ Ibid, Reel 18. Accession # 111682001.

²² Ibid, Reel 18. Accession # 11683304 & Reel 20, # 11683610.

Like Jacob Prosser and Nellie Holmes, Oscar Taliaferro was a self-purchaser who raised \$400 to extract himself from bondage (1847). He accomplished this by making a series of short-term payments to his owner, James Blakely. The aging Blakely would meanwhile use the money to pay his own health care bills and claim that he had lost it. When Taliferro finally applied for his deed of emancipation he received the astonishing news that he was to be "sold to the south," where he would be "separated from his wife a slave in Richmond." Taliferro responded to this potential disaster by arranging for a man named George Taylor to buy him. This arrangement did not however come without strings. Part of the deal Taliferro made with Taylor was that he would pay off the balance of his own purchase price. This meant Taliferro was pushed into the unenviable position of having to pay for his freedom twice. One of the consequences of this situation was that Taliferro would grow too old to finish raising the money he needed to buy his wife. The irony of this story was that the goal of purchasing his own and his wife's freedom had, according to his counselor...:

stimulated him to work while others rested and to deny himself indulgences which others enjoyed and again after (some two years since) satisfying the claims of his present owner's prospect of accomplishing this object, only secondary as resulting from it to the great object to which his efforts previously had been directed for years when he was prostrated the last summer at the Hot Springs of Virginia: by severe indisposition during which attendanse[sic]-board and the Drs. Bills swallowed up a considerable part of his accumulations for that object and now—increased years enfeebled health prevent him from cherishing any such hope.²³

²³ Ibid, Reel 20, Accession #11684703.

Talieferro's struggle illustrates how fraught with difficulties risky self-purchase projects proved. It also highlighted some of the hazards that most stranded families faced. Among them were old age, enslaved spouses, enslaved children, the specter of the slave market, the long periods of labor required to complete transactions involving the purchase of oneself or a family member, and of course unscrupulous owners. Indeed, the lives of many people wedded to Richmond's stranded families intersected with one or more of these issues. Stranded family members that confronted these issues were also less likely to emigrate to Liberia. The result was that others like John Hope, John Elson, Judith Hope, Phillip Robertson, Clara Robinson, and Salley Dabney carved out lives for themselves on the middle ground between enslavement and manumission just like Oscar Taliaferro, Jacob Prosser, Nellie Holmes, and John Winston.

Living between the political borders enslavement and manumission could be extremely challenging. Manumission in Richmond contained an unwritten class feature, wherein free coloureds without a regular income, property, or White allies to testify to their good character quickly found themselves drawn into an unfree labor system that resembled indentured servitude. Richmond free coloureds that had first hand encounters with the city's law enforcement system were exposed to this harsh reality. Lucy Briggs, "a free woman of color," was admitted to the Richmond city jail 25 April 1841 for failing to register her status with local authorities. She was then denied a public hearing and compelled to

remain in jail for nine months before a court released her to be “hired out at a public auction at the Old market to Benjamin Whopper...” Whopper paid her jail fees of \$59.38 in exchange for nine years of her labor. Polly Stewart, another free woman of color, received an even longer indentured sentence than Lucy, although Stewart spent less time in jail and accrued \$1.74 less in jail fees than Briggs. Stewart was denied the right to a trial and “discharged from the Jail and carried to the old market and hired to Richard S. Whight Head...the lowis [sic] bidder for turn [sic] of 45 years.” Louisa Brown suffered a similar fate. The jail fees she accumulated over a six-month period resulted in her being sold for “fifty years.” Finally, there was the case of Sally Ball who received an indirect sentence of “twenty five years” for not being able to pay \$17.75 in jail charges. Each of these cases in addition the similar ones of Joe Ross, William Pleasants, and William Freeman punctuated the fact that manumission was not synonymous with freedom.²⁴ Rather, manumission was an unstable bridge that linked the social destination points of unfreedom and freedom together. In this regard, manumission always had the potential to discourage persons who had access to it from emigrating to Liberia. For example, it would have been very difficult for indentured hires like Lucy Briggs and Sally Ball to emigrate to Liberia until their labor contractual obligations had been fulfilled.

Historians of Liberian Colonization have often focused too much on the anti-slavery or pro-slavery tendencies of the American Colonization Society to explain why support for its Liberian colony declined beginning in the 1830s. This

²⁴ Richmond, VA City Sergeant, Section 1 Register, 1841-1846, Mss3R4156b1, ViHi, Richmond Virginia.

approach along with others that attributed the failure of Liberian Colonization to abstract political and economic forces have often alluded to but have not placed the issue of free coloured lived experiences at the center of this discussion. This chapter on Black Richmond shifts the point of emphasis. The problem of manumission and the challenges faced by stranded families in Richmond demonstrate that the complicated process of living in a slave society was in itself a major inhibitor to Liberian emigration.

Chapter 4

BLACK MANIFEST DESTINY: AMERICAN MANIFEST DESTINY¹ RHETORIC & THE PROBLEM OF LIBERIAN EMIGRATION RECRUITMENT IN RICHMOND VIRGINIA, 1816-1860

...Slavery is an evil. And besides this, the existence of a free black population in this country is an evil. Their colour, of necessity, interposes a line of separation between them and ourselves which can never be removed. The road to honorable employment will probably never be open to them. The healthful moral stimulants which operate upon their better feelings of the heart are excluded from their motives to action. Hence they will always feel degraded and depressed, and will generally continue immoral. To alleviate these evils so far as it is in the power of man to alleviate them, it seems necessary to provide a place to which free coloureds may resort, which they may establish a government for themselves, and where they may enjoy all the blessings of freedom and equality, and also a place where slaves may be located as their masters may choose to emancipate; for it is manifest, that to emancipate them in any great numbers, and leave them in this country, would be cruelty to them and most injurious to society.²

The anonymous author, who wrote the above addendum to one of Lott Cary's letters, partially captured the ideological connection between the rhetoric used to promote African Colonization and American Manifest Destiny in the early 19th century.

¹ Manifest Destiny is an imperial concept that presumes that territorial conquest conducted by a nation-state (i.e. U.S. or Israel) can be justified by a supernatural force. Secular humanists have often labeled this concept as naked imperial conquest, while disciples of various branches of religious hagiographic and eschatological traditions have tended to recognize the same as the "Will of God."

² The above passage was published in the Christian Watchman and The Religious Intelligencer (1825) as well. See Lott Carey, "Colonization Society" The American Baptist Magazine (1825-1835); Aug 1825; 5, 8; APS Online, pg. 239-240.

Little attention has been paid to this dimension of American Manifest Destiny literature.³ Most of the historical literature on this subject has focused on explaining how Whites in the Early Republican and Antebellum eras used Manifest Destiny rhetoric to achieve their goal of territorial aggrandizement.⁴ This chapter locates evidence related to the African Colonization movement in the U.S. and Richmond within a narrative based on older Manifest Destiny historiography. This preliminary evidence shows that some emigrants to Liberia adopted American Manifest Destiny rhetoric to achieve similar political objectives in West Africa. However, the overwhelming majority of Black Richmonders rejected Liberian emigration and the Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric its White promoters used to recruit them. The “stranded families” (chapter 3) many of these Black’s participated in, the growth of the interstate slave trade (1820-1860), and the overall climate of racial distrust slavery produced were all factors that contributed to the failure of the African Colonization movement in Richmond. White supporters of Liberian Emigration in Richmond therefore found themselves at the helm of a African Colonization movement that few free coloureds participated in by the mid-1830s.

³ The literature focuses primarily on the second half of the nineteenth century. See Wilson Jeremiah Moses, The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850-1925 (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); Tunde Adeleke, Un-African Americans: Nineteenth Century Black Nationalists and the Civilizing Mission (Lexington, Kentucky: the University of Kentucky Press, 1998).

⁴ See fn. # 12.

Manifest Destiny, Slavery, and Free Coloureds

Serious questions about the role free and enslaved Blacks would play in America's Manifest Destiny surfaced during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. What was to be done with the growing slave population? As White Americans settled on western lands, would slaveholders be permitted to take their slaves into newly acquired American territories? Would America's unfolding Manifest Destiny include or exclude free coloureds (free borns and manumitted slaves)? White planters and slave traders answered the first and second questions when they organized relocation of one million plus enslaved men and women from the Upper to the Lower South and West between 1820 and 1860. This prompted the expansion of the Southern slave-based agro-economy, while it also assured the survival of slavery in the years before the American Civil War.⁵ However, the solution to the third problem, which involved the American Colonization Society's plan to expatriate the American free coloured population to West Africa, became a much more contentious subject of public debate.⁶ Thomas Jefferson's acquisition of the Louisiana Territory (1803),

⁵ For information on the interregional slave trade debate see Frederic Bancroft, Slave Trading in the Old South (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1959); Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery (Boston & Toronto, Little, Brown and Company, 1974); and Michael Tadman, Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South (Madison Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

⁶ Two positions emerged on the issue of the ACS Colony. Samuel Cornish and Theodore Weld, The Colonization Scheme in its Reflection by the Colored People (Newark, 1840); William L. Garrison, Thoughts On the African Colonization Society (Boston, 1832); William Jay, An Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization Society and Anti-Slavery Societies (New York, 1835); Edmund Ruffin, The African Colonization Society Unveiled (n.d.); G. B. Stebbins, Facts and Opinions Touching the Real Origin, Characters, and the Influence of the American Colonization Society (Boston, 1835); and Charles Stuart, A Memoir on Granville Sharpe (New York, 1836) characterized the ACS as a pro-slaver organization. Meanwhile, Archibald Alexander, A History of Colonization on the West Coast of Africa (Philadelphia, 1846);

precipitated by the overthrow of the legendary slaveholding regime at French St. Dominique, brought the free coloured problem to the immediate consciousness of White local, state, and national policy makers in the U.S. Those public officials who searched for ways to reduce the size of the free coloured populations warmed to the idea of African Colonization. The sage of Monticello was the first major political figure to endorse the colonization solution, following the successful slave uprising in St. Dominique (modern Haiti) and Gabriel's failed revolt in Richmond, Virginia. Jefferson proposed slaves be immediately colonized outside the U.S. when Virginia or other slave states chose to adopt formal emancipation policies—a course of action known as emancipation-colonization. He reasoned that the failure of slave states to accept this policy would lead to a winner take all race war. In reflecting on a possibility of such a disaster occurring, Jefferson wrote, "I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever."⁷ Although Jefferson was a prodigious slaveholder in his own right, many of his ilk in Virginia rejected his proposal because it threatened their right to retain and profit from slave labor. Fourteen years would thus pass before another Virginia politician, Charles Fenton Mercer, revived and revised Jefferson's earlier colonization plan. Mercer's African colonization plan proved more palatable to a greater number of White pro-slavery partisans than Jefferson's for two reasons. First, Mercer viewed African colonization as a free coloured expatriation program rather than

Frederick Freeman, Yardee: A Plea for Africa in Familiar Conversations on the Subject of Slavery and Colonization (Philadelphia, 1836); Ralph R. Gurley, Life of Jehudi Ashmun, Late Colonial Agent in Liberia (Washington, 1835); and Thomas Hodgkin, An Inquiry into the Merits of the American Colonization Society and a Reply to the Charge Brought Against it and the Account of the British African Colonization Society (London, 1833) depicted the ACS as a project designed to improve the condition of Black Americans.

one designed to remove all Blacks (enslaved and free) from the U.S.⁸ Second, he believed free coloureds should be resettled beyond the parameters of the Western Hemisphere in West Africa. In spite of the Mercer plan's popularity, two major problems with it remained unresolved. How were the necessary funds going to be raised to remove the increasing free coloured population in the U.S.? Second, would free coloureds leave the United States voluntarily for West Africa or would Whites have to use coercive tactics to achieve the same end?

The American Colonization Society (ACS), which the efforts of Mercer and New Jersey preacher Robert Finley established in the winter of 1816-1817, was the first national organization to actively address these questions by founding the first American settlement in West Africa that would become Liberia, although the U.S. did not recognize it until 1862. Supporters of the ACS used the rhetoric associated with the notion of American Manifest Destiny to convince American free coloureds that God had sanctioned their return to Africa. Society supporters hoped this African Colonization strategy would inspire a massive Black exodus, transform the cultural identities of African people into those adopted by American Evangelical Protestants, and contribute to the demise of the African slave trade. They also believed that ACS styled African Colonization would rid the nation of its detested Northern and Southern free coloured populations, and prevent them from settling in newly acquired U.S. territories.

⁷ Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (1787; Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982), 163.

⁸ Douglas R. Egerton, " 'Its Origin is not a Little Curious': A New Look at the American Colonization Society," Journal of the Early American Republic, 5 (Winter 1985), 468; Robert Allen Carter, " Virginia Federalists in Dissent: The Life of Charles Fenton Mercer," (Ph.D. Diss, University of Virginia, 1988), 228-229.

I have developed the term Black Manifest Destiny, which represents a convergence of these African Colonization ideas embraced by many ACS supporters. Meanwhile, I argue that Black Manifest Destiny was a racialized form of American Manifest Destiny rhetoric used by Whites and some Blacks to promote the removal of free coloureds from the United States. To develop this argument, this chapter examines the formation of Black Manifest Destiny as an ideological concept, the legal and philosophical rationales that spawned its creation, and how the ACS's Richmond Virginia auxiliary used Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric to advance its interests in the African Colonization Movement.

Richmond serves as an excellent site for exploring the issue of Black Manifest Destiny and the African Colonization Movement for at least three reasons. First, it was one of the two major cities in the Upper South where free coloureds supported the ACS in its early years (1817-1833). Second, economic opportunities for Richmond free coloureds fluctuated over the course of the antebellum period, which made the city a potential hotbed for emigration recruitment.⁹ Third, focusing on Richmond engenders a clearer understanding of the triumph of pragmatism as over the idealistic motives of the ACS. More specifically, the Richmond auxiliary's supporters viewed Black Manifest Destiny as both a means to regulate the growth of the free coloured population and extend Protestant ideas about civilization building abroad.

⁹ Marie Tyler-McGraw, "Richmond Free Coloureds and African Colonization, 1816-1832," Journal of American Studies 21, No. 2, (1987); 207-224.

American Manifest Destiny and Black Manifest Destiny Ideological Structure

Two major ideological forms of Manifest Destiny emerged before and after the constitutional founding of the American Republic. The Northern form blended John Winthrop's millenarian ideas with Alexander Hamilton's vision of an industrial-manufactures' Republic.¹⁰ Winthrop likened the Massachusetts Bay Colony to a "City Upon on a Hill" that would bring all humans of the earth into what Augustan theologians called the "City of God." This rhetoric would be redeployed by advocates of African Colonization who recognized Liberia as "A city set upon a hill which cannot be hid" from benighted "African tribes."¹¹ Meanwhile, the second and southern ideological form of American Manifest Destiny imbibed Thomas Jefferson's vision of republicanism. He surmised that an agrarian focused economy designed to promote notions of civic virtue would set the American Republic on the path toward the final stage of human history.¹² Newspaper editor, John O' Sullivan, had this in mind when he described Manifest

¹⁰ John Winthrop, "City Upon A Hill," in Thomas G. Patterson and Dennis Merrill, editors, Major Problems in American Foreign Relations, Volume I: To 1920 (Lexington: D.C. Heath Company, 1995), 29.

¹¹ The writer envisions Liberia as a civilizer of Africa, which he portrays as a place ravaged by the unscrupulous slave trade. "A thousand barbarians, who have long made merchandise of their brethren, and have been regarded themselves, as the objects of a bloody and accursed traffic, come within the gates, are taught the doctrine of immortality—the religion of the Son of God. Heaven forbid that this Colony should perish; for its influence to the most abject, injured, and miserable of our race, will be cheering as 'the day-spring from on high,' and salutary as the waters of life." Anonymous, "Liberia," The Guardian and Monitor. A Monthly Publication, Devoted to the Moral Improvement of the Rising Generation (1825-1828) August 1825; 7, 8.

¹² Stephanson, Manifest Destiny, 22; Jefferson's logic opposed industrial manufacturers' systems of production because he believed it would create a citizenry of wage labor dependents, susceptible to anti-republican political corruption. Jefferson was in the best position to impose his ideology, because agriculture was the primary occupation and mode production in the early Republic. See Thomas Jefferson, "Manufactures," from William Peden, editor, Notes on the State of Virginia (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 164-165.

Destiny as an American mission to “overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions,” although he did not pen these words until 1845. Before then Winthropian/ Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian visions of national development had already embraced American territorial expansion in conjunction with the notion of Divine Providence. Moreover, as these forms of American Manifest Destiny thought competed for the center of the country’s political stage, they depended on one common denominator—the idea of contiguous expansion. Consequently, the concept of Manifest Destiny in this proto-typical stage worked its way into America’s foreign policy framework.¹³ Some racially alienated Black Americans also borrowed and reshaped Manifest Destiny to serve their own needs. Before post-1845 firebrands used it to conduct the country’s first Imperial Wars in what became the vast Texas, New Mexico, and California territories, they embraced what I call Black Manifest Destiny.

¹³ Stephanson’s work represents the latest installment in the historiographical debate on how the character of and origin of American Manifest Destiny has been treated. Stephanson aligns himself with Ernst Lee Tuveson who argued that American expansion was the product of Reformation millennial thought—a sacred ideology. Reginald Horsman finds Tuveson’s thesis to be valid during the early American Republican period. However, Horsman claims that the paradigm of racial materialism replaced millennial thought during America’s war with Mexico. He recognized the ascendancy of the idea of inherent racial inferiority and superiority coupled with active territorial expansion during the late antebellum period. This materialist/secular secular argument has steadily evolved in the works of Ernst Albert Weinberg, Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1935); Ernest Lee Tuveson, Reedmer Nation: The Idea of America’s Millennial Role (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1968); Reginald Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1981); Thomas Hietala, Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985.), 8; Frank Owsley, Jr. and Gene A. Smiths, Filibusters and Expansionists: Jeffersonian Manifest Destiny, 1800-1821 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997, 8-9, 11. and Anders Stephanson, Manifest Destiny: American Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right (New York: Hill & Wang, 1995).

Black Manifest Destiny emerged from the aforementioned forms of American Manifest Destiny, yet it was also connected to ACS African Colonization ideals. The same themes that underwrote American Manifest Destiny—land acquisition and the extension of American Protestant Christian Civilization—so to became the hallmarks of Black Manifest Destiny. However, Black Manifest Destiny's geographical trajectory in proximity to North America pointed in the direction of West Africa because White northern and southern American Nationalists rejected the idea of free persons of colour and Whites living as politico-economic equals in the United States. Many White and some Black ACS supporters used these ideas to promote the Society's plan to resettle free coloureds in West Africa. They recognized Black Manifest Destiny as the second of two Divine plans. The first was to expatriate free coloureds, recaptured Africans and uncontrollable slaves in West Africa, while the second recognized free coloureds émigrés as Divine instruments predestined to introduce American Protestant Civilization to the backward peoples of the "Dark Continent."¹⁴ These ideas implied that God had intended the United States to be a "White man's country," which reinforced White proslavery and anti-free coloured rhetorical exigencies on both sides of the Mason Dixon Line.¹⁵ Many of the same White

¹⁴ Rev. Phillip Randolph Slaughter, The Virginia History of African Colonization (Richmond: Macfarlane & Ferguson, 1855), 4; Rev. John Newland Maffit expressed these feelings in his description of the ACS as an organization rendering "divine service" to Africa—"in short it presents hope, in a land of ignorance and depravity of Paganism and Mohammedanism, the interesting and bright exhibition of an intelligent, moral and christian [sic] community." Maffit, A Plea for Africa: A Sermon Delivered at Bennet Street Church, In Behalf of the American Colonization Society, July 4, 1830 (Boston: Putnam & Hunt, 1830), 12

¹⁵ Many White politicians in the North and South believed that Blacks were inherently inferior to themselves. Three ideas grew out of this assumption. First, social equality between the races was impossible. Second, the increase of the free black population added to the nation's poverty. Third,

Americans committed to protecting this ideal became the leading supporters of the ACS's African Colonization mission. Meanwhile, these anti-free coloured sentiments were converted by Black religious constituencies in Baltimore into a Black imperial vision. For example, a group of Black Baltimorean clergymen likened free coloureds to the first displaced Englishman who settled in North America. "We are not so prosecuted," they exclaimed, "but, we too leave our homes, and seek a distant and hospitable shore: an empire maybe the result of emigration; as of theirs." In addition, Black emigration would spread "civilization and the Gospel, and the blessings of our common creator." The same sentiments linking empire building and the proliferation of Christianity in West Africa became a cornerstone of colonization rhetoric in Richmond, Virginia. It was for this reason that members of members of the Richmond auxiliary asked,

What revolutions may not be effected in commerce by the foundation of a new empire, on a continent abounding with the richest exchangeable productions? What sublime consequences may not be expected to follow the introduction of Christianity and civilization in a benighted and degraded region. Entertaining no visionary views of ultimate destiny of this infant empire, we will avert more particularly to the evils among ourselves, which its foundation and success are designed to remove.¹⁶

it was "Christian" to support the ACS program of Free Black removal. See W.E.B. DuBois, Black Reconstruction in America (Reprint: 1935, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 7; Winthrop Jordan, White Over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), xiv; Leon F. Litwack, North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1961), viii; Gary Nash, Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840 (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1991), 234-235; Ira Berlin, Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South (New York: The New Press, 1974), xiv, 182, 285; and Don R. Brown, "Free coloureds Rhetorical Impact on African Colonization: the Emergence of Rhetorical Impact on African Colonization: The Emergence of Rhetorical Exigencies," Journal of Black Studies, vol. 9, 3 (March 1979), 251-265.

¹⁶ Third Report of the Managers of the Richmond and Manchester Colonization Society. Presented to the Annual Meeting of the Society, January 16, 1826. Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, p. 2.

Although Black Richmond Preacher, Lott Cary, and other persons of color emigrating to Liberia recognized this Colonizing mission as a positive form of Black self-determination designed to disentangle its participants from the repressive web spun by slave holders and anti-free coloured advocates in the U.S., this did not negate the fact that the ACS project in Liberia bore ideological ties to ongoing colonizing projects located east and west of the Mississippi river in North America. The distinguishing feature between the two was that the project of Liberian settlement contained both post-colonial and colonial sensibilities. The agents of colonization in Liberia were primarily former slaves hoping to construct an anti-slavery/post-colonial future. Furthermore, these emigrants were people who left behind communities wedded to colonial slave systems and Anglo cultural traditions.¹⁷ Examples of these traditions included spoken English, Protestant Evangelical religion, and Western liberal forms of political and economic organization.

The ACS headquarters in Washington, DC, along with its state auxiliary organizations, played an active role in constructing the ideas undergirding “Black Manifest Destiny.” The purpose of the slaveholder backed ACS was clear in this regard: it would be responsible for relocating subversive free coloured and slave populations in West Africa, while a more homologous White population would be free to move into the North American West without the fear of future slave

¹⁷ “Extracts from a Memorial from the Free People of Colour to the Citizens of Baltimore,” in The Speech of the Honorable Henry Clay, Before the Colonization Society in the Hall of the House of Representatives, January 20, 1827 (Washington, D.C.: Printed at the Columbian Office, North East Street, 1827), 7; “Circular Addressed to the Coloured Brethren and Friends in America: An Unpublished Essay by Lott Cary, sent from Liberia to Virginia, 1827,” Benjamin Brand Papers, 1790-1838, Virginia Historical Society (ViHi), Richmond, Virginia (Hereafter cited BPP).

revolts. In addition, the notion of extending Christianity and Civilization to Africa drew many Black Americans into the ACS movement. The ACS decision to establish an African colony also supported anti-free Black migration arguments. Some initial promoters of Black domestic colonization suggested that a portion of the Louisiana Purchase should be reserved for the relocation of free coloureds. Opponents of this position, however, feared that free coloureds and manumitted slaves would form an alliance with Indian factions in the West and obstruct the establishment of new White settlements. Hence, they decided not to set aside western lands for free coloureds. Other foes of Black Colonization in the American West argued that West Africa's climate was more suitable to the environmental needs of Black settlers.¹⁸

The significance of Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric lies in its use as an argument in the recruitment of Richmond free colored émigrés for the ACS colony in West Africa. Therefore, an examination of Black Manifest Destiny's influence on ACS émigré recruitment in Richmond does not lend itself purely to a quantitative analysis of ACS emigration records. A mixed body of evidence was thus collected to analyze how the rhetoric of Black Manifest Destiny was used in Richmond.¹⁹

¹⁸ John Saillant, "The American Enlightenment in Africa: Jefferson's Colonizationism and Black Virginia's Migration to Liberia," Eighteenth Century Studies, vol. 31, 3 (1998), p. 269-270, 273; Amos Beyan, The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian States: A Historical Perspective, 1822-1900 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991).

¹⁹ Emigration records report only the settlers' cause of death, status (free born or manumitted), age, occupation, and the vessel they traveled on to Liberia. One could assume that the decision free coloureds made to emigrate to Liberia was motivated only by the chance to increase their incomes. This would have particularly been the case of skilled free coloured artisan, who felt they had reached a socio-economic dead in the United States. This economic deterministic mode of analysis runs the risk of producing speculative conclusions. To avoid this analytical pitfall, this

The decline in Richmond emigration rates in the 1830s reflects the influence that the Nat Turner slave revolt (1831) and aftermath had on the African Colonization movement in Virginia. Turner's revolt precipitated a debate (1831-1832) on whether it was in the best interest of the state's security to protect the property of slaveholders or pass a statewide emancipation-colonization bill. The latter option would have presumably prevented slave revolts and supported the economic interests of White artisans who competed with skilled slave laborers, while undermining the planter caste's control over state politics. Also, Bill No. 7 (1837) brought before the Virginia Assembly would have given the state the power to set annual free coloured emigration quotas, and force designated numbers of free coloureds (under the age of forty) to emigrate to Liberia. Meanwhile, the bill charged the Virginia Colonization Society (VCS) with the responsibility of facilitating this program.²⁰ The great slave debate ended in a stalemate, which reduced the probability of future statewide emancipation bills getting through the Virginia Assembly. More importantly, Virginia's failure to adopt a program of gradual emancipation exacerbated the problem of stranded families in Richmond, which had been created by state laws that placed strict limits on manumission in the first two decades of the 19th century (see chapters 2 & 3). Thus, the idea

chapter relies on Richmond rates of emigration collected from the ACS emigration records and qualitative sources such as manuscript collections, periodicals, letters, and legal records that describe the creation and use of Black Manifest Destiny Rhetoric as an emigrant recruitment device. Meanwhile, the emigration records allow one to track the actual numbers of Richmond free coloureds applying for emigration.

of African Colonization became increasingly unpopular (1834-1860) among Virginia's free coloureds who faced the prospect of having to leave slave kin behind by choosing to emigrate to Liberia.²¹ The fall in emigration rates in the city during the late 1820s was a reflection of free coloured opposition to the principles of Black Manifest Destiny, when it meant they might be separated from relatives in the process. Furthermore, Virginia's Black Laws and widespread anti-miscegenation ideas that depicted them as social aliens also bred dissent among free coloureds in relation to White ideas about Black Manifest Destiny.

It would be useful to revisit Virginia's Black laws to illustrate the hostile legal climate in which Richmond free coloureds operated. The most important laws of this kind were passed between 1790 and 1822. Two factors prompted their passage. The free coloured population rose from 4.2% to 7.2% between 1790 and 1810.²² Richmond's free coloured population grew at a rate over twice the state average, increasing from 3%

²⁰ Frederick Bransford, American Colonization Society, Virginia Branch Minute Book, 1823-1859, Richmond, Virginia, also Liberia (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1996), Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia (Hereafter cited, VCBR).

²¹ Allison Goodyear Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate, 1831-1832 (Baton Rouge & London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 1-10; A Bill Providing for the Removal of Free Black Persons of Colour from this Commonwealth, No. 7, Virginia Assembly, 1837; Tyler- McGraw and Kimball, Bondage and Freedom (Richmond, VA, 1988).

²² William Walter Henning, editor, The Statutes at Large: being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, from the first session of the legislature in the year 1619, 13 volumes (Charlottesville: Published for the James Foundation of the Commonwealth of Virginia by the University of Virginia Press, 1969), XII, 182-183; James Shepard, editor, The Statutes Being a Collection of the all the Laws of Virginia (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1969), 123-125, 181; Historical Statistics, Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington D.C., Associated Publishers, 1931), 245.

(1782) to 12 % (1830).²³ Second, Gabriel's conspiracy to overthrow Virginia slavery encouraged state lawmakers to court supporters of free coloured removal. Their first legal objective was to slow the growth of the state's free coloured population. Such laws passed in 1793 and 1805 restricted free persons of colour from entering the state and required manumitted slaves to exit the state after May 1, 1806. Violators of the second measure faced the possibility re-enslavement. Statutes in 1819 and 1822 later limited manumission to slaves demonstrating "extraordinary merit" and permitted the Commonwealth to re-enslave free coloureds convicted of a felony.²⁴ These laws hindered Richmond emigration recruitment in one fundamental way. They fostered a climate of distrust between whites who operated on behalf of the state and free coloureds. Free coloureds were after all frequently jailed in Richmond for the smallest infractions of the city's legal code, such as being without their "free papers." Having one's free papers was such a big deal that one gentlemen posted a lost and found notice in a local newspaper. This evidence suggests that members of stranded families, such as the Hope

²³ See Takagi, "Rearing Wolves to Our Own Destruction," (Charlottesville 1999.); McLeod, "Free labor in a slave society..." (1991); 2nd through the eighth Population Schedules of the U.S. Federal Census.

²⁴ John Cummings & Joseph A. Hill, Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915 (Washington D.C., 1918), 57; John Hope Franklin & Alfred A. Moss, Jr. From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans, 7th edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1994), 151; Jordan, White Over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812 (Chapel Hill, 1968), 575; "An Act Reducing into One, The Several Acts Concerning Slaves, Free Negroes and Mulattoes" The Revised Code of Virginia, 1819, Chapter 111, reprinted in Paul Finkelman, The Law of Freedom and Bondage: A Casebook (New York, London, & Rome: Ocean Publications, Inc. 1986), 112.

Family (chapter 2), would have been especially suspicious of any actions made by the state.²⁵

Older laws, erected in the 1780s and 1790s, encroached on the political and economic mobility of free coloureds. Free persons of colour were prohibited from owning more than one firearm; they, like slaves, were forbidden to offer testimony against Whites in court; they could be whipped for striking a White person for harboring slaves; free coloureds and “Indians” could not buy White servants; and free coloureds were banned from enlisting in the state militia—one of the prerequisites for citizenship.²⁶ These legal restrictions that preserved a social order linking blackness to slavery and economic dependency maintained the climate of racial distrust in Virginia, which hampered emigration recruitment efforts in its capital city of Richmond.

Another seed of dissention amidst Blacks and Whites in Virginia and the United States entailed the entrenchment of ant-miscegenation ideology. Three major anti-miscegenation ideas that helped to justify African Colonization included beliefs that Black Americans were intellectually inferior to whites, they were descendants of the Biblical Noah’s cursed son—Ham, and that they represented a lower order of human species. These assumptions led to the conclusion that an increase in the free coloured population threatened the

²⁵ See “The Mayoral Docet,” Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia; Richmond, VA; Carter G. Woodson, The Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830, Together with Absentee Ownership of Slaves in the United States 1830 (Washington Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1924).

²⁶ Jordan, White Over Black, 407; Michael Gottfredson & Michael J. Hindelang, “A Study of the Behavior of Law,” American Sociological Review, 44, 1 (1979); 3-18.

country's national security or White racial purity.²⁷ ACS supporter, John Leeds Bozman released one of the most scathing anti-miscegenation statements two years after the Society sent its first emissaries to buy land for the planting of a new colony near Sierra Leone (1817). Bozman's message (1819), based on the fear of a St. Domingue styled rebellion cropping up in the U.S., represented just how sophisticated White attacks on the proposition of miscegenation had become. He wrote:

Man is a gregarious animal, but each species has a right to keep its flock from hardling [sic] or mixing with others. Should chance or accident have brought two of these flocks together, the minor party must yield the exclusive right of field and pasture to the majority. The latter have a right to drive the former to seek other haunts and climes. To apply the allegory—the Whites have a right to say to the blacks, your residence with us is incompatible with our safety, even could we tolerate the ideas of an intermixture of the blood of our two races; yet the other is too much probability, that...could effectually take place, quarrels and contests would assuredly produce the extermination of one or the other of us. You are now our slaves, but we give you your liberty, provided you will quietly seek a home in [an] other country. If you do not do this willingly, we must remove you by force.²⁸

In conjunction with Black Laws, widespread anti-miscegenation sentiments poisoned any constructive relationship that might have existed between Richmond Whites and Blacks before the American Civil War.

²⁷ The Universal Genius of Emancipation, 22 January 1827, Library of Congress, Washington DC; Jefferson, Notes on Virginia (Boston: Lilly and Wait, 1832); John Leeds Bozman, "An Essay on the late Institution of the American Society for Colonising the Free People of Colour of the United States, 1819," in American Colonization Society Papers (Hereafter cited ACSP), Library of Congress Collection, Washington, DC, Volume 6, Series 23, later published in by Washington: Davis & Force, 1820; Genesis 9:20-27; David Brion Davis, Slavery and Human Progress (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Thomas Gossett, Race: the History a of an Idea in America (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 32-57.

²⁸ Bozman, "An Essay on the late Institution of the American Society for Colonising [sic] the Free People of Colour of the United States," 1819, ACSP.

Therefore, the Richmond free coloured population would have perceived White interpretations of Black Manifest Destiny as disingenuous.

Planning A Free Coloured Exodus: Black Manifest Destiny and the Richmond Auxiliary

The Richmond ACS auxiliary used Manifest Destiny rhetoric to recruit free coloureds for African Colonization. This rhetoric presumed that God had used the crucible of slavery to re-socialize and return manumitted slaves to Africa. Furthermore, these ex-slaves' Divine mission was to propagate Protestant Christianity and American Civilization in the land of their Old World ancestors. As early as 1826, members of the Richmond auxiliary acknowledged the disadvantaged condition of the free coloureds within their midst and their need for a country of their own where they might be "transformed into respectable members of [a] social compact" with the opportunity to cultivate "ornaments to science and the arts, or chosen vessels for the propagation of the word of life."²⁹ Rev. Phillip Slaughter, the last of the Virginia Colonization Society agents to the ACS, was the first to try to situate free coloureds within what he construed to be their Divine relationship with enslavement, Colonization, and Black Manifest Destiny. Slaughter claimed the arrival of the first Black slaves in Jamestown, ignited the beginning of a positive transformation. He wrote, "[had] the African been left like the Indian in his native freedom, his would have been the fate of the Indian. But in the mysterious providence of God, [in time] the Africans [were]

bound to the care of the Anglo-American,” which exposed them to the “manners and arts of civilized life, [and have] been taught the christian religion,” so they might some day return and save the dark continent from the ignorance of its native inhabitants.³⁰ Other supporters of African Colonization in Richmond expressed similar idealist sentiments about the cause, while holding fast to the conviction that it was not God’s will for Whites and Blacks to co-exist in the same polity. These colonization supporters believed free coloureds were of a “race of men whose distinctive character must separate them from the rest of the population; whose morals must ever be of the humblest standard, and whose color places an impassable barrier between them and the rest of the population of the land, are to be removed, and re-placed by a free, hardy, virtuous white population, standing equal in every right claimed by civilized man.”³¹ The term “civilized man” was therefore used as a code word for White men in a binary discourse that characterized Blacks as uncivilized. This piece of rhetorical chicanery effectively characterized free coloureds as a *problemated people* whose color prevented them from being “free.” Otherwise, they would have to be described as people with a problem in need of a solution to become “free.” “Civilized man” was therefore a strictly political term used to persuade Whites

²⁹ Third Report of the Managers of the Richmond and Manchester Colonization Society, January 16, 1826, p. 3. Library of Virginia (LVA), Richmond, Virginia.

³⁰ Rev. Phillip Randolph Slaughter, The Virginia History of African Colonization (Richmond: Macfarlane & Ferguson, 1855), iv, viii.

³¹ Sixth Annual Meeting of the Richmond and Manchester Colonization Society (1828), Richmond, Virginia, LVA.

that the removal of free coloureds and continued enslavement of other persons of colour was justified.

Richmond auxiliary Treasurer Benjamin Brand and the emigrant Rev. Lott Cary were two of the players actively invested in the idea that Blacks and Whites could not live as equals in the same place. Their correspondence over the course of the five years Cary resided in the Liberia testified to the unflappability of this longstanding conviction. Other evidence related to the Richmond auxiliary and Virginia Colonization Society reinforced these sentiments. They also highlight the ineffectiveness of Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric in convincing free coloureds to apply for emigration to Liberia, and how Richmond colonizationists responded to various Liberian colonial developments. The narrative that follows draws heavily on these documents.

Three years before the organization of the Richmond auxiliary's campaign to recruit free persons of colour for African Colonization began, forty-one men, thirty-two women, thirteen children, and three White ACS agents traveled aboard the *Brig Elizabeth* to Sierra Leone (1820). Not long after the ship left port, a conflict occurred between one of the Black emigrants on board and the ship's captain. In the aftermath of this squabble, the Black emigrants appointed, AME pastor, Daniel Coker as their unofficial leader. A line of racial demarcation divided the White crew from the Black émigrés, which remained for the rest of the voyage. Coker's authority later faded when the Black passengers sensed that he was reluctant to represent their interests that diverged from those harbored by

the White ACS agents.³² Problems and tensions unleashed during this first passage foreshadowed more difficulties for the future of these emigrants who dreamt of new lives for themselves upon an unknown and distant shore.

After four months of travel, the settlers landed at Sierra Leone. Animosities continued to brew betwixt the White agents and Black emigrants. Disease and the fact that a definite piece of land had not been purchased before the settlers arrived worsened an already complicated situation. The journal of Daniel Coker suggested that the settlers anticipated “fierce” bouts with African “diseases,” but they had not anticipated that lands would not be prepared for their settlement when they arrived.³³ By the spring of 1820, all three ACS agents and twelve émigrés had died from malaria, fever, and other pathogens. Coker was thus left to lead an already battered group of settlers in the work of setting up shelter and preparing lands they rented at Campelar for planting, which was located on Sherbro Island about fifty miles off the Coast of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Unanticipated summer rains crippled their efforts and convinced the group to retreat to Freetown, rendering this first Black settlement attempt in West Africa an utter failure.³⁴

The next settlement attempt, conducted by the second group of Southern

³² “Emigration Register,” January 1820, ASCP, Washington, DC, Library of Congress; Tom Schick, Behold the Promised Land: a History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 17-18, 21.

³³ Daniel Coker, Journal of Daniel Coker, A Descendent of Africa, From the Time of Leaving New York in the Ship Elizabeth of, Capt. Sebor. On a Voyage for Sherbro, in Africa. In Company with Three Agents, and About Ninety Persons of Colour (Baltimore: Published by Edward J. Coale, 1820), 16.

³⁴ Schick, Behold the Promised Land, 22.

Blacks that arrived along the West African Coast in March of 1821 proved to be slightly more successful than the first; however, disease and conflicts with the Dei, Gola, and Condo chiefdoms of Windward Coast threatened the settlement's early development. Violence erupted when two White ACS agents pressured a local chief into selling them lands near Cape Montserrado Island.³⁵ The surviving members of the first and second groups, including Richmond native Lott Cary, established a permanent settlement. White ACS agents called the settlement Monrovia, the future capital of the Liberian Colony and subsequent Republic.

Apart from the early conflicts with the indigenous Africans, the settlers' struggle with disease proved to be a greater problem and more deadly. Between 1822 and 1843, malaria and the fever stunted the Colony's population growth. Nearly half of the Black settlers emigrating to Liberia in this period died from disease or left the colony to preserve what remained of their failing health. The high death rates in Liberia's settlement phase were in fact greater than those experienced by white indentures and proprietors affiliated with the first English settlement at Jamestown, which lost over half of its first twelve hundred settlers to disease in its first four years. Corraling high disease death rates was thus high on the list of concerns addressed by the leaders of the early Liberian settlement. Lott Cary was in fact among the first to suggest emigrants be sent to Liberia

³⁵ For details on the violent diplomatic tactics used to acquire Cape Montserado see Schick, 23-24; Judd Harmon, "Marriage of Convenience: The United States in Africa, 1820-1843" American Neptune, vol. 32, 4 (1972), 266-267; Beyan, The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State (Lanham 1991), 51-70. These secondary accounts agree that the ACS agent, Dr. Eli Ayres and U.S. Government appointee, Lt. Robert Stockton acquired the land from Chief Peter by holding him at gunpoint.

during the fall months, when they would have a much better chance of adjusting their bodies to the new environment before the coming the rainy season.³⁶

Cary was a product of the Afro-Creolization process that unfolded in Virginia between the 18th and 19th centuries.³⁷ Afro-Creoles, such as Cary, often adopted an identity that embraced evangelical Christianity but rejected White institutional leadership. Cary obviously shared the view of White evangelicals that portrayed African Colonization as a Christian crusade. However, he did not believe Richmond free persons of colour posed a threat to the city or state's White population. Cary avoided a tone of complete submission to his White benefactors, while emphasizing his primary objective to win souls for Christianity among peoples lost in the "savage" climes of Africa. One observer of Cary's life noted he would probably "never be able to divest himself of a kind of suspicious reserve, toward White people—especially his superiors—which universally attaches itself to those reared in slavery."³⁸ When one combines this assessment of Cary's outlook on race with his deep sense of responsibility toward missionary work, a complex cosmology emerges. His cosmology blended notions Black self-determination, the spread of American Protestantism, territorial

³⁶ Under half of the settlers remained in the colony during the this period. See U.S. Congress, Senate, U.S. Navy Department, tables showing the number of Emigrants and recaptured Africans sent to the colony of Liberia by the government of the United States...together with a census of the colony and the Report of its commerce, &c. September 1843: Senate Document No. 150, 28th Cong., 2nd sess., 1845, Library of Congress, DC; James Henretta, et al., America's History (New York: Worth, 1997), 44.

³⁷ Melville J. Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past (Boston, Beacon Press, 1958); Mechal Sobel, Trabelin' On : the Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith (Westport, Conn. : Greenwood Press, c1979); Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion : The "invisible institution" in the Antebellum South (New York : Oxford University Press, 1978); Michael A. Gomez, Exchanging Our Country Marks : The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

expansionism, and Western commercial development. Each of these aspects of his worldview portrayed settlement in West Africa as an outgrowth of what he would have agreed to be part of a broad based Black Manifest Destiny.³⁹

The ACS's African Colonization proselytizing motives were clear, but Cary and other Society supporters also recognized this program's potentially pecuniary benefits. For example, a number of Richmond tobacco manufacturers were excited by the prospects of business profits that an American colony in West Africa might bring. However, they wanted to make sure that the colony would be in the position to produce tobacco and other cash crops first. Hence, they were prepared to wait for "free persons of colour" to travel to West Africa to determine whether the conditions of a prospective settlement would be favorable for the planting of family farms. In anticipation of the settlement's success, Cary was selected as a representative for several White Richmond merchants. Among them was Seymour Scott, William Barret, William G. Pendleton, and William Gilliatt, who described Cary as "an honest and respectable man."⁴⁰ With Cary's assistance, these investors had the opportunity to claim lucrative returns from untapped West African cash crop markets.

While the first free coloured settlers struggled to establish the ACS colony, an auxiliary of the national Society was formed in Richmond. Its hierarchy consisted of a president, a secretary, and twelve-second tier

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ African Repository and Colonial Journal, October 1825.

managers. John Marshall (president), James Pleasants (the first vice president), James Gibbon (second vice president), Thomas C. Howard (secretary), and Benjamin Brand (treasurer) made up the executive body, while William H. Fitzwylsom, John Rutherford, Charles Nicholas, William Crane, William Barrett, James Coskie, Robert G. Scott, Hall Neilson, James Blair, Beverley Randolph, Willis Cowlings, and James E. Hearsh, served as its managers.⁴¹ The managers had two responsibilities. First, they were to raise funds by appointing persons to oversee the major wards of the city, who would be charged with collecting donations. These funds were then delivered to the Washington, DC ACS Treasurer, Ralph R. Gurley, who maintained regular correspondence with the Colony. Second, managers were to make certain that the work of the Richmond auxiliary was promoted in the local “evangelical and Library Magazine.” Lastly, executive members were expected to promote the nobleness of the colonization cause as often as they could in public.⁴²

Many of the free coloureds, recruited by the auxiliary, were members of the 1st Baptist Church—home of the largest racially mixed congregation in the city. Moreover, Blacks often outnumbered Whites in this house of worship at a ratio of more than 3:1. Some pro-slavery Whites in Richmond were suspicious of the auxiliary early on, while anti-slavery pundits feared the organization would protect slavery. An 1824

⁴⁰ Joseph King and Thomas Tyson, 30 December 1823, BBP.

⁴¹ VCBR Vo1, pp. 1-2 and 11.

proposal for a state tax levied on free coloureds and slaves agitated the interests of both factions because these tax revenues were earmarked for the local auxiliary's operations. Slave-owners accused the Richmond auxiliary of attempting to emancipate Virginia slaves before the bill was defeated. The auxiliary rebutted this claim by restating that its central mission was consistent with the ACS Constitution, which was to recruit and transport free coloureds who volunteered to emigrate to Liberia.⁴³

By the fall of 1824, the Richmond auxiliary had begun its first major recruiting efforts, while ACS agent Reverend William McKenney solicited as much statewide financial support for the organization as possible. In a letter to Richmond auxiliary Treasurer, Benjamin Brand, McKenney expressed the enthusiasm characteristic of early national, state, and local ACS activities. He informed Brand that he planned to acquire a ship to transport at least one hundred "coloured people" to the ACS Colony that fall. However, the progress of this ambitious project would depend on the fund raising success of the Richmond auxiliary and supporters in surrounding "colonies" (counties). This address established McKenney's role as the head Virginia fundraiser. The urgent tone of his correspondence implied that if only Virginians were willing to work hard for this cause, the free coloured "problem" would soon be solved.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ VCBR 11; "Constitution of the American Colonization Society, ACSP, 2.

⁴⁴ Rev. William McKenney to Benjamin Brand, 30 October 1824, BBP.

Over one hundred and forty Virginia free persons of colour and manumitted slaves had emigrated to the Colony since 1821, which helped sustain McKenney's fervor for African Colonization during the next year.⁴⁵ He was also excited by the progress of the older Virginia ACS auxiliaries, the creation of new ones, financial contributions made to the ACS, and the prospects of the African colonization movement in the state taking on the likeness of a Holy crusade. Auxiliaries were established in Suffolk, Smithfield, Hampton, Elizabeth City, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Petersburg, Richmond, Lynchburg, Loudon County, Charlestown, Rockingham, New London, and Frederick County. Thirty-five Frederick county residents alone donated \$6,230. However, McKenney proclaimed that more had to be done, for "no patriot—no philanthropist—no christian can withstand its claims for support" for this "righteous cause." He also insisted that the state government set aside funds "...least for five years cover it, with its fostering mantle, by appropriating annually a few thousand dollars, for the benefit of those [free coloureds] who are now worse than alien in the land that gave them birth."⁴⁶ If Virginians failed to support the Liberian settlement with all the financial resources that they could provide, McKenney predicted that African Colonization would die like an "infant" left unattended.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ This figure corresponds with the total number of emigrants who traveled aboard the *Elizabeth* (1820), *Nautilus* (1821), *Strong* (1822), *Oswego* (1823), and *Cyprus* (1824); "Emigration Register," *ASCP*, Reel 314; Schick, *Emigrants to Liberia* (Newark 1971).

⁴⁶ Rev. William McKenney to Mr. Cowlings in Norfolk, January 1825, *BBP*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The African Colonization movement continued to gather momentum in Virginia when a King William County resident informed Brand of a new auxiliary established in his town. Without any reservations, John Taliferro believed that colonization would give “hope” to “free people of colour” denied the “privilege of a free government,” dispose of the slave population, and restore Virginia to the good graces of Christian Providence. More specifically Taliferro believed African Colonization offered White Virginians the opportunity to re-enter the brotherhood of “Christ” their Lord.⁴⁸

The Richmond auxiliary agreed with Taliferro’s judgment, and wished also to prevent any negative incidents from occurring that might discourage free coloureds from emigrating. The minutes of 17 January 1825 highlighted this concern. All of those in attendance wanted to be sure that the choice of the “free people” to make their home in Africa remained voluntary. If coercion were used, it might “excite no other feelings than regret, deep conscientious, that blessings which flow from its acceptance would be lost.”⁴⁹ They were particularly afraid of cases where slaves being manumitted for colonization were forced to leave family members behind. The Richmond Auxiliary found these incidents weakened the cause, for they realized that the free coloured and slave communities were so intertwined in Richmond and in nearby counties that actions carried out against one caste often influenced the behavior of the

⁴⁸ John Taliferro, in King William County to Benjamin Brand, 31 May 1825, BBP.

other. Benjamin Brand's description of the emotional pain experienced by a young enslaved father, who was reluctant to release his daughter for emigration to Liberia in 1827, demonstrated the malignant affects colonization could have on a stranded family:

Yesterday, I sent [Colonel] Bullock's twenty-two slaves on a steam boat to the care of Mr. McPhail requesting him to ship them on board the brig Doris. Soon after their departure, the Father [sic] of one of the little children was in such extreme distress as to induce Colo. [sic] Bullock to ask me to write to Mr. McPhail to send the child back. He promises to educate her and in two to three years to send her with her father to Liberia.⁵⁰

Patrick, the child's father, was so distressed by his daughter's absence that he convinced Brand to encourage his owner to permit him to accompany her. Bullock agreed to his request. Hence Patrick, who had fallen ill, mustered enough strength to take the next steamboat out to be reunited with his daughter, before they boarded the *Brig Doris*. This incident demonstrated a father's love for his daughter. It also highlighted the fact that the enslaved relatives of free coloureds might have to be manumitted for emigration in order to convince the former to go as well.⁵¹ Otherwise, prospective Black emigrants might perceive manumission coupled with emigration as an alternative form of destructive slave sale.

In addition to the Board's desire not to have prospective free coloured emigrants construe African colonization as another form of coercion, they were concerned with a set of external issues that might

⁴⁹ VCBR, 15.

⁵⁰ Benjamin Brand to Ralph R. Gurley, 5 November 1827, BPP.

produce negative publicity and destroy the movement's momentum. These issues included Liberia's capacity to defend itself, raising the funds to send motivated emigrants, and the potential of Haitian immigration siphoning off prospective Liberian émigrés. The auxiliary board was satisfied with reports on the Colony's military competence, which they believed would silence ACS opponents. However, they were more concerned with the ACS headquarters' poor reputation for raising enough money to pay emigration fees (i.e. transportation, housing, food, etc...). This was a consistent problem during the first twenty years of the Society's existence.⁵² Many Society supporters were disheartened by this news, because many free coloureds were willing to settle in Liberia, but the funds were not available to send them. Aside from these financial problems, Richmond auxiliary managers were thoroughly convinced that "there remained no respectable portion of the free persons of color, who were unwilling to go to Africa; and applications for this purpose became so numerous that there was much perplexity in making selections."⁵³ While the ACS Richmond auxiliary was unable to harness the enthusiasm of prospective free coloured emigrants in the city, graver threats loomed in the Caribbean and in Liberia.

Lott Cary led a rebellion in Liberia between the spring 1823 and

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² VCBR, 16; Frankie Hutton, "Economic Considerations in the American Colonization Societies Early Effort to Emigrate Free coloureds to Liberia, 1816-1836," Journal of Negro History, vol. 4, 4 (Autumn, 1983), 376-389.

⁵³ VCBR, 16.

Summer of 1824. These insurgents charged the ACS agent in Monrovia with the unequal distribution of colonial supplies (i.e. food, arms, land) to all emigrants. Therefore, they seized control of the Monrovia arms and food warehouses. The uprising in Liberia ended when the ACS Treasurer, Ralph R. Gurley, withheld all food supplies to the struggling colony, Cary's band of dissenters were punished, and White ACS governor Jehudi Ashmun was restored to his post.⁵⁴ Though the revolt endangered the existence of the Liberian Colony, the Richmond auxiliary made no mention of the incident.

Richmond African Colonization organizers were concerned with Haitian colonization as an alternative solution designed to solve the "free Black problem." The auxiliary argued that Haiti's Francophone language, style of government, lack of fertile soils, and state religion would present major problems to prospective free coloured emigrants. Hence, Liberia would be a far more suitable home for Black American settlers.⁵⁵ To the Richmond auxiliary's relief this alternative immigration program, supported by anti-ACS Philadelphia free coloureds, failed after a few months of operation in 1825.⁵⁶

The Richmond auxiliary held fast to the position of ultimate success

⁵⁴ "Journal of the Board of Managers," April 1 and 18, 1824. ACSP; African Repository, October 1825; William A. Poe, "Lott Cary: Man of Purchased Freedom," Church History, Vol. 39, No. 1 (1970), 59.

⁵⁵ VCBR, 16-17.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

for Society objectives, despite of the threat Haitian Colonization and the Liberian settler uprising posed to the ACS' African Colonization program. The Richmond auxiliary contended that "with a small portion of the command of the Government a permanent and flourishing colony can be founded in Africa, to which, in the course of a few years, all of the free people of colour, now in the United States, and those who may be hereafter emancipated, may be transported." They did not entertain the possibility that failure would stifle emigration motivations and affect the "blessing, which would follow such a measure, both to ourselves, and to the colonists." Hence, the auxiliary resolved to send a petition to the Virginia legislature requesting more funds for what they perceived as the most urgent of all causes.⁵⁷ In late January 1825, a formal petition was issued to the Virginia Legislature. The petition requested, "aid to the Colony of Liberia, on the implements of husbandry, and to be furnished from the penitentiary [sic] establishment of the Commonwealth." The petition was later approved by the legislature, releasing several hundred dollars to the auxiliary.⁵⁸

Social relations in the Colony improved by the winter of 1825. Cary regained his right to preach lost during the rebellion's aftermath and wed for a third time, after losing his wife Nancy to the "fever" three years earlier.⁵⁹ The financial stability of the Colony, education, and the

⁵⁷ VCBR, 19-20.

⁵⁸ VCBR, 22, 24, 30-31.

suppression of the African slave trade occupied most of his thoughts. He hoped the “camwood, ivory, and tobacco” products would allow the Colony to reach a level of economic independence. However, West African tobacco prices were not as competitive as those found in North American markets. In the spring of 1826, he expected to balance the cost of imported supplies with the profits generated from the colony’s indigenous brand of coffee, which had the potential to yield even greater profits. He also seemed to be more preoccupied with the development of the new day school and two slave factories that had been destroyed by British sailors near Monrovia. These developments represented a positive move toward restoring the Colony’s role as an outpost for Black Manifest Destiny.

In Richmond, the auxiliary did not pay much credence to the tenuous economic situation of the Colony. Rather, they focused on ACS accomplishments. The popular claim was that the Liberian colony was more successful than the original Jamestown settlement after its first four years. Virginia alone had succeeded in establishing twenty separate auxiliaries of the parent society in Washington. With all this success, the manager’s report questioned, “what sublime consequences may not be expected to allow the introduction of Christianity and civilization in a benighted and degraded region?” However, the Richmond auxiliary refused to admit that there were many local free coloureds opposed to African Colonization. Instead, they presumed that it was the “benighted minds of depraved morals, of the ordinary motives of virtuous action,” that

⁵⁹ Schick, Emigrants to Liberia, 20.

free coloureds “pervert the shadow of liberty which they enjoy, into the purpose of crime, and self abasement.” Hence, it was more “practicable to remove them” than extend them civil liberties where they lived. These sentiments echoed the precise reason why politicians such as Charles Fenton Mercer feared free coloureds. Mercer believed that free coloureds were a socio-economic liability. When they went to find jobs, the lot of them found only menial employment, which created a dependent caste and stunted the Commonwealth’s overall economic growth.⁶⁰

While the auxiliary praised the comparative success of the ACS colony with grandiose rhetoric, Cary was preoccupied with the various needs of a Colony trying to stay afloat in the summer of 1826. He expressed his concerns in four policy recommendations that addressed the problems of settler health needs, training for physicians, land distribution, and defense. The settlement of physicians should be charged with meeting the settlement’s health needs and training “young lads” for the same purpose. Otherwise, future physicians traveling to the Colony would become overwhelmed with the same administrative and medical duties that persuaded Dr. Peaco to resign. To augment the Colony’s trade capacity, he made two other recommendations. First, the ACS should allow farmers to purchase more land in order to increase tobacco production, during a period when a British anti-slave trade blockade on the

⁶⁰ VCBR, 29-30; Mercer, in relatively recent scholarship, is depicted as the chief architect of the ACS’s purpose that promoted African Colonization as a free removal mechanism. He believed that the removal of free coloureds would prove profitable to the Virginia and United States economy in the long run. See Egerton, “Its Origins is Not a Little Curious,” p.486.

Grain Coast had stifled the importation of this coveted commodity.

Second, Cary advised the United States to send a warship to protect Liberia from its African enemies, while mission school officials attempted to socialize indigenous children who might prove “injurious” to the Colony.⁶¹

Cary’s arguments for more land was similar to that of White North American speculators that pursued western lands during the 1820s. Similar to these Jacksonians, Americo-Liberian leaders moved to replace an indigenous land tenure tradition based on notions of usufruct proprietorship with the idea of private land ownership.⁶² It was also assured that the majority of indigenous African groups must be converted to American Protestant styles of religious thought, “clothing, music, and other arts.”⁶³ Otherwise, the Americo-Liberian “settler standard” that embraced the nuclear “family, the ideals of Christianity, western education, and social uplift” would be threatened.⁶⁴ This culturally chauvinist perspective had two major effects. First, it spawned conflict between Americo-Liberian settlers and native tribes in the 1820s. Second, it brought American Manifest Destiny into the Liberian context. The only difference was that Black American settlers were primary participants in the West African Colony.

To protect the African Colonization movements, Brand took steps to fend

⁶¹ Cary to Benjamin Brand, August 3, 1823, BBP.

⁶² Charles Sellers, The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1818-1846 (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 179, 291; George Klay Kieh Jr., Dependency and the Foreign Policy of a Small Power: The Liberian Case (San Francisco: Mellon Research University Press, 1992), 142.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

off anti-colonization attacks made by radical abolitionists. In a letter to ACS Treasurer, Randolph R. Gurley, Brand spoke of ways to counter circulars that proclaimed Liberia a failure. He was most concerned with the document drawn up by the Philadelphia free Black community, denouncing the ACS as a pro-slavery organization. Thus, Brand asked Gurley to send a list of those Blacks that successfully emigrated and adjusted to the Liberian environment. Otherwise, he feared that if word got out “that all negroes, except one, sent by Rev. Mr. Paxton are dead—and that no children are born or raised in the Colony” it would harm Richmond auxiliary emigrant recruitment efforts.⁶⁵ In addition, the Virginia State Legislature debated about levying a tax on free coloureds with the purpose of raising revenues for colonization activities, and passing a law that would prohibit slave manumissions unless prior arrangements were made for their transportation to Liberia. If these measures passed, it would give radical abolitionists more ammunition to claim that colonization was not voluntary.⁶⁶

Cary joined Brand in the rhetorical defense of the Society, by pointing out the benefits of African Colonization to the Richmond free coloureds and countering Philadelphia free coloured criticisms. To leave the United States, according to Cary, was a matter of common sense. How could Blacks continue to live in a nation that falsely equated “comfortable subsistence” with hard work, thrift, dedication, and honesty, when Richmond free coloureds had “felt the pain

⁶⁴ Schick, Behold the Promised Land, 59.

⁶⁵ Brand to Gurley, December 11, 1827, BBP.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

that it is too little practiced by the very large majority of [its] citizens.”⁶⁷ Hence, they should come to Liberia, where Cary “had almost forgotten” about the pangs of racial repression he had experienced in the United States.⁶⁸ He also urged them not to pin their hopes on race mixing as a solution to American racial discrimination. Amalgamation strategies, in his view, would only worsen the condition of free coloureds and leave them “in a state of captivity.” He recommended they instead accept “that she [Africa] is waiting for her rightful sons, and here you or your children must, and shall come.” This Destiny was likened to the 12th and 13th century crusades compelling several generations of Western Europeans to carry Pauline Christendom into the Muslim dominated Far East. However, this crusade was designed to repossess the presumed lost souls of Africans.⁶⁹ American free coloureds’ subscription to western migratory Destiny was also foolish in Cary’s view.⁷⁰ It was naïve of Black western migration advocates “to think that when you go to take up those lands that you will not find, that there are other judges in the matters besides yourselves.”⁷¹ Cary thus recommended that they be “obedient and submissive tenants” and “remove” to Liberia.⁷²

⁶⁷ Cary to Brand, December 15, 1827, BBP.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Richmond free Blacks, Lenty Craw and William Bowler, were among the first to endorse western migration over African colonization. They petitioned the U.S. government in January 1817 to provide land for free coloureds in Missouri Territory, which became a slave state in 1820. See interpretation of their position in Louis B. Mehlinger, “The Attitude of the Free Negro Toward American Colonization,” Journal of Negro History, 1 (July 1916), 276.

⁷¹ Cary to Brand, December 15, 1827, BBP.

He argued, only there would they be able to build lives for themselves, while aiding the suppression of the African slave trade on the Grain Coast. Cary reasoned that an increase of Liberia's anti-slavery population, coupled with current English, French, and American maritime slave trade suppression efforts would halt the trade in human cargo. In spite of the fact that African slaves continued to find their way into American markets,⁷³ Cary believed a nation of anti-slavery Black Americans planted on West African soil could drive the trade out of existence. This anticipated free coloured exodus to Liberia, according to Cary, was both sanctioned by Providence and was a practical way for dispossessed free coloured Americans to improve their lives.

The second portion of this defense of the Liberian colony, bearing Cary's name, was the work of an anonymous author. It challenged three charges made by anti-ACS free Black partisans in Philadelphia. Representatives of Philadelphia's Black community questioned Liberia's capacity to absorb large numbers of Black emigrants, by claiming that over half of the Colony's Black émigrés had died from disease or from violent conflicts with native African groups. The author answered this criticism by labeling violence with indigenous Africans as the primary cause of emigrant death in the Colony. However, he ignored the fact that many emigrants had died of malaria and fever. He dissembled and avoided mentioning the devastation of the Colony's ever present bouts with disease. He deliberately portrayed the Americo-Liberian settlers as

⁷² Ibid.

heroes, who by appealing to the Manifest Destiny had “gone by a well ordered Providence, and what the Lord owes we cannot revoke.”⁷⁴ In short, the author presumed Black Americans’ destiny lay in Liberia rather than in the United States.

The author also trivialized the issue of Native African/ Americo-Liberian conflicts by suggesting that the Colony’s Black settlers lived in no more dangerous an environment than the one inhabited by the majority of Black Philadelphians. The real mistake of the “poor Frozen Philadelphian,” he suggested, was to believe in the rhetoric of their Black anti-colonizationist brethren, who were “cowards that remain in America only for the purpose of having some person [to] protect” them. According to the author, Liberia was more than able to defend itself against Native attacks. This rhetorical strategy suggested the Philadelphia free coloureds posed a greater threat to the Colony than indigenous groups.⁷⁵

The Black Philadelphians’ second grievance against the ACS was that the colony would ignite future wars with Britain, France, and other European merchant/sea powers. The author addressed this argument by denying the possibility of this kind of incident ever occurring. He reasoned that the U.S. refusal to officially recognize Liberia as its Colony prevented it from entering into

⁷³ Ibid; “Suppression of the African Slave Trade,” in Nathan Huggins, *Writings* (New York, N.Y.: Literary Classics of the United States : Distributed to the trade in the U.S. and Canada by Viking Press, 1986).

⁷⁴ [Lott Cary], December 1827. The letter was sent to Brand with instructions to publish and distribute among the Richmond’s free Black population, *BBP*.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

international wars over Liberia.⁷⁶ This argument highlighted a major problem in ACS operations. If the Society hoped to accomplish the goal of removing free coloureds from the United States, it would need the full support of the U.S. government. Without this support, the Colony's long-term politico-economic legitimacy would remain tenuous.

The Black Philadelphians' last claim suggested that the ACS did not guarantee that slaves would receive their freedom upon their arrival in Liberia. Thus, they suggested that the ACS should be identified as a pro-slavery organization, unless they granted slave emigrants their freedom before they left the U.S. Otherwise, the Society would be vulnerable to accusations that it used coercive tactics to provide emigrants for their Colony. The author's response to this argument revealed his irritation with the Black Philadelphians. He argued that the Black Philadelphians had "no right" to make any request that remotely resembled a call for national emancipation. To suggest that the ACS be given the power to free slaves before they arrived in Liberia was clearly a step in this direction, which violated slave holders' Constitutional right to dispose of their slave property in anyway they chose. Furthermore, the author ridiculed their argument by asking that if the government were to free slaves, then would the Philadelphia free coloureds actually be willing to emigrate to Liberia? If they were, he questioned who would pay for it or be assigned to govern this large group of people? Then, in the middle of his critique, he paused to praise the Black Philadelphian's argument before stating that they were "not to be

⁷⁶ Ibid.

depended on, in affairs of government. And therefore if we could civilise [sic] you in two years after you arrived here, I should think that we had made a rapid progress of you.”⁷⁷ These statements in defense of the colony embodied the essence of Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric used by the Richmond auxiliary supporters to recruit free coloured emigrants. Also, the author's response to the question concerning the status of slaves freed for colonization did not address the problem of these free coloureds' right to choose whether or not they wished to emigrate. If they were not permitted to make this choice, one must conclude that *de facto* emancipation-colonization violated the voluntary “consent” clause in the ACS Constitution.⁷⁸

Back in Richmond, Brand described a religious revival atmosphere that improved the “morals of the city.” However, he remained baffled as to why “none of the free coloured people of this city are willing to emigrate to Liberia.”⁷⁹ After all, Brand and other pro-colonizationist believed ACS African Colonization was guided by Providence. For example, the auxiliary lamented that the “the History of the world scarcely supplies another instance of a colony planted on a barbarous shore, by uncultivated men, from a far land, becoming in so short a period, so stable, so free, so happy exerting an influence on surrounding tribes, so extensive and so salutary, as the Colony of Monrovia.”⁸⁰ In their view this was proof of an unfolding Black Manifest Destiny. Their paternalistic feelings towards

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ “Constitution of the American Colonization Society,” ACSP, 2.

⁷⁹ Ibid. VCBR, 29.

⁸⁰ VCBR, 29.

the presumed childlike free coloureds would not only allow them to consider that free coloureds had decided on their own that African Colonization was not in their best interests. Instead, Brand explained that the reason must lay in “unfavorable accounts, which they keep secret from us.”⁸¹

What Brand and other Richmond supporters of the ACS failed to understand was that there were few local free coloureds who embraced colonization, based on the premise that God had reserved Africa for them. This notion was accepted only by a few, expressed in the following poem:

Come on my fellow comrades, come
Let's hasten to our new given home
The time's arrived, the signals given
For us to see our destined haven

In Africa, the Black man's land
Given by him who none withstand
We'll build an altar to his grace
And strive to save a heathen race

Yes, there we'll sing of all His love,
And live as harmless as a dove,
Guided by the wisdom from on high,
Our song shall reach the lofty sky.

Seventy-six Black emigrants recited these verses the night before boarding the *Brig Hunter*, which was scheduled to depart for Liberia.⁸² This poem conveys a sense that the settlers were believers in Black Manifest Destiny: Providence deemed that they rescue the presumed Godless African continent from its pagan ways. These men and women were willing to travel thousands of miles from the

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² “The written verses were sung in a Norfolk, Methodist Church, on 30 January 1828 by the Emigrants of the *Brig Hunter*, Capt. Peters, bound for Liberia.” The Norfolk Broadside, BBP, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

land of their birth, with the hope that they might seize the liberties forbidden them in the United States. Nine of these emigrants were from Richmond. Those who went seemed to harbor feelings that it was their Manifest Destiny, but why more free coloured members of Richmond's First Baptist Church did not act on these feelings was due to news of high death rates in the colony and many of them were entangled in stranded families. There was also a high degree of racial distrust produced by their encounters with "the legacy of slavery," Virginia legal constraints, and social discrimination doled out in the Church. Thus, it was difficult for potential emigrants to associate benevolence with a White colonization society in Richmond. In short, whiteness inspired feelings of distrust in Richmond's free Black population. Cary alluded to this important issue of racial distrust in a letter (1827) to Benjamin Brand that suggested the strategy he planned to use to solve the under recruitment problem:

As it respects my Colored friends in Richmond, I feel for them very much indeed—But what can I do. I wrote to them individually as long as I found it was profitable to them for I am no great scribe, and I found from answers which I received to my letters that they had suffered this misinterpretation—I [know] therefore that it was best to communicate to them through the "Board of Managers of the African Missionary Society" and I have done so for the last two days.⁸³

Cary implies in this passage that Richmond free coloureds were less likely to trust reports about the Colony from the Richmond auxiliary than from the African Missionary Society.

⁸³ Lott Cary to Benjamin Brand [italics added]—June 1827, BPP.

Historians, Marie Tyler-McGraw and Gregg Kimball also imply that the seeds of racial distrust were embedded in the Richmond Black community's most influential institution—The First Baptist Church. In 1823, only two years after Cary left for the colony, First Baptist leaders tried to form a separate church. From that point forward animosities between the White minority and Black majority members of this congregation continued until a separate church for Black congregants was established in 1841. Cary, who was all too familiar with Richmond's racial divisions, hoped recruitment efforts would be improved by appealing to the most influential Black channels of communication, which made up the “African Missionary Society”—Black exhorters and preachers. The problem was that these preachers were continually at odds with the paternal demands of First Baptist's White clergy and Virginia's Black laws.⁸⁴ The tragedy in this, Cary noted, was that Richmond free coloureds would “regret the loss of time when they are convinced of the great mistake that they labour under for I am of the full belief that you might go out in your streets and take a list of the name of the first hundred men that you saw and send them out and in twenty-four passed hours [sic] after they arrived in Monrovia, they would not want to return to

⁸⁴ Tyler-McGraw and Kimball, , 36-37. First Baptist passed a policy in 1829 that required Black “preachers and exhorter” to certify or re-certify. The Church later complied with a Virginia 1832 statute forbidding Blacks to preach, in spite of the “considerable difficulty having arisen in reference to the exercising discipline among the coloured members of the church...” because of the law. See Minutes of the First Baptist Church, 1825-1830 (n.p.), 49. Virginia Baptist Historical Society (VBHS), Richmond, Virginia; Minutes of the First Baptist Church, 1830-1840, Book II, (n.p.), 10. VBHS; June Purcell Guild, Black Laws of Virginia: A Summary of the Legislative Acts of Virginia Concerning Negroes From Earliest Times to the Present (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet & Shepperson, 1936), 106-107.

America.”⁸⁵ Black distrust continued to hamper recruitment efforts to incite an exodus to the West African Colony. Thus, Cary suggested that Brand abandon the matter of recruitment until he returned to the United States at some later date. Only then, he argued, would large numbers of Richmond free coloureds be attracted to the African Colonization cause.⁸⁶

With the number of Richmond free coloureds emigrating to Liberia on the decline in the late 1820s, the African Colonization movement absorbed a devastating blow. In December 1828 Lott Cary, who was one of the Colony’s best hopes for drawing more Richmond emigrants to the colony, was killed in an accident. While preparing for a raid of a nearby slave trading post, he and several other men lost their lives in an explosion at the Monrovia arms house. This was perhaps the most damaging episode in the history of the Richmond African Colonization movements; second only to the death of emancipation-colonization politics following Nat Turner’s slave revolt (1831) and the end of the Virginia Slave Debates (1831-1832). Cary’s death indirectly affected the outcome of these debates, which undermined the first legitimate attempt to end slavery in Virginia.⁸⁷

A letter from Brand to Joseph Shiphard in the fall of 1830 conveyed

⁸⁵ Lott Cary to Benjamin Brand [italics added]—June 1827, BPP.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ “The Death of Lott Cary,” The African Repository, 1830; Allison Goodyear Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution (Baton Rouge, 1982), 1-10.

the bitter feelings toward the recent death of Lott Cary. Brand happily informed Shipard that he had obtained nearly \$200 to pay for the construction of a Presbyterian Church and school in the Colony. He was however irritated with the departed Cary who had left behind several debts that Brand was now responsible for settling. He revealed his displeasure in the following excerpt:

I hope you will remit to me for my claim against Lott Cary's estate as soon as possible. I do not feel willing to trust anymore of my money in Liberia until I receive payment—Mr. Crane has received payment... I intend if Cary's executor does not honestly pay my claim, to have it settled before a master commissioner in Washington City—Instead of paying my claim and thereby stopping all complaints—Executor wrote an angry letter to the Rev. Armstrong.⁸⁸

Brand claimed that this “angry letter” had the affect of convincing several potential emigrants not to remove to Liberia. Brand was also disturbed by negative reports about the colony written by Gilbert Hunt who was also from Richmond. His correspondence described settlers afflicted with diseases in Liberia to Richmond Blacks. What was particularly troubling was that the Richmond Blacks had begun to question whether children were “born and raised in the colony.” This added fear of death further reduced the probability of a mass Richmond free coloured exodus to Liberia.⁸⁹

The lack of sufficient funds in ACS coffers posed a major problem,

⁸⁸ Benjamin Brand to Mr. Joseph Shipard, BBP, October 12, 1830.

⁸⁹ Marie Tyler McGraw, 219; Brand to Shipard, October 1830, BBP.

according to the Richmond auxiliary minutes dated 5 November 1828. Approximately, “forty free persons of color” wished to emigrate to Liberia, but the society in Washington did not have the money to send them. Local appeals for donations were also unsuccessful. This implied that there was at least a lukewarm interest among the city’s free coloureds to resettle in the ACS Colony. However, the state’s unwillingness to donate the money needed to push the emigration process forward demonstrated that the African Colonization movement in Richmond was long on rhetoric and short on action.⁹⁰

Only two Richmond free coloureds traveled to Liberia between 1828 and 1831. Meanwhile, the likelihood of a free coloured exodus to Liberia diminished after the Nat Turner slave rebellion. This rebellion inspired a fear in White southerners, who already believed free coloureds were involved in anti-slavery activities. The revolt convinced several South Hampton Virginia slaveholders such as Thomas Preston Esquire to offer slaves to the Richmond auxiliary renamed the Virginia Colonization Society.⁹¹

By 1828, the Black emigrants traveling to Liberia from Richmond slowed to a trickle. Approximately, one hundred emigrants left Richmond for Liberia between 1821-1832. The records of the Richmond Auxiliary and Virginia Colonization Society compared with ACS emigration records revealed one clear fact. Members and supporters of the Richmond

⁹⁰ VCBR, 49.

auxiliary viewed African Colonization as connected to the notions of American Manifest Destiny with two paths; one for Whites in unorganized western territories of North America and the other of Blacks in West Africa. However, most Blacks eligible for emigration did not agree with this assessment and stayed in Richmond.

There were three major reasons for Richmond free coloureds' disinterests in African Colonization. First, the majority of the city's free coloureds were born and raised in Virginia, and declined to move thousands of miles away from their homes and slave families. The second reason, which revolves around the issue of racial distrust, was by far the most significant issue. Trust was an important part of the Richmond colonization program's success because the terms of free coloured emigration recruitment articulated in the ACS Constitution required potential émigrés to volunteer for rather than be forced to emigrate to Liberia. The sources of this racial distrust, which included Virginia's Black Laws that created stranded Black families, epitomized White fears of miscegenation, and fueled racial dissent in the city's First Baptist Church. The salience of this source of racial distrust was crucial, for First Baptist was the best place to recruit Black emigrants. However, the refusal of the most influential Black members of this institution to endorse the work of the auxiliary as a Providential cause, was linked to the White clergy's treatment of Black members in the 1820s. The Black preachers responded

⁹¹ Thomas Preston to Benjamin Brand, December 1831, BBP.

to this treatment by resisting the overtures of White colonizationists such as Benjamin Brand.

In short, the racial discord nurtured in the First Baptist Church created free coloured resistance to the Richmond auxiliary. Cary realized this problem and attempted to fix it by suggesting that Brand use the African Missionary Society to recruit emigrants for the Colony. However, before this emigration recruitment strategy could be implemented, Cary died in the munitions house explosion (1828). Cary might have been able to bridge the gap of racial distrust, and draw large numbers of free coloureds into the African Colonization movement by speaking in the U.S. about his own successes with emigration. He after all had been a slave, fallen under the spell of drink, converted to Christianity, joined First Baptist, lost two wives to the “angel” of death, purchased his freedom, emigrated to Liberia, and achieved a modicum of prosperity there. Cary embodied the praxis of Black Manifest Destiny at work, which made him a prime candidate to convince other Richmond free coloureds to emigrate. His sudden death eliminated this possibility. Perhaps if a greater number of free coloureds and manumitted slaves would have emigrated Liberia due to his influence the Virginia legislature would not have slammed the door shut on gradual abolition policy in 1832.

Black Manifest Destiny Without Black Emigrants, 1830-1860

The two years following Cary's death became a major transitional period for the Richmond auxiliary and the ACS in Washington DC. Soon after Andrew Jackson's Democrats claimed the presidency in 1828, they pressured Congress into discontinuing funding to the ACS colony at Liberia. State colonization societies in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York thus seized control over the African colonization movement by establishing their own colonies that were either loosely affiliated with or independent of the ACS settlements near Monrovia. The Virginia Colonization Society's (VCS) replacement of the Richmond auxiliary was a result of ACS instability as well. This transition was motivated by the Richmond auxiliary's desire to counter Virginia slaveholders' depiction of them as an anti-slavery wolf in sheep's clothing. Auxiliary members were confident that colonization was both economically feasible and morally just, but were reluctant to characterize colonization as a form of gradual abolition.⁹² Indeed, a backlash against their activities was so feared in this regard that they put off meeting for two years after the VCS was founded in 1828. The VCS may never have reconvened if the Nat Turner rebellion had not rejuvenated white popular support for African Colonization. Not since Gabriel's conspiracy was unveiled at the beginning of the century was there so much support for the removal of free coloureds, who white slaveholders believed were the chief instigators of slave insurrections. For

⁹² Richmond & Manchester Colonization Society, Annual Meeting of the Richmond and Manchester Colonization Society (Richmond, VA, 1827). 7.

example, free coloureds were labeled as enemies of the public in various Virginia jurisdictions such Rockingham County, Norfolk, Northumberland County, Prince George County, Dinwiddie County, Morgan County, Lynchburg, Kanawha County, Warren County, Spotsylvania County, Ohio County, Augusta County, and Frederick County.⁹³

Positive reports on the success of self-government in Liberia published in the *African Repository* (AR) also motivated the revival of VCS activity in Richmond. This information rekindled notions of Black Manifest Destiny playing out in what they perceived to be a wholly unenlightened Africa. These romantic sentiments were expressed in the VCS minutes for a meeting held in June of 1831:

Without any exaggeration in language, we now behold the light of Christian civilization rising amidst the gloom of African superstition and darkness; a flourishing community springing up in a distant and barbarous land, borrowing its laws, manners, and institutions, from a republican country, and evincing by its acts of wisdom and moderation, an entire capacity for self-government.⁹⁴

The Liberia the VCS understood to have existed in 1831 was really a propagandistic fantasy created by the editors of the AR and several evangelical journals disseminating the AR message in the U.S. To have taken seriously other reports concerning high rates of death and problems with agriculture delivered by Black Richmonders such as Gilbert Hunt and other free coloured emigrants that returned to the U.S. would have

⁹³ Schweninger & Shelton, Reel 21, Accession #s 11683808, 1168310, 1168311, 11683816, 11683818, 11683820, 11683821, 11683825, 11683830, 11683834, 11683911, 11683914, 11684906, 11684907, and 11685013.

compromised the VCS position on African Colonization. The VCS had to believe that the Liberian project was conceived and directed by a Divine Hand, because the Richmond and larger Virginia public was willing to recognize only two major positions on this controversial issue after 1830. The first position advocated the removal of free coloureds, while the second supported two degrees of free coloured re-enslavement: indentured servitude or full re-enslavement. Both of these positions were informed by white Virginian's longer-term commitment to slavery and the evolving forms of racism they created to justify its existence. In short, the dominant arguments made for or against African Colonization in Virginia at this moment never abandoned the premise that slavery and racism were valid elements of the social order. Racialized slavery or racial slavery was so intertwined as to be inseparable. After the Civil War slavery was abolished but racism persisted even into our own moment. The only issue was whether all free coloureds could and/or should be removed via African Colonization. The free coloured removal strategy was a part of a larger vision contrived by Virginians who participated in the founding of the American republic. Their view, shared by others in the North, was to create an all white citizenry that lived in accordance to certain Protestant and republican principles such as equal treatment under the law, active political participation, material independence, hard work, and a reverence

⁹⁴ Proceedings of the Colonization Society of Virginia and Report of the Managers, Presented June 9th 1831 & Made a part of the Annual Report, 11th January 1832 (Richmond: L.W. White, 1832), 10.

for Christian doctrines.⁹⁵ The citizens of this republican system were permitted to hold enslaved persons as property, and exclude free coloureds from participating in mainstream political franchises. Advocates of free coloured re-enslavement portrayed slavery as a “positive good,” where all forms of emancipation including colonization threatened what these theorists believed to be the ideal social order with Black slaves accepting the perpetual rule of White slaveowners.⁹⁶

The conclusions reached by delegates participating in the Virginia constitutional convention of 1829 and the 1831-1832 slavery debate in Richmond prevented either of the positions described above from trumping the other. Decisions made by free coloureds, slave trading merchants, and individual slave-owners would therefore continue to determine the success or failure of Liberian emigration recruitment in Richmond and the rest of the state. Charles Fenton Mercer hoped the convention of 1829 would lead to the enfranchisement of all non-propertied Whites in Virginia. He believed a drastic change in the electorate was necessary to push bills through the Virginia Assembly, designed to create and maintain a statewide program of emancipation-colonization. Mercer and his allies’ at the convention, however, failed to marshal enough votes to override the interests and opposition of the

⁹⁵ David M. Steifford, “The American Colonization Society: An Application of Republican Ideology to Early Antebellum Reform,” The Journal of Southern History, Vol. 45, No. 2 (May, 1979), pp. 204-205, 210.

⁹⁶ Drew Gilpin Faust, The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South (Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, c1988).

Tidewater planters whose power had been contingent on keeping non-propertied Whites out of government. Government therefore remained an undemocratic enterprise in Virginia, until all White men were deemed members of the Commonwealth voting public in 1850. More importantly, the cost of funding emancipation-colonization cases remained the preserve of individuals rather than the state.

Nat Turner's slave rebellion compelled Virginia policy makers to reconsider proposals to fund a grand emancipation-colonization program during the 1831-1832 Virginia slave debate, but the idea was ultimately rejected. At the conclusion of the debate, Virginia Delegates claimed to be "profoundly sensible of the great evils arising from the condition of the colored population of this commonwealth; induced by humanity as well as policy to an immediate effort for the removal in the first place, as well as those now free, as of such as may hereafter become free"⁹⁷ A government program of this size would however have been too costly and require more public support on the issue of expatriating "slaves." It was therefore "resolved... inexpedient for the present legislature to make any legislative enactment for the abolition of slavery."⁹⁸

The refusal of the state to release unlimited funds for emancipating and colonizing persons of colour, left the burden of paying transportation and other fees up to individuals who could afford it. The fact that most of

⁹⁷ Cited in Marie Tyler McGraw, "The American Colonization Society in Virginia, 1816-1832: A Case Study of Southern Liberalism" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1980), 200.

these persons were white slaveowners had a major influence on the average status of the emigrants leaving Richmond and other Virginia locations for Liberia after 1832. Before the Virginia slave debate, free coloureds represented the majority of emigrants traveling to Liberia. Thereafter the overwhelming majority of émigrés were manumitted slaves. This trend had several immediate and long-term affects on the African Colonization movement in Virginia and Liberia. First, it transformed the VCS into an organization specializing in the removal of manumitted slaves, although Society managers continued to publicly portray it as a free coloured removal society. Second, white slaveholders manumitting and offering slaves for resettlement replaced free coloureds as the main contributors to Liberian population growth. The impact of this dramatic demographic shift was most palpable in the years through 1843, when Liberian death rates continued to exceed birth rates. Third, Liberia's reliance on white slaveholders for emigrants inhibited its capacity to develop a sound agricultural economy that depended on mobilizing enough settlers to occupy vast tracks of lands secured by ambiguous treaties. (See Chapter 5)

Liberia's dependency on white slaveholders for new emigrants also bound the development of its politico-economy to the institutions in the American South designed to extend slavery into newly acquired Western territories. For example, Liberia drew most of its emigrants from states in the American Upper South that simultaneously supplied the most slaves to

⁹⁸ Ibid.

the Lower South and West. This placed the emigration, settlement, and expansion goals of Liberian authorities at odds with the expansionist projects orchestrated by slave owners in the Lower American South during the 1840s and 1850s. One of the most telling examples of this conflict of interests involved the indirect influence that the interstate slave trade in the U.S. had on the peopling of Liberia. Preparing slaves for emigration was expensive, while selling them to interstate slave traders could be extremely profitable. Most slaveholders therefore tended to sell rather than release their slaves for emigration, unless they experienced a moral crisis. Yet, as we saw in the last chapter, Southern Baptist and Methodists who reconciled Christian principles and slavery in their theological doctrines eased the consciences of most slaveholders on the morality front. Consequently very few persons in Virginia feared they would be denied Christian salvation because they owned or sold slaves. What historian Sylvia Frey identified as the post 1829 plantation movement to convert slaves to Christianity without emancipating them had a tremendous impact on this mode of slaveholder thought. With the question of Christian morality now off the table, the market god of supply and demand tended to have more influence over whether slave owners decided to give slaves up for emigration or sell them. The number of slaves released for emigration (6000) compared to those held in bondage (4,000,000) by 1860 underscored American slaveholder feelings on this issue. These results also coincided with the predictions of those that advocated state funded

colonization some thirty years earlier. Pro-colonizationists that participated in the Virginia slave debate believed if the interstate slave trade flowing through Richmond were allowed to continue and if the state refused to fund Liberian emigration, efforts to remove all free coloureds from the Commonwealth would fail.⁹⁹

Closing the interstate trade in slaves was never really an option after the national ban on the African slave trade 1808 led to the creation of an extensive slave-trading network linking the commerce of the Upper South to that of the Lower South. Furthermore, article I, section 2 of the U.S. Constitution had already wedded the power of representatives elected in slave holding states to the national project of conquering lands in the Southwest and filling them up with large slave labor forces that specialized in the production of cash crops. Therefore, the economic and political fortunes of Liberia would be inextricably bound to the institutional imperatives of an American South committed to long-term projects involving the acquisition of slave labor, territorial conquests, and political annexation.

The boldest of the proposals made to solve the free coloured problem was drafted six years after (1837) the Nat Turner revolt (1831). This bill would have authorized a “central board of commissioners for the removal of free persons of colour” to coordinate the efforts of colonization

⁹⁹ James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (London ; New York : Norton, 1998), chapter 1; Robert H. Gudmestad, *A Troublesome Commerce: The Transformation of the Interstate Slave Trade* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), last chapter.

agents, appointed to represent various Commonwealth towns and cities. The duties of these agents would have included compiling rolls of free coloureds; establishing emigrant quotas; assembling free coloureds found on these rolls; periodically transporting them to local seaports; and seeing they boarded vessels en route to Liberia. The only major difference between the method of administering colonization found in this bill and the one exercised by the Richmond auxiliary in the 1820s was that it advocated forced removal. Under this bill, emigration was mandatory for all free coloureds between the ages of 14 and 40.

Another form of the bill made its way into the Virginia legal code two years later (1839). The increased appropriations this bill called for helped make Virginia one of the largest contributors of emigrants to Liberia from the Upper South (40%), which was the region that furnished about 70% of all settlers to the colony. Virginia free coloureds were highly visible in Liberia, but less than three percent of the state's total ever emigrated there. This suggests that most Virginia free coloureds resisted colonization for the same family related reasons expressed by the actions of Richmond free coloureds. (See Chapters 2 & 3) They simply were not willing to risk being separated from family members in order to gain access to liberal freedoms in Liberia. This proved that money was not the only thing needed to make Liberian emigration a success. The revised bill alluded to above retained the idea of a "central board of commissioners,"

Eric Burin, "The Peculiar Solution: The American Colonization Society and Antislavery Sentiment in the South, 1820-1860," (Ph.D. Diss: University of Illinois-Urbana, 1998), p. 10.

and eliminated clauses referring to mandatory emigration. Meanwhile, appropriations totaling “\$18,000” a year for five years were made by the state to facilitate the work of the board. A similar law allocated “\$90,000” to the board to offset the emigration expenses during the turbulent 1850s.¹⁰⁰

Evidence of a link between low emigration rates and the values of stranded families (see chapter 2) did not compel White colonizationists to rethink their free coloured recruitment strategy, packaged in Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric. VCS managers instead focused on broadening their base of White support. Their approach entailed countering the claims of pro-slavery and abolitionist critics by portraying Liberian emigration as a vehicle for voluntary slave emancipations, “Southern Patriotism”, and national unity “to produce the most happy results for our country & for the world.”¹⁰¹ This myopic strategy produced troubling results for the VCS, wherein the Society found itself leading a free coloured emigration movement without free coloured support. This lack of participation was a response to the pressures imposed on their families by Virginia’s slavery policies.

¹⁰⁰ “A Bill, Providing for the Removal of Free Persons of Colour from the Commonwealth,” pp.1-7, ViHi, Rare E445V8A158OS; “An Act Making for the Removal of Free Persons of Colour, passed March 4th 1833,” Public Claims of Slaves and Free Blacks. Auditor of Public Accounts, Misc. Reel 1320, LVA Archives, Richmond, Virginia; Twenty-eight hundred Virginia free coloureds and manumitted slaves made the trip to Liberia before 1860, but fifty thousand remained behind. “Message of Governor Johnson, in House Journal,” 1853-1854, p. 15; “House Documents 1859-1860,” no. 5 p. 407.

¹⁰¹ VCBR, 74, 91, 70

The ill timing of Virginia's serious financial engagement with Liberian emigration also helped transform African colonization into a movement without free coloureds. Support for the African Colonization movement in Virginia during the 1820s was primarily rhetorical. Indeed, the state's aggressive move toward providing substantial funding for colonization did not occur until they were compelled to by the Nat Turner rebellion (1831). The Turner rebellion however occurred at a moment when the ACS had already taken on a wider range of expenses. Aside from emigrant transportation fees, ACS agents had to be paid and new arrivals needed money for housing, time to acclimate their bodies to an environment fraught with epidemiological hazards, food rations to tide them over during this "seasoning" phase, and provisions to get subsistent farms started. Additionally, they needed money to train doctors for the colony, build schools, construct and maintain storehouses, purchase arms, and gifts used to make land deals with indigenous headmen and chiefs.¹⁰² As the ACS struggled to prevent being consumed by its debts, it was not able to create the infrastructure necessary to accommodate the large numbers of emigrants Virginia planned to send to its colony. Nor were Virginia policy makers willing to send their excess funds to offset growing ACS expenses in Liberia after 1830.

In an effort to remain independent of the ACS, VCS managers resolved to establish a colony in West Africa that would bear the name of

¹⁰² Hutton, "Economic Considerations in the American Colonization Society's Effort to Emigrate Free coloureds to Liberia, 1816-1836," 382-384.

“New Virginia.” Ten percent of the \$100,000 price tag estimated to launch this project would be raised by the managers, while the agent they hired to work with their auxiliary societies would be responsible for coming up with the rest. In the meantime, they planned to request the Legislature allow all funds released for colonization activities to “apply to any [person of colour] who have been or may hereafter be emancipated.”¹⁰³ This policy recommendation was designed to place state funding at the disposal of manumitted slaves who were traveling to Liberia in numbers greater than freeborn free coloureds in 1830s. The Virginia Assembly eventually complied with this request in the 1850s when the desire to remove all free coloureds reached its highest point, symbolized by a \$90,000 appropriation made for colonization. However, the sharp increase in slave prices between 1830-1860 had already removed most slaves from the pool of eligible emigrants in Virginia, because it was more profitable for slaveholders to sell them than to send them to Liberia.

Before Virginia’s expanding slave market showed signs of stealing all of the colonization initiative’s thunder, the VCS truly believed it could accomplish its removal goals by planting the new colony. Their plans began to unravel when their agent Charles Andrews resigned only a few months after he had been hired in January of 1836. Therefore, the money for the independent colony was never raised and the VCS became an ineffectual organization over the course of the next ten years.

¹⁰³ VCBR, 74, 76, 82-83.

Charles Fenton Mercer's decision to move to Florida in the October in 1840 signified the diminishing influence of the African Colonization movement in Virginia, which he had helped revive and sustain for a quarter century. The slide of the movement continued when a new VCS proposal to raise \$20,000 for a colony within Liberian borders fell through shortly after it was made in 1843.¹⁰⁴ One last major attempt to restore African Colonization as a legitimate alternative to slavery or immediate abolition was made when the VCS encouraged the Virginia and U.S. governments to recognize Liberia's independence.¹⁰⁵ British and French emissaries did so shortly after Liberia declared its independence in 1847. The U.S., however, refused to recognize Liberia, due to the political rift colonization helped create between the nation's slaveholders and non-slaveholders. Indeed, Liberia was not officially recognized (1862) until Abraham Lincoln used emancipation policies to undermine Southern slaveholders military resolve during the Civil War.

The signs of organizational decay were most apparent in the African Colonization movement in the 1840s. During this decade the VCS hardly met at all, until the debate over runaways culminating with the passage of a national Fugitive Slave Law (1850) revived it once more. Under the direction of the Virginia governor Floyd and Rev. Phillip Slaughter the new VCS focused on monitoring ACS activities on the

¹⁰⁴ VCBR, 96.

¹⁰⁵ VCBR, 109.

behalf of the state's slaveholders. They promised to pursue this duty "with sleepless vigilance, and give warning of the least and first departure from" the principle of free coloured removal that Virginia colonization was based on.¹⁰⁶ The VCS in this regard became a caretaker organization, in the service of leaders wanted to diffuse public conversations about slavery and disunion. Facilitating emigration was a secondary issue. The small number of emigrants that left Virginia for Liberia in the 1850s shows this to be true. Of the 800 persons listed in the Board of Commissions Meeting minutes, just over half actually made the trip to Liberia.¹⁰⁷ In spite of this reality, Rev. Phillip Slaughter wrote a History of the Movement in Virginia that described it as a successful project, whereby God had used slavery to reeducate blacks in the ways of Western civilization. Black Manifest Destiny therefore became the stuff of fantasy as Virginia emigrants settling in Liberia began the long slow process of restarting their lives in a place where the possibilities of the empire the ACS envisioned could not compete with pressures exerted on eligible emigrants by domestic slavery in order to increase the flow of emigrants to Liberia.

Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric was an outgrowth of competing American Republican visions of nationhood. White advocates of these visions struggled to reconcile the country's imperial ambitions and Christian sensibilities with a contrived national identity based on regional institutions of racialized slavery.

¹⁰⁶ VCBR, 111.

Many found a solution to this problem in the African Colonization program piloted by the ACS. The ACS affiliate organization in Richmond used Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric to assist the Society in achieving its goal of free coloured removal. Several developments however undermined this project before it was brought to fruition. Among these were free coloureds unwilling to leave enslaved relatives to emigrate to Liberia, a social climate of racial distrust underwritten by Black Laws and anti-miscegenation culture, and the competition for Black bodies waged between colonization supporters and facilitators of the American interstate slave trade. In the end, slaveholders were far more eager to sell their slaves than release and prepare them for emigration. Black Manifest Destiny therefore remained a dream deferred as the complicated process of Liberian emigration and settlement unfolded in Monrovia.

¹⁰⁷ Virginia Colonization Board. Journal of Proceeding, 1853-1858. Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Chapter 5

THE MONROVIA BLACK COMMUNITY, 1822-1870

*We did not enjoy...freedom in our native country; and, from causes, which, as respects ourselves, we shall soon forget forever, we were certain it was not there attainable for ourselves or our children...Our Constitution secures to us, \$0 far as condition allows, 'all the rights privileges enjoyed by the citizens of the United States': and these privileges are ours...Forming a community of our own, in the land of our forefathers; having the commerce and soil and resources of the country at our disposal; we know nothing of that debasing inferiority with which our very colour stamped us in America...It is a moral emancipation—this liberation of the mind from the worse fetters, that repays us, ten thousand times over, for all that it has cost us, and makes us grateful to God...We solicit none of you to emigrate to this country; for we know not who among you prefers rational independence, and the honest respect of his fellow men, to that mental sloth and careless poverty, which you already possess, and your children will inherit after you in America.*¹

This scathing indictment of Blacks who opposed Liberian emigration separated all potential émigrés into two camps. Blacks who supported Liberian emigration were portrayed as making a choice for “freedom and health,” while those who opposed it were caricatured as lovers of the poverty and social death² that whites offered them in the United States. Black opponents of emigration were encouraged to stay and “keep their rented cellars, and earn their twenty-five cents a day, at the wheel barrow, in the commercial towns of America...,” while “the industrious and virtuous that can point to independence and plenty,

¹ “Address of the Colonists to the Free People of Colour in the U. S.; (CIRCULAR.)” African Repository and Colonial Journal , Washington: Dec 1827. Vol. 3, Iss. 10; p. 300.

² Social Death is a product of what Orlando Pattern called “natal alienation.” Natal alienation represents “the loss of ties of birth in both ascending and descending generations.” See Orlando

and happiness ” were encouraged to come to Liberia.³ The actual circumstances that most early emigrants faced often contradicted this neat dichotomy. Blacks who emigrated were afforded more freedoms than those who chose to remain in the U.S. However, their capacity to exercise these freedoms could be severely limited by their low level of immuno-resistance to local diseases, formal education, and access to investment capital. It would therefore be incorrect to assume that emigration equaled freedom, good health, and happiness, while staying in the U.S. was commensurate with poverty and social death. The choice to emigrate often resulted in the physical death of scores of emigrants, who had been eager to leave the social death America offered them behind. How this and other issues figured into the political and economic development of Monrovia, Liberia, will be the focus this chapter.

The status Monrovia held as a Black community outside of the realm of U.S. slave societies was the most important feature that distinguished it from one of its precursors in Richmond. Slavery was not a precondition of freedom in Monrovia, while the opposite had long been true in Richmond. Nearly six thousand miles of ocean separated these seemingly different versions of Black community, but this great distance was not enough to negate the influence of American slavery on them both. As explained earlier, Richmond free coloureds attempted to bring order to their lives within a legal framework that compelled them to form stranded (vis-à-vis mixed status) families. Members of these highly

Patterson, Slavery and social death : a comparative study (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1982), 7.

³ Ibid.

evolved social groupings subscribed to a family-first logic that usually discarded Liberian emigration as a feasible liberation strategy. Free coloureds in these families had no qualms with the liberal idea of individual freedom that ACS advocates used to promote their emigration movement, as long as their families were not broken up in the process. Meanwhile, the systemic issues of political disfranchisement and a legal system that compelled free coloureds to buy enslaved relatives limited this community's capacity to close the wealth gap with white Richmonders. Just over two hundred Richmond free coloureds climbed into the ranks of property owners before the American Civil War. Most of these free coloureds had however been born free, which distinguished them from the majority of others who either owned no property or still maintained close ties to their enslaved past. Richmond's free coloured majority therefore lived in a state of relative poverty signified by two things. First, they tended to share rented residences with one or more families rather than own their own homes. Second, they were more often channeled into slave-dominated occupations such as washerwoman or factory-hand earning the lowest wages in the city.⁴

The politico-economic development of Liberia's Black Community in Monrovia was inhibited by a similar slavery/poverty dynamic. Poverty in Monrovia was wedded to the dependency of the early Liberian Colony on emigrants from

⁴ "Richmond City" in Personal Property Records, reels 364-5, 823-835, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia; United States Department of the Interior, 8th Census, 1860/ Virginia Free Schedules, Vol. 12, Henrico, Roll, 295; John Maddox [etc.] Hill's Richmond City Directory (Richmond: Hill Directory Co., 1819); "Free Colored Housekeepers" in William Montague, Richmond Directory and Business Advertiser, for 1852: Containing the Names, Residences, Occupations and Places of Business of the Inhabitants of Richmond, also, a Variety of other Information, Necessary and Useful (Richmond, VA: s.n., 1852).

American slave states to replace its deceased settlers. During the Colony's first thirty years, the expansion of slavery into American Southwestern territories undermined Liberian efforts to found a profitable agro-economy. Emigrant farmers in Liberia were often members of a group that consisted of subsistent producers, which was markedly different from the cash-crop culture most slaveholding farmers in the American South benefited from. Liberia's constitutional rejection of slavery proved to be a major disadvantage in this regard, because the most economically advanced cash-crop societies in the Atlantic World depended on imported or homegrown slave labor. Supplies of cheap and reliable labor needed to propel plantation agriculture were virtually absent in early Liberia. ACS organizers of the Liberian Colony thus developed a habit of compensating for their emigrant labor shortages, by deploying the hollow imperial rhetoric of Black Manifest Destiny (see chapter 4). Even one of the Liberian settlement's biggest foreign supporters reported, "I see that the colony is now in want of numbers to clear and cultivate a country which will amply repay them for their labor."⁵ The labor they needed, however, never came. At least not on the size and scale that helped define the plantation societies of the Western Hemisphere. Liberia was unable to attract levels of labor comparable to the tens of thousands of unfree workers that created the major slave societies in the Americas. Different African ethnic groups would therefore continue to compete for and dominate the lands north of Monrovia and the Liberian coast during the

⁵ "Copy of a Letter from Capt. Nicholson, of the U.S. Navy, to Hon. H. Clay," Washington, March 17, 1828 in John B Nicholson, "American Colony at Liberia," *The Religious Intelligencer ... Containing the Principal Transactions of the ...* Apr 12, 1828; 12, 46.

19th century. Another consequence of this labor shortage was the rise of a small merchant/trader class in Monrovia that used their wealth to obtain the majority of seats in Liberia's parliamentary government. Meanwhile, the majority of Monrovia's other working inhabitants endured a largely subsistent existence.⁶

The core of Liberian development rested in Monrovia, before the mid-century coffee boom temporarily shifted the country's political center into rural areas. Consequently, Liberia's path of politico-economic development was wholly different from the one employed by the architects of the societies in the American South. Politico-economic development in Liberia moved from the semi-urban location at Monrovia into rural areas, while the direction of development in what was the American South tended to flow from rural to urban areas. This was in spite of the fact that states in the Southern United States supplied more emigrants to Liberia than any other location in the world. That ACS dependency on the American South for most of its emigrants bound the politico-economic development of Liberia to that of the latter. High mortality rates and the lack of reliable alternative labor sources in Liberia were the two major variables that held this strange politico-economic relationship together. Indeed, Liberia was not able to break free of its dependency on the American South for emigrant labor until

⁶ Over twice as many laborers in Monrovia worked in non-wealth producing occupations such as laborer, farmer, seamstress, nurse, tailor, seamstress etc... Approximately 12% were employed in the wealth generating sector. The most prominent jobs in this category were trader and merchant, followed by Government Employees, Blacksmiths, Millwrights, Stone Masons, Carpenters, Bricklayers, and Coopers. See "ROLL OF EMIGRANTS THAT HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE COLONY OF LIBERIA, WESTERN AFRICA, BY THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY AND ITS AUXILIARIES, TO SEPTEMBER, 1843, &c," in Information Relative to the Operations of the United States Squadron on the West Coast of Africa, the Condition of the American Colonies there, and the Commerce of the United States therewith, 28th Congress, 2d. Session, S. Doc. 150, serial 458, [http:// ccharity.com /liberia/monroviacensus.htm](http://ccharity.com/liberia/monroviacensus.htm), May 11, 2006, 8am.

Liberian reproductive rates began to stabilize in the late 1840s and large numbers of Africans reclaimed from European and American slave ships were brought to the Black Republic in the early 1860s. Even then, there was still not enough cheap/reliable labor in Liberia to create a competitive plantation economy. Much of this result had to do with the way American planters amassed their power.

The ruling planter regimes of the American South derived their power from the cash crops produced by Afro-American slaves within an ever expanding commercial network of small and large rural estates. An interpretation of the data below explains how this kind of development in the American South limited the number of emigrants traveling to Liberia. More importantly, this Trans-Atlantic feature of Liberian emigration highlighted the integral role American slavery played in the country's colonial (1821-1846) and early republican (1847-1870) histories. Indeed, American slavery appeared to be more disruptive to Liberia's plan to balance its agricultural and trade sectors of development than other issues raised by polemicists and scholars in 19th and 20th century debates.⁷ For

⁷ Aside from studies on the African indigenous groups, most scholars have fallen prey to the problematic assumptions made by immediate abolitionist, pro-colonizationist, and decolonization polemicists writing on Liberia during the 19th and 20th centuries. Immediate abolitionists and pro-colonizationists set the parameters of the first debate in the 19th century, while decolonization theorists and neo-abolitionist scholars set the agenda for the second in the 20th century. Immediate abolitionists and pro-colonizationists agreed that Black Americans would be hard pressed to acquire freedoms afforded to White American males under the Constitution of the United States. These camps therefore characterized Liberian emigration as a program that either ameliorated or worsened the condition of Blacks in the U.S. Meanwhile, the indigenous African groups with whom Liberian emigrants interacted were depicted as uncivilized "others" who might benefit from exposure to Western Protestant and commercial ideals or suffer the humiliation of conquest. At some point most immediate abolitionist and pro-colonization narratives, Liberian emigrants were depicted as victims. Pro-colonizationists believed emigration would redeem Blacks from this state of victimhood, while immediate abolitionist believed their best chance of improvement was to remain where they were and work to reform U.S. culture with perfectionist

theology. Wilson Moses and George Frederickson provide two of the best explanations about the relationship between perfectionism, abolitionism, and the emigration movement. See Wilson Jeremiah Moses, Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History (Cambridge [England]; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1998); George M. Frederickson, The Black Image in the White Mind (New York, 1971).

The notion of the Liberian emigrant as victim underwent a major overhaul in the second half of the 20th century, when the post-World War II generation of decolonization scholars described them as neo-colonial oppressors responsible for the underdevelopment of the cultures and institutions of indigenous African groups. Neo-abolitionist scholars have since countered this claim by continuing to argue that Liberian emigration was a benevolent enterprise that contributed to the suppression of the West African slave trade. The current bookends of the neo-abolitionist/decolonizationist debate are represented by the work of Tunde Adelenke and Lamin Sanneh. Adelenke contends that Liberian nationalists prompted the spread of European Imperialism in Africa, while Sanneh argues that emigrants from New World societies were responsible for suppressing the slave trade in West Africa. Sanneh writes in the contentious tradition of William Lloyd Garrison, R.R. Gurley, and Archibald Alexander, while Adelenke subscribed to the decolonization position held by Gus Liebenow, Monday B. Akpan, Monday B. Abasiattai, and others. See Tunde Adelenke, UnAfrican Americans : Nineteenth-Century Black Nationalists and the Civilizing Mission (Lexington : University Press of Kentucky, c1998); Lamin Sanneh, Abolitionist Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

The main texts falling within the parameters of the 19th century debate were as follows: R. R. Gurley, Life of Jehudi Ashmun: Late Colonial Agent in Liberia (New York, 1835); William Lloyd Garrison's Thoughts on African Colonization (1832); Archibald A. Alexander, A History of Colonization on the West Coast of Africa (Washington DC, 1846); W.H. Heard, The Bright Side of African Life (Philadelphia, 1898), Colonel Wauwermans, Liberia Histoire de la Fondation d'un Etat negre libre (Brussels, 1885); Commander Andrew H. Foote, Africa and the American Flag (New York, 1854), Harriet G. Brittan, Scenes and Incidents of Everyday Life in Africa (New York, 1860), Thomas McCants Stewart, Liberia: The Americo-Liberian Republic (New York, 1886), John T. McPherson, "History," in the Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, IX, 10 (Baltimore, 1891); Maurice Delafosse, "Un Etat Negre: La Republique de Liberia," Bulletindu Comite' de L' Afrique Francais, Renseignements Coloniaux, No. 9 (December, 1909); Sir Harry Johnston, Liberia (London, Hutchinson & co., 1906); Frederick Starr, Liberia : Description, History, Problems (Chicago : s.n., 1913); Raymond L. Buell, "Liberian Paradox," Virginia Quarterly, VII (April, 1931) pp. 161-75, "Reconstruction of Liberia," Foreign Policy Reports, VIII (August 3, 1932); pp. 120-35; Buell, "New Deal in Liberia," New Republic (August 16, 1933), pp. 17-19; Buell, "The Liberian Republic," in The Native Problem in Africa (1947), and Liberia: A Century of Survival, 1847-1947 (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, The University Museum, 1947).

Gus Liebenow's underdevelopment thesis changed the debate on early Liberian history by situating it within the parameters of 20th century decolonization theory. See J. Gus Liebenow, Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege (Ithaca, Cornell University Press 1969); Robert Clower, George Dalton, et. al., Growth Without Development: An Economic Survey of Liberia (Evanston, Illinois, 1966); George Dalton, "History, Politics, and Economic Development in Liberia," Journal of Economic History, vol. 25, issue 4 (December, 1965), pp. 568-91.

The first indirect challengers of the Liebenow thesis were generally scholars who focused on the histories of interior groups. See James Gibb, "Some Judicial Implications of Martial Instability Among the Kpelle" (Harvard University, 1960); Warren L. d' Azevedo, "The Continuity and Integration in Gola Society," Northwestern University, 1962 & "A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism," Liberian Studies Journal, 1-2.; Jane J. Martin, "The Dual Legacy: Government Authority and Mission Influence Among the Glebo of Eastern Liberia, 1834-1910," Boston University, 1967; Svend Holsoe, "The Cassava-Leaf People: An Ethnohistorical Study of the Vai People with a Particular Emphasis on the Tewa Chiefdom," Boston University, 1967; Elliot J. Berg, "Growth, Development and All That: Thoughts on the Liberian Experience," (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor: Center for the Research on Economic Development, March, 1969).

example, the merchant dominated Liberian government and the position the ACS held on American slavery appeared to have less of an effect on Liberian development than three other issues. These were a sharp increase in slave prices following the expansion of the American interstate slave trade in the 1830s, the socio-economic backgrounds of most emigrant settlers, and the commercial expertise of African indigenous groups residing on Monrovia's distant periphery.

Evaluating the external variables that most inhibited the process of Liberian settlement is one way to begin this investigation. High numbers of disease related emigrant-deaths, conflicts with and amidst various "native" ethnic groups, nascent Euro-colonialism in Sierra Leone and Cote D'Ivoire, and Liberian ties to the Trans-Atlantic economy were important external variables that disrupted Liberian political and economic development.⁸ However, when these factors are examined along with the most recent data compiled on Liberia emigration, American slavery and high emigrant death rates emerge as the biggest obstacles to politico-economic progress in Monrovia and Greater Liberia.

Most emigrants to Liberia came from the slave holding states in the American Upper (67%) and Lower South (24%). Liberian emigration therefore became a Southern movement wedded to the aggressive politics of slavery expansion in this section of the United States. Figures from the Richmond market show that slave prices doubled and sometimes tripled as slavery spread into

⁸ Antonio McDaniels, Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, The Mortality Cost of Liberia in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); Tom Shick, Behold the

cotton producing territories west and east of the Mississippi River. This sharp increase in prices eliminated the major financial incentive for slave owners to manumit their slaves for Liberian emigration. In short, the cost of preparing and sending manumitted slaves to Liberia was much more expensive than selling them on the open market. One slaveholder described part of this problem in the following words:

I am a slaveholder and have it in contemplation to liberate several of my slaves, provided they could be removed to Liberia at a cost I could afford. But mine is the common misfortune of most slaveholders—a nominal wealth only the shadow and not the substance, the reality. We may give to Freedom—to Liberia—this delusive property (and I dare say with the majority of masters it would be gain) but here would end the boon, for with them could be added no purse, or means of emigration or settlement. There are many, slaveholders, I am sure, who would cheerfully relinquish all their slave property to Liberia, could they afford the means of equipment and settlement or temporary maintenance of such manumitted slaves.⁹

This particular weakness that united white slaveholders with the emigration movement was exposed in the 1830s. The number of free colored emigrants from the South plummeted 700% (1305 to 181 persons)¹⁰ during this period, before rising again in the 1850s following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act.** ACS advocates presumed manumitted slaves would compensate for this

Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1980).

⁹ Quoted in Early Lee Fox, The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1919), 24.

¹⁰ See tables I & II.

** Although the Upper South continued to supply more free coloured emigrants to Liberia than any other region following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law (1850), the north experienced the largest growth in free coloured emigrants. Eric Burin and others have presumed that this trend reflects the real fear Black northerners had about being abducted and sold into slavery.

dramatic decline in free coloured emigrants. However, high death rates and low reproductive rates in Liberia prevented this from happening.¹¹ According to Antonio McDaniel, of the 10,401 emigrants who left the U.S. for Monrovia or other Liberian settlements between 1821-1860, manumitted slaves (59%) represented the majority, followed by freeborn-free coloureds (38%), and “self-purchased” free coloureds (3%).¹²

Table I.
Emigrants to Liberia by Category

Location		Breakdown	Free Blacks	Manumitted	Self-Purchased	Total
Region	Upper South	# emigrants	2479	4307	178	6964
		% within region	36%	62%	3%	100%
		% within Status	61%	72%	57%	67%
	Lower South	# emigrants	718	1672	131	2521
		% within region	28%	66%	5%	100%
		% within Status	18%	28%	42%	24%
	North	# emigrants	899	13	4	916
		% within region	98%	1%	0%	100%
		% within Status	22%	0%	1%	9%
	Total	# emigrants	4096	5992	313	10401
% within region		39%	58%	3%	100%	
% within Status		100%	100%	100%	100%	

Antonio McDaniel, “ACS Data Base,” in Eric Burin, “The Peculiar Solution: The American Colonization Society and Antislavery Sentiment in the South, 1820-1860,” (PH.D. Diss: University of Illinois-Urbana, 1998), p. 10.

¹¹ “Between 1822 and 1843, 4454 emigrants (one fifth of all emigrants who came to Liberia between 1822 and 1900) arrived in Liberia. Of this number 2,198 died; 520 returned to the United States, went to Sierra Leone, or to the independent colony at Cape Palmas (Maryland County); 1,736 were alive and residents of the fourteen emigrant settlements in the Commonwealth of Liberia; 654 births brought the number up to 2,390.” See “Roll of Emigrants,” United States Document No. 150, 28th Congress, 2nd session, 1844-1845, p. 306; Tom Shick, “A Quantitative Analysis of Liberian Colonization from 1820 to 1843 with Special Reference to Mortality,” *The Journal of African History* > Vol. 12, No. 1 (1971), pp. 45-59.

¹² See table 1 & 2.

Table 2.

Free Coloured Emigrants

		1820-1833	1834-1847	1848-1860	Total
Upper South	# emigrants	1137	116	1026	2479
	Period %	79	48	48	61
Lower South	# emigrants	168	65	485	718
	Period %	10	27	22	18
North	# emigrants	191	59	649	899
	Period %	11	25	30	22
Total	# emigrants	1696	240	2160	4096
	Period %	100	100	100	100

Antonio McDaniel, "ACS Data Base," in Eric Burin, "The Peculiar Solution: The American Colonization Society and Antislavery Sentiment in the South, 1820-1860," (PH.D. Diss: University of Illinois-Urbana, 1998), p. 52.

Although the ratio of manumitted slaves to freeborn emigrants was more balanced in Monrovia than in rural settlements, the distribution of wealth in this community remained skewed toward a small faction of merchant/traders.¹³ Tom Schick's emigration data, however, shows that insufficient stocks of emigrants arrived to establish a plantation mode of agriculture in Liberia. This had the effect of placing Monrovia at the forefront of country's political and economic affairs.

The ACS officials preferred not to establish an urban/trade economy before a rural/agricultural one. There were negative consequences. First, the

¹³ The number of manumittedes was approximately 455 persons, while there were 489 freeborns in Monrovia. These figures were produced by subtracting the number of emigrants per category. The number of freeborns fell from 892 to 489 due to various death causes, while the number of manumittedes fell from about 529 persons to 455. For the raw data, see Tom W. Shick, Roll of the Emigrants to the Colony of Liberia Sent by the American Colonization Society from 1820-1843 [computer file]. Madison, WI: Tom W. Shick [producer], 1973. Madison, WI: Data and Program

dependency of the country's economy on Monrovia trading firms tied Liberian economic growth to the sale of raw materials that Afro-American emigrants did not produce. Second, long-term economic growth depended on how well the Monrovia government was able to enforce port of entry laws. These laws were set up to prevent indigenous and European commercial competitors from eroding the main source of the country's tax base—trade.¹⁴ Third, the centrality of trade in early Liberia exposed its economy to periodic disruptions linked to conflicts between settlers and indigenous groups.

A confederacy comprised of various interior chiefdoms (known as Condo) managed to achieve long periods of peace, which undoubtedly favored Liberian merchant/traders. However, conflicts between the region's powerful Manding and Gola chiefdoms always had the potential to undermine trade on the interior. For example, a series of Manding-Gola wars in the late 1830s and 1840s severed access to interior trade routes, thereby confining settler wealth producing opportunities to the coastal trade. Meanwhile, the expansion of the interstate slave trade in the American South and the refusal of large numbers of free coloureds to emigrate limited Liberian prospects of establishing a slaveless post-colonial society based on cash-crop agriculture, trade, and evangelical Christian culture. The term "hinterland" thus became a euphemism for the vast inland areas under the control of indigenous groups, while Liberians directed their limited military and financial resources toward the preservation of their

Library Service [distributor], 1973 and 1996; <<http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/Liberia/index.html>>; (11 May 2006).

¹⁴ Dwight N. Syfert, "The Liberian Coasting Trade, 1822-1900," The Journal of African History, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1977); 217-235.

settlements situated no more than 50-60 miles north of the Windward Coast. This reality illustrated how the claims ACS officials made for lands stretching 140 miles north of the Cape became moot when they were unable to produce the firepower and emigrant-colonists necessary to effectively occupy these lands. These politico-geographical limitations also demonstrated how Liberia was not an “un-African” neo-colonial power during its colonial and early republican periods.¹⁵ Liberia was instead a member of a political arrangement that Richard White has called a “middle ground,” similar to the middle grounds forged by English and Iroquoian traders in 17th century North America.¹⁶ The prime mediators of the middle ground betwixt the Liberian coast and “Hinterland” were Monrovia merchant/traders and a range of African groups dominating the commerce and agriculture on the interior. Most Liberian settlers were not however members of this inter-ethnic trading establishment. Rather, they were capital poor ex-slaves pursuing certain post-colonial freedoms, unavailable to them in the U.S.¹⁷

¹⁵ This has been a popular claim made by proponents of the Liebenowian. See footnote no. 6.

¹⁶ A “middle ground” is a “geographic” space shared by two or more groups who are compelled to make certain concessions to one another, because neither of them has the resources—military or otherwise—to achieve a state of cultural dominance over the other. Meaning neither group has the power to dictate terms to the other on issues such as trade and how labor would be organized in that shared space. Timothy Shannon, “Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Fashion,” in Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell, editors, American Encounters : Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850 (New York : Routledge, 2000), p. 355; Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (Cambridge; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁷ Carl Patrick Burrowes posits the reasonable claim of Liberian settlers seeking republican freedoms similar to those expected by slaves released from bondage after the American Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Among these were the “acquisition of new names and residences, stabilization of families, Black control of churches, expansion of schools and benevolent societies, development of economic independence and the forging of a distinctive political culture.” See Burrowes, “Black Christian Republicanism: A Southern Ideology in Early Liberia, 1822 to 1847,” The Journal of Negro History, Vol. No. 1 (Winter, 2001), 30-44.

Groups affiliated with Gola and Manding cultural groups were too influential to be replaced by the homogeneous national identity many Liberian settlers promoted. The Gola spread their culture through their secret societies and military conquest, while the Manding (i.e. Mandingo & Vai) used a creolized form of Islam and commercial hegemony to accomplish similar ends. If one traveled about hundred miles from the city of Bopolu toward the coast, the Manding numerical presence became significantly less. But the towns Manding cultural groupings established at Cape Mount, Vanswina, Bopolu, and Masadu enabled them to project a considerable amount of coercive power from Old Mali imperial enclaves near the Southern Guinea border to the coast. Afro-American emigrants got their first taste of this power when a Manding chief at Bopolu traveled to Cape Mesurado (a.k.a. Monrovia) to settle the initial land dispute between Dey chiefs and the settlers residing there (1822). Aside from the control the Gola exerted over the kola and salt trades in the forest zone, Manding traders were particularly successful in regulating the flow of goods transported back and forth between Winward Coast and the Western Sudanic capillaries of the Trans-Saharan trade.

The Making of the of the Hinterland

Interlocking processes of migration and commercial development were underway in lands within the borders of modern Liberia, eight hundred years before the first white ACS agents and Afro-American settlers landed at Cape Mesurado (1822). Kwa speaking groups (Dei, Kru, and Bassa) first arrived in the

forests near Cape Mesurado as iron tools became available for the slash and burn agro-technology they employed between 1000-1400. Manding speakers came later and occupied lands near the coast in the 15th and 16th centuries. The disintegration of the Mali Empire and the arrival of European traders on Windward Coast aided this progression. Meanwhile, several Manding groups settled in the highland areas straddling the Upper Guinea forest and savannah zones, near what is modern Southern Guinea and Northern Liberia. Among these Manding sects were the Vai, Mende, Loma, Kpelle, and Bandi. Mel speakers such as the Kissi, Temne, and Gola had moved from the northeastern Lofa territory to settle in the forests of what is central Liberia. They moved to this area to avoid the Bambara and Mandingo slave traders and gain access to the kola and salt trades closer to the coast.¹⁸ Hence, the Mel, particularly the Gola, carved out a geographic niche for themselves between the powerful Manding groups of the north and clusters of Kwa chiefdoms nearer the coast. Kwa groups such as the Dei, Bassa, and Kru responded to the southward migrations of the Mel speakers by re-establishing themselves in lands east of the Cavalla River, which would become Cote D' Ivoire's eastern border.

The Vai of the Maninka territory became the first of the Manding sects to tap into the coast based salt trade by establishing a permanent foothold at Cape Mount, located about 100 miles west of Sierra Leone's southern most border. During the late 15th century, the Manninka Monarch (Kamara II) married the daughter of a Gola Chief to protect Vai commercial interests at Cape Mount. By

¹⁸ Richard L. Roberts, The State and the Economy in the Middle Niger Valley, 1700-1914 (Stanford University Press, California, 1987).

the mid-16th century, the Vai used their cultural connections with their Manding Dyula, Loma, Bandi, and Kpelle allies to overthrow the Dei Chiefdom at Cape Mount. This conquest opened the famed “Mandinka Corridor” that linked the commerce of Cape Mount to the Southern Guinea cities of Masadu and Beyla. Ultimately, Manding traders used this “Corridor” to transmit both goods and Islam to the coast within a regional political system dominated by Poro and Sande secret societies.¹⁹ With the arrival of the Vai at Cape Mount, Dei chiefdoms resettled on lands near Cape Mesurado, bordered by the Gola to the north and Kwa (Bassa, Kru, and Grebo) towns west of the St. John’s River. None of the above mentioned groups exercised military dominance over all of the others by the end of the 18th century. Therefore diplomatic negotiations were a more effective means of settling disputes rather than armed force. The Condo Confederacy, based out of Bopolu, was the premiere inter-ethnic alliance in the region. Drawing upon the support of at least six different ethnic groups, this Confederacy managed a robust interior trade system with ties to the Atlantic commerce as well. The Gola produced kola, salt, rice, gold, and cotton for Manding traders that had connections with the merchants operating along the desert edge; the Bassa, Kru, and Grebo sold fish, salt, pepper, rice, and cotton to costumers as far east as the Gold and Ivory Coasts, while they also served areas

¹⁹ Oral traditions suggest that all of these groups claim Masadu as a source of cultural origin. See Tim Geysbeek, “A Traditional History of the Konyan (15-16th Century): Vase Camara’s Epic of Musadu,” History in Africa, Vol. 1994, 49-85; Svend Holse, “The Manding in Western Liberia: An Overview,” Liberian Studies Journal, VII, 1 (1976-1977); 1-12; Adam Jones, “Who Were the Vai?,” The Journal of African History, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1981), 165.

in central and western Liberia; lastly, a hodgepodge of groups in the Southeast exported iron, "wild game," ivory, and palm oil.²⁰

Slaves were the other major commodity exchanged on the interior, but the geographic orientation of this trade differed from the one that has revived the debate on the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.²¹ Suppliers operating near the Guinea/Liberia border tended to sell slaves to traders traveling Saharan routes or to local customers who used them for domestic purposes. Relatively few slaves were actually sold to Europeans on Windward Coast.²² Guinea's proximity to the trans-Saharan trade routes had a great influence on this result. Most captives who were drawn into the Atlantic slave trade were sold in West African locations where connections to the trans-Saharan trade were weak or non-existent. Indeed, the further south one traveled from the desert edge and encountered the various polities of the West African Coast, the weaker the bonds with the trans-Saharan became. For example, indigenous groups operating out of Gold Coast, the Bight of Benin, the Bight of Biafra, and Angola (West-Central Africa) exported exponentially more captives through Atlantic ports than those in Senegambia and Windward Coast.²³ Consequently, the trans-Saharan trade and internal systems of domestic slavery had more influence on how states were

²⁰ Burrowes, "Economic Activities of Pre-Liberian Societies: Production for Local Use and Exchange," 38-40.

²¹ See Paul Lovejoy, Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa (Reprint, 1980: Cambridge University Press, 2000); John Thornton, Africa and African in Making of the Atlantic World (1992, 1998).

²² Adam Jones & Marion Jones, "Slaves from the Windward Coast," The Journal of African History, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1980), 17-34.

²³ Paul Lovejoy, Transformations in Slavery (Cambridge, 2000), 86.

formed amidst the politics of Windward Coast than European traders in search of slave cargoes. No mass slave trading enterprises with Europeans existed north of Windward Coast until the early 19th century. Even then, this kind of slave trading was confined to the Gallenhos [sic], which had been the Vai controlled neutral zone between the Liberia and Sierra Leone borders.²⁴ The lack of a long term Atlantic slave trading tradition in Windward Coast did not however lessen the influence it had on the imagination of Afro-American settlers involved in the planting of the Liberian colony. Indeed, it only hardened their Protestant derived perception of the indigenous peoples as uncivilized “heathens.”

Planting the Colony

There was nothing new about the idea of planting a colony in West Africa for dispossessed North American Blacks, when the ACS sent two men to purchase lands for a new expatriate settlement near Sierra Leone in 1819.²⁵ Nor was the idea of using an expatriate colony to suppress the African slave trade and spread Western Civilization. British colonial agent, G.A. Robertson,

²⁴ Svend Holsoe, “Slavery and Economic Response among the Vai: Liberia and Sierra Leone” in Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), 286-297; Warren L. d’Azevedo, “A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism Part 1” Liberian Studies Journal, 1, 2 (1969), 9.

²⁵ The ACS was the ironic champion emigration idea cause in 19th century, in light of previous attempts made by Blacks in America to pilot the idea. As early as 1794, three Black Businessmen representing the Providence African Society (PAS) hired slave trader, James McKenzie, to travel to Sierra Leone and secure lands for a new Black settlement. The aim of the Black emigrants traveling to this new settlement was to serve as ambassadors of Western/Christian Civilization in Africa, an objective later articulated by ACS supporters. The PAS however failed in its mission because Samuel Hopkins (leader of the Rhode Island Abolition Society) refused to supply the Sierra Leonean governor with character references for the twelve Black families who anticipated settling there. In the meantime Granville Sharp’s Province of liberty for dispossessed Black British subjects had fallen during a power struggle between slave traders and the Temne elite near Granville town. Impressed with the resurgence of the Sierra Leone project, under new leadership in the early 19th century. See George E. Brooks, “The Providence African Society’s Sierra Leone

was among the first to posit these ideas. Although Robertson was against meddling in the religious affairs of African indigenous groups, he was “convinced that civilization is all that is wanted to secure Africa those great advantages which nature affords her inhabitants; her climate situation being, in many ways, advantageous for agricultural, as well as commercial, speculations.” If only her leaders could be convinced to discontinue their participation in the business of sending captives to the slave plantations of the New World.²⁶ Meanwhile, there had been a handful of Blacks in the U.S. who supported emigration to Africa as a liberation strategy. However, they had been unable to raise enough capital to set their emigration plan in motion since the death of the mulatto merchant/sailor, Paul Cuffee. Cuffee’s vision had been to create a haven for Blacks to practice and proliferate the values he most admired about Protestant Christian Civilization. These included education in arithmetic and Biblical scripture, training children in the arts of agriculture and trade, refraining from pretentious dress, abstaining from the consumption of “spirituous liquors,” avoiding idle “amusements,” legalizing marriages, and investing in real-estate.²⁷ The ACS

Emigration Scheme, 1794-1795: Prologue to the African Colonization Movement,” The International Journal of African Historical Studies, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1974), 183-202.

²⁶ G. A. Robertson, Notes on Africa; Particularly those Parts Which Are Situated Between Cape Verd and the River Congo; Containing Sketches of the Geographical Situations—The Manners and Customs—The Trade, Commerce, and Manufactures—And The Governments and Policy of the Various Nations in the Extensive Tract; Also a View of their Capabilities for the reception of Civilization; With Hints for the Melioration for the Whole African Population (London: Printed for the Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, Parternoster Row, 1819), 1, 7.

²⁷ Cuffe financed the transportation of some 38 emigrants from the U.S. to Sierra Leone. He intended to make arrangements to send more, but died shortly after the conclusion the second U.S. War with Britain. Paul Cuffe, A Brief Account of The Settlement and Present Situation of The Colony of Sierra Leone, in Africa... (New York: Printed by Samuel Wood, No. 357, Pearl Street, 1812), 12.

would succeed in partially fulfilling Cuffe's vision, but the Society's underlying goal of removing "free persons of colour" from the U.S. often created a culture of mistrust in free coloured communities. In spite of this major shortcoming, white ACS advocates were able to convince the U.S. government to finance the planting of a colony for recaptured Africans, free coloureds, and manumitted slaves in West Africa.

As explained in the previous chapter, the ACS's first attempt to buy and establish a new settlement in West Africa was an utter disaster. Half of the emigrants died from exposure to malaria, along with all three of its white agents. Those who survived lost confidence in the ACS and stayed in Sierra Leone or returned to the U.S. For example, dispossessed Baltimore preacher, Daniel Coker, went on to manage one of the upland settlements for recaptured Africans in Sierra Leone. The second expedition of ACS emigrants and white agents did not fair much better. The rates of emigrant death remained high, and all but one of the next three white agents died from malaria. Moreover, an agent who attempted to acquire land in the Bassa territory signed a contract with a local Chief that would have required the ACS to pay an annual tribute of \$300. The ACS subsequently fired this agent who had already died from malaria, and dispatched Yale Professor, Dr. Eli Ayres and U.S. Naval Officer Robert Stockton to negotiate a new deal.

In late December of 1821, Ayres and Stockton sailed two hundred and fifty miles south of Freetown with hopes of acquiring the most coveted piece of land on Windward Coast, at Cape Mesurado. The Cape had long been an admired

territory, due to its overall commercial and defensive advantages. All other natural ports along Windward coast were blocked by water bound rock formations, rendering them nearly unreachable by sea. Cape Mesurado was the exception. If carefully navigated, small vessels could make it to the shoreline from the large Bay in front of the Cape without sustaining any damage to their hauls. One witness described it as a "hamlet situated on the Island," rising some 75ft above the ocean surface.²⁸ This high elevation seemed "to be the key of its defence [sic]: in fact, Cape Mesurado might be made capable of a strong resistance at a trivial expense, as it commands the bay. A small force on the ridge behind the town, would secure the ground in its vicinity."²⁹ One of the Cape's other natural benefits was its close proximity to several fresh waterways such as the Mesurado, Junk, St. Paul, Mano, Mafa, St. John's, and Cavalla rivers. Although some of these rivers were better suited for long distance travel than others, persons living on the interior came to depend on them as major irrigation sources.

Europeans had made regular trips to the area since Portuguese sailors first encountered the Cape in the mid-16th century. But no group of outsiders had ever attempted to establish a permanent settlement there. Indeed, there had been only two persons to spend extended periods of time on nearby islands during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Both of these persons were Afro-Creole traders with links to European traders who wanted palm oil, camwood,

²⁸ Robertson, Notes on Africa (London, 1819), 35.

²⁹ Ibid.

ivory, pepper, cloth, foodstuffs, slaves, etc... One of these traders, Phillipi, left the Cape after an attempt made by British subjects to suppress the local slave trade in 1813, while the other trader, John Mill, continued to live on one of the islands near the mouth of the Cape Mesurado river. Indeed, Mill would arrange the first meeting between ACS agents and King Peter for the purchase of Cape lands. Like other Afro-Creole traders, Mill possessed the language skills to make this kind of inter-ethnic dialogue possible.

Ayres' official report to the ACS on how he and Stockton's negotiations with King Peter went was a shrewd piece of propaganda. Ayres implied that they bought Cape lands without much disagreement from its former Dei owners. This message was strange for one particular reason. Dei authorities had always refused to sell Cape lands to foreigners because it had long been recognized as the residence of a Poro god. In Dei cosmology, selling these lands was equal to offending the deity and the prosperity they associated with remaining within the god's good graces. Ayres neglected to bring this up in his official report. He instead focused on the agreement reached by himself, King Peter, and Stockton for a tract of land "at the western extremity of the Gold Coast, on the river Mesurado, and includes the whole of a cape of the same name." This plot was about forty square miles wide, "exclusive of one or two small islands in the mouth of the river," and extended some 140 miles inland from the Cape at "W. long. 15° N. lat. 6°." ³⁰ Although this land had actually been extorted from the Dei Chief and

³⁰ Jehudi Ashmun, "A Memoir of the Exertions and Sufferings of the American Colonists, Connected With the Occupation of Cape Monterrado: Embracing the Particular History of the Colony of Liberia From December 1821 to 1823," African Repository and Colonial Journal (1825-1849); Jun 1826; 2, 4; Anonymous, The Guardian and Monitor. A Monthly Publication, Devoted

his subordinate rulers at gunpoint, Ayres skipped over this other important detail to praise what he perceived to be a windfall deal for the ACS. He wrote:

We have purchased a tract of country containing one million dollars' worth of land, with the best harbour between Gibraltar and the Cape of Good Hope, an Island containing nine houses, six others to be built; there are excellent springs of water near the site we have selected for a city; and at the pitch of the Cape, there is an excellent place for watering ships. All this we have purchased in a fee simple for little more than was stipulated to be given for the annual rent of Bassa, and not amounting to more than three hundred dollars. The Island at the mouth of the river we have named "Perseverance," to perpetuate the long and tedious palaver we had in obtaining it.³¹

Ayres' exuberance over the procurement of these lands would be short lived. In January of 1822, Ayres made arrangements to have the second group of settlers waiting in Sierra Leone delivered to the Cape. Dei resistance would however compel the arriving settlers to retreat to a nearby island occupied by John Mill. In an effort to arrange safe passage for settlers from this island to the Cape, Ayres met with "King Peter" at Kru-town in yet another palaver with Dei Chiefs. During this meeting, King Peter demanded the settlers be removed and Ayres accept the return of merchandise he and Stockton gave as part of the Cape lands treaty. Operating from a weak position, Ayres negotiated the best of possible bad deals. He explained that the colonists could not be removed for the lack of a vessel to transport them back to Sierra Leone. This delay tactic

to the Moral Improvement of the Rising Generation (1825-1828). New Haven: Aug 1825. Vol. 7, Iss. 8; p. 255.

³¹ Elie Ayres to Randolph R. Gurley, 16 December 1821 in R.F. Stockton: midshipman, 1811; lieutenant, 1814-1830; captain, 1838; resigned 1850, 55-64.

bought the settlers enough time to make other arrangements, considering they did not have the power to challenge King Peter's authority militarily.

To avoid any future confrontations with King Peter, Ayres cut a second deal with another Dei Chief who was assigned the Anglo name of King George. In exchange for "half a dozen gallons of rum, and about an equal amount in African-cloth, and tobacco," King George assured the safe passage of twenty-odd settlers from Perseverance Island to the Cape. When the settlers arrived, they set about the "the laborious task of clearing away the heavy forest which covered the site of their intended town." In spite of their best efforts to avoid delays in building homes, a storehouse, and reliable fortifications in the process of raising this new town, the rainy season had already begun. Not only did the frequent showers falling at this time of year render outside labor uncomfortable, it produced the pools of dank water that were the main breeding grounds for malaria. With the exception of one of the settlers, the rest fell ill to the blood born "fever" that malaria parasites cause. Construction on the town thus slowed to a halt until this "epidemic" began to subside. Ayres too came down with malaria, but elected to restore his health in the more favorable climes of the United States. In his absence, a free coloured emigrant, Frederick James, took command of the ailing settlement until Jehudi Ashmun arrived to replace Ayres in August of 1822. During James' brief tenure, settlers moved gradually toward the end of building permanent shelter while preparing for a possible attack.³²

³² Ashmun, "A Memoir..." Jun 1826; 2, 4; Eli Ayres to E.B. Caldwell, 23 August 1822 in Charles Henry Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia*, Vol. 1 (New York: Central Book Company, Inc., 1947), 205.

The way in which Ayres and Stockton obtained the treaty for of the Cape lands left the question of ownership open. Thus a struggle ensued between local chiefdoms and the settlers over the legitimacy of the latter's original claim for this 40mi x 140mi territory. Followers of Dei chiefs and the Monrovia settlers participated in the first phase this conflict at the end of 1822. Tensions between the two groups rose in October when a British ship transporting thirty recaptured Africans to Sierra Leone crashed at sea and floated up the Mesurado River to Perseverance Island. Several members of King George's chiefdom converged on the ship and claimed it as their own. Their charge was however slowed by cannon rounds fired from aboard the small vessel's deck. Meanwhile, the British captain received aid from a group of settler militiamen located on the Cape. In the events that followed, two of King George's men were killed in a minor skirmish and nearly "three thousand dollars worth" of settler provisions were destroyed in a cannon accident. While the colonists had lost only replaceable property, the killing of two of King George's men highlighted the dreaded colonial presence other Dei Chiefs had tried to remove from the Cape. Two attacks were thus lodged against Monrovia in November and December of 1822. The first involved a Dei attempt to lay siege to Monrovia, which was broken up by settler cannon fire. The second invasion was conducted by a coalition of Dei, Condo, and Gola warriors, but this force was unable to neutralize the settler's advantage of being able to fire cannon rounds down range from a fortification atop the Cape. Even with this advantage, the settler fortification was nearly overwhelmed by this invading force. A third invasion was in the works, but the Manding Chief, Sao

Boso, intervened to stop it. Shortly after he arrived from Bopolu, he convinced the Dei Chiefs and rulers of other surrounding chiefdoms to recognize the terms of the Cape lands treaty; otherwise, he promised violent reprisals against these chiefdoms. In spite of the decisive role Sao Boso played in restoring peace to the peoples living near the Monrovia settlement, this fact was later washed over by a nationalist myth.³³

Class & Monrovia's Early Settlement Years, 1823-1834

The overall tone of political and economic development in Monrovia was set during the first eleven years after the initial battles over Cape Mesurado ended. The town itself was laid out in a grid. Within the grid, small lots were set aside for homes, forts, churches, a landing and pier, court buildings, a market square, a blacksmith shop, a "new agency house," an arms house, and a public warehouse. A printing shop and public garden were added later.³⁴ From the beginning, agriculture was secondary to the emergent trade industry in Monrovia due to the rock laden clay soils inside and on the edge of the town's perimeter. As a consequence, Monrovia came to depend on food, tools, and other wares imported from the U.S. or goods produced by indigenous groups on interior lands. The major disadvantage of this economic arrangement was the oft-noted shortage of supplies in Monrovia.

³³ Siahnyonkron Nyanseo, "Putting to Rest the Matilda Newport Myth - Part 2," The Perspective January 7, 2004 < <http://www.theperspective.org/2004/jan/matildanewportmyth.htm> > (5 May 2006)

³⁴ "Plan of the Town of Monrovia," in Matthew Carey, Letters on the Colonization Society; and Its Probable Results; Under Following Heads: the origin of the society; increase of the coloured population; manumission of slaves in this country; declarations of legislatures, and other assembled bodies, in favour of the Society; situation of the colonists in Monrovia, and other

Laws drafted by ACS authorities were the one thing the colony never experienced short supplies of. The first measures severed all claims emigrants might have had to U.S. citizenship, and placed the settlement under the rule of marital law.³⁵ Meanwhile, the Constitution for the Colony was being drafted by the ACS Board of Managers in Washington D.C. With the exception of those measures designed to establish a rule of “common laws,” mandatory military service for males, and outlaw slavery, the ACS Constitution vested nearly all-executive, judicial, and legislative powers in its resident agents—most of whom were white males. Agents therefore assumed the role of petty dictator, which immediately compromised the legitimacy of their authority in the eyes of emigrants who craved more autonomy. Two internal rebellions that rocked the settlement in 1823 and 1824 were the indirect result of this Constitutional weakness.³⁶ Both of these rebellions led by Lott Carey involved raids on food stores and the local arms house. As part of the agreement to end the second revolt, the Board of Managers finally conceded some government power to the settlers. The result was the creation of a settler “advisory council” made up of a colonial Vice-Agent and those persons appointed to chair the Agriculture, Public Works, Militia, and Public Health committees. Other minor state jobs were “colonial secretary, Librarian, superintendent of captured Africans, instructors in public schools, auctioneer, and crier of the court.” Even with these changes, the

towns. Addressed to C.F. Mercer By M. Carey (Philadelphia: E.G. Dorsey, printer, 1838), appendix.

³⁵ Huberich, 266, 277, 281.

³⁶ Sanneh, Abolitionist Abroad, (Cambridge, 2001), 209-210.

Agent retained the bulk of state power through his control over the distribution of lands and ACS funds. This produced a form of government in Monrovia that was barely republican and wholly undemocratic.

The other major laws handed down by ACS authorities addressed the problem of land tenure. All settlers were to receive title to plantation lands and town plots,³⁷ under one major condition. Settlers had to prove to the Secretary of Agriculture that they had improved their lands within two years of possession, else the state had the right to repossess these lands. Whether or not the state enforced this law is a subject that will require more research. It is however clear that the epidemiological hazards most settlers faced in Monrovia reduced their capacity to comply with the law. For example, many settlers claimed to have been so weakened by seminal and recurrent bouts with malaria that they were unable to fulfill the land improvement mandate. This was an assessment that a more recent study on the effects of malaria seems to support.³⁸

In conjunction with the issue of local trade activity, malaria and the pre-emigrant status of settlers had an enormous influence on Monrovia's early economic trajectory. Answers to why Liberia's agricultural economy developed

³⁷ Male or female family heads was assigned two acres. Males with wives received an additional acre and one for each of their children. The total number acres allocated to one family were not to exceed a total of ten. Female family heads without husbands were received land under the same terms as male heads. See Svend Holsoe Collection, Box 39, Indiana University (Department of Musicology), Bloomington, Indiana.

³⁸ T.S. Kaufman and E.A. Ruveda, "The Quest for Quinine: Those Who Won the Battles and Those Who Won the War," Angewandte Chemie International Edition Volume 44, Issue 6, Pages 854-885, Published Online: 25 Jan 2005; Jacob C. Koella, Flemming L. Sorensen and R. A. Anderson, "The malaria parasite, *Plasmodium falciparum*, increases the frequency of multiple feeding of its mosquito vector, *Anopheles gambiae*," The Royal Society, Proc. R. Soc. Lond. B (1998) 265, 763-768.

exponentially slower than its trade industry best explains the relationship between the above variables. Scholars who have discussed early Liberian agriculture often attributed its slow pace of development to factors such as settler laziness, emigrant inexperience with farming in a tropical climate, the quick popularity of trade, ineffective state policies, the intrusion of “wild” animals on settler farm lands, inadequate fencing and surveying techniques, and high farm animal death rates.³⁹ Different conclusions however emerge when one examines the pre-emigrant status of most settlers in relation to the variable of time. Preliminary samples of emigrant data show that most persons settling in Monrovia between 1823-1834 were freeborn emigrants. Compared to slaves who had been manumitted for emigration, freeborn emigrants were more apt to possess the capital, formal literacy skills, and abroad contacts needed to participate in high wealth yielding occupations such as trade and/or finance. Monrovia freeborns who were not found within the ranks merchant/traders were usually well represented among practitioners of the mechanical or fine arts. It would thus be reasonable to assume that freeborn emigrants earned higher wages than manumitted emigrants.

It has already been shown that freeborns in Monrovia experienced higher death rates than manumitted slaves living there,⁴⁰ but the former tended to accrue more wealth than the latter anyway. High death rates were indeed a

³⁹ M.B. Akpan, “The Liberian Economy in the Nineteenth Century: The State of Agriculture and Commerce,” Liberian Studies Journal, VI, 1 (1975); Santosh Saha, A History of Agriculture in Liberia, 1822-1970: Transference of American Values (Lewiston, Queenston & Lampeter: the Edwin Miller Press, 1985); William E. Allen, “Historical Methodology and Writing the Liberian Past: The Case of Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century,” History in Africa 32 (2005), 21–39.

theoretical advantage for those freeborns who managed to survive the acclimatization phase experienced by all settlers. For example, the number of competitors participating in high return occupations decreased, as freeborn death rates increased. Furthermore, freeborn emigrants greatly outnumbered manumitted emigrants in Monrovia before 1834. This demographic fact illuminates the eleven-year head start freeborns had over manumittedes in the unspoken competition for political and economic power in Liberia.⁴¹

On the other hand, manumitted emigrants were usually capital poor farmers who did not have the skills necessary to match the wealth accumulation capabilities of Monrovia freeborns. Hence, the majority (54%) of these migrants lived in dispersed rural settlements such as Millsburg, Caldwell, Clay Ashland; and in Bassa located further down the coast. William Burke of Arlington, Virginia was among these manumitted emigrants. Most manumitted emigrants arrived in rural destinations without any money, a marketable trade, or formal literacy skills. Burke was therefore an anomaly in that he was both literate and possessed the skills of a shoemaker. So if his crops went bad for a season, he was still able to generate enough income to purchase food and/or pay down debts. Meanwhile, his family acquired food from trade with the “natives” and a garden tended by Rosabella, his wife. In letters to his former owner, Robert E. Lee, Burke candidly admitted that he did not know how he would have earned a living if he had not learned the shoemaking trade before he left Virginia. Nor would he have had the means to pursue his dreams of becoming an ordained pastor in one of the

⁴⁰ See fn. # 296.

country's Baptist churches. The situation for most other ex-slave settlers from Virginia was far more challenging in that their chances of creating a "respectable" living from their labor alone was slim. Burke alluded to their prospects when he wrote:

A little money here, can do but little with regard to farming, and that is certainly the surest and best avenue to wealth ease, and comfort. The only farmers here who are making anything for sale, are those who come to this country with money. Farming is more difficult now than it has been, as all the land on the St. Paul's river has been bought and the emigrants now, have to go back in the forest some two, three and four miles, and whatever they may plant, is destroyed by the wild hog, the wild cow and many other wild animals. We hope, however, that the time will soon come, when persons will venture to settle a little back from the river, and beast of burden will be brought into use. At present, there is not one of any kind...⁴²

For this reason, Burke hoped Liberian leaders would do a better job of recruiting the "right people" with capital and American commercial contacts to settle in the rural areas of the country.

A sample of Virginia emigrants that inhabited Monrovia and places like the one Burke settled showed that 59% of them were manumitted farmers, while only 31% of were freeborn farmers before 1844. The problem of high farmer deaths rates, encountered mostly by manumitted emigrant families, thus explains why profit producing agriculture took thirty years to develop in Liberia and how Monrovia was able to take the early lead in the country's economic development by focusing on trade. Over half of the farmers listed in the Virginia sample died (54%) in these rural areas before 1844, thereby reducing the number of capable

⁴¹ Shick, Roll of the Emigrants <<http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/Liberia/index.html>>; (11 May 2006).

hands available to lead this potentially important sector of the Liberian economy.⁴³ In addition to this important health issue, Liberian farmers faced the difficulties of mobilizing cheap/reliable labor forces, drought, competition with more experienced indigenous farmers, skirmishes with “natives,” and finding a crop that was both low labor and capital intensive. Until these farmers began solving some of these problems in the 1850s and 1860s, Monrovia would remain the most populous and economically advanced settlement in the country.

Expansion, Monrovia, and Independence, 1834-1847

Amos Beyan and others have already written much about how ACS Agents figured in the development of Liberian policies in Monrovia and how the country's borders expanded during the 1830s and 1840s.⁴⁴ The treatment of this subject that follows therefore cites no new evidence. During the third and fourth decades of the 19th century, Liberia's basic geography took shape and remained virtually unchanged for the next sixty years.⁴⁵ This political geography, which consisted of five counties, was spread out across 300 miles of coastline and pushed about 50 miles inland. However, most Liberian emigrants lived in Montserrado County nearest the original Monrovia settlement planted at Cape

⁴² Bell I. Wiley, Slaves No More: Letters from Liberia 1833-1869 (Lexington Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1980), 191.

⁴³ Shick, Roll of the Emigrants <<http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/Liberia/index.html>>; (11 May 2006).

⁴⁴ See Amos Beyan, The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State : a historical perspective, 1822-1900(Lanham : University Press of America, c1991).

⁴⁵ The major counties were Cape Mount, Monterrado, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, and Maryland. See D. Elwood Dunn & Svend E. Holsoe, Historical Dictionary of Liberia (Metuchen, N.J. & London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1985), Front Matter.

Mesurado. As late as the 1840s, two-thirds of all Liberian emigrants (2000) had settled in Montserrado County with over half of them living in Monrovia (1062+). The next largest Liberian settler populations were those located at Bassa Cove (1000) and Sinoe County (300).⁴⁶ Reports published in the main ACS journal, known as the *African Repository*, rarely alluded to this important demographic arrangement. ACS agent and chief propagandist, Jehudi Ashmun, was the first to create the illusion of a wide spread and growing population in the Liberia. By the time his life was seized by a recurrent case of malaria, he had already established a tradition of myth making that other Agents would follow. Meanwhile, at least six other journals in U.S. delivered the message of positive Liberian population growth and other fantasies to the American reading public. One such fantasy was Ashmun's claim that mortality rates for Blacks in Liberia and the United States were roughly equal.⁴⁷ Actually, mortality in Liberia was closer to the $\geq 60\%$ that characterized the death rates of imported African slaves laboring on the sugar plantations of the West Indies and Brazil (see chapter 1). Finding creative psychological ways to cope with high death rates in Liberia thus became an integral part of settler life. Indeed, it was not uncharacteristic for entire families to die within four months of arriving in Monrovia before 1844. The

⁴⁶ Carl P. Burrowes, "Black Christian Republicans: Delegates to the 1847 Liberian Constitutional Convention," *Liberian Studies Journal* 14, No. 2, 1989; 64-87.

⁴⁷ "Latest from Liberia: To the Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society. THE HEALTH OF THE COLONY. THE CIVIL STATE OF THE COLONY, THE AGRICULTURE OF THE COLONY. THE MEANS OF COLONISTS TO OBTAIN THE COMFORTS OF LIFE, AND ACQUIRE PROPERTY. THE BUILDINGS AND OTHER WORKS OF CONSTRUCTION. THE MEANS OF LITERARY AND OTHER KINDS OF MENTAL IMPROVEMENT. THE DEFENSIVE FORCE OF THE COLONY," *African Repository and Colonial Journal* (1825-1849); May 1826; 2, 3.

most exceptional of all of these cases involved the death of an entire crew of Black emigrants from Boston, who arrived aboard the *Brig Vine*. Instead of accepting some of the blame for this tragedy, the ACS blamed the settlers for traveling from a cold climate to Liberia during one of the most dangerous periods of Liberia's acclimatization season.⁴⁸

In the midst of all this death, the merchant-traders of Monrovia emerged as the central players in the economics and politics of the country. Several other underlying trends aided this progression. First, as manumitted farmers continued their search for a cheaply produced export-crop, they remained second tier players in Liberian politics. Second, free coloureds from the U.S. virtually ceased coming to settle in Liberia. After 1834, the majority of emigrants were manumittedes who were more likely to take their chances at earning a living in rural settlements than in Monrovia. Their numbers were however becoming fewer as the interstate slave trade expanded in the United States. The absence of a large number of skilled free coloured emigrants in the colony enabled a few men such as Francis Devany, Nugent M. Hicks, J. R. Daily, and Joseph Jenkins Roberts to pursue their trade and political ambitions virtually unencumbered by much competition. Third, the commercial alliances merchant traders made with indigenous leaders helped them become the leading brokers of merchandise on the coast and competitive traders on the interior. Fourth, merchants or traders

⁴⁸ Address of the Colonists to the Free People of Colour in the U. S.; (CIRCULAR.) African Repository and Colonial Journal (1825-1849). Washington: Dec 1827. Vol. 3, Iss. 10; p. 300.

secured nearly all of the elected seats in the legislative wing the Liberian government by the 1840s.

Merchant-traders used their political influence to implement a foreign policy tailored to serve their own domestic interests. There were two halves to this policy. The first encouraged white ACS Agents to use treaties with local Chiefs to gain access to interior trade routes or buy these lands outright. The second part of the policy forbade Europeans to trade in Liberian ports along the coast without paying duties, and insisted that indigenous groups not aid the former in ignoring these tariffs. Liberian politicians responsible for passing these laws did not have the military power to enforce them along the entire coastline. However, they believed their special status as a colony involved in the suppression of the slave trade would at least neutralize British armed resistance against their tariffs. Only after the British refused to have their subjects comply with these laws, did the trader-controlled government at Monrovia declare its independence from the American Colonization Society. In sum, Liberian independence was declared in 1847 to convince British and other European traders to recognize tariff laws passed earlier in the 1840s.

Liberian foreign policy orchestrated by the Monrovia government was undoubtedly designed to achieve the personal domestic ends of a small class of traders. They did however devise one special domestic policy to close inland missionaries and farmers moonlighting as traders out of the larger interior/coastal trade. In order to stop their clandestine trade activities, the Monrovia government banned free trade on the interior. By doing so, persons who the government

recognized as licensed traders gained a theoretical monopoly over the distribution of goods acquired from persons living on these lands. Meanwhile, they had already gained the lion share of the coasting trade linking the commercial zones of Cape to those at Cape Mount, Bassa, Cestos, and Cape Palmas. These merchant traders then reinvested their profits in larger ships built in Monrovia to transport their growing cargoes to markets in the United States and Europe. This primary source of trader strength was also the source of their greatest weakness. While these hundred or so men pursued a monopoly over the interior and coastal trades and rewarded themselves with all the material goods worthy of aristocrats, they alienated themselves politically from the growing number of farmers who were mostly ex-slaves with no capital to invest in the country's prosperity.

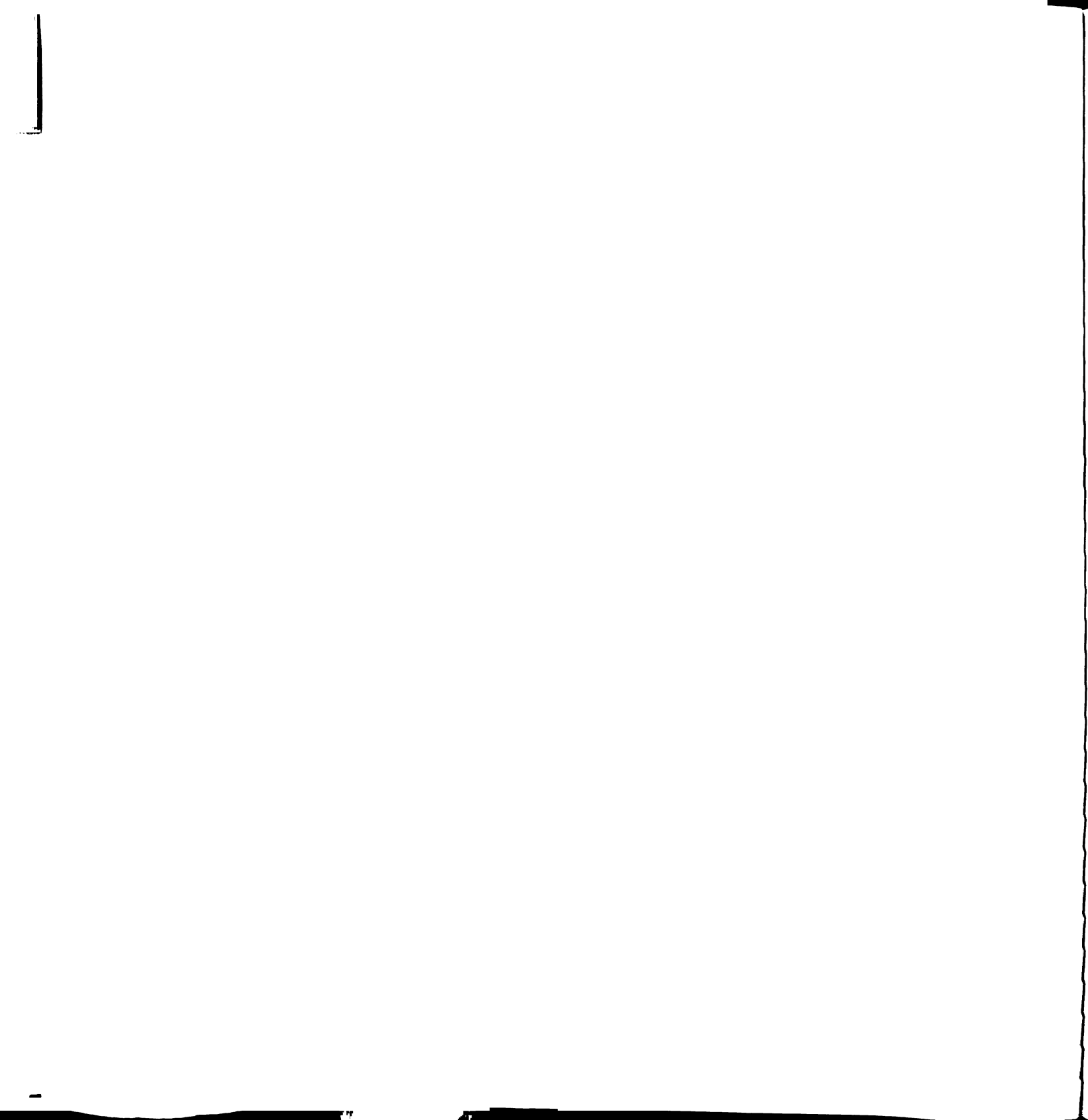
Next to government, churches and schools were the other predominant institutions in Monrovia. Preachers and teachers however often found themselves having to adopt the same survival strategies used by farmers. Their jobs were among the few in Monrovia that provided consistent incomes, but they still did not make enough to avoid laboring in other occupations (i.e. farming, Blacksmithing, trade, etc...) as well. One of their constant responsibilities was to secure donations from communities in the U.S. in order to acquire books and other essential supplies needed to keep these institutions up and running. Agents and emigrants sustained these fund raising drives by portraying Monrovia as a "City of God" steadfast in its cause to transform the peoples of Africa into

disciples of Christianity and Western Civilization.⁴⁹ Their aims were however challenged by local cosmologies and the growing presence of Islam. It was from this vantage point that Lott Carey warned of a coming conflict between Black Christian settlers and Manding disciples of Islam. He was convinced that the missionaries of Monrovia would encounter a:

...severe struggle from the Mandingo priests who have been for years propagating their system of religion among that nation. They are a kind of Mahometan Jews—they are very skillful in the Old Testament [sic], and are governed principally by the Jewish laws—they observe the new moons, offer sacrifices, and circumcise, &c.—they are generally believed by the nation to be able to work miracles; but there is one natural cause that I think will ever give us the preference—that is, the pride of the Cape Mount Nation is such, that they never will be contented with any thing less than a knowledge and practices of the fashions and customs used by white men; and not only so, our cause is God's, and must prevail.⁵⁰

Carey's assessment was partially correct. The presence of Islam was growing in Cape Mount, but it was effectively checked by the greater influence of Poro and Sande groups until the 1890s. Conversions to a creolized form of Qadiriya Islam occurred frequently among Vai trading families in the late 18th century, which preceded the arrival of the first Afro-American settlers at Cape Mesurado by several decades. The main transmitters of Islam in this coastal region were marabouts and Muslim Brotherhoods, who had been influenced by Islamic scholars residing in the interior Manding cities of Bopolu and Masadu. Muslim Brotherhoods were particularly successful in establishing schools designed to slowly

⁴⁹ J ASHMUN, "AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY," The Religious Intelligencer Apr 30, 1825; 9, 48; APS Online pg. 762



transform Vai society into one that observed the supremacy of sharia law. This of course contrasted with the violent style of conversion (*jihad*) adopted by persons most influenced by Sokoto Caliphate, Futa Jallon, and Futa Toro scholars.⁵¹ Islam was most appealing to those Vai who wished to establish alliances with the Manding traders who supplied goods to communities on the interior. The faith of these particular converts was at best lukewarm. Strict observance of daily prayers, Holy Ramadan, the *sharia*, and other Islamic traditions was more the preserve of Manding traders and members of local Muslim brotherhoods.⁵² This situation demonstrated how difficult it was for proponents of Islam or Christianity to effectively sell their message to groups residing on this part of Winward Coast. Especially, since these groups were willing to accept a creolized form of these monotheistic faiths, without fully accepting the cultural ways of their proselytizers.

Most Monrovia settlers often had few opportunities to dedicate themselves fully to the work of converting African “heathens” to Christianity. They instead spent the lion share of their time trying to earn a

⁵⁰ LOTT CARY, “LETTERS FROM REV. LOTT CARY, TO MR CRANE,” The American Baptist Magazine (1825-1835); Oct 1827; 7, 10; APS Online pg. 303.

⁵¹ There were two recognized forms of jihad. The first was the *jihad* of the sword, while the second was the *jihad* of the heart. Of the two, the latter was always considered to be the most difficult. For more on the jihad tradition in 19th century West Africa, see works by David Robinson & Nehmia Levitson. Robinson, The Holy War of Umar Tal: The Western Sudan in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) & Nehmia Levitson and Randall L. Pouwels, editors, The History of Islam in Africa (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 13 & chapters 5 & 20.

living in an extremely challenging environment. Information extracted from the letters of former slave, Peyton Skipwith, bring some clarity to this reality. When Skipwith and his family of six arrived in Monrovia in February of 1834, a major change in relation to the demographic orientation of Liberian emigration was already underway. Before Skipwith arrived in Monrovia, the majority of emigrants settling in Monrovia and the few rural settlements bordering the St. Paul River were free coloureds from the Upper South. Afterward, the majority of emigrants were former slaves released by their owners for the sole purpose of emigrating to Liberia; a trend that continued until the conclusion of the American Civil war. Although Skipwith and other former slaves were probably unaware of this major change in the emigrant population, it would reduce their chances of accumulating wealth in Liberia anyway. Like most newcomers, Skipwith was focused on generating enough income to provide for a family whose health was compromised shortly after they stepped onto Monrovia soil. For example, Skipwith's wife and eldest daughter died of malaria after having been in Monrovia for less than a year. Skipwith and the rest of his family were among the 40% of new emigrants before 1844 who actually survived malarial "seasoning" process and other death causes. However, an injury prevented him from plying his trade as a stonemason right away. After only being on the job a few days, he began losing his sight from direct exposure to the sun. While he eventually recovered from this injury,

⁵² Richard Corby, "Manding Traders and Clerics: The Development of Islam in Liberia to the 1870s," Liberian Studies Journal, XIII, 1 (1988), 48-49.

he would soon be grounded for an additional ten months after sustaining a wound on his right leg that would not heal. These circumstances compelled Skipwith to request financial assistance from his former owner, who sent him a hogshead of tobacco to sell in the Monrovia market. This gift bought Skipwith some time to recover from his second major injury. It was not however enough to lessen the intensity of the other everyday problems this small family experienced. Repairs needed to be made on Skipwith's weather beaten home, money had to be earned to purchase food for the family, and the children needed to go to school. Handling weighty responsibilities of this kind were most difficult for ex-slave emigrants who were often sent to Liberia without a trade, the ability to read and write, and money to invest in plantation agriculture. Peyton recognized these disadvantages early on when he wrote,

There is Some that hav [sic] com [sic] to this place that have got rich and a number that are Suffering. Those that are well off do hav [sic] the natives as Slavs and poor people that come from America hav [sic] no chance to make a living for the natives do all the work.
53

The correspondence of former Virginia slave, Sampson Ceasar, provides yet another glimpse into the lives of Monrovia settlers. Ceasar arrived in Monrovia without a family, but his impressions of the state of emigrants living there were similar to those recorded by Skipwith. He explained that:

...two agreat many of them got rich Since they came to Liberia their is Some that are doing bad like in all other places I think from what I hav Seen and heard that any body Can liv in this place if they will be industrous the natives are numerous in this place and they do

⁵³ Bell I. Wiley, Slaves No More (Lexington, 1980), 36.

the most of the work for the people in this place they will Steal
every Chance they hav they are most all Croomen... ⁵⁴

Ceasar's first priority was to avoid taking unnecessary risks that might reduce his chances of survival. This was clear from the outset of his correspondence, when he mentioned the death of four persons who traveled to Monrovia with him. All of whom died of the dreaded "fever." To avoid meeting a similar end, Ceasar steered clear of the "Country" because "there has been so many people died in this place I thought I would not expose myself in travelling[sic] So I have not been from the Cape." ⁵⁵

Unlike many other new ex-slave emigrants arriving to Monrovia, Ceasar was one of the few who might be described as a full-time missionary. As a consequence, he had more time on his hands to record daily observations. For example, he was initially surprised by the scant amount of clothing worn by "natives" in Monrovia. So much so that he "thought that" he "...never could get used to it but it is an old saying use is second nature." He was also astonished by the level of craftsmanship and intellectual sophistication possessed by some of the so-called uncivilized "heathens." Ceasar explained, "To See their cloth that they make and other articles that they make you would be surprised. To be Short, their natural talents are great indeed. Some of them can read and write."

⁵⁴ Ceasar, Samson. Liberian letters: Samson Ceasar to David S. Haselden 1834 February 7, Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccernew2?id=L340207.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=1&division=div1>> (May 11, 2006).

⁵⁵ Samson Ceasar to Henry F. Westfall, April 1, 1834 <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/browsesimple?id=L340401.Z&tag=public&images=/images/modeng&data=/web/data/subjects/liberia/texts/tei>> (May 11, 2006).

The prosperity enjoyed by “natives” contrasted with consummate death experienced by Ceasar and his white missionary colleagues. Ceasar dealt with the problem by seeking psychological refuge within his own Christian cosmology.

There is a great many white people in short they are coming and going out and in Monrovia most every day. We have lost but five out of our number yet but God only knows how Soon Some more of us will have to go but thank God it is as nigh to heaven in Africa as it is in America. The time is not far distant when Gabriel will sound the trumpet and gather us all together O that I may be so happy to meet you and all your family on the Right hand of God and also all my neighbors where we can enjoy the company of each other for ever and we will be clear of trouble for ever and we will see our God face to face and live for ever [.]⁵⁶

Even after a year in country, his worries about facing an untimely death in Monrovia had not subsided:

I do not know when I can come but if God Spares me I hope to See you all in this world if not I hope to see y[ou] in a bet[ter] world than this I hav been to one Camp meeting in Liberia I must say I never was at a Camp meeting in my life that people acted better it has been very sickly here for about three month many hav gone to eternity in that time I thank God that I am still living [.]⁵⁷

There is no evidence that whether Ceasar’s health ever broke under the pressure of his new environment. Remaining emigration data do however suggests that natural reproduction rates in Liberia did not begin to stabilize until the mid-1840s. Liberia would thus move into its new role as an independent state reeling from the emigrant labor shortage and negative

⁵⁶ Samson Ceasar to Henry F. Westfall 1834 April 1, Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library, [http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/browse-simple?id=L340401.Z &tag=public&images=/images/modeng&data=/web/data/subjects/liberia/texts/tei](http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/browse-simple?id=L340401.Z&tag=public&images=/images/modeng&data=/web/data/subjects/liberia/texts/tei) (May 11, 2006).

⁵⁷ Ceasar, Samson . Liberian letters: Samson Ceasar to Henry F. Westfall 1835 March 5, Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library <<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=L350305.s>

population growth problems that plagued its early settlement and colonial periods. More importantly, independence would expose these weaknesses along with Monrovia's dependency on trade for economic growth.

Commercial Decline and Political Realignment in Monrovia, 1847-1870

The calculated risk taken by the Monrovia government in declaring independence from the ACS in 1847 backfired due to the same problem that had always plagued Liberian political and economic development—a severe emigrant shortage. After independence was declared, the new republic faced the problem of securing its ports without sufficient emigrant military labor to accomplish this objective. Therefore, a small group of British merchant trading firms, with far more capital at their disposal to enhance their overall commercial efficiency on Windward Coast, began seizing larger and larger shares of the coasting trade market from the leading Monrovia firms. These Monrovia firms thus slowly became the vassals of the more powerful British firms. With the declining influence of the Monrovia trading elite, Liberian farmers emerged as the potential economic saviors of the republic. As the American Civil War got underway, the demand for Liberian sugar and coffee skyrocketed. Though sugar production was largely the preserve of a handful of Liberian farmers with the capital to buy the expensive equipment and pay the large labor

forces necessary to execute this finely calibrated form of agriculture, the high demand for coffee in the U.S. opened up avenues of economic prosperity for ex-slave farmers in Liberia that had not previously existed. William Burke described this coffee mania sweeping the St. Paul's river settlements:

The attention of almost every farmer has been lately turned towards raising coffee, and I regret that they have not done so before. I am operating on a hundred acres of land, about three miles back from the river. My wish and intention is (should God permit) to plant least twenty-five acres in coffee. Should my life be spared to see it come to perfection, I shall doubtless realize a handsome profit, and should I die before receiving the profit, it will be a good legacy for my children. I am truly glad to learn that the attention of many of our friends and relations are being turned towards Liberia. We need thousands, multiplied by thousands, to fill up and built, and cultivate this vast waste. In this regard to the healthiness of the country, I think it will compare favorably with any other part of the known World.⁵⁸

Liberia would not however be able to attract the "thousands" of emigrant laborers Burke and other Liberian farmers desired.

The newfound wealth of Liberian farmers would inspire population growth in the country's rural areas, and the emergence of the country's first two party system. The newest of these parties was the Whig Party, which sponsored the interests of the ex-slave/recaptured African majority living in rural areas. As long as the Monrovia elite's Republican Party had been in power, attempts made to incorporate large numbers of indigenous

iv1> (May 11, 2006)

⁵⁸ William C. Burke to Ralph R. Gurley, Clay-Ashland, Liberia, February 21, 1863 in Wiley, p. 212.

peoples residing near Liberian rural settlements had been blocked. However, the rise of the new Whig party threatened to transform this dream into a reality. The new Whig party also supported a state supported program of agricultural improvements, based on the building of a new University near the upland settlement of Clay Ashland. However, the decline of world sugar and coffee prices with the aggressive entry of Brazil and Cuba into the American market for these products stripped the new Whig party in Liberia of its economic legitimacy. In a desperate measure, the new Whig President, Samuel Royce, agreed to a high interest loan from a British bank that the Liberian government could not afford to pay. All government projects directed toward agricultural development thus stagnated and members of the Monrovia elite retook the reigns of power by force of arms.

Conclusion

During Monrovia's colonial and early republican periods, the problem of American slavery had an enormous influence on its political and economic development. Most of the settlers arriving in Monrovia and other parts of Liberia were ill-equipped to succeed in this environment where one's access to capital often determined success or failure. This spawned the development two-classes in Monrovia and Greater Liberia in the 1820s. Emigrants who had been born free in the United States were most often members of the first class that was able to use the formal

education and capital they brought with them to invest in trade. The second class was comprised of ex-slaves who were often illiterate, capital poor, and possessed no skills outside the field of agriculture. Members of this class made a living through temporary wage work or became subsistent farmers in one of Monrovia's outlying rural settlements. Because these ex-slaves were in the majority, plans for Liberian territorial and commercial expansion had to be delayed. There simply were not enough of these emigrants to occupy the lands and displace indigenous populations. The superior agricultural and commercial knowledge of these indigenous groups; the vulnerability of Black American emigrants to local diseases; and the changing nature of stateside emigration in the 1830s also contributed to this outcome. Liberia was thus unable to create an independent political economy or homogenous national culture in the 19th century.

CONCLUSION

The comparative approach this study used to evaluate the political and economic success of the Richmond and Monrovia Black communities has answered many questions and raised new ones. From the outset, we witnessed how the experience of Virginia free coloureds differed from similar groups that inhabited other New World slave societies. Virginia free coloureds lacked the advantages of a strong military tradition, population growth on par with whites, and high white mortality rates. Therefore, they became especially vulnerable to the expatriation movement sponsored by the American Colonization Society and its auxiliary organizations. Their demographic disadvantages also encouraged whites to enforce sexual regulatory laws, limit the spaces free coloureds inhabited as slavery expanded westward, and impose stricter limits on manumission. Richmond free coloureds and some slaves responded to this predicament by purchasing themselves, relatives, migrating to other U.S. states, or emigrating to Liberia. Most, however, staid in Richmond where they were often members of stranded families. Free coloured members of these mixed status families rejected Liberian emigration because it would have separated them from their enslaved relatives. Therefore, the Black Manifest Destiny rhetoric colonizationists used in

Richmond failed to attract large numbers of free coloureds to the Liberian emigration cause. Many Richmond free coloureds were still immersed in the protracted process of purchasing family members, which prevented them from rising within socio-economic order of the Virginia slave society. Were stranded families however the norm in Black communities throughout the Upper South? If so, did these families have the same negative effect on the Liberian emigration movement and free colored prospects for wealth accumulation? Answers to these important regional questions will be explored later. The Richmond case however shows that the everyday decisions free coloureds made in relation to their enslaved relatives crippled the overall success of the African Colonization movement in Virginia. This case also shows that even if the American Colonization Society had possessed more money to send and settle emigrants in Liberia, free coloureds still would not have emigrated due to their ties to enslaved kin.

The predicament of Blacks that traveled and settled in Monrovia during the early 19th century was very similar to that of free coloureds in Richmond. Although Monrovia and Greater Liberia was not a slave society, its economic and political development relied heavily on choices made by American slaveholders, particularly after 1834. Before that year, most emigrants to Monrovia were free coloureds who had been born free in the United States. If these emigrants survived the “seasoning” process, they were often better equipped to begin accumulating wealth than their manumitted slave counterparts. Freeborns possessed the capital, contacts, and literacy to

succeed in trade and/or the artisan sectors of the Liberian economy, while former slaves manumitted for emigration did not. Former slaves therefore, moved into rural areas near Monrovia with the hope of scratching out a subsistent living. However, their lack of capital to invest in plantation agriculture; the absence of a cheaply produced cash-crop; high death rates from disease; and periodic conflicts with indigenous African groups co-signed these largely illiterate settlers to lives of poverty, inside and outside of Monrovia. In addition, Monrovia and Greater Liberia depended on American slaveholders to increase the size of their population after 1834. Liberia therefore never had enough settlers to occupy lands far from its coastal settlements. African indigenous groups dominated these interior lands and the culture disseminated on them. Consequently, a homogenous form of nationalism never took root in Liberia based on Western values. Instead, its settler population deeply divided by class continued to occupy one portion of a cultural and commercial middle ground between the Liberian coast and indigenous African Hinterland, for the duration of the 19th century.

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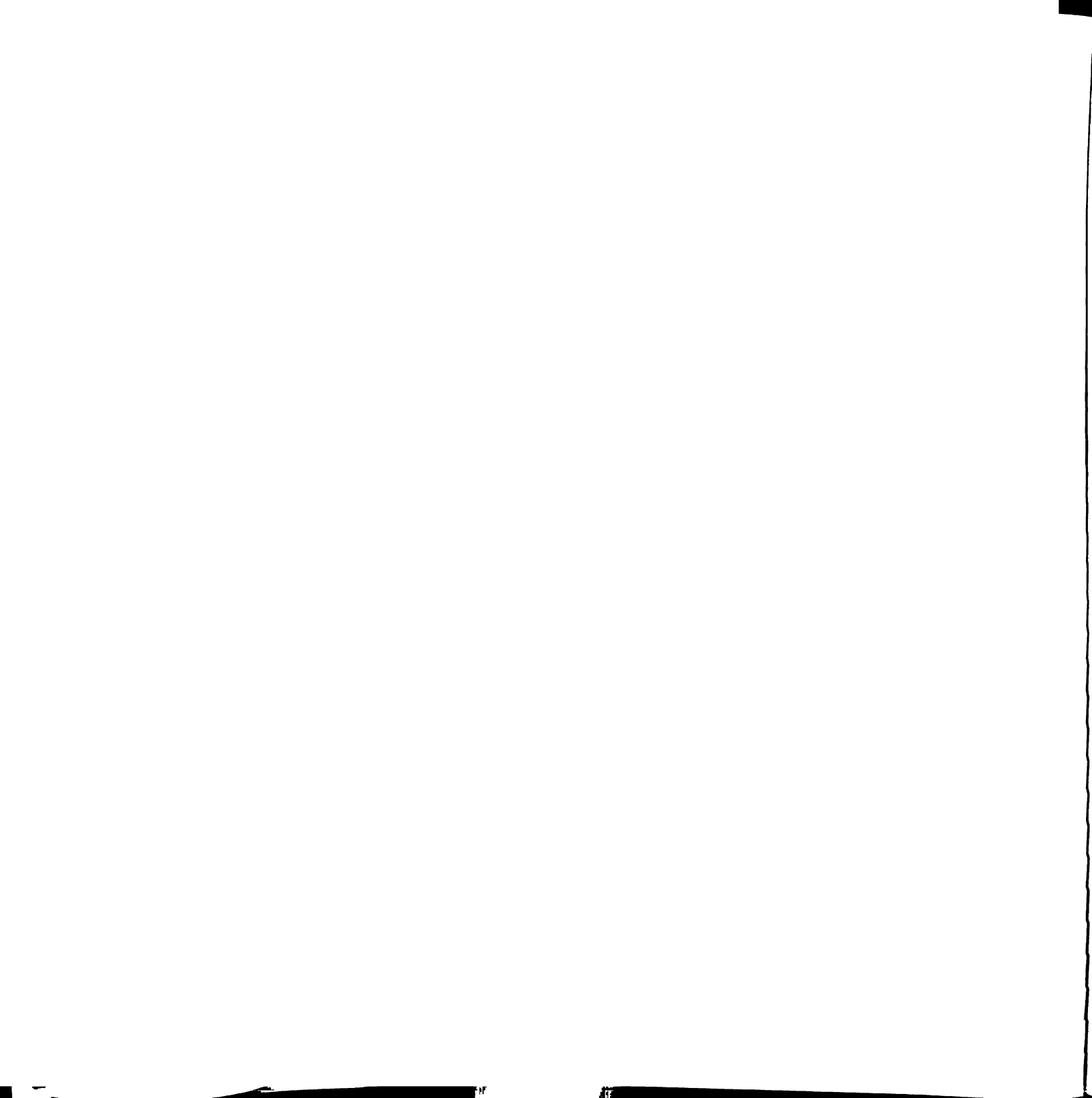
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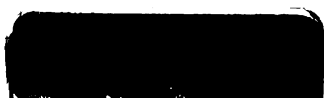
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