

# African American Settlements in West Africa

John Brown Russwurm and the  
American Civilizing Efforts

Amos J. Beyan



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AFRICAN AMERICAN SETTLEMENTS IN WEST AFRICA

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First published in 2005 by

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN™

175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010 and

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England RG21 6XS

Companies and representatives throughout the world.

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ISBN 1-4039-6891-8

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Beyan, Amos Jones.

African American settlements in West Africa : John Brown Russwurm and the American civilizing efforts / Amos J. Beyan.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p. ) and index.

ISBN 1-4039-6891-8

1. Russwurm, John Brown, 1799-1851.
  2. Liberia—History—To 1847.
  3. African Americans—Colonization—Liberia—History—19th century.
  4. African Americans—Liberia—Biography.
  5. Governors—Liberia—Biography.
- I. Title.

DT633.3.R87B49 2005

966 62'01'092—dc22

[B]

2005040546

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: September 2005

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

*In memory of the more than 250,000 Liberians  
who died in  
the Liberian Civil War in the 1990s*

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## A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

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This study is one way or another informed by many Africanists, African Americanists, and Americanists. I extend my thanks to all of them. My gratitude is expressed to Professors D. Elwood Dunn, Patrick Seyon, and Joseph E. Holloway for their moral and intellectual support throughout the course of the study. A special appreciation is also extended to Professors Robert Maxon, Robert Gregory, K. C. Morrison, Otey Scruggs, and the late Nathan Huggins for introducing me to some of the finest publications covering African/African American History. Thanks also to Professor Phyllis Belt-Beyan of Western Michigan University whose study of the development of literacy traditions in the nineteenth-century African American community informs this study.

I extend my appreciation to Eberly College of Arts and Sciences and the Office of the Provost of West Virginia University for offering me a faculty research grant for the study. This appreciation is also rendered to Dean Ruth Jackson, formally of the West Virginia University Library, whose efforts led to the purchase of the microfilm edition of the Maryland State Colonization Papers for the study; and to Dean Elise B. J. Jorgens, of Arts and Sciences, Western Michigan University through whose office a computer and a printer were purchased that helped the completion of the study.

I will always be indebted to my late parents, Maimai and Kolubah for my achievements.

Finally, I again extend my thanks to my colleague and wife, Phyllis and sons, Stephen Quoi Quoi and Kolubah whose collective assistance and love made the completion of this study possible.





John B. Russwurm (1799–1851).

## *Introduction*

This study is an assessment of the role of John Brown Russwurm, America's third black college graduate and its first black journal's coeditor, in the American civilizing efforts in Liberia and later in Maryland in Liberia, two African American settlements that were established by Americans in the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike other studies on Russwurm, this work examines not only his intellectual accomplishments and his significant contributions to the black civil rights movement in America from 1826 to 1829, but it also explores the essentials that distinguished his thoughts and endeavors from those of other black leaders in America, Liberia, and Maryland in Liberia, from 1826 to his death in 1851.

Thus, the study shows how Russwurm helped to reinforce and mold the social, material, and other institutions that the American Colonization Society (ACS) and Maryland State Colonization Society (MSCS) had introduced in their respective African American settlements in West Africa. It is therefore not a comprehensive life history of Russwurm rather, it focuses on his role along with those of the ACS and the MSCS in the transference of American values in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia as this aspect of his life-experience has not been critically examined in detail.<sup>2</sup> The study is as much about the deeds of Russwurm as it is about the activities of the ACS and the MSCS in West Africa in the nineteenth century.

Russwurm's biracial background, his brief childhood experiences in Canada, and his intellectual exposure and development at Hebron Academy and at Bowdoin College in Maine are examined in the context of what later informed his leadership and role in the development of Liberia and Maryland in Liberia. Russwurm's accommodation and alienation, especially his latter encounter in America, are examined in relation to the development of what were obviously his brands of Black

Nationalism and Pan-Africanism—the high form of the former—following his graduation from Bowdoin in 1826.

While the mentioned black nationalist sentiment is considered herein as an ideology that stresses American blacks' racial and cultural pride, common experiences with enslavement, racism, and other forms of oppression along with their demand for civil fairness and self-determination, its high form, is viewed as a thought that constitutes not only the noted elements of Black Nationalism that addresses the interests of blacks exclusively in America, but one that deals with the issues of black people everywhere.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, Pan-Africanism unlike Black Nationalism is examined in the text as a creed that deals with black issues worldwide.

Thus, Russwurm's employment of the *Freedom's Journal* as a tool against racism, slavery, and other molds of black oppression in America is treated in the study as an expression of Black Nationalism. His praise in the journal, of the ancient African kingdoms of Egypt, Kush, Abyssinia, Ghana, Mali, and Songhay together with the revolution led successfully by Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti, is considered as a manifestation of Pan-Africanism.

Russwurm decided, however, to abandon the belligerent approach, and committed himself to the cause of the ACS, an organization that many blacks and their white allies portrayed as racist and pro-slavery. The reactions of American blacks, especially those of such affluent status as William Watkins, Samuel Cornish, Bishop Richard Allen, James Forten, David Walker, William Bowler, and Lentey Crow, to Russwurm's abandonment of the civil rights movement, are explored in the context of strong antiblack sentiments in the early nineteenth century. Russwurm's justifications for the call for black colonization in West Africa, and the rationale of black and white abolitionists who unwaveringly opposed his pro-colonization position as a solution to the worsening conditions of blacks in America is also assessed.

The study investigates the origins of the ACS together with Russwurm's role in the reinforcement of the various social systems and values that the body had introduced in its West African colony. Likewise the sources of ACS' commenced values, and the reasons why Russwurm accepted them are also examined. Examined here are, moreover, the motives for ACS's support of Russwurm, his alienation by the African American settlers in Liberia, and the reasons he turned against the ACS in favor of MSCS, the body that founded the settlement that came to be known as Maryland in Liberia in 1834.

The work traces the origins of the MSCS, Russwurm's role in that body's establishment of Maryland in Liberia on the coast of West Africa,

and the various means he employed to win the endorsement of the MSCS headquartered in Baltimore. Further, emphasis is placed on the specific ways in which the settlement was established and consolidated, in relation to the responses of the traditional Glebo people to these developments in their territory. The last chapter examines Russwurm's leadership as the governor of Maryland in Liberia from 1836 to 1851 and his role in the promotion of MSCS's introduced institutional values in the settlement.

Russwurm's role in fostering and transferring the high values in question are examined against the backgrounds of his unique social and intellectual experiences in America, and his desire to enhance his material, social, and leadership interests in Liberia and in Maryland in Liberia. Also examined are the legacies of Russwurm's leadership and his other ventures in Maryland in Liberia. The conclusion highlights the dominant themes of the study and provides implications of the worldviews and exertions of Russwurm, who was among the most Westernized blacks in the nineteenth century, for his American and African counterparts in the present century.

## CHAPTER ONE

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### *John B. Russwurm and His Early Years in America*

John Brown Russwurm was born on October 1, 1799 in Port Antonia, Jamaica to a white Virginian American merchant and slave owner named John Russwurm and an enslaved black Jamaican whose name is not mentioned in surviving records.<sup>1</sup> It could be assumed that Russwurm was born a slave, since the slave laws of Jamaica stipulated that the status of a child was the same as that of his or her mother.<sup>2</sup> The ignominy associated with being the father of an interracial child in Jamaica was probably among the many reasons why Russwurm's father decided to send him to Quebec, Canada in 1807 when he was approximately seven years of age.<sup>3</sup>

Russwurm's experiences in Quebec between 1807 and 1811 appeared to have been pleasant. Although it was not a paradise for blacks, Canada was more socially receptive to blacks than most places in Anglo-Saxon America. It is no wonder that African Americans portrayed Canada as a "Promised Land," especially from 1800 up to the beginning of the American Civil War in 1861. More than 12,000 blacks including black loyalists, or African Americans who had sided with the British against the Americans in the American Revolutionary War, and a number of enslaved black escapees from America, had settled in Nova Scotia and other places in Canada in the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, except for his implications that Canada was too cold for blacks, and that it was potentially antiblacks, Russwurm's scant accounts of his brief stay in Quebec illustrate the impression that he was well treated there. Russwurm's seemingly estimable experiences in Canada should, however, be understood against the backdrop of the fact that unlike other Canadian towns such as Halifax, Shelburn, Prestown, and Birchtown that

had relatively significant numbers of blacks who competed with whites for lands, jobs, and other opportunities in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, Quebec had only a small population of blacks. Whites did not therefore see blacks as threats in Quebec. Further, Russwurm's mulatto features together with his intellectual potential might have enhanced his social acceptance in Quebec. The praxis of accepting light-skinned blacks over dark-skinned ones was common in the period under consideration. The practice corresponded with the held racial view that anything closer to whites in spirit and appearance was more preferred than one that was not.<sup>5</sup> As discussed later, apparently Russwurm's civil experience in Canada did inform his thoughts and endeavors.

Russwurm's father, who had left the West Indies in 1812 to resume his commercial activities in America, brought him from Quebec to Portland, Maine. Subsequently, his father decided to marry Susan Blancher, a white woman, in 1813. Yet, for fourteen years, Russwurm's father failed to assign his last name to his black son. His refusal might have been due to the taboo associated with a master having a sexual relationship with his enslaved woman.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, he finally assigned his family's name to his black son only because his new wife pressured him. Consequently, his son who had been known as John Brown prior to 1813, was renamed John Brown Russwurm.<sup>7</sup>

There is no account by Russwurm of this early experience with his father; perhaps he was too young to remember the episode; or the sadness caused by the death of his father in 1815 might have discouraged him from remembering any terrible encounter he had with his father. Besides, Russwurm's brief childhood experiences with his father appeared to have been mostly kindhearted. Unlike most black children who had been fathered by white slave owners, Russwurm was not sold into slavery by his father. His father had sent him to Canada to study; a practice that slave owners who loved their black children, but who were not allowed to show a fatherly affection in their immediate social surroundings, because of the many racist ideologies developed by members of their class to justify and perpetuate the subjugation of blacks.<sup>8</sup>

Russwurm's early courteous experiences with his father in Canada did not end with the death of his father in 1815; his stepmother, Susan Blanchard Russwurm, continued to treat him in a similar manner. It is no wonder that Russwurm lived at his stepmother's house for four years after his father's death.<sup>9</sup>

He enrolled in 1819 at Hebron Academy, a school in Maine that prepared students for college. Russwurm had hoped to take courses at

Hebron that would prepare him for training in medicine or in theology. Russwurm's interest in the above fields seemed to suggest that he was not only aware of his intellectual potential, but he was also quite confident that he would bring it to realization. Obviously, Russwurm's experiences in Canada, at Hebron, and with his father and stepmother enhanced his interest in the acquisition of knowledge. His intellectual curiosity would be reinforced at Bowdoin College.<sup>10</sup>

Russwurm enrolled at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine on September 30, 1824; and his annual expenses at Bowdoin College totaled \$12.44. Bowdoin accepted him as a junior. His admission at this seemed to suggest that he had been well prepared at Hebron. Russwurm's main professors at Bowdoin included Thomas Cogswell Upham, William Smyth, and, perhaps, Parker Cleaveland, a renowned geologist. He was taught moral and mental philosophy by Upham and mathematics and natural philosophy by Smyth. The two professors were also involved with the abolition and black colonization movement. Upham wrote against the transatlantic slave trade, the trade that brought more than 12 million Africans to the Americas. Furthermore he provided assistance to several fugitive slaves to escape to Canada. Smyth and Upham were among the leading sponsors of the antislavery movement in Maine. Although they held the view that slavery was morally wrong and desired its abolition, both Upham and Smyth believed that the emancipation of slaves should be followed by their colonization outside white America, since according to them the two groups would never live together in harmony. Ironically Upham and Smyth, like other New England theologians or scholars such as Jossiah Tracy, Hubbard Winslow, and Nehemiah Adams, would later portray the emphasis of abolitionists that slavery should be immediately done away with as subversive.<sup>11</sup> As examined, the mentioned contradictory views would indirectly inform Russwurm's future endeavors.

Russwurm's later activities and views may also be understood against the background of the students with whom he interacted with at Bowdoin College, and of the new American high ethics. His classmates, who also became his friends and associates for decades, included John P. Hale, who later served as senator of Maine and then as a candidate in the presidential election of 1852 on the Free Soil Party's ticket; Henry W. Longfellow and Nathaniel Hawthorne, who became accomplished writers; and Horatio Bridge, who served in the U.S. Navy and would militarily help to consolidate Russwurm's leadership in West Africa. Russwurm and his classmates studied Greek, Latin, theology, mathematics, rhetoric, English literature, international law, science, history, and philosophy. Their education also included elements of America's moral and social ethics or what

American Founding Fathers, following the Revolutionary War in 1783, defined as virtuous republicanism. They were required to become virtuous citizens or to internalize and exhibit the high rectitude that constituted virtuous republicanism, if they wished to become full members of America's evolving privileged class. With such an important incentive, they seemed to have been in high spirits as a group and as individuals to meet the precondition that had been set for them.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, Russwurm and his fellow students became well acquainted, one way or another, with the publications of such American intellectuals as Noah Webster, Samuel Harrison Smith, Robert Coram, Samuel Knox, Benjamin Rush, Mercy Otis Warren, Rayall Tyler, and others. The studies of these scholars stressed the dominant themes of virtuous republicanism. They emphasized, for instance, that among the main needs of the New Republic was a highly principled educational system, since according to them, the opposite of such a school would only produce an immoral society, impoverishment, and other social scourges could decisively ruin the new country. Another aspect of American high uprightness was the condemnation of those who were propertyless and dependant, as not full citizens. These scholars clearly defined what America ought to be and ought not to be. American virtue, enlightenment, and liberty, were therefore defined in relation to other people's vice, barbarity, and servitude.<sup>13</sup> They associated the antitheses of what constituted American evolving high rectitude with Native Americans, and to a lesser degree, blacks who they allegedly declared to be incapable of becoming virtuous people.<sup>14</sup>

The effect of the mentioned American rectitude on Russwurm would obviously be profound, and this was to be shown by what he considered to be the attributes that qualified or disqualified an individual as a good editor, a year after he assumed the coeditorship of the *Freedom's Journal*. He listed and defined these as followings:

First of all, *Principle*—which includes honesty of purpose, integrity of conscience, firmness of decision, and all attributes of nobility; for this is foundation of every man's usefulness, and without it he is slave—first to his own passions, then to the whims or threatening of others. *Courage*—to hunt down popular vices, to challenge popular opinions, to investigate public measures, to unmask deception—expose the arts . . . of the demagogue—attack the follies of the times—and to lead in every moral enterprise. It is so essential in the characters of an editor, who would be serviceable to the people, that its absence can never be allowed. *Independence*—which is the companion of courage. It must be as such power cannot awe, nor wealth



bribe nor friendship seduce nor betray. This is a rare trait—a jewel of such exceeding worth that few possess it who aspires to be the teachers and guides, the champions and defenders of a wide community. *Genius*—to conceive, to illustrate to embellish which disdains to prey upon labour of another; which adds to opulence of the intellectual world; which makes column a golden pyramid, and heaps up piles of precious thought. *Industry*—without which it is impossible to thrive in any pursuit: or to acquire extensive popularity. In fact it is a key to all the honors and emoluments of society, and the grand secret of mental superiority. These are all indispensable to qualify an editor for his station. But there numerous other traits, which are worthy of enumeration—such as prudence, candor, magnanimity, patience, perseverance, and like. Your unprincipled editor will do more mischief than a band of robbers. He operates upon a multitude of minds, and poisons the moral atmosphere around him. He is a generator of quarrels, a vilifier of sacred things, a destroyer of virtuous character, and a pest to society. Your timid, half-minded, shivering-in-the wind editor is a most animal. He endeavors to please all parties and is discarded by all. You may almost beat the breath out of his body, but the poor craven cannot pluck up courage to meet a glance of your eye or to resent the insult. Your dependent, calculating editor is a wretched tool in hands of designing men. He sacrifices principles to interest, he is creature of circumstance, more changeable than a chameleon; and in fine he is always in market, and can be bought and sold at small advance. Your indolent editor is a harmless man who prefers the pleasures of ease to the highest rewards of fame; a comfortable person does to earthly immortality. *Journal of the Time*.<sup>15</sup>

As illustrated in chapters three and five, unlike most Liberian black leaders who seemed to have been practically influenced by their Antebellum Southern popular cultural backgrounds, Russwurm was apparently informed abstractly by New England's concepts of history, enlightenment, and the noted ethical guidelines as defined by his professors at Bowdoin College and other scholars such as Webster and Warren. Further treated in the mentioned chapters, is the point that Russwurm's New England intellectual and social background set him apart not only from the other privileged blacks in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia, but it also made him increasingly unpopular with the common settlers in the two settlements especially in the early nineteenth century.

Although he stayed at a carpenter's house some twelve miles from the campus of Bowdoin for reasons unexplained,<sup>16</sup> Russwurm's own

testimony indicates that he was well received by his classmates. Russwurm's invitation to become member of the Athenaeum Society, a fraternity that had been founded by students on the campus of Bowdoin in 1808, seemed to suggest that he was appreciated by his fellow students. His acceptance of the invitation made him the first black to become a member of a fraternity of this kind in America.<sup>17</sup>

Russwurm's professors and fellow classmates admired him furthermore because of his excellent academic performance. He graduated from Bowdoin with a Bachelor of Arts degree together with some thirty other students on September 6, 1826. He was among the graduating students called upon to give the commencement address. Shortly afterwards, Boston's public officials appointed him as a headmaster for Primus Hall, a school that accepted black children. Bowdoin College also awarded him an M. A. degree just before he left America for Liberia in 1829.<sup>18</sup>

Russwurm's mentioned experiences, if taken at face value, would lead to the conclusion that he was not only a black elite, but he was also a consociate of what was obviously an American influential intellectual white class. Although he became part of the evolving affluent black class by virtue of his education, Russwurm's thorough Western acculturation apparently did not lead to his full acceptance by whites of his caliber. As mentioned earlier, Russwurm had hoped to earn a degree in medicine or in theology before he entered Bowdoin College. However, Russwurm gave up such a pursuit for reasons unexplained in recorded accounts.<sup>19</sup> He might have been discouraged by some of his professors or his academic environments to not seek a degree in the above fields, since it was assumed that the fields in question were reserved for white Americans of upper-class background.<sup>20</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that, even though Russwurm was allowed to attend anatomy lectures at Bowdoin College Medical School, he did not earn his degree in medicine. Russwurm's contemporaries such as Martin Delany, Daniel Laing, and Isaac Snowden later had a similar experience. The three African Americans had been admitted to Harvard Medical School under the conditions that while they would be allowed to attend classes, they would not be permitted to attempt examinations or to practice medicine in the United States. Despite the fact that they accepted these restrictions, Delany, Laing, and Isaac were forced to leave Harvard as a result of protests from students, professors, and administrators.<sup>21</sup> James W. Pennington, another African American and a contemporary of Russwurm had a similar encounter at Yale Theological Seminary. He was admitted to the Seminary, but was not allowed to participate in class discussions or check out books from the Seminary's library.<sup>22</sup>

Other nineteenth-century African Americans who had similar experience included Thomas Sidney, Isaiah De Grasse, Alexander Crummell, and Henry Highland Garnet.<sup>23</sup>

Like the experiences of Pennington, Delany, Laing, Isaac, Sidney, De Grasse, Crummell, and Garnet, those of Russwurm seemed to have been one of the causes of his contradictions. In fact, Russwurm's thoughts and activities would later be shaped by his alienation and accommodation in America in the early nineteenth century. Although he had been an excellent student, and had been well received by his fellow students and faculty alike, Russwurm was directly and indirectly reminded that these did not qualify him to be treated as a white American. While his light-skinned appearance was among the factors that ostensibly enhanced his partial social acceptance, his black features seemed to have served as obstacles to his attempt at full accommodation. Further, Russwurm had hoped to become a medical doctor or a theologian; but he was unsuccessful in his attempts. Besides, he had planned to settle in Haiti. However this did not materialize because the new black leaders of Haiti, for unexplained reasons, were against the plan. Yet, his willingness to settle in Haiti and his glorification of it appeared to have been expressions of his proto-Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism, the high form of the former, since such interest and praise identified him with an independent black country.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, descriptions by an observer of Russwurm's commencement address at Bowdoin College on September 6, 1826 provide an overall view of his early experiences in America, thus:

One circumstance was peculiarly interesting and we believe it was a perfect novelty in the history of our College. Among the young gentleman who received the honors of the College, and who had parts assigned to him, was Mr. Russwurm, a person of African descent. He came on the stage under an evident feeling of embarrassment, but finding the sympathies of the audience in his favor, he recovered his courage as he proceeded. He pronounced his part in full and manly tone of voice, accompanied with appropriate gestures and it was received by the audience with hearty applause. Altogether it was one of the most interesting performances of the day.<sup>25</sup>

Inferences can be made from the above quotation. Russwurm might have become self-conscious, not only because of his "blackness," but because of the ways in which such a feature was portrayed in early-nineteenth-century America. The portrayal associated blacks with ugliness, savagery,

backwardness, paganism, and it identified whites with beauty, civilization, or enlightenment.<sup>26</sup> It is no wonder that Russwurm's manners and his presentation at the commencement were reflections of the approved norms, values, and attributes of white America. Another point can be inferred from the quotation: by his well-executed performance, Russwurm assured his audience that blacks were intellectually capable as other people; and that this would be proven if they would be given the necessary chances as had been given to others.

Evidently, the new political, social, economic, and other opportunities that were extended to whites were denied to most blacks, especially throughout most of the nineteenth century. The ideological message of freedom for all that had been preached by patriots led by Americans during the American Revolutionary War was not extended to most blacks, especially to the ones who lived in the South.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the constitution of the United States framed in 1787 and ratified in 1788 allowed the continuation of slavery in the New Republic.<sup>28</sup> Besides, slavery that had been abolished in Vermont during the Revolutionary War and later abolished in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York, was reestablished in these states by the fugitive slave law of 1793, and again, by the second one in 1850. It comes as no surprise that President George Washington, a slave owner himself, declared that "the spirit of freedom which at the commencement of the [Revolutionary War] would have gladly sacrificed everything to the attainment of its objective has long since subsided and every selfish passion has taken its place."<sup>29</sup>

Although the right to vote was granted to most adult white males, it was denied to most adult black males who not only paid their taxes, but who also met the other necessary requirements for such a right. In fact, the social, economic, and political conditions of blacks deteriorated nationally, in the absolute sense, beginning in the decade Russwurm arrived in America. Blacks were disqualified by the Congress of the United States from distributing mails in 1810. The greatest blow to blacks' desire to participate in the newly evolving American democracy in the 1820s was the rapid admission of new states to the United States whose laws severely restricted the basic civil rights of blacks. What was humiliating for free blacks in the 1820s was that they were denied the basic legal rights that were guaranteed not only to white citizens, but also to white aliens in America.<sup>30</sup>

As mentioned, blacks were oppressively restricted in the early nineteenth century. Such a treatment had many bad effects on blacks. Blacks in the South as in the North could not testify against whites.<sup>31</sup> This together

with the absence of black jurors, judges, and economic clout explains why disproportionate numbers of blacks were in prisons in New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and in other states in the 1820s. Blacks constituted about one-seventy-fourth of the population of Massachusetts; nevertheless, they comprised about one-sixth of the convicts' population of the state; black New Yorkers made up about one-thirty-fifth of its general population, yet blacks constituted about one-fourth of the state's prison population. Pennsylvanian blacks comprised approximately one-thirty-fourth of its population, but blacks constituted about one-third of the state's prison population.<sup>32</sup> Adding to the problems of blacks was the failure of the national government to guarantee their basic civil rights, even of those who were freed. Indeed, the U.S. Congress enacted a bill that allowed that body to table all petitions relevant to slavery that it received.<sup>33</sup>

Against the background of the alienation of blacks as a group, and Russwurm's partial social accommodation as an individual black by whites, can his views and activities in America between 1826 and 1829 be well examined. His experience of simultaneous social accommodation and alienation by white Americans obviously helped to reinforce his Black Nationalism. As discussed in the next chapter, Russwurm did express the mentioned sentiment immediately after he arrived in New York in late 1826.

Besides, Russwurm seemed to have rediscovered himself, at least socially in New York City. Included among the factors that made this possible was the presence of a large population of a free blacks and pro-slavery and anti-free black newspapers in that city. Of the 200,000 people who lived in New York City in the early nineteenth century, about 14,000 of them were blacks. Unlike Russwurm's friends and associates as Bridge, Hale, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Calvin Stowe in Brunswick, Maine who were white, his friends in New York City who included Cornish, Wrights, Peter William, Boston Crummell, and James Varick, were black. Hence, he not only developed an interest in the problems of blacks in New York City, but he also began to address these problems from the perspectives of blacks, views that were similar to those of his new black friends and associates in the city.<sup>34</sup>

The black community in New York City was located in lower Manhattan, or in an area that was commonly known as Five Points. Although it was described as "leprous houses and wolfish dens," Five Points was also full of life. Educated and famous blacks such as included David Ruggles, the Garnet, and the Crummell families resided there. Mother Zion or Methodist Episcopal Zion Church built by blacks in

1800 and the African Free School that trained such future black leaders as Garnet, Crummell, Patrick Reason, Charles Reason, George Downing, Ira Aldridge, Isaiah De Grasse, Samuel Ringgold Ward, and James McCune Smith were also located at Five Points. Black intellectual organizations in New York City included the Philomathean Society and the Phoenix Society.<sup>35</sup>

Five Points had, likewise, black-owned entertaining centers. They included Joe Stewart's Criterion, Douglass' Club, Anderson's Club, Johnny Johnson's Club, Ike Hine's Club, and Barron Wilkin's Savoy Club. While the Barron Wilkin's Savoy Club, located near Thirty-Fifth Street, was attended mostly by common blacks, the Ike Hine's Club was frequented mostly by professional blacks.<sup>36</sup>

Five Points was among the main places in the early nineteenth century where blacks developed and perfected their theatrical skills and other talents. A black entertaining company, known as the African Company, dramatized Othello, Richard III, and other famous plays at a place called African Grove near the corner of Bleecker and Mercer streets. Indeed, the company success was seen in its lease of an expensive hotel in lower Manhattan. Its black owners petitioned the officials of New York City to allow whites to attend the theater.<sup>37</sup>

The theater's seating arrangement and its admission fee policy not only provided a portrayal of the social stratifications that characterized the black community in New York City, but as discussed in chapter three, they also provided hints concerning the prelude of the social orders that Russwurm and other black elites introduced in West Africa in the early nineteenth century. Admission fees for a black of upper- and the one of middle-class status totaled 75 cents and 50 cents respectively. Such individuals were assigned seats in the theater's opulent section. Underprivileged blacks were required to sit in the theater's gallery, and the admission fee for a member of this class amounted to 35 cents.<sup>38</sup>

As illustrated, the black elites in New York City like counterparts almost everywhere in America were still politically and socially restricted. The ordinary blacks in New York City were among those who belonged to the lowest end of the emerging American social, material, and political ladder. The mentioned explanations show that the limited freedom black Northerners had won at the end of the American Revolutionary war in 1783 was being rapidly undermined starting in the early nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup>

Against the mentioned backgrounds Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, another black of Jamaican background, decided to join forces and established what came to be known as the *Freedom's Journal*, the first black journal

in America, on March 16, 1827. The office of the journal was initially located at 6 Varick Street, and was later moved to L52 Street in New York City. The journal was issued every Friday; and its slogan that appeared on its first editorial page read: "Righteousness Exalted a Nation" a motto Russwurm had mentioned in his commencement address in 1826 at Bowdoin College. Russwurm adopted the slogan, "Devoted to the Improvement of the Coloured Population" after Cornish resigned as a coeditor of the journal in September 1827. Cornish became the journal's general representative, a position he held until May 29, 1829 when he launched a new journal that came to be known as *The Rights of All*. The *Freedom's Journal* derived its income mainly from its approximately 800 subscribers and advertisements of new commercial products, social events, job openings, and new publications, especially those that dealt with blacks. Its annual subscription rate per individual was three dollars, and its advertisement of about "twenty-two lines" was priced at twenty cents. The paper had subscribers and representatives in other states and countries such as Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, England, Canada, and Haiti.<sup>40</sup>

Among the most famous representatives of the paper outside New York were David Walker, a militant Black Nationalist who authored the *David Walker's Appeal*, and Theodore Wright who was a black undergraduate student at Princeton University when the journal was first released. Not surprisingly, Wright's reaction to the first issue of the journal was that it was "a streak of light in the darkness; a clap of thunder."<sup>41</sup>

The journal originated in New York, and not in Boston and Philadelphia, because although the three cities had a large population of blacks, Bostonian and Philadelphian whites were more receptive to blacks and abolitionists than those of New York. Indeed, such white commentators as Mordecai Noah, who controlled several newspapers in New York City, and Professor Samuel Miller of Princeton University were among the chief critics of blacks in New York City.<sup>42</sup> Hence, Russwurm under the headline entitled, "Proposals for Publishing" in the *Freedom's Journal*, summarized the purposes of the journal in these words thus:

As education is what render man superior to savage, and as the dissemination of knowledge is continually progressive among other classes in community; we deem it expedient to establish a paper under and bring in the operation of all means with which our benevolent Creator has endowed us, for the moral, religious, and literary improvement of our injured race. Experience teaches us that the press is the most economical and convenient method by which

this object is to be obtained. Daily slandered; we think there ought to be some channel of communication between us and the public, [and] through which a single voice may be heard in defense of Five hundred Thousand Free People of colour. For often has injustice been heaped upon us when our only defense was an appeal to the Almighty; but we believe that the time has now arrived when the calumnies of our enemies should be refuted by forcible arguments. Believing that all men are created equal by nature, indulge the pleasing anticipation that as the means of knowledge are more extensively diffused among our people, their conditions will . . . improve, not only in their daily walk and conversation, but in their domestic economy. Our columns shall ever be open to a temperate discussion of interesting subjects. But in respect to matters of religion, and while we concede to them their full importance, and shall occasionally introduce articles of general character, we would not be the advocates of any particular sect or party. In the discussion of political subjects, we shall ever regard the constitution of the United States as polar star. Pledged to no party, we endeavor to urge our brethren to use their right to the elective franchise as free citizens. It shall never be our objective to cause controversy, though we must at times consider ourselves as raising our community into respectability, are the principal motives which influence us in our present undertaking. We hope our hands will be upheld by all our brethren and friends in the champions in defense of . . . humanity and as the diffusion of knowledge.<sup>43</sup>

The *Freedom's Journal*, though not initially a radical or an abolition paper, was launched as a counter response to the increasing social, political, and economic subjugation, especially of the free blacks in America in the early nineteenth century. The paper was therefore employed to rebut aggressively the many misleading arguments that had been used against blacks. Under the headline, "The Mutability and Human Affairs," in the journal, Russwurm and Cornish bestowed that although it was mainly designed to deal with problems of blacks, the journal would also enlighten "all nations [and would] . . . spread the true principles of liberty and equality." Indeed, Russwurm mentioned that the new venture would challenge the subjugation of blacks and promote what would be termed virtuous republicanism or religious, moral, and other useful education among them.<sup>44</sup> To this end, the two editors wrote that the horrendous portrayals of blacks by white journalists, secular and religious leaders were among the leading causes of the strong resentment toward



them. They added that while the moral failings and debasements of blacks were always stressed and used against them by whites, they never mentioned their accomplishments or merits. They rhetorically asked whether the ignorance, impoverishment, and abjection that characterized the black community were divinely imposed. Assuming that the answer to their question was no, the two editors spotlighted the point that through irreverent efforts, the appalling social and material conditions of blacks would be successfully addressed.<sup>45</sup>

This explains why the journal ventured to inspire black women to be proud of not only their physical looks, but also to develop an interest in the acquisition of knowledge. They, therefore, printed materials that criticized female blacks for their concept of an attractive woman from the perspectives of whites. To discourage this line of thinking, the editors maintained that although whites damned them as vices, black women were naturally and profoundly beautiful. They also noted in the journal the intellectual contributions of female blacks like writer Wheatley, who they pseudonymously referred to as Matilda.<sup>46</sup>

Likewise covered in the paper, was an essay on the side effects of blacks' habit of purchasing the latest and stylish clothes and cosmetics in New York during the 1820s. The essay maintained that it was commonly known that blacks spent more money on "the superfluities of life" than any other social group in New York City, and that such an unwise use of their limited incomes added to the poor conditions of their community in that city. The essay also stressed that if blacks wanted to be respected, they would have to get rid of "all frivolities of every varying fashion" and to adopt "the hand maidens and industry." Further mentioned in the reprinted essay was the view held by most black elites that the improvement of moral conditions of black, especially those of the black youth, should be one of the main goals of the black community.<sup>47</sup>

Another issue raised in the journal was the black prison population in New York City in 1829. Russwurm and Cornish maintained that the official data of New York City showed that out of the total white population of 160,000, about 139 were prison inmates; and out of the overall black population of 15,000, 81 were incarcerated in the city. Relying on these figures, the two journalists concluded that blacks could be disproportionately imprisoned in New York City. They contended that the poor circumstances of blacks could be attributed to the fact "that the white man possesses all the knowledge and advantages, . . . while the [black] man has scarcely any." They further accented that whites held all the essential occupations while blacks retained only the insignificant ones.<sup>48</sup>

The paper also recorded news of international events, births, marriages, and deaths of the black community. The *Freedom's Journal*, in addition, readily reprinted extracts from other such antislavery papers as *The Church Advocate*; *the Philanthropist*; *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* that was edited by Benjamin Lundy, a Quaker; and Garrison's *Liberator*. Possibly, to increase the size of its reading audience, the editors published essays with titles such as: "Choosing a Wife by Proxy," "A Cure for Drunkenness," "The Effect of Sight Upon a Person Born Blind," "The Egg Trade," "The Church and the Auction Block," "The Common School of New York," and "The Chinese Fashion," and so on. The paper also listed and stressed the achievements of such famous blacks as Paul Cuffe, a Bostonian colonizationist and successful merchant who sailed to Sierra Leone, West Africa in 1810 and again, in 1815 with some commercial items and thirty-eight other blacks; Wheatley, a well-known poet, whom the two editors now portrayed as an example of bona fide black womanhood; Toussaint L'ouverture, the leader of the Haitian Revolution; and George M. Horton, a free black writer who was illegally arrested and imprisoned in Washington, DC as a recaptured slave.<sup>49</sup> The two editors appealed to the journal's readers to do everything in their power to liberate Horton, thus:

a little can be spared towards effecting the liberation of one who bids fair to be an [honor] of our race. Something must be done! George M. Horton must be liberated from the state of bondage. . . . We [will] be much gratified to see him in his enjoyment of his freedom; every thing in our power—every information that we can give to the benevolently disposed concerning him, will be given with the utmost promptitude. Horton is undoubtedly a young man of talents, and it seems somewhat hard they should be buried, as they will be, in a measure, if he is doomed to waste the prime of his days in vile servitude. Cannot one or hundred dollars be raised towards purchasing his freedom?<sup>50</sup>

Horton's published poems were reproduced in the journal to extend his appreciation to those who had provided funds for his release, and, obviously from Russwurm's point of view, to illustrate the point that even among the enslaved blacks, there were accomplished intellectuals, and perhaps, to help to publicize the unfairness of the American system. Horton's poem dedicated to people of goodwill toward him bears

testimony to the first foregoing point, thus:

Joy kindles by thy vital gal,  
 And breathes true philanthropy;  
 Thy with delight I hail  
 The dawn of liberty.

The song of gratitude I own  
 To thee from whom these pleasure rise,  
 And strain of praise to thee shall flow,  
 Until my memory dies.

Far from this dark inclement place  
 Unto thy sacred beams I'll flee;  
 Unto the soothing smiles of grace,  
 The smiles of liberty.

Enraptured by the pleasing charm  
 Aloud will I my joys proclaim;  
 And soar above oppression's storm  
 And triumph in my name.

Philanthropy, thou feeling dove,  
 Whose voice can sound the vassal free?  
 Upon the wing of human love  
 I'll fly to liberty.

Through inclement seas distress'd,  
 Where all storms of hardship roar  
 Ere long I humbly hope to rest,  
 On freedom's peaceful shore.

May Providence reward each man?  
 Who feels such safe regard for me?  
 And in his breast enroll a plan  
 Davis's for liberty.

May all the smiles of Heaven attend  
 Thy life who thus relieves the poor,  
 And showers of blessings down descend  
 To amplify thy store.

Thus may thy feeling heart rejoice,  
 And cause me to rejoice with thee,  
 And triumph with a cheerful voice,  
 The voice of liberty.<sup>51</sup>

Abbe Gregoire's work on such blacks as Don Jon Latino, Hannibal, Antoney Amo, Lislet Geoffroy, James Derham, Benjamin Banneker,

Othello, Ottobah Cugoano, James Eliza, John Capitein, Thomas Fuller, Francis Williams, Olaudah Equiano, Ignatius Sacho, and Wheatley who had distinguished themselves in the arts and sciences in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries was frequently cited in the journal to illustrate the point that blacks were not intellectually inferior as European and American scholars alleged. Likewise, the *Freedom's Journal* would be employed to partially and frequently paraphrase the same and counterminimize "those who [saw] glory in keeping [blacks] ignorant and miserable [so that they would be] better slaves."<sup>52</sup>

The paper also mentioned the assistance occasionally provided by some blacks to slave catchers who were sent by slave owners to recapture runaway slaves. Under the headline, "Self-Interest," Russwurm made notice of this, thus:

We are sorry to inform our readers that the business of arresting persons of colours as runaways from the South is daily taking place in [New York City], and it appears to be followed so systematically that we know not an end will be put to it. Since our last [issue], we have learned that the villain, who testified against the young woman, was her own cousin! Where is this man of colour, whose feelings do not burn with indignation while perusing these few hasty lines; for our part, we cannot describe ours while penning them, and inscribing the name of *Moses Smith*, formerly of Baltimore, Md. as the informer. . . . We would proclaim his name with that of one *Nathan Gooms* of this city, (formerly from the South) from Maine to Georgia, that our brethren may be on the alert against their base and infamous practices. We have other names in our possession, but though some men would be led to draw conclusions against them, still we have clarity enough for the present to hope better things; at least, we shall delay publishing their names for a while. In our humble opinion something ought to be done to arrest this infamous business. We leave it to older and wiser heads what course to pursue. We are sorry to see our brethren so unconcerned on the subject, and we are sorry, that through the haste and rashness of one, the informer first mentioned, escaped from those who pursuit of him were. We would have brother abroad; keep a lookout for these villains, as we are confident they will find but little peace if they remain in this city. It is certainly common cause, and how divided so ever we may be on other subjects we should unite in this for the protection of ourselves and families. We believe any man of colour who will betray one who is a runaway, would not hesitate one moment towards assisting to kidnap those who are free.<sup>53</sup>

Among the issues later most stressed in the paper were, however, the attempts to stop the ACS black colonization scheme in West Africa, and the various injustices blacks continued to experience in America. Russwurm and Cornish, therefore, declared that they would employ the *Freedom's Journal* to not only expose how the ACS as pro-slavery and antiblacks, but they would also work to "prejudice the minds" of the black masses in America against that body's harmful motive of attempting to colonize them in West Africa. They further pointed that if the ACS shows "any merits, it cannot lose by investigation; but if the motives of its founders will not bear investigation, then it ought to sink." They added that the social and material conditions of blacks would be at all times emphasized in the journal.<sup>54</sup> Not surprisingly, Russwurm and Cornish editorialized that they would:

hold up always the banner of the . . . slaves who [were their] kindred by all the ties of nature . . . [and added] that while all the rest of mankind [were] advancing in march of improvement, two millions of the [black] race in free America shall be left in irretrievable degradation. . . . And have the blacks neither duties nor rights?<sup>55</sup>

The two editors noted that they would exert every effort to not only publicize the true and suffering conditions of blacks in America, but also try to identify the solutions to such problems. Essays on black education were thus among the most published materials in nearly every issue of the paper because the editors and other affluent blacks earnestly held the view that the acquisition of knowledge and practical skills would help to solve the many burning problems that blacks faced in America. Against this backdrop Russwurm and Cornish reemphasized that: "It is surely time that [blacks] should awake from this lethargy of years, and make concentrated effort for the education of . . . [black] youth." They emphasized that young blacks should be trained in ways that would make them not only competitive in changing America, but would also prepare them to bring esteem to the black community that in turn would undermine intolerance, a fallacious conduct, that they considered to be a by-product of ignorance. Also stressed in the paper was an appeal made to black parents to be vigilant and adamant in their demands for a quality education for their children.<sup>56</sup>

The editors also mentioned that the journal would welcome the views of all those who cherished humankind. While Russwurm and Cornish

encouraged whites' financial and moral support for their endeavor, the former wrote, however, that:

we wish to plead our own case. Too long have others spoken for us. Too long has the public been deceived by misrepresentations in things which concern us dearly. . . . [However], there are many in society who exercise towards us benevolent feelings; still with sorrow we confess [that] there are others who make it their business to . . . discredit any person of color; and pronounce anathema as and denounce all [blacks] for the misconducts of the quality ones. We are aware that there are many instances of vice among us, but we avow that it is because no one has taught . . . [them] virtue; [and] . . . because no . . . effort [has] been made to teach them how . . . to secure [for] themselves comfort.<sup>57</sup>

Russwurm accentuated that "the civil rights of a people being of the greatest value, it shall ever be our duty to vindicate our brethren when oppressed. . . ." He further stated that he and Cornish would employ the *Freedom's Journal* to expose the inequities that characterized the black community. The above quotations and statement are obviously examples of Russwurm's expressions of Black Nationalism, a sentiment that was precipitated and informed by what he described as dreadful experiences of blacks in America.<sup>58</sup>

Russwurm continued to express what his proto-Black Nationalism was, and protested against the different forms of injustice blacks experienced while maintaining that he was touched by the argument put forward by whites that blacks were responsible for their own problems, which included their powerlessness, social degradation, or impoverishment. Against this background, he declared that blacks should work together to determine their own destiny. He reemphasized that the main role of the *Freedom's Journal* was to enhance the liberation of blacks. To this end, he called upon the few blacks who had been given the franchise to use this power to facilitate and reinforce the social and political struggle for the liberation of blacks. He reminded the franchised blacks to not allow any political groups to use them as tools. Russwurm and Cornish had declared that the journal was a divine undertaking to improve the ethical, political, and literary conditions of blacks. They also expressed a black racial pride when they objected to the statement made by white clergymen such as Bishop William Meade of the Episcopal Church, Dr. John Oakley Lettlesom, a Quaker, and others that all well-behaved

blacks in the secular world would become white people in heaven. The two black editors implied that the statement was contrary to the view that every race was equal before God.<sup>59</sup>

Russwurm conveyed not only elements of Black Nationalism; he did invoke, moreover, aspects of Pan-Africanism through the *Freedom's Journal*. For example, the favorable descriptions of the relationship that existed between West and North Africa by Hughes Clapperton and D. Denham, two British explorers were, for example, recorded in the *Freedom's Journal*, by him. Thus, the death of Clapperton in Sokoto on April 12, 1827 brought by his assistant, Richard Lander, to Russwurm's attention was also published in the journal. Reports by Rene Caille, a famous French explorer, on West Africa that were published by the Geographical Society of Paris, and then reprinted in the *Gazette de France*, were reproduced in the journal. The reports covered in detail the extensive commercial activities of the people of Northwest and West African cities and towns of Rabat, Fez, Sasanding, El Arawan, Mequinez, Jenne, Timbuktu, Yamina, Teligna, Tangir, and Tolon.<sup>60</sup>

Russwurm further noted in the *Freedom's Journal* on September 12, 1827 a humiliating experience of an unnamed West African chief. The chief, a brother of King Yaradee of Solimas, a place located in the area that became part of Sierra Leone, is said to have been captured, undressed, chained, and put on a slave vessel that was destined for America. The chief's ordeals had been published in the *African Repository*, the official newspaper of the American Colonization Society. Russwurm made known that every estimable information and portrayal of Africa would "find ready admission in the *Freedom's Journal*." He further declared that "as [Africa] becomes daily more known, many things will come to light proving that its natives are neither so ignorant nor stupid as they have generally supposed to be."<sup>61</sup>

Hence, a musical praise by Bostonian blacks of Abul Rahhahman, a Muslim who had been freed by his Mississippian owner, Thomas Foster, under the premise that he would settle in Liberia, was published in the journal. The song also glorified Africa, thus:

All hail to the Chief from Old Africa's shore;  
Whose forty year's bondage has had to be deplored;  
He does us the honour to come to our mess;  
We greet him with welcome, and wish him with success. . . .  
Huzza for the Chieftain—Huzza for the Chief—Huzza for the  
Chief from old Africa's shore.<sup>62</sup>

Also reproduced partially in the journal was an essay that had been written about the tragic experiences of two very light-skinned black Jamaican girls. They were said to have been sold on an auction block after the death of their white father. The reprinting of the event in the *Freedom's Journal* was, perhaps influenced by the fact that Russwurm's mixed racial and Jamaican backgrounds were the same as those of the two young women, and besides, it was in line with what was apparently his Pan-African sentiment, a sentiment that was committed to addressing the issues of black people everywhere.<sup>63</sup> He again expressed a Pan-African feeling when he saluted the successful blacks' revolution led by their leader, Toussaint L'ouverture, against the French in Haiti in 1791, thus:

Empires rise, and fall, flourish, and decay. Knowledge follows revolutions and travels over the globe. Man alone, remains the same being, whether placed under the torrid suns of Africa or in the more congenial temperate zone. . . . Among the many interesting events of the present day, and illustrative of this, is the Revolution in Hayti holds a conspicuous place. The former political condition of Hayti we all doubtless know. After years of sanguinary struggle for freedom and a political existence, the Haytiens on the auspicious day of January first 1804 declared themselves a free and independent nation. Nothing can ever induce them to recede from this declaration. They know too well by their past misfortunes; by their wounds which are yet bleeding, that security can be expected only from within them. Rather would they devote themselves to death than return to their former conditions? Can we conceive of anything which can cheer the desponding spirit, can reanimate and stimulate it to put every thing to the hazards? Liberty can do this. Such were its effects upon the Haytiens—men who in slavery showed neither spirit nor genius; but when Liberty, when once Freedom struck their astonished ears, they became new creatures: stepped forth as men, and showed to the world, that though Slavery may benumb, it cannot entirely destroy our faculties. . . . The Haytiens have adopted the republican form government: and so firmly is it established, that in no country are the rights and privilege of citizens and foreigners more respected, and crimes less frequent. They are a brave and generous people. . . . May we not indulge in the pleasing hope that the Independence of Hayti has laid the foundation of an Empire that will take rank with the nations of the earth . . . ? We look forward to the period when . . . Hayti trading in the footsteps of her sister republics, shall . . . exhibit a picture of rapid and unprecedented advance in population, wealth and intelligence.<sup>64</sup>



Indeed, Russwurm's vindication of the means employed by L'Ouverture and his people in their war for independence was nearly similar to the declaration that a superior force was occasionally needed to countermine oppression that was stressed by such future Black Nationalists and Pan-Africanists as Frantz Fanon, Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, and Malcolm X. Russwurm had maintained that if the Haitian revolutionists had exercised ruthlessness, it might have been a needed superior counterresponse to the cruelty of the French. He told his audience at Bowdoin College in 1826 that the Haitians failed to reckon with the French because the latter treated them like brutes. Russwurm further stressed the points that: "[it] is an undisputed fact that more than sixteen thousand Haytiens perished" as a direct result of the draconian policy of the French; and added that the "cruelties inflicted by the French on the children of Hayti . . . exceeded the crimes [perpetrated against American Indians by] Hernando Cortes and Francisco Pizarro," two Spanish warriors who served in Mexico and Peru respectively in the early sixteenth century. He rhetorically asked the question whether any group could have exercised humbleness "toward such a danger?"<sup>65</sup>

Russwurm expressed, moreover, a Pan-African view when he declared that: "we are always rejoiced to hear of the welfare of our brethren in all quarters of the globe, and we can assure our readers that though we are opposed to the plan of the American Colonization Society in life." He articulated such a sentiment again when he wished, that 200 African Americans sailing to Liberia on the *Harriet* have a secure voyage to the "fatherland." He added that information he had received from Liberia indicated that the black settlers there, including the ones who were in transit, were people of "superior character and education." He further stressed that the settling of people of such caliber in Liberia would enhance the honorableness of the colony, and in addition, would persuade many blacks and whites in America to support the ACS colonization scheme in West Africa. Thus, he maintained that the American general public was already becoming receptive to the idea of sending blacks to Liberia because the history of the colony "presents no parallel of a similar enterprise having succeeded so well, and in so short a period."<sup>66</sup>

Although he did belligerently address the issues of blacks in the United States and elsewhere from 1826 to 1828, Russwurm's later approaches to such issues would be described, especially beginning from 1829 and onward, as cautious or conservative rather than radical as those of his contemporaries such as David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet, Samuel Cornish, James Forten, and Martin Delany.<sup>67</sup> Russwurm's statement that, "We wish to conciliate all and to irritate none; yet we must be firm

and unwavering in our principles and persevering in our efforts” bears testimony to his moderate approach to the problems blacks faced in America.<sup>68</sup>

As examined in the next chapter, Russwurm was, however, to waver, at the expense of his opposition, to the movement designed to colonize blacks outside America. Russwurm’s later vacillation can be better understood in relation to his early accommodation and alienation that have been discussed in this chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

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### *Russwurm, the Colonizationist, and the Anti-Colonizationists in America*

Russwurm had sought refuge in the black community in New York City, partly because he believed that it was the best place to fight against American institutional racism that was increasingly becoming national, and affecting nearly every aspect of the lives of blacks. As illustrated, the war against American racism was waged through the *Freedom's Journal*. Essays written or sermons or speeches presented against the oppression of blacks were usually published in the journal.<sup>1</sup> The release of the *Freedom's Journal* did not, however, ease the unjust treatments of blacks; in reality, it was reinforced from the 1820s to the beginning of the American Civil War in 1861.<sup>2</sup>

The reinforcement of the oppression of blacks was among the reasons why Russwurm decided to support the ACS, the organization that had established the colony of Liberia on the coast of West Africa in 1822. As mentioned earlier, Russwurm had displayed interest in settling in Haiti after his studies at Bowdoin College in 1826. He gave this up, however, in favor of the position of other black leaders such as William Watkins, Bishop Richard Allen, and others who believed that blacks should remain in America and fight for their rightful place. But Russwurm vacillated between staying in America to continue with the struggle for blacks' civil rights and moving to a foreign land. He evinced this view on June 8, 1827, thus:

We have never desired to conceal our sentiments. In soliciting patronage for our Journal among colonizationists, we expressed ourselves to many of them as opposed to colonization in any shape,

unless it can be merely considered as a missionary establishment; yet, if we were wrong our minds were opened to conviction.<sup>3</sup>

In response to a recruiting letter written to him by Ralph R. Gurley, who served as secretary of the ACS for about fifty years, Russwurm maintained that while it was not presently wise for him to be a colonizationist, he considered “with high sense the liberal offer” made to him by the ACS.<sup>4</sup>

Russwurm’s pro-colonization position was increasingly becoming public as is illustrated by his subsequent notification: “Wanted immediately! Thirty able-bodied men well acquainted with farming to go out to Hayti as cultivators.” He made known in the *Freedom’s Journal* early in 1828 that there was a need for a discussion about the ACS West African colonization scheme. Indeed, Russwurm who had adamantly opposed the colonization of African Americans in Liberia decided to support this scheme in 1829. He pointed out that the oppression of blacks in America and the promotion of Western civilization and Christianity in Africa were the main reasons for his new pro-American Colonization Society’s position. He told his audience that it took him about seven days to reach the conclusion that the colonization of African Americans in Liberia was the best solution to the problems of blacks. Russwurm noted that most ordinary African Americans did not support the ACS because of the subsequent reasons, thus:

Of late, we have thought that the principle objections, which the mass of our brethren have against colonization, arise from ignorance of the designs and progress of the Society. We confess, that we have hitherto viewed the members of the society with jealousy—to all their labors, we have imputed wrong motives—but are we, the only ones who have formed our opinions after this manner? Is it not the imperious duty of every man of colour to ask himself candidly have I not passed a like judgment—has not prejudice been the only organ through which I have viewed the labours of these disinterested men, who have toiled in our behalf for years . . . ? The society has met with much opposition from us, but the mist which completely darkened our vision, having been dispelled, we now stand before the community a feeble advocate of the society. . . . It cannot be denied that our brethren mostly believe that Southern interest completely guide the plans of the society—that all its movements tend to fetter more closely the chains of the enslaved—and that removal of the free from among [the] slaves is the ultimatum of

[its] wishes. And further, so ignorant are many our people that they are even afraid to trust themselves under the protection of the society, from fear of being carried into foreign lands, and sold into bondage. We have also wrong ideas upon what the society has reflected and what [it is] now doing on our behalf. Everyone who will give these objections the last examination, will perceive, that to answer them, the society need, but point to flourishing colony of Liberia, as an unanswerable argument in its favor, against all that can be brought against it. . . . We ask every man of colour can any thing be more simple; here is a land in which we cannot enjoy the privileges of citizen, for certain reasons known and felt daily; there is one we may enjoy all rights of freemen; where every thing will tend to call forth our best and most generous feelings—in a word, we may also act as such. Can any man of sound judgment hesitate about the choice of the two? We do expect that all will embrace the society's offer, as there are thousands whose course of life is a complete barrier against acceptance; and there are also thousands the extent of whose wishes have never dreamed of state, where the man of colour may not only act and feel as other responsible being, but where all energies of his mind impelled by the most powerful motives, will put forth their best, and astonish the most prejudiced. The society have done in favor of emancipation; for it is a fact that there are many in the colony who are indebted for that liberty which they now enjoy to the door which the establishment offers to liberal and humane slave holders to emancipate their slaves—nor is this all, as we well know, there are four or five hundred slaves now waiting [from want of funds] to be landed on the shores of Liberia, to become freemen. As the work emancipation has thus commenced under the immediate auspices of the society, we cannot consider it out of the natural course of things to conclude that as the means and patronage of the society extend, this great and glorious work will also advance in the same ratio until the blessed period come so ardently desired by the Friends when the soil of this tears of [Africa's] sons and daughters.<sup>5</sup>

To the blacks who strongly disliked the ACS and who demanded that no black should identify with that body, Russwurm declared that people, especially blacks in America should give other blacks the right to press out their respective views, since according to him; this had been denied to them as a group by whites. To chastise the black leaders who strongly opposed his new pro-colonization position, and who charged that he only superficially treated Africa in the paper, Russwurm maintained

that “our course has always been an independent one; we [will] not be dictated to by certain professor, and we are sure that he [will] not bear from others. . . . In literature as in politics we wish for no king or dictator.”<sup>6</sup> He further responded to the mentioned criticisms, thus:

We wish to claim no more than what has really emanated from our pen, and to put an end to all doubts about the matter, we intend publishing a list of contributors to our columns at the close of our labours; when no doubt, many who now wear borrowed plumes, will appear in their true feathers. There is nothing like truth; it will bear its due weight, when the airy whispering of A. B. C. sink into merited oblivion. We know not who A. B. C. are, nor do we care; our only hope is, that these gents, will undertake the publication of a paper for the edification of enlightened brethren. After its appearance, from its original matter, no doubt, vice will disappear, and will ignorance hide its unfashionable head from among our community.<sup>7</sup>

Again, Russwurm justified his pro-colonization position by pointing out that a large settlement of African Americans in West Africa would help to heighten the dissemination of civilization and Christianity “throughout [the] vast continent of Africa.”<sup>8</sup>

Russwurm also provided other justifications for his pro-colonization stand. He argued that blacks could accomplish their objectives of accumulating wealth and winning respectability if they went to Liberia, because he believed that the Liberian colony had the necessary political and social environments for the achievement of these goals. Russwurm reminded his black listeners that American racism had closed nearly every avenue to their attempts at self-improvement; and unless they changed their “Ethiopian Complexion,” which he believed was impossible to accomplish, their social, political, and material conditions in America would remain the same. He further maintained that even the blacks who owned some property and were well learned like himself were still treated as members of the inferior social order by white Americans, and that the potential of blacks would never be fully realized in America.<sup>9</sup>

It is no wonder that, Russwurm decided to reinforce his commitment to the ACS. Leading white colonizationists such as Rev. Robert Finley, Bishop William Meade, John Randolph, Francis Scott Key, Henry Clay, Bushrod Washington, Ralph Gurley, and General Andrew Jackson, Russwurm lectured to blacks about the benefits of identifying with the ACS. He had suggested in the *Freedom's Journal*, on December 12, 1828, that

Thomas Jefferson's agrarian doctrine that poor whites, especially in the Antebellum South, would become useful or virtuous citizens if they became cultivators of their own farmlands, and would work well for the common blacks who had sailed to Liberia. He added that Jefferson's idea should be stressed in a way to encourage the migration of black Americans to the West African settlement.<sup>10</sup>

Also printed in the journal were the reactions to the view expressed by some Southern slaveholders that they would emancipate their slaves if they were removed from America. The reactions to the mentioned view that Russwurm published in the journal, seem to further illustrate his increasing pro-colonization position, thus:

The people of the Northern states have professed to feel a great interest in the emancipation and colonization of the Southern slaves. [Northerners] have often blamed the slave holders. Now is the time to test these professions. The Southern people seem to be saying, we will free our slaves if anybody will take them. . . . Shall not the offer be accepted? If not, we must cease to blame them. The Northern people have shared in the guilt of [the] . . . introduction of [slavery] in this country. They still share the curse, and [will] . . . continue to do so unless they share in its removal.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, in 1829 Russwurm told blacks in New York City that he was proud to tell them and blacks elsewhere that he had embraced not only the ACS, but he was also appealing to them to support his position by emigrating to Liberia that had been established by that body on the West African coast.<sup>12</sup> Again, he highlighted that only in Liberia could black people be in a situation to determine their own destiny. Russwurm repeated the emphasis of the leading white colonizationists when he declared that universal emancipation could only be made possible in America if the blacks who were already freed could move to Liberia. He also cautioned blacks that although they had not yet passed laws forbidding the newly emancipated blacks from moving in "their limits," the non-slaveholding states would pass such laws once a large number of blacks began to move to these states.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps, as a result of his interracial black background, Russwurm declared that any attempt at mass racial amalgamation would be strongly opposed by whites, and even if such an initiative were to be carried out, it would not improve the conditions of the offspring since, according to him, the members of this social group would still be considered and treated as blacks.<sup>14</sup> Against this background, Russwurm would reemphasize

what he considered to be the disadvantages of blacks staying in America, and the benefits of their settling in West Africa. He maintained, thus:

the disadvantages under which we at present labour, can any consider it a mark of folly, for us to cast our eyes upon some portion of the globe where all these inconveniences are removed—where the Man of colour freed from the fetters and prejudice and degradation, under which he labours in this land, may walk forth in all majesty of his creation—a Free Man!<sup>15</sup>

Being influenced, obviously by the accounts of West Africa provided by James Yeo, a strong proponent of the ACS, Russwurm declared that it was evident that the traditional West Africans behaved like truly free people, which according to him was contrary to the behaviors of their descendants in America and the West Indies.<sup>16</sup> To this end, Russwurm reminded blacks in America that they would gain everything if they went to Liberia, and would have nothing to lose but their perpetual powerlessness, alienation, and subjugation which they would experience if they stayed back.<sup>17</sup>

Although they were in agreement with Russwurm concerning the deteriorating conditions of blacks in America, black leaders adamantly opposed his colonization solution to the problems. Indeed, blacks had opposed the establishment of the ACS on December 21, 1816 and its reorganization in Washington, DC in 1817.<sup>18</sup>

For example, the free blacks of Richmond declared on January 24, 1817, that they were not interested in the ACS plan to send blacks to a foreign land. They also sent resolutions to government agencies, churches, and antislavery organizations to show their disapproval of the ACS. The resolutions were signed by William Bowler and Lentey Crow, the leaders of the free black community in Richmond.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, black leadership occasionally referred to the ACS as “hydra-headed monster of prejudice and hatred.”<sup>20</sup> David Walker, a militant black abolitionist and nationalist and other black leaders had argued, for instance, that the move by the ACS to colonize blacks in West Africa “violated the professed American principles; it sought to stigmatize the free Negro population, and it countenanced the perpetuation of human bondage. . . .”<sup>21</sup>

Early black supporters of the ACS such as Lott Carey, Elijah Johnson, Samuel Wilson, Perry Lockes, Thomas Camaraw, Nathaniel Peck, Nathaniel Brandier, and Edward Wigfall who were also among the first group of blacks to sail from the harbor of New York City in 1821 for what came to be known as Liberia in 1822, were described by opponents of the ACS as “opportunists and few unhappy strangers among the free



blacks.”<sup>22</sup> Other black leaders agreed with the statement of William Lloyd Garrison and Gerrit Smith, two white radical abolitionists, that the main objective of the ACS was to perpetuate slavery by removing the free blacks who were considered the natural allies of the enslaved blacks.<sup>23</sup>

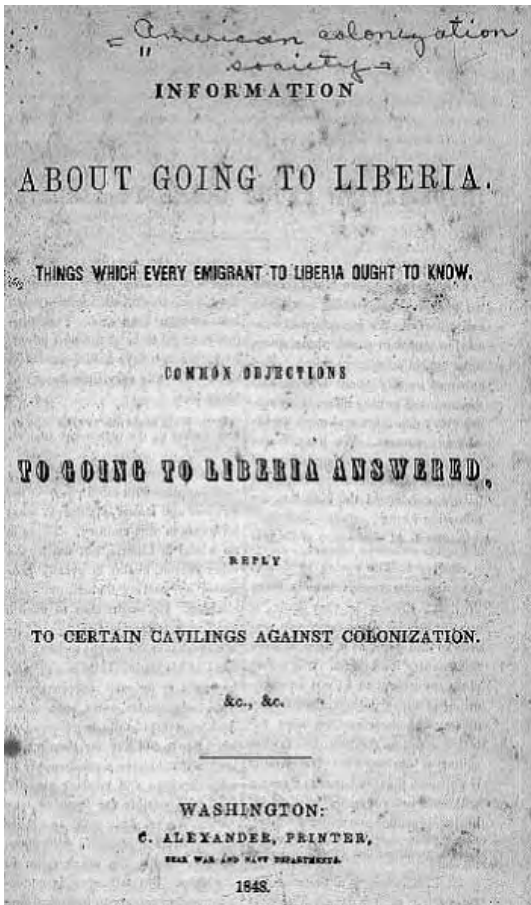
Under the sponsorship of Bishop Richard Allen of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC), and James Forten, another black leader, some three thousand blacks met in the Bethel Church in Philadelphia on August 10, 1817 to register their opposition to the ACS. Forten, who chaired the gathering, maintained that there was not a single black in the group who supported the ACS. In fact, the consensus at the conference was that any attempt to remove blacks from America would be inhuman and against the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights.<sup>24</sup>

Black Philadelphians declared that they would never abandon their enslaved brothers and sisters for some financial advantages (see figure 2.1). They established a committee with the main task of coordinating every effort to oppose the ACS. The committee members included prominent blacks like Bishop Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, John Gloucester, Robert Douglass, Robert Gordon Sr., John Summersett, and Russell Parrott.<sup>25</sup>

Anti-ACS organizations were also evident in New York City, Pittsburgh, Boston, New Haven, and other cities and towns. During the gatherings of these organizations, blacks re-emphasized that their “ancestors . . . were the first successful cultivators of the wilds of America . . . , and [they, their] descendants [were, therefore,] entitled to participate in the blessings of her luxuriant soil.” At other events, blacks declared that “America was their country and beneath its soil lay the bones of [their] fathers and [mothers]; for it, some of them fought, bled, and died. Here [they] were born, and here [they] will die.”<sup>26</sup>

Blacks also questioned the motives of the ACS leaders. William Watkins, a Philadelphian prominent black, who was also instrumental in turning William Lloyd Garrison against the ACS, argued how leading slave holders such as Henry Clay and Bushrod Washington could promote the interests of free blacks when in fact all their public statements about them had been designed to reinforce their degradation, alienation, and powerlessness. To substantiate his argument, Watkins cited segments of pro-slavery and antiblack speeches that had been presented by Clay, Washington, and other leading members of the ACS. He further maintained, thus:

by draining the people of color from this their original and only home; notwithstanding, the many hyperbolic accounts which they assiduously circulate about that pestiferous clime. I never felt so indignant at any of their maneuvers for every step they take to facilitate



**Figure 2.1** A pamphlet written by the American Colonization Society to counteract black and white abolitionists' charge against that body that its main objective was to perpetuate slavery by colonizing free blacks who were considered to be the natural allies of the ones who were enslaved, in foreign land. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

their plan, tends but to expose inconsistency as at a piece of composition which appeared in the twelfth number *Liberia Herald* written by its editor, John B. Russwurm. This John B. Russwurm is known, I presume, to every one of us; his ingratitude is but too deeply stamped on the minds of many, who have been requited in a manner, which time not will space ever obliterate. After he subverted the pledge he made to his colored brethren, he left to our satisfaction, his

country—suffused with shame—and branded with the present by Clay, Washington, and other leading members of the ACS.<sup>27</sup>

Reverend Nathaniel Paul, a leading black abolitionist described the motives of the ACS and its supporters as delusive and preposterous, and added that pro-slavery intellectuals, politicians, and religious leaders controlled the ACS. Cornish who had been a coeditor of the *Freedom's Journal* wrote in his newly released paper, *The Rights of All*, that prominent members of the ACS who included Clay, Washington, and Key were using the ACS as a tool to win the endorsements of the new political and social groups such as the Free-Soilers, Know-Nothings, Democrats, and the Republicans in the late 1820s and 1830s. In reflecting upon the feelings of blacks toward the ACS, an unidentified black told Clay that there was not one black in ten thousand who desired to settle in Africa, and that the attempt on the part of the ACS leadership to lobby the U.S. Congress on behalf of its colonization scheme was absolutely and morally wrong.<sup>28</sup>

Similar arguments used against the ACS and its leaders were employed against Russwurm. The criticisms levied against Russwurm were, however, harsher than the ones used against white colonizationists, because blacks feared that his pro-colonization position would not only undermine their strong opposition to the ACS, but would also broaden the base of support for that body. Against this background, Russwurm was portrayed as a traitor by blacks. They also maintained that his defection would boost the interests of ACS that had long planned to destroy the racial solidarity, consciousness, and unity the *Freedom's Journal* was trying to promote among blacks. They reemphasized that the ACS had corrupted and bribed Russwurm for the sole purpose of having him to carry out an “unholy and treacherous act” of betraying blacks. Indeed, blacks in Philadelphia decided to burn Russwurm’s effigy immediately after he declared his intention to permanently settle in Liberia in 1829.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the attacks, Russwurm continued to defend his support for the ACS. Hence, he decided to resign as a coeditor of *Freedom's Journal* on March 28, 1829, obviously as a result of the protests against his pro-colonization position. Russwurm described his resignation and the finances of the journal in these words:

As this now concludes the second volume, and is also the termination of our labours, we hope subscribers, who are in arrears, will see the necessity, of immediately balancing their accounts. The money, in all cases may be sent by mail. Our agents in different places will accept

our feeble thanks for their exertions on behalf of the Freedom's Journal.<sup>30</sup>

This was followed by his emigration to Liberia on the vessel, *Susan*, in 1829. Russwurm, again, highlighted his reasons for leaving America for Liberia immediately following his arrival to the latter, thus:

It is with much pleasure that we have witnessed the daily spreading of the cause of colonization. Our brethren of colors are beginning to view it in more favorable light. And though, a few of them, misled themselves, have endeavored to mislead the ignorant to [move] to Canada. Do not the resolutions of Upper Canada speak volumes? Are they not viewed as intruders? Will not the arbitrary laws, or rather prejudices which have been raised in Ohio, be planted and matured in Canada? It required no prophetic eyes to foresee, that to them and their posterity there is no abiding place on the other side of the Atlantic. Canada will hardly afford them a temporary shelter, against the bleak winds of winter. Before God, we know no other home for the man of color, of republican principles, than Africa.<sup>31</sup>

Russwurm's emigration to the Liberian colony reinforced the already strong resentment of blacks toward him. One Philadelphian black critic maintained, that the positive images that had been portrayed of Liberia by white colonizationists were nothing but gross exaggeration, and that Russwurm, as a tool of the ACS, was promoting these misleading views through the *Liberia Herald*, a newly published journal in Monrovia, Liberia for which he had been appointed by the ACS to be its editor. Russwurm was also pictured as a man who had done great damage to blacks in such a way that, "neither time nor space will ever obliterate."<sup>32</sup> Another black portrayed the subsequent views of Russwurm and the ACS, thus:

When Mr. Russwurm was employed in the editorial department of the Freedom's Journal, and paid for services which were not rendered, he was much opposed to the colonizing of free people of color in Africa as I am; but when his patrons failed to support the Journal . . . [He] converted the people's paper to the use of the Colonization Society, by which change he worked himself into their employ; and you now have evidence of his faithful performance to his worthy employers.<sup>33</sup>

In response to Russwurm's argument that blacks had no home but Africa, a Philadelphian black, known in surviving records only as C.D.T.,

asked this question: "would have Mr. Russwurm gone to Africa even for a visit had he been in flourishing circumstance in America?" Assuming very well that the answer from his listeners would be no, C.D.T. maintained that Russwurm went to Africa as a result of economic necessity, and not to promote civilization or Christianity as he and the ACS emphasized.<sup>34</sup>

Cornish, a former strong supporter of Russwurm, became one of his chief critics and the ACS. He declared that although Russwurm and prominent members of the ACS wished to deny blacks the right to be American citizens, Cornish emphasized that they would never succeed in such an attempt, and that blacks were in America to stay. To this end, he reiterated that "let there be no compromise, but as though born free and equal, let us content for all the rights guaranteed to us by the constitution of our native country."<sup>35</sup>

The denunciations of Russwurm and the ACS by the anti-colonizationists increasingly became blistering following his departure from America for Liberia in 1829. The subsequent pronouncements, probably by James Fortune or by C.D.T., bear witness to the mentioned statement, thus:

Stigma of disgrace—to dwells in that land for which the tempter money caused him to avow his preferment. He has resided there more than a year, publishing doubtless to the satisfaction of his supporters, their many glorious schemes and eulogizing to the skies the prosperity of his goodly Liberia. Not contented with lauding the retreat in which and about he may flame with impunity, he has the audacity to reprove those with whom he played the traitor. Out of much he said, let this suffice as an example: before God, we know of no other home for the man of color, of republican principles, than Africa. Has he no ambition? Is he dead to everything noble? Is he contented with his condition? Let he remain in America. To this we reply: that before God we of no surer burial place than Africa, for the men of any color; that we will never envy John B. Brown Russwurm's ambition; and that we will pray to God that his notions of nobleness may never enter our hearts, and that we will not be contented with our conditions, but will make it better in this our native home.<sup>36</sup>

Blacks, especially the ones who were better-off, condemned Russwurm, because he supported not only the colonization of blacks in Africa, but his action also served as a reinforcer of the justifications employed to deny blacks their basic civil rights. The implication of Russwurm's action

that blacks were not only American citizens but would never be as such was more threatening to blacks.<sup>37</sup>

The action of Russwurm did not, however, deter blacks from their civil rights struggle in America. Indeed, they were to redouble their efforts in pursuit of the goal, especially in the 1830s. Again, for most black elites, the solution to the problems that the blacks were facing was to continue to invoke America's institutional values such as its Declaration of Independence, its Constitution, and its moral or religious principles.<sup>38</sup>

Russwurm, on the other hand, believed that this approach had previously failed blacks, and he saw no prospect of it ever working in America.<sup>39</sup> Russwurm like the white colonizationists, believed that the relocation of blacks to Liberia would help them to determine not only their own destiny, but it would also help to promote Western civilization among the traditional Africans of that region, thus bringing respectability to the black people in Africa and those in the American Diaspora.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Russwurm had provided in early 1829 what were obviously convincing and genuine reasons for his change of views to support the attempts of the ACS to settle African Americans, particularly in Liberia, thus:

Whatever may have been our opinions hitherto, concerning the plan of colonizing the free people of colour on the coast of Africa, all must sympathize with the friends of [the] cause. . . . As our former sentiments have always been in direct opposition to the plan colonizing us on the coast of Africa: perhaps, so favorable an opportunity may not occur, for us to inform our readers, in an open and candid manner, that our views are materially altered. We have always said, that when we are convinced of our error, we should hasten to acknowledge it—that period has arrived. The change which has taken place has not been the hasty conclusion of a moment: we have pondered much on this interesting subject, and read every article within our reach both for and against the society, and we come on from the examination, a decided supporter of the American Colonization Society. We know that in making this avowal, we advance doctrines in opposition to the majority of our readers, to many of whom we are personally known, and for whose opinions we still entertain great respect: but how unpopular so ever they may be, we know they are conscientious ones—formed from no sordid motives, but having for their basis, the good of our brethren. We have carefully examined the different plans now in operation for our benefit, and none we believe, can reach half so efficiently the mass, as the plan of colonization on the coast Africa; for if we take second look into any

or all of them, we find them limited to a single city or state. We consider it a mere waste of words to talk of ever enjoying citizenship in this country: it is utterly impossible in the nature of things: all therefore who pant for these, must cast their eyes elsewhere. The interesting query now arises, where shall we find this desirable spot? If we look to Europe, we find that quarter is already overburdened with a starving population; if to Asia, its distance is an insuperable barrier, were all other circumstances favorable. Where then shall we look so naturally, as to Africa? In preferring Liberia, we wish not to deprive any of the right of choice between it and Hayti; as it is not our objective to say . . . [that we are] against Hayti or the able ruler at its head; but it is a fact well known to all, that our people have strong objections against emigrating to that country, arising in many cases, from the unfavorable reports of those who have returned. Sensible of this fact then, of the unwillingness of our people to emigrate to Hayti; we feel it our duty, to their consideration, our present sentiments concerning African colonization; and perhaps what we may be able to offer hereafter, may be the means of enlightening some, whom it was our misfortune to have misled by our former opinions.<sup>41</sup>

Taking into consideration the arguments so far, it could reasonably be maintained that Russwurm's rationale for his solution to the problems faced by blacks in America contained elements of his brands of Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism or the high form of the former. Did he, however, put into practice his perceptions of the ideologies in question in Liberia and what became known as Maryland in Liberia? The following chapters examine this question.

## CHAPTER THREE

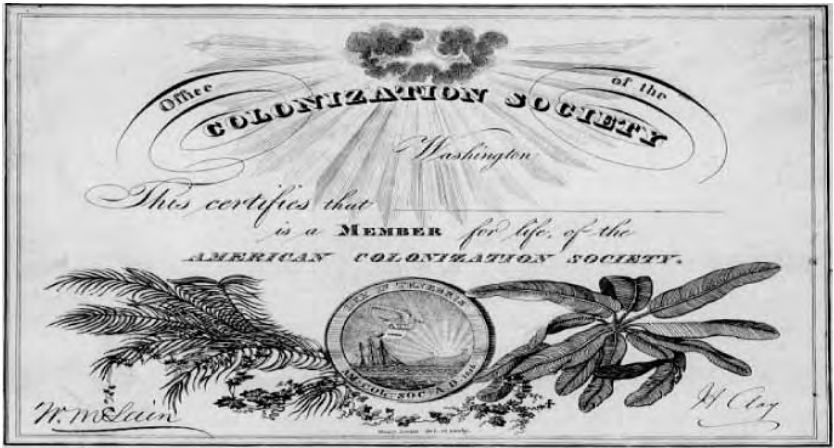
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### *The American Colonization Society Civilizing Mission in Liberia and John B. Russwurm, 1829–1836*

Russwurm's activities in Liberia can be better examined in the context of his American experiences together with the evolving Liberia's high moral rectitude in the early nineteenth century. Indeed, Liberia's developing institutional values and Russwurm's acquired rectitude accommodated each other easily, largely because they had a lot in common.

To test the mentioned proposition, it is necessary to examine what constituted Liberia's budding institutional arrangements in the early nineteenth century. The principles and norms that became part of Liberia's social and political traditions were introduced in the Liberian colony by the ACS through its white representatives in the early nineteenth century (see figure 3.1). The ideals included Liberia's paternalistic, religious, and centralized political orders. Their origins can be traced to the background of such prominent members of the ACS as Washington, Clay, John Randolph, Robert Finley, William Meade, John Taylor, Howard Smith, William Crawford, Andrew Jackson, Madison, John Mason, and many others. They had consciously or unconsciously passed these ideals on to the ACS, which in turn introduced them in Liberia through its representatives such as Dr. Eli Ayres, Jehudi Ashmun, Richard Randall, Joseph Mechlin, John Penney, Ezekiel Skinner, Anthony William, Thomas Buchanan, and Joseph J. Roberts. Indeed, the moral, religious, and social values of ACS' prominent members were the syntheses of contradictory components of American religious, humanitarian, paternalistic, racist, and other social systems in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup>





**Figure 3.1** Certificate for life membership of the American Colonization Society. The Certificate cost \$30.00 per copy. It shows the signature of William McClain and Henry Clay, two prominent members of the Colonization Society. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

The mentioned institutional values were informed by the American Revolutionary War's ideologies such as the Declaration of Independence, its national constitution developed in 1787 and ratified in 1788, and American virtuous republicanism and the different religious and social arguments used to justify the continuation of slavery by the very American Founding Fathers who had declared in 1776 that "all men are created equal."<sup>2</sup> John Adams, the second president of America was both right and wrong when he maintained that the American Revolution was "a conservative attempt to preserve the status quo" the British had introduced in colonial America.<sup>3</sup>

The mentioned view is wrong in the sense that the Revolutionary War did bring about such new major developments as America's independence, political democracy, and checks and balance systems. Nevertheless, the view is right in substance in that the new leaders of America continued to hold on to such institutions as slavery, racism, and other forms of black oppression that the British had introduced during the colonial era. Besides, although they introduced a constitutional document that was the most democratic record in the world in 1787, American new leaders' interpretations of that record denied the basic rights of most blacks, especially from 1800 to 1865. As noticed, the oppression of blacks was reinforced following the framing of the national constitution in 1787. This was

illustrated by the nationalization and recognition of slavery in 1793 and 1808 respectively by the new constitution.<sup>4</sup>

The reinforcement of slavery and other forms of black oppression, however, radically contradicted the democratic values that American leaders were trying to promote in the new country. It could, therefore, be maintained that the ACS, founded in 1816 and reorganized in Washington, DC in 1817, was partly an attempt at reckoning with the above contradictions by America's new generation of politicians, clergyman, and intellectuals.<sup>5</sup> Finley, a New Jersey Presbyterian clergyman, in proposing a colonization of blacks in Africa in his book, titled, *Thoughts on Colonization*, emphasized the "positive good pro-slavery" argument that was as old as the one that had been used to justify the transatlantic slave trade.<sup>6</sup> He maintained, for example, that since the free blacks were to a degree civilized, they would serve as prime agents for promoting civilization in "dark" Africa. The colonization of American blacks in Africa would then accomplish "a happy and progressive" end, and further, would get rid of slavery in America.<sup>7</sup> Clay, one of the leading sponsors of the ACS declared that although they were addicted to vices and had the potential of corrupting the slaves and poor whites, the free blacks, if they went to Africa, would promote "the holy cause of civilization, religion, and free institutions" in that continent.<sup>8</sup>

Aspects of the views held by the founders and prominent members of the ACS were expressed by Samuel Mills and Ebenezer Burgess, the two white Americans sent by the ACS to West Africa to locate a suitable place for the colonization of black Americans. Indeed, their descriptions of the Africans in Sierra Leone, a place that had been taken over by the British in 1787 for the resettlement of blacks from England, Nova Scotia, and Jamaica,<sup>9</sup> corresponded with the views of the prominent members of the ACS. Mills's declaration on March 20, 1818 near Freetown, the chief town of Sierra Leone, bears testimony to the foregoing statement, thus:

The altars on these hills which the natives have dedicated to the devils are falling before the temples of the living God like the image of Dagon before the Ark. The time is coming when the dwellers in these villages and on these mountains will sing hosannas to the sons of David. Distant tribes will learn their songs. Ethiopia will stretch forth her hands unto God and worship.<sup>10</sup>

While they praised almost everything in West Africa that reflected Western attributes, Mills and Burgess denounced every traditional value.

They portrayed traditional songs, for instance, as primitive and unvarying. Like most of the leading founders of the ACS, the two ACS envoys viewed blacks as children who needed the guidance and protection of whites. Mills's description of traditional West Africans in Sierra Leone as "children of large growth, and would . . . by temporary conformity, gradually wean them from their vicious customs" is an example of his paternalism.<sup>11</sup> Mills later described an African village as dispiriting. He added that the villagers were "idle, superstitious, self-indulgent and fond of ardent spirits." Obviously, Mills's poor depictions of the traditional West African people were among ACS', and later Russwurm's apologies for the civilizing efforts in West Africa.<sup>12</sup>

Although he died from fever on June 16, 1818 on board of a sailing ship just few miles from Freetown, Sierra Leone, Mills's reports together with those of Burgess concerning a possible site for the establishment of the anticipated colony were brought by the latter to the attention of the officials of the ACS in Washington, DC. The information provided by the two ACS envoys was, however, misleading; it was based on the insincere gestures of semi-Westernized African coastal traders including Yaltucker, Caulker, Fora, and John Kizell, an African American who had fought in the American Revolutionary War on the side of the British against the Americans. While they opposed the ACS' attempt to establish a permanent colony on the Sherbro Island, because they seemingly feared that this would undermine their commercial interests, the mentioned West African traders, nevertheless, recommended the island to the two emissaries for the proposed American colony.<sup>13</sup>

In fact, Kizell had earlier rhetorically evoked elements of Pan-Africanism that corresponded with the objective of the officials of the ACS. Kizell pointed out, for example, that Africa is owned by Africans in Diaspora and in Africa; and that blacks in America had not waived their right to inherit the land of their ancestors, because of their enslavement in America.<sup>14</sup> Kizell also religiously stressed his support for the colonization of black Americans in West Africa in a letter he wrote to Bushrod Washington, the President of the Board of Managers of the governing body of the ACS, thus:

Sir I desire to return to you and the Board of Managers of the Colonization Society my grateful thanks for the confidence you have reposed in me; I have received your letter and the people, [or the newly arrived black American emigrants]. . . Africa is wide and long; Africa is fertile and healthy; Africa . . . [cried] for her children; and will not be comforted till they come home. Send more, more. . . You must not mind the talk of those colored

people in your own country who opposed you. They are ignorant of our climate, soil, fruit, and cattle. It may be that they are wicked too; some of them . . . do not wish their Zion well. You must not listen to the words of those white persons who try to stop free people from coming over. . . . Let them come and sit down in our valleys, and on our hills, and near our rivers; and all the country will soon break forth into song. Sherbro country is full of meat, fish, bread, oil, and honey. Send us people to eat them. I can say in one word—God bids you, colonize. I know it is God's will. God has sent me here and set me down to make a place for my brethren. I say God will stand at your back and look over your shoulder and see that no ill comes in your path. Faith leads and helps. Farewell: I say, colonize.<sup>15</sup>

As noticed, the two Americans accepted the above rhetoric as Kizell's genuine commitment to the colonization of African Americans in Africa. It is no wonder that they decided to praise him, thus:

Mr. Kizell is a second Paul Cuffee. He has a good mind and considerable knowledge. His writings discover him to be a man of sense and worth. He has a good heart and no one . . . [is] more anxious for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the Africans, and their descendants [than him]. He has enlarge views [and he] believes with . . . confidence . . . [that] the time has arrived when the descendants of Africa abroad shall begin to return to their own country. His mind relies on the promises of God. Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God.<sup>16</sup>

Hence, Kizell's misleading statement that the chiefs around the Sherbro Island area had approved the establishment of the proposed American colony on the island was accepted at face value by Mills and Burgess. As already noted, the statement was passed on to the officials of ACS in Washington, DC.

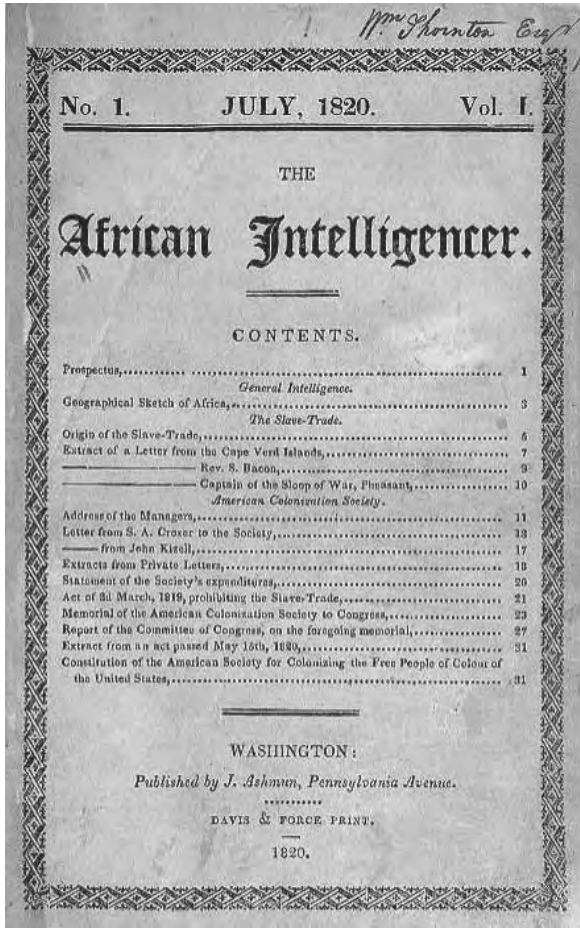
Against this background, the ACS decided to send some eighty-five African Americans on the ship, *Elizabeth*. The voyage that began at the harbor of New York on January 21, 1820 was led by Samuel Bacon, a white appointee of the U.S. Government. John Bankson and Samuel Crozier, who served as Bacon's assistants were also white. Eighty-four of the eighty-five blacks on the *Elizabeth* were freeborn, which illustrates that Liberia was established by mostly freeborn African Americans, and not by emancipated African Americans as many scholars and journalists

continue to allege. Hence, forty of the arriving emigrants came from New York; nine arrived from Virginia; thirty-three of them came from Pennsylvania; two members from the District of Columbia; and the rest came from unmentioned states. Forty members of the group knew how to read and write; and twenty-six members of their group were children. The *Elizabeth* arrived at Freetown, Sierra Leone on March 9. The ship later anchored near Campelar, a trade outpost that was owned by Kizell. Although he welcomed Bacon to his trade outpost, Kizell at the same time feared that the Americans' advent posed a strong potential threat to his commercial interests in or around Campelar and Sherbro Island. Accordingly, Kizell decided to turn wholeheartedly against his earlier reluctant commitment to the establishment of an American colony on the Sherbro Island. He successfully persuaded the Sherbro chiefs, for example, to reject the request by the Americans to establish a settlement in their area.<sup>17</sup>

Kizell's action together with the high death rate among the Americans would slow ACS' attempt to establish a settlement on the coast of West Africa. Around twenty-five of these blacks, including Eliphalet Newport, William Amey, William Butler, and Rueben B. Crook and their three white leaders died from malaria on the West African coast before the end of 1820. Against this background, that the sixty-three emigrants who had survived the malarial attack decided to return to Fourah Bay, near Freetown, Sierra Leone. They were led by Daniel Coker, an African American Methodist Episcopalian minister.<sup>18</sup>

These developments did not, however, stop the ACS colonization scheme (see figures 3.2 and 3.3). Indeed, another group of thirty-three blacks was sent aboard the vessel, *Nautilus* from America to the West African coast by the ACS on March 8, 1821. The group included thirty freeborn. Three members of the group had purchased their freedom; twenty-five of them from Virginia; and the rest from Maryland. Twenty of them knew how to read and write; thus, three members of the group were children. Ephraim Bacon, Jonathan B. Winn, Christian Wiltberger, and Joseph R. Andrus, who were white, had been appointed by the administration of President James Monroe and the ACS to lead the group. The *Nautilus* anchored at Fourah Bay, Sierra Leone with its crews on March 9, 1821. The arrival of the new group did, obviously, bolster the morale of the Americans who had retreated from the Sherbro Island to Fourah Bay.<sup>19</sup>

Against this backdrop, the two groups under the leadership of Bacon, Winn, Wiltberger, and Andrus were to start afresh in search of a suitable location for the establishment of the proposed colony. The American



**Figure 3.2** The ACS published *The African Intelligencer* in Washington, DC under the editorship of Jehudi Ashmun who later served as the Liberian Governor from 1822 to 1828. (Courtesy of the American Colonization Society Papers.)

emigrants arrived on March 27, 1821 at Cape Mount, a place that was almost equidistant from Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Cape Montserrado, the starting base of what would become Liberia. This was followed by an attempt by the Americans to win the affection of John Mills, a Westernized mulatto African who was engaged in the transatlantic slave trade in the Cape Mount area. Fearing that such a friendship would lead to the establishment of a permanent American settlement that was potentially



**Figure 3.3** A copy of the treaty allegedly signed between the American Colonization Society and the Cape Montserrado leaders. Captain Robert F. Stockton and Dr. Eli Ayres signed for the Americans. The traditional leaders who signed the deed included King Peter, George, Zoda, Long Peter, Jimmy, and Governor on December 5, 1821. (Courtesy of the *First Annual Report of the ACS* (1821), pp. 64–66.)

against the transatlantic slave trade, Mills together with his ally, a semi-Westernized African, showed no interest in such a relationship.<sup>20</sup>

Mills, therefore, decided to recommend the Americans to Cape Montserrado, a place that was several miles from Cape Mount. Consequently, the Americans continued to sail toward Cape Montserrado. They arrived near the Cape on December 12, 1821. This development was followed by their appeal to local Westernized and semi-Westernized African chiefs for a suitable land. The Montserrado chiefs' response to the request was similar to that of other coastal Westernized West African leaders such as

Kizell, Mills, and Jack Ben. Like them, the chiefs through their supreme leader, King Peter, showed no interest in offering land to the Americans. Although his justification was that if he offered land to the Americans his “women would cry aplenty,” King Peter’s refusal was apparently dictated by the fear that allowing a permanent American settlement would undermine his intermediary role between the Montserrado people and European merchants who frequented the area. Such a role that could be traced back to the beginning of the arrival of Europeans on the coast of West Africa in the early fifteenth century, served as a main source of power or status for nearly all the coastal elites.<sup>21</sup>

The unwillingness of King Peter and other Montserrado leaders to offer land to the Americans did not, however, deter them. As before, the position of the Americans was reinforced with the arrival of a new group of blacks from America in late 1821. They had been sent by the ACS on the vessel *Alligator*. The new group included thirty blacks and four whites. Dr. Eli Ayres, a white physician from Baltimore, Maryland served as the leader of the new arrivals.<sup>22</sup>

Also strengthening the position of the Americans on the coast of Cape Montserrado, was the arrival of an American war vessel that was captained by Robert Stockton, (figure 3.4), a veteran of the War of 1812 fought



**Figure 3.4** Captain Robert F. Stockton. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)



between America and Britain. Indeed, the Americans became increasingly self-confident as a result of the mentioned developments. Consequently, they demanded that King Peter meet their land needs. The manner in which the mandate was issued and King Peter's reaction to it was later described thus:

Stockton pulled out his pistol, cocked it and gave it to Ayres with the instruction to shoot if necessary. He then aimed another at King Peter's head. Having thus ensured an attentive audience, he lectures the . . . [Africans] on the advantages of a settlement.<sup>23</sup>

The described event forced King Peter and other semi-Westernized coastal traders to succumb to the Americans' demands. It is maintained that Cape Montserrado, the starting base of what became Liberia in 1822 was allegedly purchased with these products: "guns, gunpowder, beads, cloths, mirrors, food, and tobacco." The monetary value of these items was recorded to have been less than \$300.00.<sup>24</sup>

The purchase of Cape Montserrado, that was renamed Liberia, was followed by the establishment of Monrovia on April 28, 1822, the settlers' chief town, named after President James Monroe of America. The settlers had constructed about thirty houses before the end of 1822. Again, the settlers' resolve was reinforced with the arrival on August 8, 1822 of about thirty-six new emigrants aboard the vessel, the *Strong*. The new group was led by Jehudi Ashmun, a white from Champlain, New York.<sup>25</sup>

Despite these accomplishments, the settlers still faced many impending problems. In fact, the settlers, who numbered about sixty-five, were attacked on November 11, 1822 by about 800 local Africans under the leadership of King Peter and eight other semi-Westernized and self-proclaimed African leaders of the region. Although their number was larger than that of the settlers, the African attackers were defeated by the settlers. Ashmun described the defeat in these terms:

Imagination can scarcely figure to itself a throng of human beings in more capital state of exposure to the destructive power of the machinery of modern warfare! Eight hundred men were here pressed shoulder to shoulder in so compact a form that a child might easily walk upon their heads from one end of the mass to the other, presenting in their real breadth of rank equal to thirty men, and all exposed to guns of great power raised on a platform, at only thirty to sixty yards distance! Every shot literally spent its force on a solid mass of living flesh! Their fire suddenly terminated. A savage yell

was raised which filled the dismal forest with momentary horror. It gradually died away; and the whole host disappeared.<sup>26</sup>

Again, the settlers were attacked by the Africans on December 1, 1823. Nevertheless, like the outcome of the first war, the Africans were defeated in the second one. The settlers interpreted their victories over the Africans as triumphs over savagery or darkness by civilization or Christianity.<sup>27</sup> Such a view corresponded with ACS' declared desire to promote enlightenment, virtuous republicanism, and the gospel in West Africa. Against this background, Liberia's institutional development and the role of Russwurm in such a development can be understood.

The political and social arrangements that would be made institutional in Liberia by the ACS and such leading black settlers as Russwurm were already in the making on the *Elizabeth*, the ship that had been chartered by ACS to carry the first group of African Americans on the coast of West Africa. A contract called the *Elizabeth's Compact* was signed between the black emigrants and their white leaders on the *Elizabeth* on March 8, 1820. It was seemingly informed by comparable contract that had been signed between English Puritans and their leaders on the *Mayflower*, as the ship voyaged from England toward what would become known as Plymouth in North America in 1620. Like Puritans' contract, the black emigrants devised the following leadership commissions: Members of Council, Committee of Trade, Regulators of Public Acts, and Colonial Secretary. Unfortunately, except for the noted brief description of the contract that was drafted by Samuel Bacon on the *Elizabeth*, no further record of the compact or its text edition has been discovered so far.<sup>28</sup>

As discussed, aboard the *Elizabeth* were some eighty-five freeborn blacks. As a facet of paternalism that was employed by such ACS' prominent members as Clay and Washington in controlling their slaves in the Antebellum South, the black emigrants were led by three whites, despite the presence of qualified blacks such as Daniel Coker, Lott Carey, Samuel Wilson, and Perry Lockes to serve in such a capacity.<sup>29</sup>

Similar leadership was employed in the governing of the second, third, and the fourth groups of blacks sent from America to West Africa by the ACS between 1821 and 1822. As an aspect of the leadership, the Board of Managers, or the governing body of the ACS, whose members included Crawford, Clay, Mason, E. B. Caldwell, Key, had instructed Crozer and Bacon on December 10, 1819 to guide the blacks who would sail on the *Elizabeth* to the anticipated West African settlement in these terms:

There should not be a single member of the colony of proper age who should not be in a short be instructed to read, write, and learn

the common rules of arithmetic at least. Habits of industry should be particularly inculcated, and if necessary should be enforced by authority. No drones ought to be permitted to live among you. As far as your means and resources will permit, we wish you to aid the natives in procuring instructions in the elements of knowledge in agriculture and the arts of civilized life; and in the doctrines and precepts of Our Holy Religion. In doing this, however, you should particularly . . . use only persuasion and example. Compassion for their ignorance, tenderness to their foibles and, long established superstitions, mild persuasion and friendly solitudes for their welfare, and will prove your best and highest chain to their confidence and esteem and strongest hold on their affections.<sup>30</sup>

The mentioned quotation provides some ideas about the ACS civilizing objectives in its prospective West African settlement. Evidently, among the main goals of the ACS colonization scheme was the desire to promote American work ethics, religious, moral, social, and educational systems amid the black settlers and the traditional people of what would be Liberia. Nevertheless, ACS' white and black representatives in colonial Liberia would discourage nearly every conscious and unconscious move by the traditional Africans and the African American settlers to exchange cultural and social values. Such exchanges would have perceptibly led to the development of intermixed American and African high institutional values in colonial Liberia.

As illustrated later in this chapter and in chapter five, the moral, social, and the religious rectitude that the ACS and the MSCS subsequently advocated for the black settlers were assertively and inflexibly promoted by Russwurm in his capacities as an editor of the *Liberia Herald*, a superintendent of public schools, a colonial secretary, a member of the Colonial Assembly in Liberia, and as a governor of Maryland in Liberia. Further discussed in the mentioned chapters are Russwurm's manners of promoting American high moral and social uprightness, that seemingly set him apart from the other black elites in the two American settlements in West Africa.

Indeed, a new constitution that contained elements of American high values had been developed by the officials of the ACS in Washington, DC in 1820 for their anticipated West African colony. It would solidify the paternalistic and centralized leadership system that had been in the making on the vessel *Elizabeth*.

It placed the black emigrants in what would be Liberia under ACS' absolute control and its representatives in West Africa. The constitution

also stipulated that slavery and liquor would be barred in the prospected settlement. It, in fact covered every social, political, and religious aspect of the blacks who had settled in the proposed colony. This included the issuing of wills, holding of jury trials, the appropriations of land, commercial transactions, married relations, religious or moral requirements, and relationships between the settlers and traditional Africans. The constitution also specified that whites and missionaries could settle in the expected colony only if the ACS-appointed chief executive, later known as governor, approved their stay.<sup>31</sup>

The governor became the most powerful person in the Liberian colony. As a chief executive, he also served as a chief justice and supreme commander of the colonial militia. Although it allowed the establishment of a colonial assembly or legislature, and the election of candidates to that body through manhood suffrage, the constitution likewise empowered the governor to decide who would finally serve in that body. The governor would not only become the most politically powerful person in the colony, but he would also possess the best of everything. Governor Jehudi Ashmun (figure 3.5) who scholars have credited for the survival of the Liberian colony between 1822 and 1828, had the best house in the colony. The house was valued about \$7,500.00.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 3.5** Jehudi Ashmun. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Despite this power arrangement, Governor Ashmun continued to have a strong reservation about settlers' active involvement with the colonial leadership, because of his paternalistic assumption that they had not yet become virtuous. He was forced, however, to allow settlers' participation in running the affairs of the colony by the colonists and Gurley, the secretary of the ACS. Yet, Governor Ashmun's power remained supreme, and was further cemented by his authorization by the ACS to employ a special unit from the colonial militia for his personal security.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, the ACS-introduced centralized administrative system was well maintained in Liberia by all its later chief representatives including Agent Eli Ayres, Governors Ashmun, Meclin, Penney, Skinner, Williams, Buchanan, and Roberts, (figures 3.6, 3.7, and 3.8) the first full-time black governor who also became Liberia's first president after that country declared its independence in 1847. It is no wonder that most of these leaders were resented by the settlers. Agent Ayres was forced by the settlers to leave the colony in 1824. They disliked him for what they described as his arbitrary and unfair land distribution policy.<sup>34</sup>



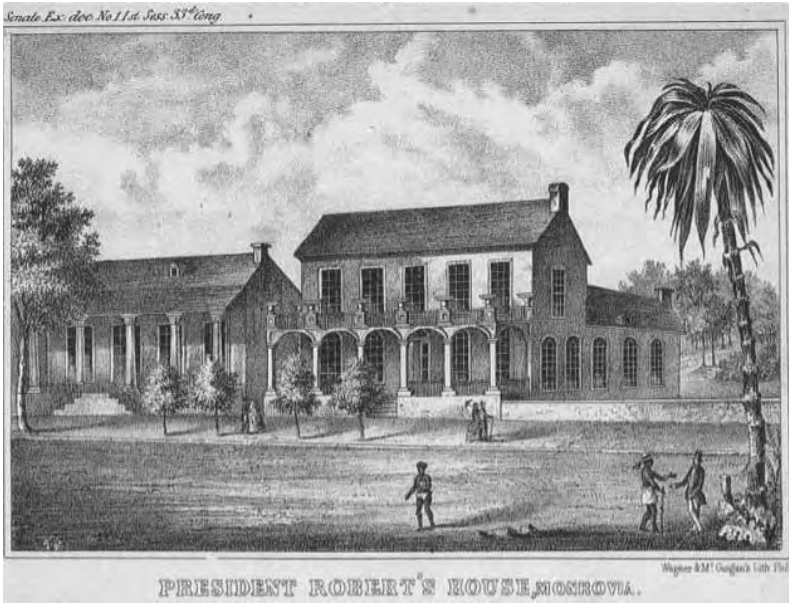
**Figure 3.6** Joseph Jenkins Roberts served as Liberia's first full-time black governor, 1841–1847. He also served as the first president of independent Liberia from 1847 to 1856. He again served in the foregoing capacity from 1872 to 1876. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)



**Figure 3.7** Jane Waring Roberts, the First Lady of Liberia. She married Joseph Jenkins Roberts in 1836, who later became Liberia's first president in 1847. She initiated a project that was designed to build a hospital in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia in 1887. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

The settlers also questioned and later, temporarily overthrew the leadership of Ashmun, the successor of Ayres. He was accused of corruption, favoritism, and dictatorial leadership. Ashmun had unsuccessfully tried to put a stop to the challenge posed to his leadership by invoking elements of the paternalism used to control blacks, poor whites, and yeoman in the Antebellum South. He told the settlers, for example, that:

there is a mutual contract . . . between the American Colonization Society and . . . you. . . . You swore to the Society that you would obey your government and not attempt to overthrow it. . . . Every blessing you have enjoyed in Africa, the security of your lives, property, and families is the consequence of this statutory arrangement by which an efficient government was constituted. . . . Some of your sufferings have resulted from your disrespect for your Agent. . . . I ask you to take no new oaths, to assume no new obligations; but here this hour in the presence of the God who has recorded your vows



**Figure 3.8** Home of Liberia's Chief Executive through the nineteenth century. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

in Heavens to recognize them and pledge yourselves to future observance of them.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the foregoing appeals by Ashmun, the settlers did expel him from the Liberian colony in 1823.<sup>36</sup> The ACS and the U.S. Navy, however, pressured the settlers to accept Ashmun as their leader immediately after he had been forced to leave Liberia for the Cape Verde Island.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, through amendments to the constitution of the colony by the ACS in 1825, the authority of Governor Ashmun was reinforced. Further, Ashmun's selective and paternalistic distribution of the supplies sent by the ACS to the colony not only enhanced his centralized leadership; but it also became an integral part of Liberia's political tradition that continues to the present.<sup>38</sup>

It is not surprising that Ashmun, like all the governors who succeeded him, continued to promote such leadership in the Liberian colony. Hence, as discussed in chapter five, Russwurm did paternalistically and selectively allocate lands put in his care by the MSCS in Maryland in Liberia.

This explains why the governors, who served in Liberia, like those who served in Maryland in Liberia, were fatherly perceived by a majority of the settlers. The subsequent descriptions of Governor Ashmun bear testimony to this statement, thus:

Mr. Ashmun stood among the colonists like a father in the midst of his children. Affection tempered his authority and respect dignified their obedience. His wisdom and firmness won their confidence, while his confidence in them increased as he beheld them inclined to instruction, and deriving profit from experience. The bond which so united him to this little community, was strengthened by the recollection of mutual cares, interests, sufferings, sympathies, and dangers. He had infused much of his own spirit into the minds of the settlers; and while he saw intelligence, industry, fortitude, and enterprise springing up vigorously around him, he saw also testified in gratitude beaming from many eyes, a conviction that, under providence, these virtues had been reared and fostered by the discipline of his hand and energy of his example.<sup>39</sup>

The above quotation and other explanations provided so far illustrate that the institutional values and norms of the leading members of the ACS, especially those of its Antebellum Southern prominent members, were not only ideologically introduced in the Liberian colony; they were also practically promoted by the chief representatives of that body prior to the arrival of Russwurm to the colony in 1829. Hence, as discussed later, Russwurm would help promote these values concretely and conceptually, especially their high ones in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia beginning 1829.

Another development that characterized Liberia's emerging political and social system could be traced to the background of the prominent members of the ACS. As it was in Antebellum South and even in the New England and North Eastern states, light-skinned black settlers in Liberia were more preferred than their dark-skinned counterparts. The antedating practice was a manifestation of prominent ACS members' racism, which stressed that anything closer to whites in appearance and in spirit was more appropriate than the one that was not.<sup>40</sup>

Against the above background, members of the light-skinned social group such as Coker, Samuel Wilson, Perry Lockes, Nathaniel Brander, Roberts, Russwurm, and Elijah Johnson would serve as a buffer between the white-led leadership and the dark-skinned blacks who constituted about ninety-eight percent of the settlers' population of 13,136 in 1862.





**Figure 3.9** Map of newly independent Liberia in 1847. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Russwurm served not only as a member of the Colonial Assembly, but he sufficed also as a secretary of the Liberian colony, the second most important position in the colony. The light-skinned blacks were the ones mostly elected to the Colonial Assembly. They also dominated commerce in colonial Liberia. It is no wonder that their social group, spearheaded by Joseph J. Roberts, inherited the white-dominated leadership in colonial Liberia in 1841. Their domination of Liberia's political and social arrangements was reinforced following the independence of Liberia in 1847 (figure 3.9), and it continued to 1869, when the dark-skinned black settlers, led by Wilmot Blyden and Edward J. Roye, won the presidential election in 1869.<sup>41</sup>

As discussed later, Russwurm, who had occasionally protested against American racial order in the *Freedom's Journal* from 1827 to 1829, failed to question similar order in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia from 1829 to his death in 1851. Like nearly all light-skinned blacks in nineteenth-century Liberia, Russwurm's refusal to challenge racism in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia, seemed to have been influenced by the fact that he was among the chief beneficiaries of such a system. It is no wonder that

Russwurm would suggest that light-skinned blacks in Maryland in Liberia should run the affairs of the settlement.

Below the light-skinned blacks, in social and political status, were the dark-skinned African American settlers who had some skills, education, or capital when they arrived to the Liberian colony. Several such members of a group as Lott Carey, Stephen A. Benson and Roye, who were among the most gifted in colonial Liberia, succeeded in climbing the social and political ladder to the top. Carey served, for example, as an educator, pastor, and part-time governor before Liberia became independent in 1847. He was the one who spearheaded the rebellion that temporarily removed Governor Ashmun from power in 1823. Benson (figures 3.10 and 3.11) who sailed to Liberia in 1822 won the presidency of that country in 1856. Roye became one of Liberia's leading merchants, and this would help him to capture the presidency in 1869 (figure 3.12). For the most part, however, members of the above social group served as school teachers, petite traders, and government bureaucrats.<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 3.10** Stephen Allen Benson, Liberia's second president, 1856–1864. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)



**Figure 3.11** Daniel Bashiel Warner, Liberia's third president, 1864–1868. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Lower in social status to the mentioned groups, were those settlers who arrived in Liberia with little education, skill, or material. Most of the settlers who came to Liberia before the arrival of Russwurm in that colony in 1829 were of this class. Some members of this group became subsistence farmers. This could be said about the sixty African Americans who had arrived in Liberia in 1826 from the lowlands of North Carolina. They settled along the St. Paul River, a place several miles from Monrovia, the chief town of the colony. They grew crops such as sugar cane, coffee, tobacco, rice, yam, cassava, and others.<sup>43</sup>

Among the few yeoman farmers who became successful planters and merchants in the colony was Harris Clarke, who came to Liberia from Petersburg, Virginia in 1824. He later organized what became known as the Agricultural Board of the colony. C. M. Waring, who started as a small farmer, also became one of the leading planters and pastors in the colony. Sarah Draper, a widow, who arrived in Liberia in June 1823 from Philadelphia with almost nothing, was among the settlers who became successful. She owned a beautiful house in Liberia in the early 1820s. She became the first woman in the Liberian colony to have a land deed



**Figure 3.12** Edward Roye was born on February 3, 1815 at Newark, Ohio. Following his study at Ohio University, he emigrated to Liberia in 1846 where he became a successful merchant, and then Liberia's fifth president from 1870 to 1871. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

in her name. Other successful settler farmers included L. Crook and A. Edmondson. They grew rice and indigo.<sup>44</sup>

Closer to the mentioned group in social standing were the recaptures or Africans who had been enslaved, but never experienced plantation slavery in the Americas. They had been set free by American war ships on the coast of America or at high seas, and were then taken to Liberia.<sup>45</sup> Like the African Americans who went to Liberia with almost nothing, most recaptures became petite farmers and traders, artisans, or craftsmen. The recaptures, whose population approximated at 5,722 before the beginning of the American Civil War in 1861, would later serve as a buffer between the African American settlers and the traditional people of the Liberian Colony.<sup>46</sup>

At the lowest end of colonial Liberia's social ladder were the traditional people of the region. Most of them did not become Liberian citizens until the twentieth century. Indeed, the views held of them by the African American settlers and the ACS white leaders were not any different from

the perceptions most whites held of blacks in America. They were portrayed, for example, as savages by the settlers and their leaders throughout the colonial period. The position of the ACS that the settlers and the traditional people should be kept apart was adhered to by settlers' leaders, especially during the colonial period. It is no wonder that most traditional people such as the Dei, Bassa, Gola, Kpelle, Kru, Vai, and others who lived near or among the American settlers were not politically and socially accommodated by them until the twentieth century. Although a few individuals from the listed ethnic groups became "civilized" and were socially and politically accepted by the Liberian settlers, such assimilated traditional Africans were required to abandon their traditions. Obviously, the noted requirement corresponded with the virtuous republicanism and the West African civilizing efforts of prominent white members of the ACS and their black supporters like Russwurm.<sup>47</sup>

Besides, the assimilated Africans were always reminded to conceal their traditional pasts and reflect their newly acquired settlers' ethics. This explains why assimilated Africans who including Gregory T. Bedell, Bede Wah, Thomas E. Beysolow, Thomas N. Lewis, Joseph Walter, Jacob B. Vonbrun, Plenyono Gbe Wolo, Boima Zinnah, and Henry Too Wesley, the first traditional Liberian to serve as a vice president of Liberia, were all less socially distinguishable from their settlers' counterparts.<sup>48</sup>

Even though, some settlers, especially the recaptures intermingled or exchanged more or less their social values with those of the traditional Dei, Bassa, Gola, Kpelle, Kru, Glebo, and other ethnic groups, the exchanges did not bring about pluralistic social systems in early-nineteenth-century Liberia. Liberia's popular approved culture of dressing, singing, dancing, speaking patterns, and others were indeed, characteristic echoes of the American backgrounds of the African American masses and their leaders. They were not typical blends of settlers' and traditional values, especially during the period from 1822 to 1847. Liberia's early songs that included *I Build My House Upon the Rock, O yes Lord; Roll, Jordan, Roll; Good-bye, Brother, Good-bye, Brother, If I Don't See You No More; When We Do Meet Again; When I Die, O Lord When I Die; What is that up yonder I see?*; and *Swing Low Chariot! Pray Let Me* were, for example, basically ruminations of Liberian settlers' American secular and religious backgrounds.<sup>49</sup>

Settlers occasionally married traditional women who had accepted their social and cultural values such as ways of cooking, raising children, household management, dressing, or their overall concept of *civilized behaviors*. Obviously, such a union was defined in the scope of settlers' American familiarities, and not in terms of the traditional concepts of marriage of the Dei, Vai, Gola, Bassa, Kpelle and Glebo. Further, a number

of settlers, including some of the settlers' elites, did establish polygamous relationship with traditional women. Unlike the traditional polygamous system of the mentioned ethnic groups that publicly and officially recognized the women as wives of the individual, usually a leader, with whom they were involved in such a relationship, that of the settlers' elites was fundamentally a concubinage relationship that was more similar to the labor, social, and sexual exploitation of enslaved black women by their white owners in the Antebellum South than the West African traditional polygamous system.<sup>50</sup>

Although it was not publicly and officially approved, the mentioned practice became part of Liberia's social tradition. Indeed, a number of Liberian officials did engage in the practice. The behaviors of such Liberian white governors as Ashmun and Joseph Mechlin; and those of distinguished Liberian black leaders such as Liberia's first Supreme Court Chief Justice, Samuel Benedict; and Edward Wilmot Blyden, a famous Liberian Pan-Africanist, Black Nationalist, intellectual, diplomat, politician, and statesman; and Presidents William V. S. Tubman, and William R. Tolbert bear testimony to the above statement. Thus, although he was legally married to Sarah Yates, a daughter of one of the most wealthy mulatto elites in Liberia, Blyden was having an intimate relationship with Anna Erskine, a dark-skinned African American school teacher who had emigrated from the state of Louisiana.<sup>51</sup>

Elder S. S. Ball, an African American who visited Liberia in 1848, provided his views on Liberia's early social orders in these terms, thus:

The wealthy colonists live in fine style, houses of brick or fine; seldom you set down to dine with a gentleman that his table is not furnished with the best of wine and English or German ale. They have just as many servants as they wish, and as much distinction between rich and poor as in America. The poor [settlers] often live in houses of bamboo made in the African style. The natives work very cheap, two dollars per month. . . . The natives . . . generally adhere to their country's custom, having from two to twenty wives. Many live with the colonists bound to them for a term of years under what is called the apprentice system. . . . They, the colonists said the natives could not be admitted into schools with the American children; . . . they were heathen, and not thought of as worthy. . . . Nearly all the wealthy people about Monrovia have from ten to fifteen bound natives about their premises. They wear, with little exception, nothing but a Rambouillet, or a piece of cloth about a yard square during the week; but on the Sabbath, a flimsy

suit of cotton clothes. . . . At church, they sit together in the rear of the congregation, and in no instance did I see a native take a seat by side of a colonist.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, Reverend Hilary Teage of the Baptist Church told Ball that he knew very well that the Churches in Liberia were doing nothing to “spread” the words of Christ in the settlement; and that “elegance of dress leaves nothing for the members to give to a minister who deals out the bread of life to them.” Sir Harry Johnston, a British visitor in Liberia in the 1880s, made remarks similar to the foregoing ones, thus:

But so far as outward behavior, law, and language they [African American settlers] are prudish to a truly American extent. Sparsest of clothing on the part of the natives is treated . . . as an offence. . . . The Americo-Liberians still worship clothes as an outward and visible manifestation of Christianity and the best civilization; and that is to say the European clothes of the nineteenth century. . . . No self-respecting Liberian would be seen on . . . a Sunday . . . even under a broiling sun . . . except in an immaculate black silk topper and a long black frock coat. Their women of course follow the fashion of Europe.<sup>53</sup>

Other social developments in the Liberian colony were similar to those of the prominent Antebellum Southern members of the ACS. Although it was prohibited in the Liberian colony by the ACS-framed constitution in 1825, it was alleged that slavery continued on the coast of that colony through the 1840s. In a letter he sent from the Liberian colony to the officials of the ACS in Washington, DC, on June 26, 1830, Roberts charged that leading Liberian settlers were participating in the slave trade. It was reported in the *Liberia Herald* in 1832 that a slave depot had been established some forty-five miles from Monrovia, the chief town of the settlement. George R. McGill (figures 3.13 and 3.14) the acting vice governor of the colony maintained in 1834 that several traditional Africans residing in the colony were abducted and sold to European slavers. It was again noted in the *Liberia Herald* in 1833 that many slave traders were active in Monrovia despite the presence of British antislavery warships.<sup>54</sup>

Leading settlers such as John N. Lewis, Hilary Teage, and James Payne (figure 3.15) were said to be directly and indirectly involved with slavery; that they were partners of such European slavers as Theodore Canot, T. Rodriguez Buron, and Don Pedro Blanco who operated in the area



**Figure 3.13** Unidentified African American Liberian. Perhaps, she was a member of the McGill family. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

surrounding Monrovia. The *Liberia Herald* reported in its 1835 and 1836 issue that slave-restraining items, which included chains, were manufactured in slave depots in the vicinity of Monrovia. Governor John Penney admitted that the charges had some merits and added that John N. Lewis, who was the secretary of the colony and prominent member of the Baptist Church, occasionally served as a chief representative of Blanco, the leading Spanish slaver on the coasts of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Dr. John Bacon, the colonial physician in Monrovia in the early 1830s, noted that “dozens of Liberian Christians were actively and joyfully engaged in the slave trade.” He further maintained that some respectable Liberians had urged him to purchase two slaves for his household.<sup>55</sup> As discussed in chapter five, allegations similar to the mentioned ones, were made against Russwurm during his governorship in Maryland in Liberia.

Circumstantial pieces of evidence obviously supported the charges. Although it was made illegal by most countries that were involved with it before Liberia was established in 1822, the transatlantic slave trade continued up to the 1880s.<sup>56</sup> Some 60,000 West Africans were illegally enslaved in America alone through this trade between 1808 and 1861. Included among these enslaved West Africans were ethnic groups like the Vai, Bassa, Gola, Kpelle, Kru, Loma, Kissi, Glebo, and others from





**Figure 3.14** One of the three brothers of Vice Governor George McGill, 1829–1833. Their sister Sarah McGill, later married John B. Russwurm. The McGills were among the most powerful in Liberia and later in Maryland in Liberia from 1829 through the 1880s. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Liberia and the surrounding areas of that country.<sup>57</sup> Besides, a number of black settlers wrote letters from Liberia to their relatives, friends, and former masters in America that the transatlantic slave trade still continued on the coastal area of Liberia; they added that ships waving the American flag were engaged in it.<sup>58</sup>

Although the charges were brought to their attention, the ACS Board of Managers failed to investigate them critically. They feared that such an approach would indirectly highlight the contradiction, especially the inconsistency of the prominent Antebellum members of the ACS, who owned slaves, but who at the same time, were trying to promote American civilization, and to destroy the slave trade and slavery through the Liberian initiative on the West African coast. Indeed, the Board of Managers' first reaction to the incrimination levied against their black settlers in West Africa was that every attempt should be made to keep it in "profound secrecy."<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, the accusation continued to be a major concern of ACS officials, seemingly because of its potential damage to the cause of that



**Figure 3.15** James Spriggs Payne, Liberia's fourth president, 1868–1870. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

body. The ACS Board of Managers' views on October 15, 1830 testified to this, thus:

If these are facts, they are more astounding and deplorable than any which have ever been communicated to the Board of Managers, since the existence of the colony. The ravages of disease and invasion of the natives are insignificant with such evil as this. One that will arm all the enemies of our cause with irresistible weapons and naturally turn those friends of humanity upon whom we depend and who have hitherto so ardently engaged in our enterprise and our success, for which so many hands are toiling and so many prayers have raised. . . . Whatever may be the opinion of an enlightened age, as rigid laws and sanguinary punishments they are often . . . the best adapted to the highest grade of crimes. They are effectual at least to remove from society one offender, and the mischief of his example. If crime of murder, so often an occasional sudden irritation, operating upon the infirmity of human temper is worthy of death, how much more a crime, so atrocious in its character and pernicious in its example, as the slave trade arising from the basest

of human passions, and effect of deliberate and sordid calculation. To suppress this trade was one of the special objectives for which the colony of Liberia was established, and for the colonists themselves to be engaged in this trade, or to give it any countenance whatever, are species of treason more basic than that of the sentinel who opens to the enemy the very gate he is stationed to guard. It is more fatal to the colony than open warfare of the most desperate character, for it would convert it from an instrument of benevolence into a scourge of humanity, and would make its destruction an object more to be desired by all good men, than was its original establishment.<sup>60</sup>

Because the ACS considered the noted abhorrence a mortal danger to its objectives in West Africa, it introduced an ordinance that stipulated that any Liberian settler caught directly or indirectly engaging in the slave trade would be for the first offence, imprisoned for not less than a year. An apprehended individual for such a vice would be fined not less than \$1000.00. Despite the mentioned ACS' deterrence, numbers of settler elites in Liberia continued to assist Blanco and his associate, Canot. In fact, Canot became a friend of several members of the so-called black merchant class in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia in the 1850s.<sup>61</sup>

Taking into consideration the spectrum of social, cultural, religious, and other institutional values mentioned so far, it could be reasonably maintained that Liberia was increasingly becoming true to its American origin. The ACS-introduced values were not only accepted, they were also institutionalized by the settlers, especially by the leaders of the settlers. The constitution and national symbols like the national flag and songs they developed for Liberia after they declared its independence in 1847 were, for instance, more reflections of their past experiences in America rather than their ongoing ones in Africa. In fact, the resolution of independence of Liberia that was developed by the settlers' elites bears testimony to the above statement, thus:

We the representatives of the commonwealth of Liberia in convention assembled, invested with the authority of forming a new government, relying upon the aid and protection of the Great Arbiter of human events, hereby in the name and behalf of the people of this commonwealth, publish and declare the said commonwealth a free, sovereign, and independent state by the name and title of the Republic of Liberia. . . . We recognize in all men certain inalienable rights, and among these: are life, liberty, and right to acquire, possess, enjoy, and secure their rights. . . . We the people of the Republic of

Liberia were originally inhabitants of the United States of North America. In some parts of that country we were debarred by laws from all rights and privileges of man; [and] in other parts public sentiment more powerful than law frowned down on us. We were excluded from all participation in the government. We were taxed without our consent. We were compelled to contribute to the resources of a country that gave us no protection. . . . Strangers from other lands of colors different from ours were preferred before us. We uttered our complaints, but they were unattended. Liberia is not the offspring of ambition, nor the tool of avaricious speculation. . . . Liberia is an asylum from the most grinding oppression.<sup>62</sup>

This could be said about their concepts of land ownership, religion, family, education, material culture, government, state, constitution or jurisprudence, military organization, mode of production, and other evolving institutional values in Liberia.<sup>63</sup>

Nevertheless, unlike the views of nearly all the Liberian black elites of Antebellum Southern backgrounds, which provided practical understanding of their material cultures and nonmaterial institutions such as the meanings of their freedom, national flag, country, and constitution, Russwurm's notions of Liberia's institutions and approved social orders were, apparently both concrete and theoretical in nature. As noted in chapter one, what became his conceptual perspectives of Liberia's institutional values were essentially reflections of the scholarly experiences he directly and indirectly had with his Bowdoin College professors and with such other New England scholars as Noah Webster, Benjamin Rush, and Mercy Otis Warren.

For example, most of Russwurm's theories about education, ethics, progress, republic, civilization, as reflected in primary sources such as the *Freedom's Journal*, the *Liberia Herald*, *African Repository*, the vast ACS and MSCS papers, and his speeches, were obviously informed by Webster's *Collection of Essays and Fugitive Writings on Moral, Historical, Political, a Literary Subjects* (1790); Rush's *Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools and Diffusion of Knowledge in Pennsylvania to Which are Added, Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic* (1786). Further, terms and phrases such as *ascertain*, *contravene*, *pursueth*, *malcontent*, *countermand*, *righteous*, *virtue exalteth a nation*, and *sin is a reproach to any people*, were commonly used by Russwurm in the many letters he wrote from Liberia and Maryland in Liberia to the officials of the ACS and MSCS in America. These terms seemed to have been borrowed from the noted

publications, especially the publications of Webster. Against the mentioned background, Russwurm's activities in Liberia can be examined.<sup>64</sup>

Russwurm left the United States in late September on the vessel *Susan* and arrived on November 15, 1829 in Liberia just seven years after this colony had been established. About 147 African Americans had arrived in Liberia on the vessel, *Harriet* on March 24, 1829. Most members of the group came from Virginia, and the rest came from Maryland, Tennessee, District of Columbia, and North Carolina. Russwurm's contemporaries and the future presidents of Liberia, Roberts and Payne, had sailed on the *Harriet* to Liberia less than half a year before his arrival.<sup>65</sup>

He was impressed by the colony immediately following his arrival in 1829, thus:

what my sensations were upon landing, I can hardly describe. This contains double the number of the houses I expected, and I am informed that Millsburg and Caldwell each contain nearly as many. The colonies here . . . appear to be thriving—they subsist chiefly by trading with the natives. You have here behold coloured men exerting all the duties of offices of which you can scarcely believe, many fulfil the important duties with much dignity. We have here a Republic in miniature.<sup>66</sup>

In fact, as discussed earlier, Russwurm began to justify through the *Freedom's Journal* the establishment of Liberia by the ACS before he left America for West Africa in 1829. The subsequent quotation further bears testimony to this:

We are indebted to the Lancaster Gazette for following accounts of this infant colony. It will, we think, interest many of our readers. The territory is called Liberia, and the settlement upon it commenced in June, 1822. The [population of the] colonists is more than twelve hundred in number, are building up eight villages: the principal one is in advance of others, being more populous. This is Monrovia, so named in grateful reference to deep interest manifest by President Monroe in the prosperity of that infant establishment. The settlement is but a few degrees north of the equator, extending one hundred and fifty miles on the westerly shore of Africa, and as far back into the interior as the purchasers thought proper. Every acre was honourably and regularly bought of the rightful owners, and the whole is guaranteed to the colonists as natural ground, by all the respectable naval powers of Europe. The soil is highly productive and agriculture is highly rewarded. The inhabitants are comfortably

housed, fed, and clothed. Many families, in addition [have] the necessities, or what are called the comforts of life and enjoy some of its luxuries. Some colonists have already acquired property, and have at command from three and six hundred dollars. They have erected thirteen public buildings, besides churches. One of them contains a library of twelve hundred volumes. Their form of government has been in operation several years. They realize the right of suffrage. The voice of the people designates individual among themselves for legislative, judicial, and executive authority. Their military force is organized. Four cannon are mounted on their principal fort. The seeds of commerce have germinated and become visible in Liberia. A small schooner in the coasting trade annually produces to its owners, four thousand seven hundred dollars net profit. No man acquainted with American history, will hesitate to say the growth of Liberia is much more rapid, and its prospects much brighter, and more alluring, than were those of any one of the various colonies first established in this country. Nations bordering on the territory of the emigrants are not hostile, but on amicable terms with them. Not with envy and jealousy, but with apparent confidence and enjoyment, those adjacent tribes cherish and encourage friendly offices, good feelings, mutual kindness, and commercial intercourse with their new neighbors.<sup>67</sup>

Besides, Russwurm's sail to Liberia, which had been encouraged by Gurley, the Secretary of the ACS in Washington, DC, was well received by the prominent officials of that body in America and the ones in the Liberian colony. The promise secretly made to him that he would be given important positions in that colony if he settled in Liberia, was kept. He was put in charge of organizing public schools. His new responsibility, however, had little significance, because Liberian religious leaders, who served also as secular leaders, operated and controlled nearly all schools in Liberia as private ones. Nevertheless, he would use the position and other responsibilities he was later assigned by the ACS to promote what he and that body's authorities termed civilization, humanity, and religion in West Africa.<sup>68</sup>

He was also put in charge of the chief editorship by the ACS of the journal that would become known as the *Liberia Herald*. The history of the *Liberia Herald* can be traced to 1826, when one Charles L. Force was hired at a starting salary of \$416.00 per year by colonizationists in New England to begin a press in the Liberia. Although he died immediately following his arrival in Liberia, Force's attempt at establishing a newspaper

in Liberia was fulfilled by an unidentified African American printer who had been freed by Mary B. M. Blackford, the widow of William M. Blackford of Fredericksburg, Virginia. The unknown settler is said to have printed the paper that later became known as the *Liberia Herald* in 1826. As it is recorded in the *Annual Reports* of the ACS, the *Liberia Herald* was the third newspaper in Westernized West Africa. Sierra Leone that had been established in 1787 by the British had two periodicals in the early nineteenth century.<sup>69</sup>

Although several issues of the paper were printed from 1826 to 1830, no account has been made of them so far. The paper was seemingly intended to promote democratic values in Liberia. This was illustrated by its motto that declared before 1830 that “Freedom is the Brilliant Gift of Heaven.” In fact, Russwurm had entitled a paper with the same motto that he published in the January 16, 1829 issue of the *Freedom’s Journal*. Nevertheless, Russwurm who assumed the editorship of the *Liberia Herald* on March 6, 1830 wrote editorially in the paper that the “demands for free press were senseless.” Russwurm’s disapproval of absolute press’ freedom in Liberia is further noted by his expressions that a free press “as fire is a very useful servant when properly cared after, but unheeded it becomes a dangerous one. . . . [Unless] the press is under the wholesome restraint of the law, [it too would be dangerous].”<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the paper’s democratic motto was removed after Russwurm became its editor.<sup>71</sup>

Russwurm further made the paper an official voice of the colony’s leadership, a move that was encouraged by the fact that the paper was subsidized by the ACS, and what was, obviously influenced by his aspiration to win the endorsement of the white-dominated leadership in colonial Liberia. Russwurm’s use of the *Liberia Herald* to promote ACS-introduced paternalistic and centralized leadership systems was clearly evident during the leadership of Governor Mechlin whose administration began in 1829, the very year the former arrived in Liberia, and ended on September 3, 1833.<sup>72</sup> He glorified in the *Liberia Herald*, for example, Governor Mechlin’s violent annexation of the territories the Gola, Kpelle, Bassa, Vai, and Dei ethnic people (see figure 3.16). The governor won, moreover, praise from the paper for stopping the Dei, who lived in the area surrounding Monrovia, from trading with their traditional neighbors, and for forcing them to declare themselves “Americans” in 1832.<sup>73</sup>

Russwurm also failed to question Governor Mechlin’s opposition to the arrival of newly freed blacks to the colony. The governor opposed the new group because the view he held was that they were more “below in intelligence and industry” than the blacks who had been freed many years earlier. Indeed, contrary to his willingness to publish in the *Liberia*



**Figure 3.16** Map of Liberia. It illustrates the size of Liberia between 1830 and 1870. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

*Herald*, settlers' moral failure such as the accusation that a number of them were involved with the slave trade, Russwurm failed to address in the paper the publicized allegation that Governor Mechlin was sexually involved with a settler's wife, and that there was an offspring from the relationship.<sup>74</sup>

Russwurm's support of Governor Mechlin and his silence on the governor's misdeeds were seemingly influenced by the fact that the governor was among his leading supporters in Liberia, especially between 1829 and 1833. The governor's praise of Russwurm in a letter he wrote on March 28, 1830 to the officials of the ACS in Washington, DC bears testimony to this, thus:

By the present opportunity I send you something which will no doubt excite agreeable surprise—that is, 300 copies of the first number of the *Liberia Herald*, just issued from our press. This, I am in the hope, will show to the people at home that we are making greater progress than they are willing to give us credit for; and the manner in which it got up, will not, I trust, disgrace us. I had made arrangements for putting this press into operation, prior to the arrival of Mr. Russwurm, but I must confess, I should not have succeeded



had it not been for his getting the press to work. I found him everything you described him to be, and I considered him a great acquisition. He now resides in the Agency House, and I . . . hope [he will] have permanently employment . . . with the Colonial Government. You may observe I do not say much in favor of our paper. I intend to let it speak for itself.<sup>75</sup>

Hence, the governor had other reasons for sending significant copies of the first issue of the *Liberia Herald* to the officials of the ACS. Most of the themes covered in the issue corresponded with what the ACS wished to accomplish in West Africa. Russwurm's suggestion in the paper that every attempt should be made to promote a positive education among the settlers, and that only through this, they would improve their intellectual and moral conditions, serve as models in Africa, and would be "worthy of generations to imitate," paralleled, for example, with the ACS civilizing goals in West Africa. Also in line with the mentioned efforts, was the suggestion stressed in the paper that reading, writing, and arithmetic should be taught in Liberian schools through the Lancastrian approach, a nineteenth-century American teaching method that allowed the most advanced students to assist with the teaching of their fellow classmates. Thus, his emphasis in the paper, that education was very necessary for self-betterment, pleasure, virtuous citizenry, and for the love of God, corresponded with his and the ACS civilizing efforts in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia.<sup>76</sup>

Russwurm invoked his New England background in the paper when he noted that,

we are pilgrims in a search of liberty, and it is our duty to profit from the wisdom of those who had gone before us. I refer particularly to the pilgrim fathers of New England. Education was ever in their thoughts. No sooner had erected their lovely dwellings than the school-house was the next objective of consideration. Their thoughts were united with action. From the beginning of the first settlement, schools were put into operation, and every encouragement was held to literacy men to emigrate from the mother country. The schools they established have been continued to the present day, and their descendants are now distinguished for their intelligence and learning.<sup>77</sup>

Russwurm's praise of the assimilated Africans and his promotion of the ACS newly commenced American ethics or institutional values in

Liberia at the expense of nearly all traditional African values seemed to illustrate that his Pan-Africanism was giving way to his acquired Western social and cultural rectitude. In fairness to Russwurm, his salute to the assimilated Africans corresponded with his civilizing mission in Africa, one that he had emphasized in America prior to his departure from America to Liberia in 1829. In fact, he had called upon what he termed the civilized world to “lead and escort the Africans to ascend the hill of science, and as [they] advance, the dark mists of superstition [would] break away. . . .” His dismissal in Liberia of the very African values he had invoked or paid homage to in America was in itself, however, a contradiction.<sup>78</sup>

It is evident that Russwurm employed the *Liberia Herald* not only on behalf of Governor Mechlin, but he also used it to promote the images the ACS and its representatives in Liberia anticipated of the colony. His support for prohibition of alcoholic beverages in the Liberian colony paralleled, for example, with ACS’ backed temperance movement in the United States in the early 1830s. Russwurm was, however, to change his position on temperance to support Governor Mechlin’s view that the prohibition of alcohol in the colony would disrupt the commercial relationship between the settlers and the traditional Africans in the area, and that such a disruption would reinforce the slave trade that continued on the West African coast.<sup>79</sup>

In response to the argument that settlers who had been in the colony for a long period disliked the recaptures and the newly arrived black Americans, Russwurm declared that this was in fact the case; and that his view was based on his contacts with the three groups in question. He further maintained that the problem was caused by the new arrivals who, according to him, expected special treatment. Russwurm furthermore informed Gurley, the secretary of the ACS in Washington, DC that most of the settlers suffered from an inferiority complex. He added that settlers’ low self-esteem was illustrated by their unwillingness to deal with the traditional Westernized Africans.<sup>80</sup>

Besides, he continued to identify closely with Governor Mechlin, despite the fact that the latter continued to implement the policies most of the settlers disliked in Liberia. Although he increased the size of the colony at the expense of the different ethnic groups who lived in the Montserrado area, or the starting base of Liberia, Mechlin did, indeed, reinforce the ACS-introduced centralized administrative system at the expense of the trammled democracy that had been extended to the settlers in 1825.<sup>81</sup>

Amendments to the constitution of the Liberian colony in 1825 allowed settlers who had met the necessary property requirements to

elect someone to the position of vice governor. The revisions also stipulated that if the governor became ill or was absent, the vice governor would assume the governorship. Despite the new constitutional provisions, ACS officials, perhaps with Governor Mechlin's encouragement, arbitrarily appointed one John Anderson, a white, and subsequently named Anthony D. Williams, a black, to serve as an acting governor during the absence of Governor Mechlin. The governor had traveled to America in early 1830. Anderson, Mechlin's successor, died from malaria, just after a month in office. Anderson's heir, Williams, remained in office till the return of Governor Mechlin to Liberia on April 4, 1830. Again, Governor Mechlin would continue to lead the settlers dictatorially through December 1833, when he resigned under ACS' pressure. As subsequently discussed, his tyrannical leadership subverted the constitutional amendments of 1825. The amendments qualified George McGill, who had been elected as vice governor in August 1833 to assume the governorship following the resignation of Governor Mechlin.<sup>82</sup>

Before Governor Mechlin's resignation he made sure, however, that his successor, McGill would continue to be a figurehead governor. Evidently, this was not a new development for McGill; he had been illegally barred by Governor Mechlin from having any say over the financial affairs of the colony immediately after he won the vice governorship. Besides, the governor had denied him "all powers to draw bills [and] to incur debts, to deal with public property, [and] to make any [official] appointments. . . ."<sup>83</sup>

Governor Mechlin had placed these responsibilities under his absolute control, and he was to assign them arbitrarily and illegally to Russwurm, who now served as the new secretary of the colony. Moreover, Governor Mechlin authorized Russwurm to establish a complete control over the *Liberia Herald*, and to discontinue the publication of the paper if McGill, who in theory was the new governor, tried to interfere with its operations.<sup>84</sup>

Russwurm who had left the United States for Liberia, because he felt that blacks were tyrannically treated in that country, paradoxically and unethically accepted the responsibilities, obviously with little reservation that he had been assigned by Mechlin. Indeed, he discontinued the publication of the *Liberia Herald* in 1833, even though he officially continued to be the editor of the paper. Publication of the paper was resumed in January 1835, however, under the editorship of Reverend Hilary Teage, one of the Liberian black elites who had questioned the leadership of Governor Mechlin.<sup>85</sup>

Russwurm was liked not only by Governor Mechlin, but he was also cherished by the officials of the ACS in Washington, DC. The governor praised him in a detailed letter he had written from Monrovia to ACS

officials in America. He maintained in the letter that Russwurm's activities in Liberia were in line with the positive images that the leaders of the ACS had portrayed of him. The governor was seemingly impressed by Russwurm; and as it has been noted, he in fact enthusiastically welcomed him to reside temporarily at his official residence in Monrovia.<sup>86</sup> The ACS on its part maintained that:

[the *Liberia Herald*] furbishes gratifying evidence of the intelligence, the commerce, and the enterprising spirit of the Liberian. It is edited in manner highly creditable to Mr. Russwurm, although we should be glad to see a larger portion of the matter from his own pen. He is very capable of conducting the Herald, as to secure for its liberal patronage in the United States, and render it a powerful means of advancing the cause of African colonization.<sup>87</sup>

Against the above background together with the fact that the *Liberia Herald* was subsidized by the ACS, it was clear that Russwurm would continue to publish materials in the paper that were mostly favorable to the ACS and its representatives in the Liberian colony.

Thus, Russwurm continued to support the ACS and Governor Mechlin, especially from 1830 to 1833, despite the fact that the course of actions of this body and the governor became increasingly tyrannical. Resentment toward the mentioned policies was shared by most settlers. Indeed, several settlers, who were led by one Joseph Shepherd, had sent a petition of redress to the Board of Managers of the ACS in 1830. The petition appealed to the ACS to allow for self-government; to stop Governor Mechlin from infringing on settlers' constitutional right to elect a vice governor; to demand the governor to allocate public positions fairly and inclusively; and to end the practice of the governor serving as a chief representative of the American Government in Liberia. The settlers implied that the fact that the governor's two noted held positions together with the fact that he served also as a chief commander of the colonial militia and as chief justice in the settlement, made him too powerful and overbearing. Governor Mechlin's reactions to the petition that the governor should keep his veto power, and that he should ascertain all enactments in the settlement, were similar to the ACS' responses to the request. The ACS' paternalistic responses to the petition, that Gurley, the secretary of the ACS, drafted, read in part, thus:

It is plain from your petition that one of the principal grounds of complaints is the existence of the phrase, sovereign power, in the Second Article of the Constitution. You remark that you came to

Africa under the solemn promise of enjoying all such rights and privileges as are possessed by the citizens of the United States, but you must be aware that the pledge contained in the First Article of the Constitution . . . sent out for the Government of the colony is to be limited and interpreted by the Articles which succeed it, the second of which is the Colonization Society shall from time to time make such rules as they may think fit for the Government of the settlement; until they shall withdraw their Agents and leave the settlers to [govern] themselves. The rights and privileges then, which you in Africa [want], could be such as to destroy the whole authority of the American Colonization Society. . . . I am instructed to express the regret which the Board [has] felt that any individual in the colony should have become dissatisfied with the present form of government, especially that there should exist among the colonists an excessive desire for political offices and distinctions. We hope and pray that party spirit will no longer be allowed to exert its baneful influences in Liberia. Let the blessed virtues of humility, meekness, and brotherly kindness, a love for whatsoever things are true . . . , just . . . , honest, and of good reports, prevail in your community; and above all, let the fear and the love of God pervade all hearts and Divine Blessing will rest upon you and the colony which you are planting, becoming the salvation and glory of Africa.<sup>88</sup>

The quoted responses of the ACS to the petition that had been addressed to Shepherd, its main author, were published by Russwurm in the *Liberia Herald*. Hence, Governor Mechlin who was Russwurm's main political ally in Liberia from 1830 to 1833 wrote in a letter he addressed to ACS officials informing them misleadingly that their inflexible views on the petition were well received by the settlers.<sup>89</sup>

As indicated and subsequently discussed, most settlers, including a substantial number of the settlers' leaders, had strongly disapproved the ACS-introduced tyrannical social and leadership systems, especially before 1841. In fact, Governor Mechlin became among the most disliked governors, precisely because of his pronounced adherence to the ACS-inaugurated orders in the Liberian colony.<sup>90</sup>

Hence, Russwurm continued to identify closely with Governor Mechlin, despite the fact that he was the most despotic leader to serve in the settlement. The governor resigned in 1834 due to the settlers' resentment toward him, and because of his uncompromising support of the ACS-centralized leadership.<sup>91</sup>

There were reasons why Russwurm did not waver in his support of Governor Mechlin and of the mentioned administrative order. Unlike most of the settler elites such as Roberts, Carey, McGill, Benedict, Teage, Johnson, Lewis, Wilson, and others who achieved their social and political prominence through the support of the settlers' masses and the ACS, Russwurm won his social and political status in Liberia, almost solely through the officials of the ACS. Further, unlike them, he had been personally persuaded by ACS leaders in America to settle in Liberia, and through its officials, he was appointed as superintendent of Liberian public schools, chief editor of the *Liberia Herald*, and as secretary of the colony, a position he held from 1830 to 1834. These and together with the fact that he was the most educated black elite in Liberia from 1829 to 1834, made him different from the other affluent black settlers, at least from the perspectives of the white officials of the ACS.<sup>92</sup>

As noted earlier, Russwurm's conceptual and, to a lesser degree, his concrete familiarity with American political, social, and moral thoughts through his education at Bowdoin College and other places in America, helped to assure his unique status and worldviews in Liberia and later, in Maryland in Liberia.

Not surprisingly, Russwurm was made the most important leader in the colony by the departing governor in 1834; however, his new inherited power did not last long. Reverend John P. Penney, a graduate of Princeton University, had been appointed on October 24, 1833 by the ACS to succeed Governor Mechlin in 1834. As before, all official positions including the office of the secretary of the colony that was occupied by Russwurm were to be subordinated to that of the new governor. Like Governor Mechlin before him, Governor Penney continued to treat the settlers overbearingly and paternalistically. His policy only reinforced settlers' resentment toward him and others such as Russwurm, who closely identified with the views of the ACS. Governor Penney like nearly all the previous governors was disliked by most of the settlers, because like them he served as an arbiter of their community. And as such, he served not only as the chief executive; he also functioned as chief justice, and as commander in chief of the colonial militia. Against this backdrop, the progressives, who included such settlers' elites as Shepherd, Johnson, Lewis, Waring, Francis Devany, Williams, A. Cheesman, who were all members of the Colonial Assembly, called for amendments to the constitution of the colony that would allow for self-government, especially at every local level. They wanted, in addition, an establishment of a court of appeal. The assembly's members, with probably the blessing of Governor Penney, decided, moreover, to dismiss Russwurm from his position as the editor

of the *Liberia Herald*, and as the secretary of the Liberian colony, seemingly because of his conservatism.<sup>93</sup>

Opposition to Liberia's power arrangement was evident in 1835 when a group of colonists decided to disrupt a court proceeding that was being conducted by Governor Penney. They questioned, what they described as, his arbitrary taxation system. Aggravating strife in Liberia, was the publication in the *African Repository* and the *Liberia Herald* in 1835 following the refusal of the ACS to grant the local political autonomy the settlers had formally requested the ACS in 1830. As before, the ACS tried to calm the political discord in Liberia by informing the settlers that:

the Board of Managers has with inexpressible regret that a spirit of dissension and insubordination has recently been manifested by some individuals in the colony. They would solemnly warn against the indulgence of this spirit. Its effects, should it be permitted to prevail in the colony, will be more fatal to its character and more subversive of its prosperity than famine, pestilence or hostility of savage foes. The Managers would then urge the citizens of Liberia, as they value their peace, the respect of mankind, or the blessing of God, to banish utterly and forever from among them, all strife and discord, and to unite in a firm support of the Government and Laws. The Managers hope, in the early days, to transmit in a printed form a brief Code of Laws, adapted to the circumstances of the settlers, and which shall remove any doubt and perplexity which may arise from the imperfections of the present legal system.<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, the attempt to calm Liberia's potential political crisis did not succeed. Several settlers rioted in Monrovia against the social and political orders in April 1835. Governor Penney maintained that the riots had been instigated by a small number of radical settlers who disliked the ACS and its representatives in Liberia. He added that the rioters interrupted an ongoing case in the colonial Supreme Court.<sup>95</sup>

Hence, the dissidents told the governor that he was no longer their leader. The governor was threatened by the dissenting settlers to not return to Monrovia from Millsburg, a small settlers' village about fifteen miles from Monrovia, where he was visiting. Settlers' anger was reinforced, among other things, because the governor had issued, at the beginning of the riot, a proclamation, which stipulated that the colony was in rebellion. He demanded that the proclamation should be published in the *Liberia Herald*.<sup>96</sup>

Indeed, Russwurm who still served as the editor of the *Liberia Herald*, reluctantly decided to publish the proclamation in the paper. His publication of the proclamation did reinforce the view already held of him by the settlers, that he was nothing but a puppet of the ACS and that body's representative in Liberia. Indeed, a number of settlers threatened to destroy the office of the *Liberia Herald* because of Russwurm's action. Russwurm and other leaders of the settlers succeeded, however, in convincing the rioters from destroying the office.<sup>97</sup>

Yet, opposition to the ACS and those who closely identified with it, like Russwurm, mounted. In fact, new developments did intensify resentment toward nearly all ACS appointees. Although it was an elected one, the position of the secretary of the colony was subordinated to the office of the governor. The 1825 constitutional amendments allowed for such an election. As it has already been noted, Governor Mechlin was, however, to change this; he arbitrarily appointed Russwurm as the secretary of the colony just before his departure in 1834. Despite the fact that Russwurm's appointment was illegal, Mechlin's successor, Governor Penney, and the officials of the ACS in Washington, DC, did not invalidate it. It is no wonder that the settlers increasingly became resentful of the ACS and its chief representatives such as Russwurm, in Liberia.<sup>98</sup>

Thus, the settlers-dominated Colonial Assembly, though subordinated to the governor, decided to remove Russwurm from his position as secretary of the colony in 1835; perhaps, because that body's members felt that his appointment by Governor Mechlin in 1834 was illegal, or because they ascertained that he was a major obstacle to their calls for self-government and a court of appeal. While Governor Penney did not question the assembly's action against Russwurm, ACS officials in Washington, DC viewed such an exploit as disrespectful and inappropriate, and they, therefore, decided to reinstate Russwurm.<sup>99</sup>

Russwurm's reappointment only increased his unpopularity among the settlers. Thus, his low esteem among the settlers would reinforce his material and political reliance on the ACS. While the ACS supported Russwurm in one situation, it weakened him in another. This became evident during the governorship of Dr. Ezekiel Skinner, who succeeded Governor Penney in 1835. Like Governors Mechlin and Penney before him, Skinner led the colony despotically. The ACS strengthened his power when he was authorized by this body to appoint an associate editor for the *Liberia Herald*, the very paper Russwurm still served as the chief editor.<sup>100</sup>

The authorization of Skinner to appoint an associate editor was a blow to Russwurm, since the former, like all the white governors in



Liberia, held the view that blacks were inferior to whites. It is not surprising that he decided to reduce Russwurm's influence over the paper. In fact, having acknowledged that Russwurm no longer had the support of the ACS, other black elites such as Colin Teage, Shepherd, Waring, Brander, Cheesman, Day, and Devany, decided to work with Governor Skinner to subvert his political ambition in Liberia.<sup>101</sup>

Russwurm stressed the resentment toward him in a letter he addressed to Gurley, the ACS chief secretary on October 5, 1835. He alleged in the letter that the Teage brothers, together with other settlers' elites and the governor had conspired to deny him the vice governorship that he had campaigned for in the election of 1835. He maintained that the governor, with his stupid view, and several numbers of the ordinary blacks had illegally postponed the election on the ground that none of the candidates had won a majority of the votes. Russwurm pointed out that the main motive behind the mentioned action was to deny him the governorship. He added that Governor Skinner and his black allies had invoked the emotions of the masses of the settlers; including the settlers who he claimed owned only thatch houses.<sup>102</sup>

Hence, to invalidate the charge against him that he had deliberately published Governor Penney's proclamation in the *Liberia Herald* to please the governor, Russwurm maintained that he, in fact, had secretly informed Colin Teage, the governor's black chief advisor, to not allow the governor to issue the proclamation. He rightly noted that he did help to calm the violent response to the proclamation. He maintained that although he abided by the laws of the settlement, invested all his incomes in it, and placed his family members under its auspices, Russwurm noted that he "suffered so much persecution" in the hands of the settlers and Governor Skinner that he was nearly inclined to vacate Liberia, and move to a place "where the laws could not be altered or amended to suit party purposes."<sup>103</sup>

Having no support among the settlers, and with his support from the ACS eroding, it was increasingly becoming obvious to Russwurm that his hope to serve as a Liberia's first full-time black governor was not promising. Against this background, Russwurm like most members of the settlers' ruling class in colonial Liberia became interested in commerce. He and Joseph Dailey became business partners. Indeed, Russwurm decided in 1835 to promote the business venture through the *Liberia Herald*, thus: "Dailey and Russwurm offer for sale the cargo consisting of . . . tobacco . . . pork, beef, mackerel, . . . nails and soap. . . ." <sup>104</sup> But like his wish to become the first full-time black governor of Liberia, Russwurm's attempt at business too did not succeed.<sup>105</sup>

Business difficulties and other factors played a role in the failure. Russwurm testified, thus:

I did promise myself two or three months ago that I would see the United States this year, but I have given over the idea as we are winding up affairs of our firm. It is likely that I shall embark on my own responsibility in commerce as early as possible after we close.<sup>106</sup>

Russwurm added that business in Liberia was poor, and that the situation would remain the same until peace with the traditional people around the settlement was restored. Dailey, Russwurm's black business partner, on his part maintained that he wished to return to America, because of his deteriorating health, and as a result of the poor political and business conditions in Liberia.<sup>107</sup>

Dailey's political view of Russwurm was similar to those held by most of the settlers. He told friends, for example, that Russwurm was a puppet of the ACS in Liberia. In a letter he addressed to African Americans who opposed the ACS and Liberian colony in America, Dailey described Russwurm as a person who was lacking emotions and indifferent to his social surroundings. In contrast to Russwurm's positive portrayal of Liberia in the *Liberia Herald*, Dailey declared that conditions were quite terrible and added that the settlers were unable to provide for themselves. He correctly predicted that Liberia would continue to be materially dependent.<sup>108</sup> Dailey described the high death rate in Liberia in these terms:

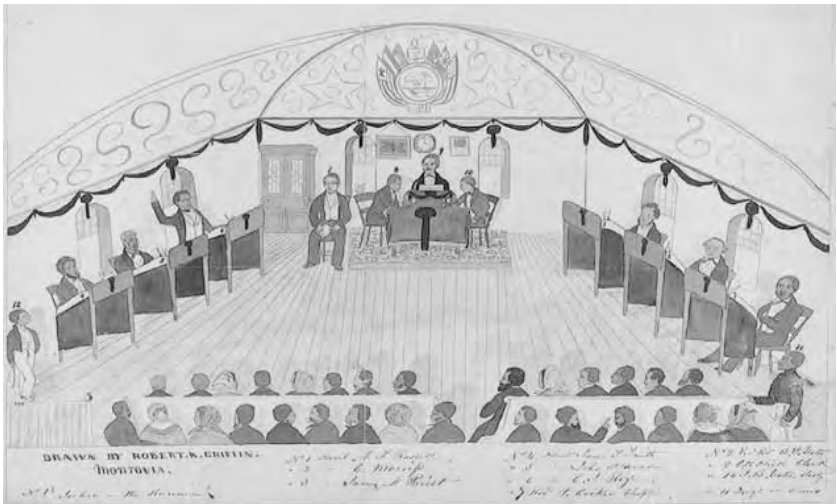
the Charleston people continue to die. . . . The sight of coffins and their tenants are so common and deaths so numerous . . . that one loses those impressions of awe and solemnity of feeling with which the sight of a corpse has inspired one in America.<sup>109</sup>

Dailey added that his deteriorating health like that of Russwurm together with his poor business relationship with the latter was among the main reasons he wished to leave Liberia for America or for Europe.<sup>110</sup>

James Price, Joseph Worthington, and Reverend Gibbim, three black settlers who returned to America in 1833, did back Dailey's descriptions of events in Liberia before an audience of African American elites in Philadelphia. The three returnees maintained that the mortality rate among the settlers was high. They also stated that the ACS leadership policy of forcing newly arrived settlers to be on their own six months following their arrival in the colony was responsible for the high death rate among them.<sup>111</sup>

Russwurm had hoped that he would regain the support of the ACS and that of the settlers if he became a successful merchant like other African American elites in colonial Liberia. But like his ambition to become the first full-time black governor, his attempt to become a successful merchant came to nothing. Adding to Russwurm's problems was that Dailey, who had been his personal friend and business partner, became one of his chief social and political critics.<sup>112</sup>

Russwurm's troubles in Liberia, especially his declining support among the settlers seemed to have been influenced by his intellectual experiences in America. As examined, Russwurm had been swayed by early-nineteenth-century American high ideals. The rectitude included America's virtuous republicanism or American Founding Fathers' self-serving concept that only those who met their defined moral, social, political, and material requirements would be qualified as virtuous citizens. Such a qualification was prerequisite for participating in and benefiting from such evolving American democratic values as the right to vote. It is no wonder that Russwurm, a devotee of virtuous republicanism, would invoke elements of it in Liberia (see figure 3.17). His implication that press' freedom and other forms of democracy be



**Figure 3.17** A watercolor portrait of the Liberian Senate by Robert K. Griffin, an African American who immigrated to Liberia in 1855 at the age of nineteen. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

restricted in Liberia, until most of the African American settlers became virtuous citizens, was similar to the view of America's Founding Fathers that the right to vote should be limited to that 20 percent of the American population who met the necessary property requirements in the 1780s and the early 1790s. Thus, he had told his counterparts in Liberia that "the experience of past ages demonstrates most conclusively, that no country could long exist with what is vulgarly called a free press under the guidance of unprincipled men."<sup>113</sup>

Like America's founders, Russwurm rationalized that without such a restriction the ordinary settlers would assume absolute power, and that this would further lead to social disorders, since according to him they had not yet acquired republican virtues. Russwurm's mentioned position is another example of his difference with the other Liberian black elites. They agreed with him on the statement that traditional Africans living in the limit of the settlement would have to be first civilized and continually adhere to settlers' moral, social, religious, and material codes in order to attain full membership of the settlers' community. Unlike Russwurm, his black counterparts did not set such requirements for the majority of the African American settlers.<sup>114</sup> As demonstrated, Russwurm's mentioned position set him apart not only from the other members of the black ruling class in Liberia, but it also made him unpopular with the common settlers.

Russwurm's implementation in Liberia of the high values he had acquired at Bowdoin College and other places in America was, however, in line with his enlightenment mission in Africa that he had emphasized before he left America for Liberia. Although it won him ACS' support in Liberia, Russwurm's described action turned the majority of the settlers against him. As already noted, the officials of ACS too decided to not support him, because they knew very well that he was disliked by a significant number of the settlers. Thus, the ACS feared that the leadership problems in Liberia would worsen, if it continued to support him.

It could, therefore, be reasonably maintained that Russwurm's acquired American institutional values that enhanced his social, material, and political status in America and Liberia, later undermined such status in Liberia. Against this background, he began to seek alternatives elsewhere. He thought of returning to America; but he knew very well that he would have to face problems with the blacks, especially with the black American elites. They had described him as a traitor; and they had burned his effigy immediately after he declared in 1829 that he had decided to support the ACS, an organization many blacks portrayed as pro-slavery and antiblacks. The ACS would have been among his main

enemies had he returned to America, since such a move would have radically contradicted its main argument that its Liberian colonization initiative was the best solution to the problems blacks faced in America.

Taking the mentioned factors into consideration it is understandable why Russwurm decided to abandon his intention to return to America. Fortunately, for him, the decision of Maryland colonizationists to sever ties with the ACS and establish their own colony in West Africa, provided Russwurm with a new avenue for his political and social ambitions—ambitions he now knew could not be realized in the Liberian colony.

## CHAPTER FOUR

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### *Maryland State's Civilizing Mission in Maryland in Liberia and John B. Russwurm*

Russwurm's involvement with the Maryland State Colonization Society (MSCS), that established the colony that became known as Maryland in Liberia in 1833<sup>1</sup> provides accounts of the ways in which he and the MSCS informed and determined each other activities. The accounts also shared light on why Russwurm responded to the MSCS initiative as he did.

The mentioned statements can be better discussed by examining the origins of the Maryland colonization movement in the context of Russwurm's reactions to such a development. The MSCS was founded in 1817 as an auxiliary to the ACS. As discussed, the ACS accomplished its goal when it established the colony of Liberia on the West African coast in April 1822. Indeed, the founding members of the ACS included such prominent Marylanders as Key, Senator H. Goldsborough, Dr. Ayres, Liberia's first chief administrator, and Randall, once a part-time governor of Liberia.<sup>2</sup>

As a branch of the ACS, the MSCS raised funds and recruited potential black settlers for the former. Through the influence of leading Maryland colonizationists, the General Assembly of that state decided to provide an annual sum of \$1,000.00 to the ACS.<sup>3</sup> The ACS used the amount to cover its expenses of transporting and settling free black Marylanders in Liberia. The General Assembly, however, suspended the annual financial assistance in 1829, and this was followed by the decision of Maryland colonizationists to declare MSCS as a separate entity on February 21, 1831.<sup>4</sup>

Further, the wish to establish a separate colony on the West African coast became the main objective of Maryland colonizationists. The reasons they gave for their decision were as follows: the unwillingness of ACS officials to make eradication of slavery in America the main objective of their movement; the belief that enslaved black labor was devaluing white labor; the fear that the population of free blacks was growing at an alarming rate; and the fright that there was a strong potential for free and enslaved blacks forming an alliance to destroy whites' liberty, happiness, and power in Maryland.<sup>5</sup>

Against the backdrop of the mentioned points, Henry Brawner who served as Charles County's representative in the House of Delegates of Maryland declared that the solution to the race problem in Maryland was to colonize black Marylanders, especially the free ones, outside the state. To justify the colonization of free blacks rather than the enslaved blacks, the editor of the *Niles' Weekly Register* maintained that the free blacks were worse off in Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, and other urban centers than the enslaved ones in the South.<sup>6</sup>

Another reinforcer of the colonization movement in Maryland was the abortive slave rebellion led by Nat Turner, a radical proto black nationalist at Southampton, Virginia in the summer of 1831.<sup>7</sup> The rebellion led to the establishment of several committees in Maryland with the responsibility of formulating measures against the occurrence of any event similar to the one that had taken place in Virginia. One of the newly established committees made the following recommendations: the emancipation of slaves in Maryland should be followed by their colonization; special funds should be allocated for the removal of black Marylanders from the state; a police force should be established and charged with the responsibility of closely observing every movement of blacks in Maryland; and a device should be sought through which slavery would be abolished in certain parts of Maryland.<sup>8</sup>

These recommendations, with only slight modifications, were approved by the General Assembly of Maryland in March 1832. The wordings of the modifications clearly identified MSCS' agenda with that of the state government of Maryland. The position of the MSCS that slavery could be abolished in Maryland through the colonization of black Marylanders corresponded, for example, with the goal of the General Assembly.<sup>9</sup>

As part of the attempt to discourage in Maryland the recurrence of such slave rebellions, as the one Turner led, the General Assembly moved to recognize and subsidize the MSCS as a state movement. It pledged to provide a sum of \$200,000.00 to the MSCS over a period of twenty years. The amount was to be used to cover the expenses of transporting free

blacks who were willing to settle in Liberia. Public officials of Maryland decided to establish a special board to manage the promised fund. One member of the newly established board served as a representative of the MSCS.<sup>10</sup>

To locate potential settlers, the General Assembly ordered all counties in the state to report the number of free blacks within their limits to the MSCS headquarters in Baltimore. The Assembly also approved a bill that became known as An Act Relating to Free Negroes and Slaves. The act was mainly designed to deter the additional settling of emancipated and enslaved blacks in the state. It stipulated, for example, that manumitted blacks were not allowed to reside in the state for more than a week and three days; and that free blacks who already resided in the state were not to be employed after June 1832. Blacks were not permitted to own weapons without the approval of local officials; and those who had been licensed to own firearms, were required to renew their licenses annually. Blacks were also barred from getting together for religious purposes without the presence of a white person. Free and enslaved blacks were not permitted to sell meat and agricultural products without a license from the authorities of Maryland. The act also stipulated that any free black who was guilty of a crime, but whose crime did not meet the requirements for execution, would be deported from the state.<sup>11</sup>

Although they were designed to stop the movement of blacks in Maryland, and to control the activities of the blacks who already resided there, the above draconian measures were also intended to force blacks to become receptive to the MSCS colonization scheme. Despite such direct and indirect pressures, black Marylanders like most blacks in other states strongly opposed the attempt at colonizing them on the coast of West Africa. Nevertheless, the position of the MSCS was strengthened by these developments, for they helped to reinforce the material and financial commitments of state officials to the MSCS colonization plan.<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, the MSCS was able to execute its colonization ideal. On December 9, 1832 about 144 black Marylanders left Baltimore for Monrovia, Liberia, on the ship *Lafayette* that had been chartered by the MSCS. Indeed, Maryland colonizationists had sent thirty-two black Marylanders on the vessel, *Orion* to Monrovia under the auspices of the ACS in the fall of 1831.<sup>13</sup>

The experiences of the 176 black Marylanders sent on the *Lafayette* and *Orion* to Liberia by Maryland colonizationists helped to reinforce MSCS' commitment to declare its independence from the ACS, and to establish its own colony on the coast of West Africa. James Price and five other newly arrived black Marylanders wrote from Monrovia to relatives



and friends in America, informing them that the settlers in Liberia had not offered them enough food. They added that the beef, fish, and other food items given to them by the Liberians were spoiled. They later pointed out that they had not been given sugar, tea, coffee, or other food necessities since their arrival in Liberia. The Marylanders charged that the physical surroundings of Monrovia made them sick. They also accused the Liberians settlers of taking possession of other materials sent along to Liberia with them on the ships, *Lafayette* and *Orion*. James Reese, another black Marylander, wrote in a letter addressed to the Board of Managers of the MSCS maintaining that the Liberian settlers at Caldwell, a small settlers' village, several miles from Monrovia, were unfriendly to the newly arrived blacks from Maryland.<sup>14</sup>

Captain Robert Hardie of the *Lafayette* who stayed in Monrovia for sixteen days described the traditional people around the Liberian settlement as savagely dressed and added that the Liberian settlers were unwilling to carry out any physical tasks assigned to them. The captain alleged that public land was used to buy votes in Liberia. Accounts provided by David C. Landis and James F. Cooksery who were crew members of the *Lafayette* paralleled with those of Captain Hardie. The two men declared also that the Liberian settlers' morale was very subdued.<sup>15</sup>

To verify the above accounts, officials of the MSCS in Baltimore decided to consult Russwurm. Russwurm's accounts of events in Liberia were arguably designed to reinforce and justify the view already held by MSCS officials to establish an alternative colony on the West African coast. Russwurm informed MSCS leaders, for instance, that the settlers in Liberia failed to engage in agricultural activities; rather they were mainly involved in trade, exchanging items such as rum and tobacco for products like rice, indigo, cassava, palm oil, and other items produced by traditional Africans around the Montserrado area. He later added that most of the Liberian settlers were unable to provide for their own basic wants.<sup>16</sup>

Although he had earlier justified Governor Mechlin's support of the rum trade, Russwurm now suggested to the leaders of the MSCS in 1833 that such a trade should be stopped. Concerning the charge against the earlier settlers that they had not been friendly to the newly arrived blacks, Russwurm asserted that this was absolutely false. To provide evidence for his position, Russwurm claimed that he had personally invited three of the newly arrived blacks from Maryland to dinner; and added that the three men like other black Marylanders were well received in the colony.<sup>17</sup>

While he apparently made no attempt to portray the policy of the ACS in Liberia as among the main causes of that colony's problems, and

as such an indictment of the ACS would have probably made Maryland colonizationists to view him as a black radical, Russwurm charged that nearly all of Liberia's problems were caused by the settlers who included the ones from Maryland. He maintained, for example, that black Marylanders and other settlers suffered, because they refused to carry out tasks assigned to them by leaders of the Liberian colony.<sup>18</sup> In his description of the settlers who had been in the colony for an extended duration, Russwurm put forward that:

it is human nature that the old settlers should be a little lifted up with the success which has crowned their efforts, and new immigrants ought not to expect to be placed on par with them unless they bring undoubted letters of introduction.<sup>19</sup>

He added that nearly all settlers viewed the traditional Africans as inferior to them.<sup>20</sup>

The accounts provided about the Liberian colony by Captain Hardie, his crewmen, Russwurm, and others, served as further catalysts of the rationale used by Maryland colonizationists for their desire to establish a separate colony on the West African coast. They reiterated that a new settlement was necessary, because the Liberian experiment had encouraged commerce rather than agriculture; and that the Liberian settlers were not truly committed to the development of a temperance-oriented, self-supporting society. Another justification for the call for a separate colony was that unlike the Liberian colony, the anticipated colony would be used as a means of abolishing slavery in America. Indeed, most Maryland colonizationists viewed the above justification as the primary objective of their colonization scheme.<sup>21</sup>

Against this background, the Board of Managers of the MSCS voted unanimously on April 30, 1833 to establish a colony on the coast of West Africa. This action on the part of the MSCS was followed by a search for a suitable place for the establishment of the colony in question. The responsibility of locating an ideal place for the proposed colony was entrusted to Dr. James Hall, who had completed his medical education in Maine in 1822. Maryland colonizationists believed that Dr. Hall was qualified to accomplish such a task, since he was well familiar with the ACS colonization scheme in West Africa. He had been appointed by the ACS as its chief physician in the Liberian colony in 1831. He left the colony in 1833, because of his ill health and what he and Russwurm considered as a poor leadership of the representatives of the ACS in Liberia; even though Russwurm, as noted earlier, had closely worked

with Governor Mechlin between 1829 and 1833 to uphold the tyrannical system that was responsible for Liberia's political strife.<sup>22</sup>

Because reports of misadministration in the Liberian colony were among the main justifications for the new colonization initiative, Maryland colonizationists decided immediately to develop a constitution that they assumed would discourage such a problem in their anticipated colony. The constitution that they framed was, however, not very different from the one ACS officials had developed for their Liberian colony. Like the framed constitution of the Liberian settlement, what came to be known as Maryland in Liberia also created a framework of government that would be described as a dictatorial system. As in Liberia, the chief executive or governor of the new settlement became nearly absolute.<sup>23</sup> The newly framed constitution empowered the governor to execute the following tasks, thus:

to obey and to carry into effect all the ordinances and regulations of the state society, which are communicated to him; to exercise a general superintendence over the concerns, police, and officers of the territory; to make a semi-annual report of the state society, of the conditions and relations of the territory, together with an account of all receipts and expenditures on behalf of the society; to recommend such laws as from time to time he may see proper to the state society; to negotiate and sign all treaties with the natives; to execute all conveyances on behalf of the state society, and superintend the correspondence of the territory. He shall also be the commander-in-chief of the territory, and issue commissions to all officers in same below rank of general officers. . . . The agent and assistant agent shall have all the authority of justices of the peace, except in case of small debts.<sup>24</sup>

The constitution also empowered the governor to appoint public school teachers, auctioneers, librarians, storekeepers, surveyors, constables, secretary of the colony, justice of peace, inspector of arms, customs collectors, measurers, and inspectors of lumber and shingles. The position of inspector was added to the list by Russwurm when he assumed the governorship of Maryland in Liberia in 1836.<sup>25</sup> Although it allowed adult males to elect candidates to subordinate positions such as a vice agent, counselor, sheriff, regulator, and town councilman, who would serve only for one year, the constitution also empowered the governor to have final say over the duties of such elected officials.<sup>26</sup>

The settlers would be represented in the colonial government by two elected counselors and a vice agent. The elected leaders and the

vice governor would constitute the Colonial Assembly or legislature of the proposed colony. The constitution required the governor to consult with the Assembly's members on issues concerning the appointing of individuals to nonelected positions; to develop new rules outside the framework of the constitution; and to deal with issues of general concerns in the anticipated colony. The constitution, however, empowered the governor to dismiss any position taken by the Colonial Assembly that he detested. The franchise would be extended only to adult black males, who owned land, paid an annual tax of about \$100.00, and who pledged to obey the constitution of the colony. The constitution further stipulated that all newly arrived settlers would be directly supervised by the governor. He would provide them with shelter, food, clothes, and medicine for about six months.<sup>27</sup>

The constitutional and social arrangements in the new settlement conformed not only to the ACS-introduced institutional systems in Liberia, but they were also influenced by the social backgrounds of the founders and prominent members of the MSCS. John H. B. Latrobe, one of the main leaders of the MSCS, ACS' prominent members, and supporters such as Roberts Finley, Washington, Clay, Randolph, Caldwell, and Key, viewed most blacks as children, and as such, they were to be guided by whites, or by such well-virtuously groomed blacks as Russwurm until they matured. Latrobe had maintained in a letter he drafted that the attempt to colonize blacks outside America was a way to clear America of "a stain and nuisance [from its] chosen soil of freedom." He also declared that such a move would not in any way undermine the "trenching on the right of property"; or in other words, Maryland's colonization scheme was not an attempt to destroy slavery in America. Besides, during the framing of the settlement's constitution, Latrobe suggested to other framers, that the document should be framed in a way "to meet the exigencies of comparatively ignorant people beginning a political existence."<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, what would become the institutional values in Maryland in Liberia, which were similar to those of Liberia and that of Russwurm's adherent rectitude, were preached to the blacks who were on board the ship *Ann* as it sailed from Baltimore to the West African coast. Before embarking the ship, blacks who claimed to be married were required to show their certificates of marriage, and those who failed to produce such records were remarried. Unwed female emigrants were obliged to accept the guidance of married couples with high moral standards. The members of the Board of Managers of the MSCS made sure that the departing emigrants were well dressed; and of course, this meant conforming to the dress codes of the Board's members.<sup>29</sup>

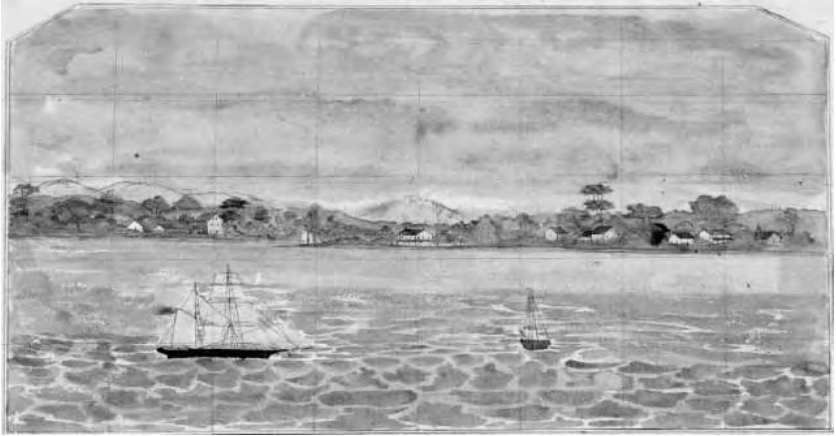
Further, before they ventured on the *Ann*, the potential black settlers had to plead that they would honor the framed constitution, and moral and religious values set for them by the leaders of the MSCS. This is illustrated by the subsequent quotation, thus:

we the persons whose names are hereunto signed do hereby solemnly promise and declare that we will severally support and obey the . . . Constitution, and we do hereby also solemnly promise and declare that we will abstain from the use of ardent spirit except in the case of sickness.<sup>30</sup>

The mentioned developments were followed by the attempt at establishing the anticipated colony. This began at 9 a.m. on November 28, 1833 when some nineteen African Americans boarded the vessel *Ann* at the harbor of Baltimore, for the West African coast. Ten members of the group were about eighteen years of age. This number also included two barbers and four farmers. James Hall, who had been an acquaintance of Russwurm in Monrovia from 1831 to 1833, and had graduated from Russwurm's alma mater, served as an arbiter of the blacks on the sailing vessel. He became the first governor of the proposed colony. He was assisted by John H. Wilson of South Carolina, and by Reverends J. Leighton and Stephen Wynkoop. The two missionaries were sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).<sup>31</sup>

The emigrants came from Baltimore, Washington, and Frederick County in Maryland.<sup>32</sup> Waving on the *Ann*, was a newly adopted flag for the anticipated colony. It was similar to the flag of the United States, except that it had a cross instead of stars of the American national flag. Religious services were held before the *Ann* sailed from Baltimore for the West African coast.<sup>33</sup>

The *Ann* arrived at Monrovia, the chief town of the Liberian colony on January 27, 1834 despite problems such as storms, sea waves, sickness, and tension between the emigrants and John H. Wilson. The *Ann* sailed toward its destination from Monrovia with thirty additional emigrants. Some members of this group were among the emigrants Maryland colonizationists had sent to Monrovia under the auspices of the ACS in 1831 and 1832 respectively. It anchored at Bassa Cove, a small American settlers' village, about fifty miles from Monrovia. Some fifteen settlers from Bassa Cove (figure 4.1) joined the emigrants on the sailing vessel. The *Ann* reached Cape Palmas, the place that had been designated for the colonization scheme by MSCS officials, on February 9, 1834.<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 4.1** Fishtown or Bassa Cove, established by African American settlers at a place that became known as Grand Bassa, near the St. John's River, several miles from Monrovia. Another example of the influence of America on Liberia. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

This was followed by Hall's purchase of land from Freeman, Will, and Joe Holland, all semi-Westernized West Africans who allegedly claimed that they were the leaders of the Glebo people in Cape Palmas.<sup>35</sup> The items requested by these self-proclaimed leaders<sup>36</sup> in exchange for the land in question included:

twenty puncheon of rum, . . . twenty cases of guns, twenty and a half barrels of gunpowder, twenty bales of cloth, twenty cases of looking glasses, a hundred dozens of red caps, a hundred iron pots, twenty hogsheads of tobacco, a box of umbrellas and a wide assortment of ornamental and practical articles.<sup>37</sup>

In return for the above items about 800 square miles, which included territories controlled by nine other Glebo leaders, were given to the MSCS for its colonization scheme. The deed of the transaction that was written in English read in part:

Know to all men by these presents, that for consideration hereafter mentioned, we Freeman, alias Parmah of Cape Palmas, King Will alias, Weak Bolio of Grahway and King Joe Holland alias, Pahfleur of Grand Cavally have granted and sold, and do by these presents

grant and sell to the Maryland State Colonization Society of Maryland in the United States of North America the following tract of land of which we are at this time lawfully seized by right of possession and descent.<sup>38</sup>

The deed was purportedly signed by both parties in 1834. Nevertheless, the Glebo interpretation of the treaties radically differed from that of the newly arrived Americans. Glebo thought that the accords allowed the Americans to lease their land, and not to own it permanently. They maintained that it was against their traditions to sell land, and they added that the material items and cash they received from the Americans were compensations for tasks such as the construction of new homes they had carried out for them. The Americans, on the other hand, thought that the pacts made them permanent owners of Cape Palmas and its surrounding areas. Hence, a letter from Latrobe that was addressed to the Protestant Episcopal Missionary Minor in 1839, showed the Americans' interpretation of the accords, thus:

you have asked me what the consideration was passing to the natives for this abandonment of their rights and sovereigens. I answer at once—the blessing of civilized government—I would add—the blessing of Christianity—but that you would say this was not appreciated by the natives when they made the treaties, and could not have entered into their minds as a part of the consideration for the contract, which would be very true. But the advantages of civilization were well-understood by the natives. For several hundred years the tribes on the coast had been trading with civilized men, and had become dependent upon them for the manufactures of civilization. That they should appreciate their superiority was most natural and therefore the idea of coming under the laws that governed them could not have presented any disagreeable idea to the native mind. On the contrary, facts show that the natives understood what they were about—and the stipulation that they have united in all the treaties made with them, that schools shall be established in their territories proves that they understood the consideration which I have suggested above. That this is understood by the whole community is not asserted. But the tribes who made treaties had authentic forms of government, democratic, somewhat in their character, and the king and his headmen who represented the people and the sovereignty cannot be considered ignorant of the effect of what they were doing when they treated with the Americans. Upon all

the evidence before me, I can come to but one conclusion which is that our treaties give us the power we claim and that those treaties were made fairly and understandingly on both sides.<sup>39</sup>

Despite the fact that the mentioned conflicting interpretations of the deed would continue to be among the main sources of conflicts between the Americans and Glebo people, the attempts to establish a permanent settlement in Cape Palmas was further enhanced by Hall's assumption of the governorship of Maryland in Liberia. Hall's next task was to set up the defense of the settlement. This was followed by his allotment of lands to the colonists, building of the governor's house, public store, and warehouse for the storage of materials for future settlers.<sup>40</sup>

Hall moved to put in place the colonial government as was defined by the constitution that had been framed by MSCS officials in Baltimore. He appointed McGill and James M. Thompson, two black settlers, to help run the colony. Thompson was entrusted to serve as secretary, public storekeeper, and surveyor of the colony. Hall, seemingly had little choice, but to rely heavily on McGill in his dealing with the Glebo people of Cape Palmas, because, McGill unlike him, knew the ethnic people in question quite well, through his elaborate commercial relationship with them.<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, McGill and Thompson were the only blacks Governor Hall entrusted with important responsibilities in the colony. Like all the white governors of the Liberia, Governor Hall paternalistically held the belief that blacks were children, and, therefore, they needed the guidance of whites. Hall later wrote to the leaders of the MSCS in Baltimore informing them that nearly all the appointed and elected black officials in the colony were incompetent. He further maintained that they depended on him not only for food, shelter, and almost for everything; but that they were also lacking the spirit of patriotism. He later informed a member of Board of Managers of the MSCS that it was becoming difficult to instill in the settlers the spirit of togetherness.<sup>42</sup>

The governor also had a low opinion of the Glebo ethnic group who lived in the Cape Palmas area. Although they had used cunning measures to gain their land, Hall, and later Russwurm, would describe the Glebo people in their many communications with Latrobe, the President of the MSCS, as uncivilized thieves. John Hersey, who served as a vice governor of Maryland in Liberia from 1833 to 1834, held similar views of the settlers as Governor Hall and Russwurm. Not surprisingly, he recommended that the right to vote should be denied to most of the black settlers, since according to him, "they had left out such characters as were qualified, and



who had been previously appointed by the governor to fill those important stations, and elected the most ignorant exceptional class of their citizens to act in their place."<sup>43</sup>

As discussed earlier, unlike the position of other Liberian elites, Russwurm's recommendation that the black non-elites in Liberia should be denied the right to vote until they became virtuous citizens was nearly similar to the low opinions held by the two white leaders of the black settlers in Maryland in Liberia. Thus, as discussed in chapter five, Russwurm would advocate similar political restriction in Maryland in Liberia after he assumed the governorship of that colony in 1836.

Although he was commended by the MSCS and some settlers for executing his duties in the colony, Governor Hall was also condemned by other settlers and the Glebo people as well. Joshua Stewart, a settler, wrote to his mother in America maintaining that Governor Hall's leadership was poor; and added that if he had the necessary means he would have surely returned to America. Other settlers also made similar charges. Just before he resigned as a governor in 1836, a number of settlers sent a detailed letter to the Board of Managers of the MSCS providing contradictory descriptions of him. While the settlers described the governor in the letter as a good person, they also maintained in the same letter that his administration was very poor, that they wished he could be recalled to America, and never sent back to the colony.<sup>44</sup>

The settlers' descriptions of the governor were in a way reflections of what would be termed as a synthesis of opposites or contradictory elements of the institutional systems that had been proscribed for the settlers by the MSCS framed constitution. And of course, such institutions were informed by the social backgrounds of the prominent members of the MSCS.

As noted, the institutional values in question constituted elements of paternalism and centralized or dictatorial administrative system. While a constitutional provision allowed a number of settlers to be elected to offices through male suffrage, the governor, who also served as chief justice and commander of the colonial militia, was not elected by the settlers. He was appointed by the officials of the MSCS who resided in Baltimore. Indeed, the power of the governor was absolute. He was empowered to distribute among the settlers almost everything under the auspices of the MSCS in the colony, as he pleased. The materials included land, agricultural equipment, food, and shelter. They were distributed in ways to ensure obedience, leadership, and stability in the colony.<sup>45</sup>

The governor was authorized to enforce the MSCS-defined moral and social codes in the colony. He was specifically told that, "religion,

morality, and knowledge, being necessary for good governing, and the happiness of mankind, schools, the means of education, shall forever be encouraged [among the settlers]."<sup>46</sup> Hence, Governor Hall and later Russwurm, who became the first black governor of Maryland in Liberia in 1836, inflexibly and consistently promoted the MSCS-recommended, defined institutional values in Maryland in Liberia. Against this background, the leadership and the reactions of the black non-elites to such leadership in Maryland can be well examined.

Governor Hall resigned in early February 1836 just when the institutional values in question were taking form. His health and obviously pressures from the settlers and the Glebo ethnic group were among the factors that led to his resignation. He returned to America immediately following his resignation.<sup>47</sup> He was succeeded by Oliver Holmes Jr., a twenty-eight-year-old dentist who had practiced in Maryland. Holmes had also led a group of blacks on the vessel *Fortune*, sent to Maryland in Liberia by the MSCS in December 1835.<sup>48</sup>

Before Holmes assumed the governorship, he was advised to emulate Hall when dealing with the Africans and settlers, thus:

It would seem that [Hall's] success with the natives has been the result of firmness of purpose, not less than the justice of his cause. A vacillating conduct is the worst possible with ignorant men in any country, and essentially bad in Africa. It has been the policy of many colonists heretofore to drive out the aborigines—as in the case of the [American colonies]. . . . Such is not our policy; however, we would amalgamate the natives with the colonists, raise the . . . [former] to the standard of the latter, and then carry both on together to the highest eminences of civilization and the Gospel. In doing this, great care is necessary to prevent the colonists from sinking into the natives' standard. This work of amalgamation should be managed discreetly, and the natives should be made to feel that it is a privilege to be considered equal of the colonists. In a word, let the natives be taught to look on your colonists as benefactors and brothers, and not as conquerors and enemies.<sup>49</sup>

Holmes's tenure as a governor was a short one; it lasted only four months. Several factors were responsible for his short period in office. They included his incompetent leadership and his failure to adhere to the moral requirements that had been set forth for the colonists by the MSCS. Failure of Holmes's leadership might have also been attributed to his mental illness that unsteadily peaked during his stay in the colony.<sup>50</sup>

Holmes was also involved in an activity that could be described unethical. As a continuation of the cunning practice of European slavers during the transatlantic slave trade,<sup>51</sup> Holmes, gave what he pretended was wine, but in truth, was actually a combination of water, rum, and molasses that he personally prepared and exchanged for the labor and products of the Glebo people of the area.<sup>52</sup>

Despite these problems, the colony that Hall, his MSCS' sponsors, and Russwurm had envisioned was established, and it would continue to develop. This could be said about the ethical, social, and moral values they had proposed for the new settlement in West Africa. Indeed, at the end of Hall's leadership in 1836 and that of Holmes in the same year, the population of the colony had increased to about 220 people. Its chief town Harper, named after Robert Goodloe Harper, one of the prominent members of the Maryland State Colonization Society, had about twenty-five complete houses. Like Monrovia, the chief town of Liberia that had been planned like Washington, DC, the home base of the ACS, the town of Harper was set up like Baltimore, the headquarter of the MSCS.<sup>53</sup>

The leadership in Maryland in Liberia was passed on to Russwurm. Russwurm had been unanimously appointed by the Board of Managers of the MSCS in about June 1836: Russwurm acknowledged his appointment, thus:

I cannot express my high sense of this liberality, and the flattering manner in which they have conferred the appointment. This is certainly a new era in the history of men of color, and our community. . . . Yet the principles which have prompted them to actions are certainly in advance of this age of liberal ideals. They have departed from the old exacerbated paths by their exhibition in many forms. . . . I shall [carry out] my duty with my whole mind engaged; and failure shall not arise from neglect.<sup>54</sup>

As noted, Russwurm's unsuccessful attempt to become the first full-time black governor of the Liberian colony was among the reasons why he severed ties with the ACS and joined the MSCS. Indeed, Gurley's suggestion to him that he was a potential candidate for the above position might have been among the driving forces behind his vacillating or reluctant commitment to and, finally, his complete abandonment of his involvement with the evolving black civil rights movement in early-nineteenth-century America. Thus, Russwurm became loyal to the leaders of the MSCS, because they offered him the very position that he had been denied by the officials of the ACS.<sup>55</sup>

As it has been discussed, although his strategies, especially from 1829 to 1834, helped to enhance his distinguished status in Liberia, Russwurm's alienation not only by African Americans in America, but by those who moved to Liberia, was ironically caused by such strategies. Did Russwurm employ similar means to enhance his newly acquired leadership in Maryland in Liberia? This question together with why Russwurm led Maryland in Liberia as he did is the central theme of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

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### *Governor John B. Russwurm and the Civilizing Mission in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851*

In many ways Russwurm's leadership in Maryland in Liberia can be understood in the contexts of his experiences in Liberia that had been informed by his American episode. Before he assumed the governorship in Maryland in Liberia in 1836, Russwurm was already among the most Westernized blacks in the early nineteenth century. As it has been noted, Hebron Academy and Bowdoin College had exposed Russwurm to American high ideals. He had studied philosophy, mathematics, Latin, Greek, international law, literature, rhetoric, religion, political science or government, history, geography, and other disciplines that qualified him as a virtuous citizen. The methods of teaching included daily recital or narration of the writings of scholars such as Warren and Webster, and the concrete illustration of what were considered to be scientific concepts at that time. The moral and religious requirements Russwurm and other students had adhered to at Bowdoin included drinking no alcoholic beverages, dressing to the taste of the officials of the college, praying before breakfast and dinner, studying three hours before and after noon, and attending chapel services every evening. Russwurm, like the white leaders of the ACS and those of MSCS, promoted the mentioned rectitude in Liberia, and later, in Maryland in Liberia. Such an effort constituted the civilizing mission in the two American settlements in West Africa in the early nineteenth century.

Russwurm knew very well that the administration of Bowdoin College was not democratic; and its professors like most professors in the

nineteenth century would be described as what George Fitzhugh, one of America's leading pro-slavery intellectuals in nineteenth century, termed "slave masters under different name." And of course the Athenaeum Society Russwurm joined at Bowdoin was designed to accommodate only few of his former college's comrades such as Hale, Bridge, Longfellow, William Fessenden, Hall, and Franklin Pierce whose chances of becoming prominent Americans seemed to have been nearly assured. Russwurm was also aware of the fact that the evolving American democracy was limited to the very few who were qualified as virtuous citizens. It would not be extended to most black men until 1870, and to women before 1920.<sup>1</sup>

Russwurm had viewed not only America's unity of opposites or its contradictory high institutional values such as its democracy, virtuous republicanism, paternalism, racism, slavery, religious and moral principles in the abstract sense; he had also directly and indirectly witnessed their practical expressions. Nevertheless, his experiences with America's evolving ideological and social constructs were mostly auspicious. With the exception that he was forced to live outside the campus of Bowdoin College—perhaps, because of financial reasons, and the unexplained obstacle to his unsuccessful attempt to earn a medical degree, Russwurm's life in America was unlike the many humiliating experiences of his contemporaries such as Allen, Turner, Walker, Pennington, and Garnet in America, or those of such Liberian black leaders as Benedict, Carey, Teage, Lewis, Day, Wilson, Amos Herring, Johnson, Richard E. Murray, and others.<sup>2</sup>

As noted earlier, America's high moral and social principles not only informed Russwurm conceptually, but they also influenced him actively. His emigration to the Liberian colony in 1829 and active participation in maintaining and enhancing nearly all ACS-introduced ethics, aristocratic and social arrangements in that colony bear testimony to the above statement. He employed the *Liberia Herald* to justify and consolidate the social and centralized political orders, especially during the governorship of Mechlin that lasted from 1829 to 1834. Indeed, Russwurm became an integral part of Liberia's evolving privileged social and political systems. He served not only as chief editor of the *Liberia Herald*, superintendent of public schools, secretary of the settlers, and as a member of Liberia's Colonial Assembly, he also wedded Sarah McGill, the daughter of George McGill, the vice governor of Liberia, before his departure from Liberia for Maryland in Liberia in 1836.<sup>3</sup>

Yet his views and other endeavors differed from those of other Liberian elites in several important ways. As discussed in detail in chapter three, unlike their views that dealt with practical issues, those of Russwurm were both applicable and conceptual in nature. Thus, his strong direct

and indirect opposition to the calls for self-government and a court of appeal by his black Liberian counterparts between 1833 and 1835 is another example of how he differed from them. This could be also said about his uncompromising support of Governor Mechlin who was disliked by nearly all his counterparts. Against this background, Russwurm's leadership as governor of Maryland in Liberia can be well examined.

Russwurm inherited the governorship from Oliver Holmes in December 1836. Although his appointment as a governor by MSCS officials was partially influenced by the fact that he was black, Russwurm's leadership approach to the development of the colony, and views of the settlers were fundamentally indistinguishable from those of Governors Hall and Holmes who had served before him. Like them, Governor Russwurm served not only as chief executive of Maryland in Liberia he also performed as chief justice and commander of the militia of that colony. Although the Colonial Assembly or the settlers' legislature was an elected body, the constitution of the settlement subordinated it to the governor, an appointee of the MSCS.<sup>4</sup>

Reinforcing MSCS-introduced centralized administrative system in Maryland in Liberia was that all the members of the Colonial Assembly who including Anthony Wood, James Hall, Thomas Jackson, Thompson, and John Revey shared common social, commercial, and leadership interests with Governor Russwurm. Like Russwurm, the mentioned black settlers' elites were farmers and traders in the traditions of Antebellum Southern and North Eastern American planters and merchants. They grew and traded cash crops such as indigo, sugar cane, coffee, and other items in ways similar to their Liberian and Antebellum Southern counterparts in the early nineteenth century. It is no wonder that the assembly members and the governor agreed with each other on nearly all important issues in the settlement. Although it kept the leadership stable, the mutual relationship that existed between the colonial legislature and the governor of Maryland in Liberia simultaneously undermined the democratic values Russwurm had declared in 1829 that he would advance in Africa. Such a reciprocal relationship would not have probably enhanced democracy in Maryland in Liberia, since unlike the one that existed between the Hamiltonian Federalists and Jeffersonian Republicans that obviously helped to promote party politics and democracy in early independent America, it did not contain elements of competing forces. Not surprisingly that the government of Maryland in Liberia would continue to be centralized even after the death of Russwurm in 1851.<sup>5</sup>

Hence, one looks in vain in the vast records of the Maryland State Colonization Society for Russwurm's disapproval of any of

MSCS-introduced paternalistic and centralized administrative systems in Maryland in Liberia during his fifteen years as a governor. Russwurm's acceptance of the noted social orders that also encouraged settlers' material dependency on the Maryland State Colonization Society contradicted an element of virtuous republicanism that stressed the point that a truly free people were those who did not depend on others.<sup>6</sup>

Russwurm strictly kept in place not only the power arrangements that he had inherited from Governors Hall and Holmes, he continued with the practice of controlling information, especially the ones designated for MSCS officials and supporters in America. His control of messages rigidly applied to the ones covering administration, agriculture, trade, conditions of the settlers, and the relationship between the settlers and the Glebo Africans.<sup>7</sup>

Russwurm's control of information from the colony was probably enhanced by the fact that American and European would-be carriers of such purports were likely to have been the guests of the governor. It is no wonder that settlers' accounts of the colony, especially the ones designated for America, mostly corresponded with the objectives the MSCS hoped to accomplish in its West African colony.<sup>8</sup> This also explains why such accounts that are included in the Maryland State Colonization Society and the American Colonization Society Papers mostly reflect Russwurm's achievements and not his failings in the settlement.<sup>9</sup>

It must be spelled out, however, that Maryland colonizationists like the leading members of the American Colonization Society also played a role in this; they, in most cases, added to their records only those accounts that promoted their colonization schemes. It is not surprising that scholars who have uncritically and exclusively relied on the primary sources in question have provided only one-sided portrayals of Russwurm.<sup>10</sup>

There is no mention, for instance, in most studies that have covered him, of Russwurm's linking his anticipated Glebo land policy with President Andrew Jackson's extermination policy toward American Indians in the 1830s. Russwurm is on record for telling Reverend Daniel Bacon, a brother of Ezekiel Bacon, a former governor of the Liberian colony, that the officials of the Maryland State Colonization Society would not protest if settlers' land needs were promoted at the expense of the Glebo ethnic group in the area surrounding the settlement he governed.<sup>11</sup> He later told Bacon that the worst had happened to the Cherokee Indians in America, and there was never an outcry against such an action. Fortunately for the Glebo, Governor Russwurm did not have the superior military means to expel or to exterminate them as President Jackson and the other American leaders did to the Cherokees and other Indians



in America.<sup>12</sup> Besides, unlike the increasing population of America that was about 16,684,000 in the 1830s, that of the black American settlers in Maryland in Liberia was only 2,000 in the same period. There was, therefore, no need for an annexation of the vast Glebo land.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, the mentioned explanations do not mean that violence was not used episodically to force the Glebo people, especially those who lived near the area surrounding the American settlement, to accept settlers' demands during the leadership of Governor Russwurm. The governor had complained to Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry of the American frigate, *Potomac*, to intervene on behalf of the settlers against the nearby Glebo. Russwurm claimed they had united and demanded the settlers to pay excessive prices for their products such as rice and palm oil. Perry's initial reaction to the request was that he could not assist the settlers, since according to him they were not officially recognized by the Government of the United States as American citizens. Perry was influenced to change his position, however, by Horatio Bridge, who was also a naval officer on the *Potomac* and who was Russwurm's classmate and associate at Bowdoin College. Thus, Perry did intervene militarily on behalf of the settlers in 1843. This led to the burning of five Glebo villages to ashes. Russwurm described the event as "justified chastising, [and added that] they, [the Glebo] deserve all they have received. Nothing has happened to disturb our peace."<sup>14</sup> Russwurm later wrote a letter of thanks to Commodore Perry for his assistance to the settlers, thus:

Our hearts are cheered . . . with knowledge that a market is opened for our surplus produce. Our prospects have been brighter since the arrival of your squadron on the coast. . . . However, how willing we were before to endure everything for liberty, our hearts now swell with gratitude to you for the deep interest express in our well-being.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, Russwurm and his brother-in-law, Samuel McGill, later wrote to inform the officials of the MSCS in Baltimore that the Glebo had not attacked the settlers, because of the frequent calls of American war vessels. They noted that such visits gave the impression to the Glebo that the settlers were "under the . . . protection of the American squadron on the coast."<sup>16</sup>

Related to the mentioned discussions, was the charge that Governor Russwurm was involved one way or another with the transatlantic slave, an accusation that was never recorded in the papers of the MSCS. Reverend Leighton J. Wilson of the Episcopal Church in Maryland in Liberia had maintained in a letter he sent to America that Governor Russwurm was

indirectly engaged in the slave trade through which large numbers of Africans were still taken from Africa to Cuba, Brazil, other Latin American countries, and even to the United States up to the later part of the nineteenth century. Wilson had accused the governor of allowing slave ships to anchor at the harbor of Harper, the chief town of Maryland in Liberia. He added that the ships' crews repaired not only their ships at Harper, but they also conducted commercial activities in the town.<sup>17</sup>

A similar charge had been made earlier against such Liberian black leaders as Lewis, Payne, Teage, and others between 1832 and 1836. Unlike the charge against them that was made public in England and the United States, Russwurm's was not made public. Maryland colonizationists obviously succeeded in isolating the charge against their appointed governor in Maryland in Liberia. Besides, contrary to the practice of registering in the MSCS records, items of positive portrayal of Russwurm by his admirers, Wilson's description of him as "timid, cowardly incompetent, and lacking in wisdom" was kept out from the records of that body.<sup>18</sup>

The depiction of Russwurm as a popular leader, that mostly derived from his many self-congratulatory communications with the officials of the MSCS in Baltimore, was contradicted by several settlers who were led by Joshua H. Stewart in 1848. Stewart and the others had secretly informed MSCS officials that Russwurm had been in power for too long; and they, therefore, anticipated a new leadership. They also wished to know whether the Board of Directors of the MSCS wanted Russwurm to serve as a governor for life.<sup>19</sup> Stewart emphasized, thus:

after twelve years any man would lose all sympathies for those he governed, and would inevitably become a petty tyrant. [And] that such a long term in office violated the rules of republicanism, and . . . the colony might next have a king over it.<sup>20</sup>

Stewart further maintained that he hoped that it was not the intention of the Board of Directors to have Dr. Samuel Ford McGill to succeed Russwurm as governor. He believed that the settlers would not be receptive to such a political arrangement, since according to him Dr. McGill was too young for the job, and besides, he was Governor Russwurm's brother-in-law. Other settlers held the view that if Dr. McGill became Russwurm's successor, it would be nothing but nepotism.<sup>21</sup>

The settlers communicated these views to unidentified officials of the MSCS in Baltimore during Russwurm's absence from the colony in 1848. Russwurm had sailed to the United States to discuss issues relevant

to the colony and to receive medical treatment. Despite the warning from Stewart and other settlers, Dr. McGill was appointed as a governor of Maryland in Liberia by the officials of the MSCS following the death of Russwurm in 1851.<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, MSCS ensured the perpetuation of the centralized leadership system which it had and Russwurm had inherited from his predecessors. The MSCS made sure, for instance, that almost every item it sent to its West African colony would be put in the care of its appointed governor. The materials included agricultural, building, and educational items, food, clothes, and health-related products. These items were paternalistically distributed among the settlers to ensure acceptance of the leadership and other MSCS-introduced social arrangements in the colony. The settlers who adhered to the social orders the MSCS had introduced in Maryland in Liberia were materially and politically rewarded, and those who did not, were usually expelled by the governor from the colony. This explains why the colonial store that housed the above items was seen as a symbol of the governor's power.<sup>23</sup>

Taking into consideration that they had only few choices, most settlers deceptively accepted the social arrangements in the colony. Russwurm's fifteen years as a governor of Maryland in Liberia should not, therefore, be viewed in terms of his popularity among the settlers as it has been portrayed by his admirers; rather, it should be explained in the context of the mentioned social, political, and material orders. Indeed, opposition to his lengthy leadership that became evident during his absence from the colony suggests that the settlers' acceptance of his leadership might have been imposed by the mentioned orders, and not because of a genuine fondness for such a leadership. It is no wonder that Maryland in Liberia was described as "a large plantation [with its] governor acting as an overseer." Similar terms had been used to describe Liberia and its leaders.<sup>24</sup>

The terms used by Russwurm to describe the settlers he led were very similar to paternalistic and racist terms used by American pro-slavery and antislavery intellectuals, politicians, clergymen or theologians, and colonizationists to describe blacks in the nineteenth century. He informed white officials of the MSCS in 1838 that most of the black settlers were not habituated in providing for their own necessities, and added that they needed to "learn their social and political alphabet much as a child does his ABCs."<sup>25</sup> In a letter written to Latrobe, the president of the MSCS, Russwurm maintained that he was disturbed "by their [settlers'] improvidence as there are not six families which raise their own palm oil even—nor do I believe there is one who make their own soap."<sup>26</sup> Russwurm had informed MSCS officials that the settlers were unwilling to engage

in agricultural activities, because of "their lack of diligence," and that they continued to rely on the Glebo Africans for agricultural produce.<sup>27</sup> To convince MSCS officials that he was doing everything in his power to make the settlers self-sufficient, Russwurm told them that, "a little pinching, scolding, petting, and driving operations on the public farm have convinced those with the least spark of industry that they need not starve unless they choose."<sup>28</sup>

Russwurm and Dr. McGill, the former's most important assistant, suggested that many of the settlers lacked self-initiative; that they needed to be taught how to grow crops for themselves. They later added that the colony was, "in a state of complete tepidity . . . , [and that the MSCS officials] must suggest something afresh for our [people]. . . . Our people are not fit to plan and carry out any scheme of their own."<sup>29</sup>

Russwurm's remark that the black settlers in Maryland in Liberia acted at times like "blemished" children was similar to the paternalistic and racist views held of black people by the white officials of the MSCS and ACS. He later wrote to friends and Latrobe in America informing them that leadership responsibility should be assigned to the light-skinned settlers, since according to him, they were more qualified than the dark-skinned blacks to promote MSCS-introduced institutional values in the colony.<sup>30</sup>

As noted earlier, the mentioned notion concurred with the social practice of placing mulattoes above dark-skinned blacks in America, and later in the Liberian colony. Such a racial preference was designed to reinforce the view that whites, and anything closer to them in look and spirit, were superior to the ones that were not. It is no wonder that Russwurm encouraged the mentioned practice, for as it has been suggested, it was among the factors that had enhanced his achievements at Hebron, Bowdoin College, and of course, in the Liberian colony.

Russwurm also served as promoter of what the prominent members of the MSCS considered high moral and social ideals. As modified components of American Founding Fathers' self-serving virtuous republicanism, the leaders of the MSCS believed that such ethics were "indispensable to a successful government . . ." in their West African colony.<sup>31</sup> In a letter sent to Governor Hall and later given to Governor Russwurm, the officials of the MSCS maintained that:

much can be done by you in early stages of the colony's existence, in elevating the standard of the moral conduct. And you cannot do this better than by elevating the female character among your people. The destines of an empire, for all that we know, to the contrary are

in your hands. Let your model be the land of which you are a Son, and let the domestic circles of Maryland in Liberia, be as far as you can make them, such as were the firesides of the Pilgrims—the houses of Religion—the temples of chastity. You are particularly desired to preserve the strict observance of the Sabbath, and to discountenance, by all means in your power, to stop any thing that has a tendency to produce anti-religion and immorality.<sup>32</sup>

Evidently, Russwurm took the above quoted instructions very acutely, and he would pressure the settlers to accept not only such moral and religious values, but he would demand, moreover, that they internalize them. In fact, he had maintained that only through instruction, statute law, and occasional employment of corporal punishment, that the approved moral and social etiquette could be instilled in the common settlers. Evidently, the ethics in question were similar to the ones that had informed his experiences at Hebron High School, Bowdoin College; and, as noted, his preceding practical and conceptual acquaintances with American high values were reinforced by his Liberian social and religious environments in the early 1830s.

In line with the discussed high institutional virtues, Russwurm declared that he would employ protective measures to ensure the moral safety of female settlers. Against this background, Russwurm and the Colonial Assembly of Maryland in Liberia decreed that: “as a prevention to their acquiring loose [and] vicious habits, it shall be lawful to compel all single women who are destitute of home, to live in the house prepared for them, especially at night.” Thus, Russwurm decided to build a stone jail in 1847 to confine settlers’ and traditional adult males who failed to observe the stipulated moral and social decrees of the settlement. Those, whose wrongdoings were not serious, were released during daytime to work on public farms.<sup>33</sup>

Russwurm complained to the officials of the MSCS in 1839 that although they claimed that they were Christians, a significant number of settlers were lacking “vital piety.” He had described eighty-five blacks who arrived in the colony in November 1837 on board the vessel, *Niobe*, as a group who lacked moral values. He maintained that the group was a “scandal to . . . [the] quiet settlement”; and added that, like the traditional people, the newly arrived settlers did not mind punishment. He later pointed out that they behaved like they had just been released from prison. Against this backdrop, Russwurm together with the Colonial Assembly enacted a new law that was designed to punish with “heavy fine” or imprisonment of “whoever shall be guilty of seducing a woman

of good reputation under a promise of marriage and shall violate his promise."<sup>34</sup>

The high institutional values promoted by Russwurm and the other leaders in the colony did inform the attitudes of the common settlers toward the Glebo Africans of the area. A petition sent by some fifteen settlers to the leaders of the MSCS in Baltimore, illustrates such thoughts, thus:

Natives are beginning to be admitted into our Church and say that they are civilized. We expect nothing else, but soon there will be application made for citizenship. We must make sure an inquiry of one W. Davis. . . . He has three wives. He is allowed to take . . . oath. . . . We are directed to be obedient to the lawful authorities . . . [to] set down, take our oaths on the Bible to do justice. . . . We were born in a civilized country, instructed by our superiors, yet we have to submit to . . . the Heathens, their oaths taken with ours, what would not be done in America.<sup>35</sup>

Although he occasionally accused the settlers of the above hatred of the Glebo Africans, Russwurm was equally guilty of the same charge. He referred to the Glebo people, for example, as bush people, heathen, and savages in his frequent correspondence with the leaders of the MSCS.<sup>36</sup>

The self-praised emphasis Russwurm used to describe his leadership over the settlers was similarly stressed to convince the officials of the MSCS that his authority over the Glebo Africans in the Cape Palmas area was well-assured. He had written to Hall, the former governor, who now resided in Baltimore, that his statements were law in most places in Cape Palmas. He repeated these points in 1847, thus:

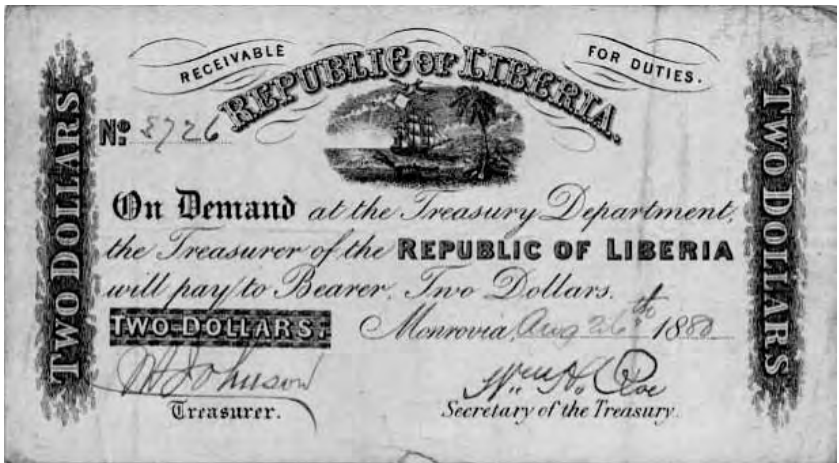
our influence [over] . . . all the tribes is increasing, and if I desire it I can almost dictate in their palaver (or a blend of Portuguese and African term that means to negotiate business transactions or to resolve conflicts employed by Europeans and indigenous Africans on the coast of West Africa since the fifteenth century) but this would be . . . needless trouble and expense, unless requested, I will never interfere.<sup>37</sup>

An event that took place in Cape Palmas, however, contradicted the preceding statement. Russwurm and his Westernized Glebo African helpers were stopped, and their clothes were taken by the very Glebo ethnic group he claimed to control in the area that had been allotted to the settlers by the Treaty of Purchase in 1833. Certainly, the Glebo

people did not recognize the authority of Maryland in Liberia, at least in practice until the early twentieth century.<sup>38</sup>

Paradoxes also characterized Russwurm's other endeavors in Maryland in Liberia. As discussed, Russwurm had condemned the Liberian settlers, because of their interest in commerce rather than agriculture. In fact, Russwurm and MSCS officials had used the above reason and others to justify the establishment of Maryland in Liberia. Russwurm was, however, to modify his position on the issue of trade and commerce during his leadership as governor in Maryland in Liberia. While he encouraged the majority of the settlers to grow such crops as corn, potatoes, okra, watermelons, cabbages, tomatoes, and yam, that were consumed locally, Russwurm like the black elites in Liberia, cultivated exportable crops that included coffee and sugar cane. By 1837, about 4,000 coffee trees had been planted in Maryland in Liberia.<sup>39</sup>

Russwurm enhanced commerce in the colony by purchasing two vessels in 1840. He named one of the vessels *Latrobe* in honor of John Latrobe, the President of Maryland State Colonization Society, and the other, the *Doctor*, perhaps, in praise of his brother-in-law, Samuel Ford McGill, who was a medical doctor.<sup>40</sup> With the encouragement and support of the MSCS, Russwurm decided to develop paper currency that included five cent, ten cent, and twenty-five cent notes (figure 5.1). Although it did not get rid of cotton as a legal tender in the colony, the new currency system



**Figure 5.1** Like the United States, Liberia used dollars and cents as its units of currency. Russwurm introduced similar currency in Maryland in Liberia when he became the governor of the colony in 1836. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

strengthened the authority of Russwurm, because he had control over its circulation; and further, the settlers were required to use the new medium of exchange. Besides, he had absolute control over the colonial store that housed nearly all items, including marketable ones sent to the settlement by the MSCS.<sup>41</sup>

In fact, commerce became central to the economy of the colony during the 1840s. With a combination of the new currency and continued barter system, Russwurm used the trade items sent to him by MSCS officials to purchase rice, palm oil, and camwoods from the Glebo Africans. And through the colonial store, the mentioned items were exchanged for cash or products from the Africans and settlers. Against this background, Russwurm managed to purchase approximately \$4,500.00 worth of products in 1840, and in 1846 he bought about 25,000 gallons of palm oil that were worth approximately \$8,500.00. He also purchased some 100 tons of camwoods in 1847.<sup>42</sup>

Russwurm's anticipated educational plan for the Glebo Africans in the Cape Palmas area was also in line with his commercial objective. He had suggested, for example, that schools should be built in the territories of the traditional Glebo Africans mainly to "keep the road open to the river and divert the trade from going to Rockboukah and Tabou" or two commercial outposts outside the limit of the American settlement.<sup>43</sup>

Like most pieces of information about important events in the colony that were brought to the attention of the MSCS leaders by Russwurm, the ones concerning education were communicated to the latter by the former. Here again, his descriptions of common settlers' attitudes toward education were contradictory. He maintained in 1838 that the

subject of education has perhaps never excited so deep an interest on old and young as of [the] present, . . . All the colonists deplore the want of education, and a few are willing to make every exertion to send their children to school, but the majority think it all sufficient, if they can stammer through a book, and scratch the names on a paper.<sup>44</sup>

Settlers' endeavors clearly illustrate, however, that the desire for education, especially for their children's education was among their main goals. Indeed, many of them had left America for Maryland in Liberia, because they believed that they would be in a better position to educate their children in West Africa than in America. It is no wonder that Henry Dennis, a settler wrote to a friend in America that, "his six children were learning to read and write, and . . . [except the] youngest [one, they] read the New Testament."<sup>45</sup>



The settlers had established literacy organizations such as the Debating Society, Cape Palmas Lyceum, Hall Palmas Reading Club, and Cape Palmas Reading Room and Library Association in Maryland in Liberia in the 1840s. Alexander Cowen, a representative of the Kentucky colonizationists who visited Maryland in Liberia in 1855 maintained that the students with whom he interacted with were progressing. He further pointed out that the practice of stopping children irregularly from playing and teaching them how to read and write in the colony compared very much with that of his home state.<sup>46</sup>

In fact, the educational history of Maryland in Liberia clearly indicates that most of the settlers showed interest in promoting learning in their community. Not surprisingly, several schools were built in the colony in the 1830s and 1840s by the settlers through the assistance of the MSCS, the Episcopal Church, and a benevolent women's organization that was headquartered in Baltimore (see figure 5.2). Even Russwurm, contradictorily admitted that settlers showed tremendous interest in education.<sup>47</sup>

The high institutional values taught at settlers' schools corresponded with the ones Russwurm had acquired in Canada, at Hebron and Bowdoin College in Maine. This could be said about the subjects taught and methods of teaching in these schools. The schools as the American ones, offered, for example, reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, geography, and



**Figure 5.2** College of West Africa established in Monrovia, Liberia by the Methodist Church in 1838. This is an example of America's influence in Liberia. (Courtesy of the Librarian Connection.)

grammar to their students. As in America and in Liberia, the Lancasterian system was employed also in Maryland in Liberia through the nineteenth century. The many Sunday schools provided similar scriptural education that included catechism. Advanced students in three of the schools received training in natural philosophy, astronomy, and surveying.<sup>48</sup>

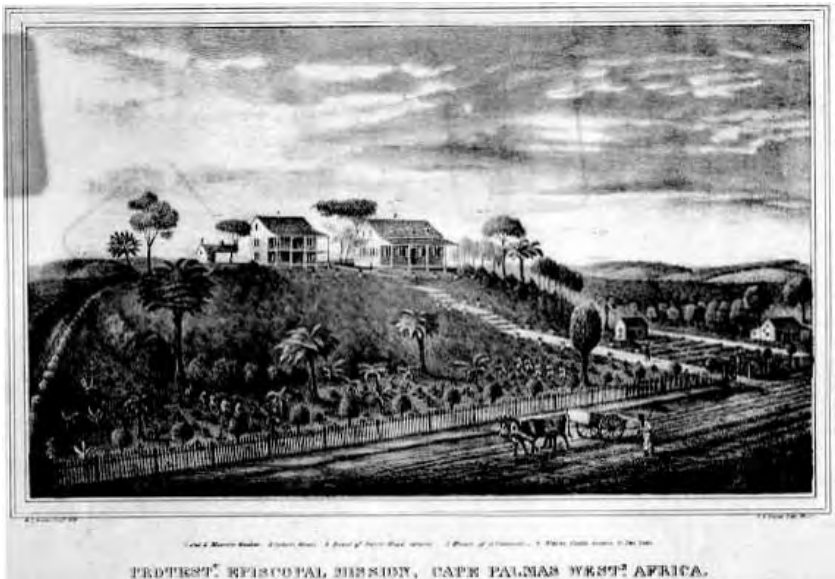
Most schools offered classes from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Thirty-minute recess was given to students at noon. Classes began in all schools in the settlement with prayers and religious education, and these were followed by reading, writing, and spelling practices. Reading, writing, and spelling exercises were done orally, and by copying selected words on slates. Like the practice of some American schools in the nineteenth century, Maryland in Liberia's teachers occasionally examined students in the presence of schools' officials and leading members of the community.<sup>49</sup>

Similar to the view of the officials of the MSCS in Baltimore, Russwurm together with American missionaries in Maryland in Liberia regarded the mentioned developments as a means of not only making the settlers virtuous citizens but also civilizing the Glebo Africans of the area. Thus, a new code of laws was developed for the Glebo in 1836, the very year Russwurm became governor of Maryland in Liberia. The code stipulated that any Glebo, especially those who lived near or in the limit of the settlement, found guilty of homicide, sexual assault, burning houses at night, or engaging in slave transactions would be sentenced to death by hanging. The code maintained that a Glebo found guilty of petty crime would spend time in prison proportionate to the nature of the committed crime. Hence, the new written laws prohibited the Glebo who were not already practicing polygamy from engaging in it. Obviously, the code was designed to discourage the Glebo people from what Russwurm and other MSCS officials considered to be bad habits, and to instill in them virtuous values. The mentioned attempt apparently conformed to the civilizing efforts in Maryland in Liberia. Thus, Hall and later Russwurm had asserted that the Africans would have to be first introduced to the fundamental attributes of Western civilization before they would become receptive to the high values of that civilization. They believed that the acceptance of such rectitude by the Glebo people would lead to the development of mutual relationship between them and settlers; and further, it would help the settlers peacefully acquire additional lands from them. As noted, Governor Russwurm saw the Americanization of the Glebo as a way of enhancing trade in the interior.<sup>50</sup>

Like the Liberian colony, the practice of using traditional children as servants in settlers' homes was also employed in Maryland in Liberia as the means of accomplishing MSCS-declared civilizing mission in Africa.

Although they received no monetary pay for their services, such traditional children were “. . . compelled to attend religious services and schools.” Attempts at assimilation also included the replacement of their traditional names with the family names of the settlers they served. Besides, such children were always reminded to conceal their African values, and reflect their newly acquired Western ones, since their adaptors associated most African social and cultural practices with the devil, and the settlers’ ones with enlightenment or civilization. It is no wonder that the Africans, especially the few who became well assimilated were socially indistinguishable from the settlers.<sup>51</sup>

Further, the social stratification Russwurm inherited and maintained in Maryland in Liberia had a lot in common with those he had experienced in Hebron, Bowdoin College, the African American community in New York City, and in the Liberian colony (see figure 5.3). Russwurm and other black leaders like Wood and Thompson, who were born in the West Indies, and Jackson, Hall, and Revey, a Baptist Minister, formed the upper layer of the social arrangements of Maryland in Liberia. Below them in social status were the ordinary settlers and a few assimilated



**Figure 5.3** American architectural influence in Maryland in Liberia. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress.)

Africans. The Westernized Africans in Maryland in Liberia served as a buffer between the traditional Africans and the settlers, since unlike in the Liberian colony, there were not significant numbers of recaptures to serve in the mentioned capacity in the former colony.<sup>52</sup>

The traditional Africans who resided in the areas around and within the limit of the settlement were at the lowest end of the emerging social ladder in Maryland in Liberia. As noted, most of the settlers held the view that the Africans were incapable of becoming full virtuous citizens; and it is not surprising that they continued to describe even the assimilated Africans, as savages. Thus, although he was in agreement with his black counterparts that the traditional Africans could never be truly civilized people, Russwurm's reservation or his cynicism about the non-settler elites becoming verily virtuous citizens, made him different from the other black elites in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia. Indeed, Russwurm's skepticism about the capacity of most settlers to acquire the values inherent in American rectitude is, obviously another example of what distinguished him from his black counterparts in West Africa.<sup>53</sup>

The arguments so far illustrate that the social orders and attributes, especially the high ones Russwurm maintained and promoted in Maryland in Liberia were fundamentally similar to the ones he had conceptually and concretely witnessed and experienced in America and in the Liberian colony. Russwurm had upheld these values in Liberia and promoted them in Maryland in Liberia because as noted, they were not only amid the main elements of his social backgrounds, but they also served as his main sources of social and political status in Liberia and later in Maryland in Liberia. This explains why Russwurm continued to pay homage to the high ideals of the American sponsors, including officials of the American Colonization Society and those of Maryland State Colonization Society in Washington, DC and Baltimore respectively, during his twenty-three years in West Africa.

Latrobe, Hall, and other prominent white members of the MSCS, who served as guardians of the mentioned institutional values, mostly determined the liaison between their group on one hand, and Russwurm and his settler elite counterparts on the other. Although he continued to profit from such a paternalistic pertinence, Russwurm's earlier lauded argument that only in Africa could blacks ascertain their own destiny was undermined by it. In order words, the relationship between Governor Russwurm and MSCS' white officials in Baltimore subjected the latter and the other black settlers in Maryland in Liberia to the former.

Although he had invoked elements of Black Nationalism before his departure for West Africa in 1829, Russwurm was less receptive to it, especially its cultural, social, and religious attributes in Maryland in Liberia. Unlike black cultural nationalists such as Reuben Simpson, J. C. Embry, Fortune, and others in America, Russwurm and most of his counterparts in both Liberia and Maryland in Liberia refused to assign the word Africa to any of their major social and religious institutions during the early nineteenth century; nor did they give such Americanized African names as Cudjo, Quashee, Tinah, Quashy Baham, Juba, Abba, Cuffy, Chloe, Selah, Mingo, Sawney, Ferriba, Garoh, Wan, Bena, Wilson Africa, Edward Affricaine, Kedar Africa, Elikaim Bardor, Byer Africa, Gadock Coffe, Pryor Biba, Alford, Cuff Cawon, and Ally Africa to their children.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, Russwurm named his first son, George, the second, James Hall, the third, Frank, and his daughter, Angelina. Russwurm sent her to America to study, and she never returned to Africa.<sup>55</sup>

Besides, the religious services of the black settlers Russwurm led in Maryland in Liberia were more reflections of those of the prominent members of the ACS and the MSCS rather than the practice of call and response and others that characterized African American Church activities in nineteenth-century America. Hence, the phrase, Americo-African first used by Latrobe to describe the first group of African Americans sent to West Africa by the ACS was replaced by the term Americo-Liberian by the settler leaders in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia to describe them.<sup>56</sup>

Besides, the mentioned African Americans' give-and-take religious ritual rarely employed by settlers' preachers in Liberia and in Maryland in Liberia, was later abandoned by the new generation of settlers' ministers; they preached almost like their white counterparts in the two West African settlements and in America. Such a replication corresponded with elements of virtuous republicanism that informed Governor Russwurm.<sup>57</sup> Russwurm's bringing into play Latin words in some of the letters he wrote to the officials of the MSCS in Baltimore is another example of his embodiment of the high rectitude he had acquired at Bowdoin College and other places in America.<sup>58</sup>

In fairness to Russwurm, his exposition of the high ideals in question was among the views that constituted his brands of Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism or the high form of Black Nationalism. He held the view, for example, that blacks would win respectability from whites if they became civilized, especially if they acquired the values inherent in virtuous republicanism, the high form of civilization as the American Founding Fathers and their successors defined it. As discussed, although his articulation

and implementation of elements of the mentioned institutional values added to his material, social, and leadership status in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia, Russwurm's empirical pronouncement of such high principles led to his simultaneous alienation by blacks in America and by those who settled in the two West African settlements. His alienation, did not, however, deter him from his strong commitment to the mentioned social and ideological orders that were also responsible for his tribulations.

There were reasons why Russwurm continued to behave as he did. First, as in America, Russwurm knew very well in Liberia, and later in Maryland in Liberia that there was everything to be gained from a strong commitment to the mentioned ideals and nothing to be won by not accepting them. As noted, Russwurm's close identification with the high values in question was, apparently the main source of his privileged status. Second, Russwurm's high social values that included the ones he had inherited at Hebron and Bowdoin College corresponded very much with the ACS and the MSCS-introduced religious, paternalistic, virtuous republican, racist, aristocratic, centralized leadership orders in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia, respectively. It is no wonder that Russwurm became among the most leading promoters of such ideals in the two West African settlements, especially in Maryland in Africa. Thus, Russwurm's thorough and scholarly knowledge of Western high thoughts together with his implementation of these values in West Africa, as noted, simultaneously made him popular with the white officials of the ACS and MSCS, but unpopular with the majority of settlers in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia. In this sense, Russwurm was very unlike other settler elites such as Roberts, Benedict, Carey, Herring, and Day who continued to rely socially and politically not only on the white leaders of the two American colonization schemes, but also on the common settlers in the two West African settlements as well.

Taking into consideration the arguments so far it is reasonable to maintain that Governor Russwurm did live up to his acquired American high principles in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia; certainly, officials of the ACS and MSCS rewarded him for his upholding and promoting of the mentioned institutional values in the two West African settlements. Ironically and evidently, Russwurm bolstered these high ideals at the expense of most of the African American settlers, the non-settler Africans, and the democratic values he declared he would promote in West Africa prior to his departure from America in 1829. Against this backdrop, Russwurm's leadership as a governor of Maryland in Liberia from 1836 to his death on June 17, 1851 can be fully understood.<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusion

The study has been an attempt to examine the experiences of John Brown Russwurm in relation to the American colonization initiatives in West Africa. It provides examples of the institutional values and norms that informed his social and intellectual endeavors not only in America, but also in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia from 1829 to 1851. It also shows how Russwurm, the ACS, and the MSCS worked collaboratively to promote these values in the two settlements. The institutional principles included elements of early-nineteenth-century evolving American high ideals. Russwurm's training in the classics, theology or religion, and the natural sciences at Hebron Academy and at Bowdoin College qualified him as a virtuous person, a criterion American Founding Fathers suggested was a prerequisite for a full privileged status in the new country. Although he met the above precondition, Russwurm did not become a full member of the class in question as a result of institutional racism that also characterized the mentioned rectitude.

Evidently, the very values that qualified Russwurm as an affluent black simultaneously also ensured his ineligibility for a full membership of America's emerging most influential social and intellectual class. Indeed, his failure to gain admission to Maine's Medical College was a concrete reminder that even though he had been among the top students at that college, and had been well praised by whites for his excellent academic achievement, he would not be allowed to become a medical doctor; such a profession was reserved for white Americans of upper-class background.

Against this background, Russwurm became conscious of his blackness, a feeling that informed his decision to join the black community in New York City in late 1826. His venture in New York together with his endeavor as a coeditor of the *Freedom's Journal*, a journal that he used to question the oppression of blacks, was in a way, a practical expression of Black Nationalism. Further, his acknowledgment of the achievements of

Africa and Haiti in the journal was another example of an assertion of Pan-Africanism, the high form of Black Nationalism. These and his concrete demonstration, by virtue of his remarkable academic achievements at Hebron and Bowdoin College, that blacks were not intellectually inferior as alleged by most Western secular and religious leaders, have rightfully classified Russwurm as a leading spokesperson for black people everywhere in the early nineteenth century.

Russwurm decided, however, to abandon the struggle for black civil rights in America and to back the ACS, an organization many blacks viewed not only as racist, but also as a movement that was interested in the perpetuation of slavery in America. Russwurm's change of position and his justifications did reinforce blacks' resentment toward him, since his action further buttressed the held view among whites that blacks were not American citizens, and would never be as such. Russwurm's increasing alienation in the black community in America, nevertheless, bolstered his commitment to the ACS colonization scheme in West Africa. Against this backdrop, Russwurm decided to emphasize not only the ACS civilizing mission in Africa, but he told blacks that only in Africa would they be in a position to determine their own destiny. As mentioned, Russwurm in fact left America in 1829 for the Liberian colony that had been established by the ACS on the West African coast in 1822.

Although most of Liberia's evolving institutional systems were similar to the American ones that he had condemned in the *Freedom's Journal*, Russwurm praised them in Liberia and later in Maryland in Liberia, contrary to his earlier view that only in Africa could black Americans determine their destiny. His support for the paternalistic, aristocratic, and centralized sociopolitical orders that were led by whites in colonial Liberia bears testimony to the preceding statement. Indeed, Russwurm informed the ACS leadership in colonial Liberia that democratic principles should be restricted in the colony until majority of the black settlers became virtuous people. He later communicated to Latrobe, a funding member of the MSCS, that Maryland in Liberia should be governed by the mulatto settlers who he believed had acquired the values inherent in virtuous republicanism. Russwurm's disapproval of traditional African values in Liberia that he had directly and indirectly paid homage to in America is another example of his inconsistency and an expression of his American high ideals.

Evidently, the officials of the ACS and MSCS rewarded Russwurm with important positions and material things for his implementation of the mentioned ideals in their respective West African settlements. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to maintain that Russwurm supported



these ideals solely because of his material and power wants. As discussed in the study, Russwurm's training at Hebron and Bowdoin College, included elements of American paternalism, virtuous republicanism, racism, and its moral or religious, social and material orders, conformed to the ACS and MSCS social constructs in Liberia and in Maryland in Liberia respectively. Against this background, together with his self-seeking interests, it could be reasonably concluded that Russwurm acted as he did during his twenty-five years in West Africa. Further, Russwurm's ceaseless embracement in West Africa of America's contradictory ideals is a clear indication that he was absolutely committed to such values, especially the high ones that had informed his thoughts and endeavors at Hebron and Bowdoin College. Not surprisingly, Russwurm was abundantly rewarded by the custodians of the high institutional values in question.

Thus, among the positive remembrances of Russwurm is the praise he rightfully continues to receive, even in death, for his accomplishments. An island in south-eastern Liberia was named after him following his death in 1851; and written on a statue erected in Liberia in his commemoration are the words: *Able, Learned, Faithful, An Honor to his Race*. In heralding Russwurm's death, the *Boston Post* noted that he was "distinguished for sagacity, firmness, and integrity. Irreproachable in his public and private character, he exercised an important influence upon the welfare of the flourishing colony over which he presided."<sup>1</sup> Latrobe, the president of the MSCS and later, the president of the ACS, eulogized Russwurm in these words, thus:

If white men have ceased to hold office or exercise authority among you, it is because he illustrated the capacity of your race to fill the highest political office with an ability that could not be surpassed. . . . In the long career of happiness and prosperity which is already opening in Liberia its highest offices will doubtless be often filled by worth and talent. But great and distinguished as these may be, their possessors may always resort with profit to your earliest history to gather from the records of Governor Russwurm's life the most admirable examples of prudence, wisdom, and integrity.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, a scholarship together with an annual lecture and a school were in addition named in his honor at Bowdoin College and in New York City respectively in the 1960s. The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) in America also inaugurated in his honor, the Russwurm Award in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

But as discussed in the study, his support for the developments of antidemocratic institutions and aristocratic social arrangements, especially in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia seriously seem to call into question the side effects of his scholarly achievements, his contribution to the civil rights movement in America in the late 1820s, and his personal material and social gains. This statement is supported by the direct and indirect consequences of the undemocratic and aristocratic social systems he conceptually and practicably helped to promote in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia from 1829 to 1851; for they would become among the sources of Liberia's social and political disorders that tragically led to the deaths of more than 250,000 Liberians from 1980 through 2003.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, Russwurm's early strong opposition to the ACS colonization initiative; and his later approval of the scheme together with that body and the MSCS-introduced centralized leadership systems in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia; his close alliance with Mechlin, whom the settlers considered to be Liberia's most dictatorial white governor; his dependence almost solely on the ACS and MSCS; his cynical attitude toward most of the African American settlers; and his inflexible interpretation and implementation of American high institutional values in West Africa obviously made Russwurm different from the other black elites in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia. These endeavors, moreover, illustrate that Russwurm was a key player in the promotion of America's social, ethical, material, and political values, which included the negative high ones in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia from 1829 to 1851. While the mentioned activities helped Russwurm win the endorsement of the ACS and that of the MSCS, they were obviously responsible for his alienation in the two American settlements in West Africa.

It may be reasonably maintained, however, that Russwurm's actions were in a way nearly similar to the deeds of earlier semi-Westernized and well-Westernized West African coastal merchant elites such as Tomba Mendez, Jose Lopez de Moura, Henry Tucker, James Cleveland, Long Peter, King Jimmy, Zachary Rogers, Senhora Duches, Robin Corker, John Mills, and others who embraced the European-sponsored transatlantic slave trade from the sixteenth century through the nineteenth century; for they too, profited enormously from the very trade that enslaved more than twelve million Africans in the Americas.<sup>5</sup>

The above statement could be applied to a significant number of the present century highly Westernized Africans (including this author) in Africa and their counterparts in the Western Diaspora. Like their earlier counterparts, the current Westernized black technocrats, intellectuals, religious and secular leaders, and military personnel in Africa and in the

Diaspora have evidently been rewarded for the promotion of their acquired contradictory Western high rectitude.<sup>6</sup> Their intellectual, professional, and material achievements must, however, be viewed in relationship to the powerlessness, impoverishment, and continued subjugation of many of their people, in Africa and in the Diaspora, since as in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia, their newly acquired Western social, economic, political, cultural, and religious values or other sources of privileged status, have been ironically parts of the root causes of the mentioned problems.<sup>7</sup> For me, these are among the appalling legacies of Russwurm and the other Westernized blacks who came before and after him.

## NOTES

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### Introduction

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1. Many people still believe that John B. Russwurm was the first black to earn a college degree in America. Studies have illustrated, however, that he was the third black college graduate; Alexander Twilight who earned his B.A. degree from Middlebury College in Vermont in 1823 is considered to be the first black to earn a college degree in America. Following his graduation, Twilight served as a school teacher in Peru, New York, and as a preacher in a Presbyterian Church in Plattsburgh in New York. He later served as the principal of a school in Orleans County in Vermont and then as a Vermont legislator from 1836 to 1837.

Edward Jones, another black, had earned his B.A. degree from Amherst College in Massachusetts two weeks before Russwurm earned his degree in 1826. Following his graduation, Jones studied at Andover Theological Seminary and then at African Mission School which was located in Hartford, Connecticut. Jones was ordained as an Episcopal Church priest, and was later offered an honorary M.A. degree by Trinity College in Hartford in 1830. Jones left America for Sierra Leone in 1831, a colony that had been established by the British for their black Diasporas on the coast of West Africa in 1787. Jones served as a schoolmaster and a principal of Fourah Bay College, and then an editor of two newspapers in Freetown, the chief town of Sierra Leone. He later went to Britain where he died in 1864. For details of the foregoing explanations see these works: Clarence G. Contee, "Twilight, Alexander Lucius, 1795–1857," in Rayford W. Logan and Michael R. Winston, eds., *Dictionary of American Negro Biography* (New York, 1982), p. 613; Gregor Hileman, "The Iron Willed Black Schoolmaster and His Granite Academy," *Middlebury College Newsletter*, Spring (1974), pp. 6–26; Stephen Keith, "The Life and Time of Edward Jones," M.A. Thesis, Amherst College (1973), Chapters 1 and 2; Hugh Hawkins, "Edward Jones: First American Negro College Graduate?" *School and Society*, November 4 (1961), pp. 375–376; Hugh Hawkins, "Jones, Edward 1808–1864," in Logan and Winston, eds., *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, p. 364; and Thomas J. Thompson, ed., *The Jubilee and Centenary Volume of Fourah Bay College* (Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1930), pp. 16–25, 97.

2. There have been many publications that covered Russwurm. Nevertheless, none of these studies comprehensively treats his endeavors in West Africa in relation to his New England intellectual background and the colonization initiatives of the ACS and MSCS. For the above statements see the following works: Philip S. Foner ed., "John Brown Russwurm, A Document," *Journal of Negro History*, October (1969), pp. 393–3997; Bella Gross, "Freedom's Journal and the Rights of All," *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 15, July (1932), pp. 241–286; Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831–1857* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 50–52, 90–91, 124, 127–128, 161, 238, 147, 157, 163–164, and 171–172; P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816–1865* (New York, 1961), pp. 167–168, 191; Richard West, *Back to*

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3. My views on Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism throughout the study are based on the assumption that the best way to define any ideology is to delineate it in the context of its concrete manifestation. For excellent examples of this, see the following studies: Moses, ed., *Classical Black Nationalism: From the American Revolution to Marcus Garvey* (New York, 1989); William Van Deburg, ed., *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan* (New York, 1997); Mary F. Berry and John W. Blassingame, *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America* (New York, 1982).

## **Chapter One John B. Russwurm and His Early Years in America**

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2. Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (New York, 1972), pp. 224–225, 228–229, 238–246; Jonathan Bush, “The British Constitution and the Creation of American Slavery,” in Paul Finkelman, ed., *Slavery and the Law* (Madison, WI, 1997), pp. 379–405; Alan Watson, *Slave Law in the Americas* (Athens, GA, 1989), pp. 11–12, 64, 85, 103; Finkelman, *The Law of Freedom and Bondage: A Casebook* (New York, 1986), pp. 1, 10; William M. Wiecek, “Somerset: Lord Mansfield and the Legitimacy of Slavery in the Anglo-American World,” *University of Chicago Law Review*, vol. 42 (1974), pp. 86, 127; Thomas R. R. Cobb, *An Inquiry into*

- the Law of Negro Slavery in the United States of America* (1858; reprint, New York: Negro University Press, 1968), Sec. 83, p. 82; William Goodell, *The American Slave Code in Theory and Practice* (1853; reprint, Negro University Press, 1968), pp. 258–265; and Hilary McD Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627–1715* (Knoxville, TN, 1989), pp. 5, 76–77, 104.
3. A number of slaveholders did send their black sons or daughters to Europe, non-slave states in America, or outside their immediate locations to study or acquire skills. While some slaveholders carried out such an action, because they cared about their black children, others did it to cover up the sexual exploitation of their female slaves, and the many contradictory racist arguments they employed to justify slavery. For details of the above explanations, see these studies: Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York, 1984), pp. 52–53; Robert B. Toplin, “Between Black and White: Attitude Toward Southern Mulattoes, 1830–1861,” *Journal of Southern History*, vol. 45 (1979), pp. 185–200; Loren Schwenger, *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790–1915* (Urbana and Chicago, 1990), pp. 99–101; E. Horace Fitchett, “The Origin and Growth of the Free Negro Population of Charleston, South Carolina,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 26, October (1941), 425–426; 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*, vol. 3, Summer (1970), pp. 408–411; Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1968), pp. 77–81; William Hogan and Edwin Davis, eds., *William Johnson’s Natchez: The Ante-Bellum Diary of a Free Negro* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1951), pp. 15, 18–19, 334; Herbert E. Sterkx, *The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Louisiana* (Rutherford, NJ, 1972), pp. 91–92, 204; Luther Porter Jackson, “Free Negroes of Petersburg, Virginia,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 12, July (1927), pp. 365–388; Luther Porter Jackson “The Virginia Free Negro Farmer and Property Owner, 1830–1860,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 24, October (1939), pp. 390–489; John Russell, “Colored Freemen as Slave Owners in Virginia,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 1, June (1916), pp. 233–242; and Ira Berlin, “The Structure of the Free Negro Caste in the Antebellum United States,” *Journal of Social History*, vol. 9, Spring (1976), pp. 297–319.
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  5. Johnson and Roark, *Black Masters*, pp. 61–64; Carter 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* (Washington, DC, 1924), pp. 27–31; Jackson, “Free Negroes of Petersburg, Virginia,” pp. 365–388; Fitchett, “The Origin and Growth of the Free Negro Population of Charleston, South Carolina,” pp. 425–426; Larry Koger, *Black Slaveowners: Free Black Slave Masters in South Carolina, 1790–1860* (Jefferson, NC, 1985), pp. 20–21, 219–223; Schwenger, *Black Property Owners in the South*, pp. 104–112.
  6. See Note 3.
  7. Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (Washington, DC, 1919), pp. 94–95; Bella Gross, “Freedom’s Journal and the Rights of All”, *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 15, July (1932), pp. 278–279; Heratio Bridge, *Personal Recollections of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (New York, 1861), pp. 25–30; and Contee, Sr., “Russwurm, John Brown,” in Rayford W. Logan and Michael R. Winston, eds., *Dictionary of American Negro Biography* (New York, 1982), pp. 538–539.
  8. See Note 3.
  9. See Note 5.

10. See Note 5.
11. Although they were against slavery, most white abolitionists were not integrationists, especially during the period under consideration. For details of this argument see the following studies: Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery. The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 12–14, 216–230; Charles H. Wesley, “The Negro’s Struggle for Freedom in Its Birthplace,” *Journal Negro History*, vol. 30 (1945), p. 74; Lewis Tappan, *The Life of Arthur Tappan* (New York, 1870), pp. 201–202; and William E. Channing, “The African Character,” in John A. Collins, ed., *The Anti-Slavery Picknick: A Collection of Speeches, Poems, Dialogues, and Songs; Intended for Use in Schools and Anti-Slavery Meetings* (Boston, 1842), pp. 56–58.
12. Eve Kornfield, *Creating an American Culture, 1775–1800: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, 2001), pp. 6, 44, 66–70; Eve Kornfield, “From Republicanism to Liberalism: The Intellectual Journey of David Ramsay,” *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 9 (1989), pp. 289–213.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age Revolution, 1770–1823* (Ithaca, New York, 1975), pp. 255–284; David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, NY, 1966), Chapters 13 and 14; Edmund S. Morgan, “Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox,” *The Journal of American History*, vol. LIX, June (1972), pp. 6, 25, 29; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1975), pp. 363–387; Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 1967), pp. 55–143, 232–246; Gordon S. Wood, “Republicanism as a Revolutionary Ideology,” in John R. Howe Jr., ed., *The Role of Ideology in the American Revolution* (New York, 1970), pp. 83–91; Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1969), pp. 3–124; and Henry P. Johnston, ed., *John Jay, Correspondence and Public Papers* (New York, 1890–1893), pp. 406–407, 289–313.
15. *Freedom’s Journal*, February 28, 1829.
16. Brewer, “John B. Russwurm,” pp. 413–422.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Foner, ed., “John Brown Russwurm, Document,” pp. 393–397; Dann, ed., *The Black Press, 1827–1890*, p. 27; and *Bowdoin College General Catalogue . . . 1794–1958*, p. 58.
19. Foner, ed., “John Brown Russwurm, Document,” p. 394.
20. Wilson J. Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York, 1989), pp. 26–33; John S. Haller Jr., *Outcasts from Evolution Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859–1900* (New York, 1970), pp. 59–60; Charles S. Bacon, “The Race Problem,” *Medicine*, vol. 9, May (1903), p. 342. Litwack, *North of Slavery*, pp. 113–152; and Brewer, “John B. Russwurm,” pp. 413–422.
21. Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th Century America* (New York, 1990), pp. 136–144; and *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 1, 1851.
22. Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, pp. 27–31; and Robert Warner, *New Haven Negroes: A Social History* (New Haven, CT, 1940), pp. 86–87.
23. *Ibid.*
24. For details on how Pan-Africanism is the high form of Black Nationalism see the following studies: Mary F. Berry and John W. Blassingame, *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America* (New York, 1982), pp. 388–423; Theodore Draper, *The Rediscovery of Black Nationalism* (New York, 1970), pp. 48, 49, 50, 51, 92, and 124; Hollis Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot* (New York, 1967), pp. 6–9, 32–53, 191–209, 248, 250, and 251; Rupert Lewis, *Marcus Garvey: Anti-Colonial Champion* (Trenton, NJ, 1998), pp. 25–36, 45, and 53; William Van Deburg, ed., *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan* (New York, 1997), pp. 8–9, 10, 40, 46, 109–111, 203–214, 279, 313; and Amos J. Beyan, “Liberia: Blyden E. W. 1832–1912,” in Kevin Shillington, ed., *Encyclopedia of African History*, vol. 1 (New York, 2005), pp. 151–152.
25. Foner, ed., “John Brown Russwurm Document,” pp. 394–395.
26. Haller Jr. *Outcast from Evolution*, pp. 3, 39, 40–59, 70–94, 153–202, 205–210; Stefan Kuhl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism* (New York, 1994),

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27. Paul Finkelman, “The Centrality of Slavery in American Legal Development,” in Finkelman, ed., *Slavery and the Law*, pp. 3–26; Mellon, *Early American Views*, pp. v–xiii; John P. Kaminski, ed., *A Necessary Evil? Slavery and the Debate Over the Constitution* (Madison, WI, 1995), pp. 41–54; David Brion Davis, “American Slavery and the American Revolution,” in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, eds., *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chicago, 1986), pp. 273–275; Takaki, *Iron Cages*, pp. 11–15; Morgan, *American Slavery and American Freedom*, pp. 363–387; and Gary B. Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Madison, WI, 1990), pp. 4, 25, 26–27, 42, 78, 83, 133, 142–143.
  28. Ibid., Donald G. Nieman, *Promises to Keep: African-Americans and the Constitution Order, 1776 to the Present* (New York, 1991), pp. 3–5, 10–14; Herbert Aptheker, *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, 3 vols. (New York, 1951–1974), vol. 1, p. 43, Donald L. Robinson, *Slavery in the Structure of American Politics, 1765–1820* (New York, 1971), pp. 288–289; Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Dred Scott Case: Its Significance in American Law and Politics* (New York, 1978), pp. 333–334.
  29. Quoted in Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 5th edition (New York, 1980), p. 89.
  30. Litwack, *North of Slavery*, pp. 31–40; William Chambers, *American Slavery and Colour* (London, 1857), p. 37; William Chambers, *Things as they are in America* (London, 1854), p. 354; *Appendix to the Annals of the Congress*, 1 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 2205–2206; 2 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 1392; 11 Cong., 1 and 2 Sess., p. 2569; 16 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 2600–2610; *Appendix to the Congressional Debates*, 18 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 91; Charles H. Wesley, “Negro Suffrage in the Period of Constitution Making, 1787–1865,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 30 (1945) p. 154; and Charles F. Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795–1848*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia, 1875), pp. 209–210.
  31. Ibid., Phillip S. Foner, ed., *The Life and the Writings of Frederick Douglass*, vol. 2 (New York, 1950–1955), p. 411; *Pennsylvania Constitutional Debates of 1837–1838*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia, 1837–1838), p. 541; and Marion T. Wright, “Negro Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776–1875,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 33 (1948), pp. 172–176.
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  34. Moses, *Alexander Crummell*, p. 18; M. A. Harris, *A Negro History Town of Manhattan* (New York, 1968), pp. 90–92; Roi Ottley and William Weatherby, *The Negro in New York* (New York, 1967), p. 102; Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (London, 1832; reprinted New York, 1949), pp. 28–29; and James W. Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York, 1968), pp. 12–13.
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37. *The National Advocate*, New York, October 27, 1821.
  38. Johnson, *Black Manhattan*, pp. 79–81.
  39. Litwack, *North of Slavery*, pp. 64–112, 153–186; *Illinois Constitutional Debates 1847; Appendix to the Congressional Globe*, 30 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 727; John Jones, *The Black Laws of Illinois, and a Few Reasons Why They be Repealed* (Chicago, 1864), p. 13; J. N. Gridley, "A Case under an Illinois Black Law," *Illinois State Historical Society Journal*, vol. IV (1915), pp. 401–425; Richard Wade, "The Negro in Cincinnati, 1800–1830," *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 39 (1954), pp. 50–55; Wright, "Negro Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776–1875," pp. 172–176; James T. Adams, "Disfranchisement of Negroes in Negro New England," *American Historical Review*, vol. 30 (1925), p. 545; and Wesley, "Negro Suffrage in the Period of Constitution Making, 1787–1865," vol. 32 (1947), p. 154.
  40. Dann, ed., *The Black Press, 1827–1890*, pp. 16–17; Gross, "Freedom's Journal and the Rights of All," pp. 241–286; Johnson, *Black Manhattan*, pp. 14, 15, 29; and Litwack, *North of Slavery*, pp. 114, 175, 252.
  41. Gross, "Freedom's Journal and the Rights of All," pp. 241–286.
  42. Gross, "Freedom's Journal and the Rights of All," pp. 241–243; Litwack, *North of Slavery*, pp. 39, 100, 102, 159, 168–169; and Dann, ed., *The Black Press, 1827–1890*, pp. 13–17.
  43. *Freedom's Journal*, April 25, 1828.
  44. *Ibid.*, April 20, 1827.
  45. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1827.
  46. *Ibid.*, July 9, 1827.
  47. *Ibid.*, May 30, 1827.
  48. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1827.
  49. *Ibid.*, August 8, 1828; October 3, 1828.
  50. *Ibid.*, September 12, 1828.
  51. *Ibid.*, September 5, 1828.
  52. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1827.
  53. *Ibid.*, November 14, 1828.
  54. *Ibid.*, September 21, 1827; June 18, 1827.
  55. *Ibid.*, March 16, 1827.
  56. *Ibid.*
  57. *Ibid.*, March 16, 1827; July 27, 1827; January 18, 1828.
  58. *Ibid.*, March 16, 1827; June 1, 1827.
  59. Gross, "Freedom's Journal and the Rights of All," pp. 257–258, 260.
  60. *Freedom's Journal*, December 26, 1828.
  61. *Ibid.*, September 12, 1828.
  62. *Ibid.*, September 5, 1828.
  63. *Ibid.*, August 1, 1828.
  64. Foner, ed., "John Brown Russwurm, Document," pp. 394–395.
  65. *Ibid.*
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5. *Freedom's Journal*, February 14, 1829.
6. *Ibid.*, December 5, 1828.
7. *Ibid.*
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10. *Ibid.*, December 12, 1828.
11. *Ibid.*, January 2, 1829.
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### **Chapter Three    The American Colonization Society**

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  14. *Ibid.*, p. 55; and Alexander, *A History of Colonization*. For similar views by later African nationalists and Pan-Africanists see the following studies: C. Legum, *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide* (London, 1962); Nnandi Azikiwe, *The Future of Pan-Africanism* (Lagos, Nigeria, 1964); Nnandi Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa* (Lagos, Nigeria, 1937); George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (London, 1956); L. C. Gwam, “Dr. Edward Wilmot Blyden,” *Ibadan*, no. 15 (1963), pp. 8–10; Robert July, “Nineteenth Century Negritude: Edward W. Blyden,” *Journal of African History*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1964), pp. 73–86; A. Nicol, “Great Sons of Africa: Dr. Edward Blyden,” *Africana, The Magazine of the West African Society*, vol. 1 (1949), pp. 19–20; George Shepperson, “Notes on Negro American Influence on the Emergence of African Nationalism,” *Journal of African History*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1960), pp. 299–312; Hollis Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot* (New York, 1967); Hollis Lynch, and “Edward W. Blyden: Pioneer West African Nationalist,” *Journal of African History*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1965), pp. 373–388.
  15. *African Intelligencer*, July 1820.

16. "Abstract of a Journal," *Second Annual Report of the ACS*, April 4 (1818), p. 35. Also quoted in Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, p. 35.
17. Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 60–61; Spring, *Memoirs of Mills*, pp. 136–140, 142–143, 157, 160–162, 164, 165–167, 226; Alexander, *History of Colonization*, pp. 102–104; and *National Intelligencer*, Washington, DC, September 23, 1818.
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21. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization*, pp. 63–64; West, *Back to Africa*, p. 114; *Fifth Annual Report of the ACS* (1821), pp. 58–59, 63, 64–66; and Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 62–66.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Fifth Annual Report of the ACS* (1822), p. 61; Quoted also in West, *Back to Africa*, p. 114.
24. Anthony J. Nimley, *The Liberian Bureaucracy: An Analysis and Evaluation of the Environment, Structure, and Functions* (Washington, DC, 1977), pp. 127–137; Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, p. 66; West, *Back to Africa*, pp. 114–115; Robert F. Stockton to the Board of Managers, U.S.S. Alligator, December 16, 1821 in RACS; *Fifth Annual Report of the ACS* (1821), pp. 58–59, 63, 64–66; and Staudenraus, *The African Colonization*, p. 65.
25. Ralph Gurley, *Letter . . . on the Colonization and Civilization of Africa* (London, 1829), p. 80; Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 67–68; West, *Back to Africa*, pp. 117–118; and Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, p. 25.
26. Quoted in West, *Back to Africa*, p. 122. Also see Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 68–69.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Ashmun, *Memoir of the Life and Character of Rev. Samuel Bacon. . . .*, pp. 250 and 251.
29. The following studies testify to this: Jordan, *White Over Black*, pp. 491–511; Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, pp. 30–31, 43, 77, 96, 97, 100–112, 119; Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States 1790–1860* (Chicago, 1961), pp. 30–63; and Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 79–80.
30. Minutes of the Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society, December 10, 1819.
31. For details on how blacks were paternalistically treated by whites in Antebellum South and in colonial Liberia, see the following studies: Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 80–81, 85–86; Beyan, "The American Colonization Society and the Socio-Religious Characterization of Liberia: A Historical Survey, 1822–1900," *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1985), pp. 1–10; Beyan, "The American Colonization Society and the Origins of Undemocratic Institutions in Liberia in Historical Perspective," *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1989), pp. 140–151; C. Vann Woodward, ed., *George Fitzhugh, Cannibals All or Slaves Without Masters* (Cambridge, England, 1973), p. 187; James Oaks, *The Ruling Race: History of American Slaveholders* (New York, 1983), pp. 97–122; Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1918), pp. 291–308, 489–490; *Journal of the Board of Managers*, Washington, DC, June 26, December 23, RACS, reel 18; Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, p. 66; *Constitution, Government, and Digest of the Laws of Liberia as Confirmed and Established by the Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society* (Washington, DC, 1825), pp. 3–7; *Twelfth Annual Report of ACS* (1828), pp. 35–36; Ralph Gurley, *Life of Jehudi Ashmun*, Washington, DC (1835), pp. 115–116; and Huberich, *The Political and the Legislature History of Liberia*, vol. 1, pp. 199–214, 278–292.



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35. Gurley, *Life of Ashmun*, pp. 190–193; and Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 82–85.
36. West, *Back to Africa*, p. 128; and Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 83–84.
37. Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 83–85.
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39. Gurley, *Life of Ashmun*, p. 25; and quoted in Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, p. 86.
40. See Note 5 of chapter 1; Litwack, *North of Slavery*, pp. 182–184; Joseph W. Wilson, *Sketches of Higher Classes of Coloured Society in Philadelphia by a Southerner* (Philadelphia, 1841), pp. 47–48, 54, 56, 60, 95–97; and M. H. Freeman, “The Educational Wants of Free Colored People,” *Anglo African Magazine*, vol. 1 (1859) pp. 116–119.
41. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, pp. 32–53; Edward W. Blyden, “Mixed Races in Liberia,” *Smithsonian Institute Annual Report* (Washington, DC, 1870), pp. 386–388; Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 100–101; *African Repository*, vol. 46 (1870), pp. 102–111; and “The True Whig National Convention 1869,” Liberian National Archives, Monrovia, Liberia.
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50. George Shepperson, “Edward Wilmot Blyden 1832–1912,” in Logan and Winston, eds., *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, p. 49; Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia*, vol. 1, pp. 432–433.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Elder S. S. Ball, *Liberia: The Conditions and Prospects of the Liberia* (Alton, IL, 1848); G. B. Stebbins, *Facts and Opinions Touching the Real Origin, Character, and Influence of the American Colonization Society: Views of Wilberforce, Crackson, and Others, and Opinions of the Free People of Color of the United States* (1853; reprinted, New York, 1969), pp. 184–185; and Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 126–127.
53. Sir Harry Johnston, *Liberia*, vol. 2 (New York, 1906), pp. 353–354; and quoted in Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 149–150.
54. Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 127–131; Stebbins, *Facts and Opinion . . .*, pp. 41–42, 162–163; and *African Repository*, vol. 20 (1836), pp. 120–123.
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72. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, pp. 165–168; *African Repository*, vol. 8 (1832), pp. 53, 55; *African Repository*, vol. 9, (1833), pp. 260, 269, 283–284; *African Repository*, vol. 10 (1834), pp. 33–35, 46, 106, 129–135, 373; and *Liberia Herald*, Monrovia, Liberia, February 22, 1832.
73. *Ibid.*
74. For this allegation see Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia*, pp. 432–433.
75. *African Repository*, vol. 8 (1832), pp. 24, 157, 259–260; *Liberia Herald*, Monrovia, Liberia, March, 1832; Joseph Mechlin, from Monrovia, Liberia, June 1830, to Ralph Gurley, RACS, reel 1.
76. *Liberia Herald*, Monrovia, Liberia, March 6, 1830.
77. *Ibid.*
78. See Notes 49 and 50 in chapter 1.
79. C. M. Waring, from Monrovia, Liberia, August 1, 1833, to Ralph Gurley, RACS, reel 9.
80. John Russwurm, from Monrovia, Liberia, August 6, 1833, to Ralph Gurley, RACS, reel 18.
81. Richardson, *Liberia’s Past and Present*, pp. 59–61; and Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, pp. 165–167; and Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia*, vol. 1, p. 398.

82. Richardson, *Liberia's Past and Present*, pp. 59–61; and Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, pp. 165–167; and Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia*, vol. 1, p. 398.
83. Richardson, *Liberia's Past and Present*, vol. 1, p. 50.
84. Ibid.
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86. *African Repository*, vol. 1, March (1830), pp. 57–58.
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88. The Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Managers of ACS, November 19, 1830.
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94. *The African Repository*, vol. 11 (1835), pp. 78, 79; and in *Liberia Herald*, Monrovia, Liberia, June 10, 1835.
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97. *Liberia Herald*, March 12, 1835.
98. Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia*, vol. 1, p. 481.
99. Ibid., p. 486.
100. Ibid., pp. 488–491.
101. Ibid., 487; *Liberia Herald*, Monrovia, Liberia, July 31, 1835; *African Repository*, vol. 12 (1835), p. 18.
102. Russwurm, from Monrovia, Liberia, October 15, 1835 to Ralph Gurley, RACS, reel 24.
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108. Ibid.
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## **Chapter Four Maryland State's Civilizing Mission in Maryland in Liberia and John B. Russwurm**

1. For detailed analyses of Maryland State Colonization Society, especially how it established the settlement of Maryland in Liberia in 1833, see these studies: Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831–1857* (Chicago, 1971); Jane Martin, “The Dual Legacy: Government Authority Mission Influence Among the Glebo of Eastern Liberia, 1834–1910,” Ph. D. Dissertation, Boston University (1968) pp. 92–121; Ernest Eastman, *A History of the State of Maryland in Liberia* (Monrovia, Liberia, 1956); John H. B. Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia: A History of the Colony Planted by the Maryland State Colonization Society under the Auspices of the State of Maryland, U.S., at Cape Palmas on the South-West Coast of Africa* (Baltimore, 1885); Frances M. S. Jennings, “The Early Activities of Maryland State Colonization

- Society in Liberia 1831–1834,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University (1951); and Samuel W. Laughon, “Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1853,” *Journal Negro History*, vol. 26 (1941), pp. 325–364.
2. Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, pp. 8, 10, 18, 23, 24, 25, and 30; P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816–1865* (New York, 1961) pp. 62–68, 85, 86, 111, 162; *African Repository*, vol. 4 (1828), p. 224; and *African Repository*, vol. 5 (1828), pp. 122–128.
  3. Meeting of Board of Managers of the Maryland State Colonization Society (MSCS), February 21, 1831, reel 1; Records of the Maryland State Colonization Society, hereafter cited as RMSCS, and the reel and reel’s number; and William Hoyt, “The Papers of the Maryland State Colonization Society,” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, vol. 22 (1937), pp. 247–271.
  4. *Ibid.*
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  8. *Journal of Proceedings of the House of Delegates*, Annapolis, Maryland, December 2, 1831.
  9. Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, pp. 35–36.
  10. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
  11. *Laws of Maryland* (Annapolis, Maryland, 1831), Chapters 281 and 328.
  12. Charles C. Harper, *An Address Delivered at Annual Meeting of the Maryland State Colonization Society in the City of Annapolis, January 23, 1834* (Baltimore, 1835), pp. 6–7; Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, pp. 14–17; *African Repository*, vol. 8 (1835), pp. 25–27; and Meeting of the Board of Managers of the MSCS, March 4, 1832, RMSCS, reel 1. For details of the reactions of blacks to the various draconian measures taken to make them receptive to the colonization scheme, see Sigler, “Attitudes of the Free Blacks Towards Emigration”; Louis R. Mehlinger, “The Attitudes of the Free Negro Towards African Colonization,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 1 (1916) and McKenney, from Cambridge, Maryland, October 15, 1832, to Howard, RMSCS, reel 1.
  13. *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, Baltimore, November 25, 1832.
  14. Reese, from Monrovia, Liberia, February 2, 1833, to Board of Managers, RMSCS, reel 1.
  15. Captain and Crew, from *Lafayette*, Monrovia, Liberia, April 11, 1833 to Board Managers, RMSCS, reel 18.
  16. Russwurm, from Monrovia, Liberia, August 6, 1833 to Gurley, RACS, reel 18.
  17. *Ibid.*
  18. *Ibid.*
  19. *Ibid.*
  20. *Ibid.*
  21. See Note 5.
  22. See Note 1; and *Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia*, 2nd edition (Baltimore, 1847), p. 21; Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, pp. 10, 30; Russwurm, from Monrovia, Liberia, February 23, 1834 to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 1; Meetings of the Board of Managers, Baltimore, Maryland, April 30, June 28, 1833. RMSCS, reel 1; and Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland, September 10, 1833, to Howard, and Frank T. Hall, RMSCS, reel 1.
  23. *Ibid.*
  24. *Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia*, 2nd edition, Section 13, p. 14.
  25. *Ibid.*, Sections 16, 17, 18, 30, pp. 14–30.

26. *Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia*, 2nd edition, Sections 16, 17, 18, 30, pp. 14–30.
27. *Ibid.*, Section 19, p. 16.
28. Latrobe, *Maryland in Liberia*, pp. 10, 30; Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement*, pp. 111–112; *African Repository*, vol. 2 (1828), pp. 154–155; John E. Semmes, *John H.B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803–1891* (Baltimore, 1917), pp. 137–141; Harper, from Baltimore, Maryland, January 3, 1827, to Gurley, RACS, reel 1.
29. Howard, from Baltimore, October 30, November 8, 1832, to McKenney, RMSCS, reel 2.
30. Meetings of Board of Managers, Baltimore, Maryland, September 9, November 22, 1833, RMSCS, reel 1.
31. Meeting of Board of Managers, Baltimore, Maryland, December 7, 1833, RMSCS, reel 1.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. Hall, from Monrovia, Liberia, January 29, 1834, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2; Russwurm, from Monrovia, Liberia, February 23, 1834, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2; and Hall, from Cape Palmas, West Africa, February 9, 1834, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2.
35. “Deed for Maryland in Liberia,” Third Annual Report of the RMSCS (1835), pp. 29–30.
36. The Westernized and semi-Westernized and self-proclaimed Glebo leaders were not legitimate representatives of their people. Their new social and economic status mainly derived from their involvement with the Atlantic trade, and not from the traditional institutions of the region. Indeed, they, together with their Western allies, had modified such institutions to promote their narrowed material and social interests, and not the interests of their people. Their origin as a social class can be traced to the arrival of the Europeans on the coast of West Africa in the late fifteenth century. These Westernized and semi-Westernized Africans played a significant role in the transatlantic slave trade on the coast of West Africa, especially in the eighteenth century. For the details of the foregoing points, see the following works: Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State, 1822–1980*, New York: Lanham, MD (1991) pp. 34–37; Beyan, “Transatlantic Trade and the Coastal Area of Pre-Liberia,” *The Historian* vol. 57, no. 4, pp. 767–568; Ronald Davis, *Ethnohistorical Studies on the Kru Coast* (Newark, DE, 1976), pp. 32–34; Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545 to 1800* (Oxford, Britain, 1970) pp. 95–121, 171–199, 200–222; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia* (New York, 1970), p. 157; Claude George, *The Rise of British West Africa* (London, 1903), pp. 65–67; Carol P. MacCormack, “Wono: Institutionalized Dependency in Sherbro Descent Groups, Sierra Leone,” in Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison, WI, 1977), pp. 182–188; Svend Holsoe, “Slavery and Economic Response Among the Vai of Liberia and Sierra Leone,” in Miers and Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa*, pp. 293–294; and Martin, “Dual Legacy,” pp. 51–52, 83–84.
37. “Deed for Maryland in Liberia,” pp. 29–30; Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, p. 76.
38. Hall, from Cape Palmas, West Africa, February 9, 1834, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2. Quoted in Samuel W. Laughon, “Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 26 (1941) p. 332.
39. Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland, November 14, 1839, to Minor, RMSCS, reel 3.
40. Laughon, “Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851,” p. 340.
41. *Ibid.*, and Hall, from Cape Palmas West Africa, February 9, 1834, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2; and Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, pp. 78–79.
42. Laughon, “Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851,” pp. 344–346.
43. Hersey, from Cape Palmas, West Africa, July 21, 1835, to the Board of Managers of the MSCS, RMSCS, reel 2.
44. Stewart, from Cape Palmas, West Africa, May 5, 1834, to Mother, RMSCS, reel 2; and Settlers, from Cape Palmas, West Africa, June 24, 1835, to the Board Managers of the MSCS, RMSCS, reel 2.
45. Laughon, “Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851,” pp. 326–330.
46. *Constitutions and Laws of Maryland in Liberia*, pp. 2, 3; and Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland, December 3, 1834, to Hall, RMSCS, reel 2.

47. Hall, at sea on the ship, *Luna*, May 1, 1836, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2.
48. Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, p. 87; and Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland, February 11, 1836, to Holmes, RMSCS, reel 2.
49. Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland, December 18, 1835, to Holmes, RMSCS, reel 2.
50. Hall, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, March 18, 1836, to Holmes, RMSCS, reel 2; Holmes, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, July 13, 1836, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2; and Wilson, from Maryland in Liberia, February 8, 1836, to Latrobe Fair Hope, RMSCS, reel 2.
51. For further explanations concerning Europeans' cunning activities on the West African Coast between 1510 and 1800 see: Beyan, *The American Colonization Society*, pp. 40–42; Rodney, *A History of Upper Guinea*, pp. 198–199; and B. Martin and M. Superell, eds., John Newton, "Thoughts Upon the African Trade, 1750–1754," *Journal of a Slave Trader* (London, 1962), p. 81.
52. Wilson, from Fair Hope, Maryland in Liberia, September 6, 1836, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2; and Thomson, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, September 6, 1836, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2.
53. Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, p. 88.
54. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, September 28, 1837, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 3.
55. Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland, June 30, 1836, to Russwurm, RMSCS, reel 2; and *Fifth Annual Report of MSCS* (1837), p. 8.

## **Chapter Five Governor John B. Russwurm and the Civilizing Mission in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851**

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2. Wilson J. Moses, *Alexander Crummell: A Study of Civilization and Discontent* (New York, 1989), pp. 27–31; and Robert Warner, *New Haven Negroes: New Haven Negroes: A Social History* (New Haven, CT, 1940), pp. 86–87.
3. McGill, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, August 17, 1837 to Easter, RMSCS, reel 3.
4. *Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia*, Section 12, p. 13, Section 14, p. 14; and Samuel W. Laughon, "Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851," *Journal of Negro History* vol. 26 (1941), pp. 326–330.
5. For the origins of American political party democracy and the roles played by Jeffersonian Republicans and Hamiltonian Federalists in its development, especially from 1783 to 1800, see the following works: Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780–1840* (New York, 1969); Joseph Charles, *The Origins of the American Party System* (New York, 1956); John F. Hoadley, *Origins of American Political Parties 1789–1803* (New York, 1983); Stanley Elkins and Eric Mekitrick, *The Age of Federalism* (New York, 1993); Lance Banning, *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: The Evolution of a Party Ideology* (New York, 1978); David H. Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism: The Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy* (New York, 1965); and Linda K. Kerber, *Federalists in Dissent: Image and Ideology in Jeffersonian America* (New York, 1970).
6. For the details of Russwurm's position on the MSCS-introduced leadership system in Maryland in Liberia see Laughon, "Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851," pp. 325–364; Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831–1857* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 90–92; Jane Martin, "The Dual Legacy: Government Authority Mission Influence Among the Glebo of Eastern Liberia, 1834–1910," Ph. D. Dissertation, Boston University (1968), pp. 97–99.
7. Laughon, "Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851," pp. 327–328; and *Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia*, Section 14, p. 14.

8. Indeed, this is evident in most of the letters written by the settlers to the officials of the MSCS that are included in the RMSCS.
9. *Ibid.*
10. For examples of this point, see the following studies: Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*; Laughon, "Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851"; William M. Brewer, "John B. Russwurm," *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 13, October (1928); and Jane Martin, "The Dual Legacy: Government Authority Mission Influence Among the Glebo of Eastern Liberia, 1834–1910," Ph. D. Dissertation, Boston University (1968).
11. Martin, "The Dual Legacy," pp. 134–135; Wilson, from Cape Palmas, Maryland in Liberia, April 19, 1839, to Anderson. Records of American Board of Commissions of Foreign Missions, hereafter cited as (RABCFM); Bayard, from Cape Palmas, Maryland in Liberia, July 10, 1838, to Easter, RMSCS, reel 3; Thornton, from, Cape Palmas, Maryland in Liberia, June 22, 1838, to Latrobe RMSCS, reel 3.
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13. United States, *Historical Statistics of the United States, From Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, DC, 1961), pp. 7–8.
14. Sagarin, *John Brown Russwurm*, pp. 118–119.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 121–122.
16. McGill, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, January 24, 1846, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4.
17. Wilson, from Fair Hope, Maryland in Liberia, August 16, 1837, to Anderson, RMSCS, reel 3; and Bayard, from Fair Hope, Maryland in Liberia, July 10, 1838, to Easter, RABCFM.
18. Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State, 1822–1980*. New York: Lanham, MD (1991), pp. 126–129; G. B. Stebbins, *Facts and Opinions Touching the Real Origin, Character, and Influence of the American Colonization Society: Views of the Wilberforce, Crackson, and Others, and Opinions of the Free People of Color of the United States* (1853; reprinted New York, 1969), pp. 86–87; *African Repository*, vol. 20 (1836), pp. 120–123; and *Liberia Herald*, Monrovia, Liberia, 1836.
19. Stewart, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, June 28, 1848, to the Board of Directors of the Maryland Colonization Society, RMSCS, reel 5.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. Mary Sagarin, *John Brown Russwurm: The Story of Freedom's Journal* (New York, 1970), pp. 135–136; Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, pp. 169–170; and Stewart, from Cape Palmas, Maryland in Liberia, June 1848, to an unidentified person, RMSCS, reel 5.
23. Laughon, "Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851," pp. 327–328; and the *Constitution and the Laws of Maryland in Liberia*, Section 35, p. 21.
24. William B. Hoyt, *Land of Hope: Reminiscences of Liberia and Cape Palmas, with Incidents of the Voyage* (Hartford, CT, 1852), p. 122; and Martin, "The Dual Legacy," p. 179.
25. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, November 10, 1838, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4.
26. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, May 31, 1841, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4.
27. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, February 12, 1837, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 3.
28. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, November 1, 1838, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4.

29. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, September 16, 1850, to Hall, RMSCS, reel 6; and McGill, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, September 15, 1850, to Hall, RMSCS, reel 6.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Laughon, "Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851," p. 354; and Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland, June 2, 1834, to Hall, RMSCS, reel 1.
32. Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland, June 2, 1834, reel 1.
33. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, April 3, 1839, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4.
34. Proceedings of the Agent and Council, Harper, Maryland in Liberia, May 18, 1839, RMSCS, reel 4.
35. Settlers, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, September 12, 1838, to the Board of Managers of the MSCS, RMSCS, reel 4; and quoted in Martin, "Dual Legacy," p. 108.
36. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, September 22, 1841, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4; and McGill, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, September 11, 1851, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 6.
37. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, January 23, 1847, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 5.
38. Martin, "Dual Legacy," pp. 179–205, 333–335; Blyden, from Monrovia, Liberia, July 10, 1885, to Coppinger, RACS, reel 127, no. 260; Westernized Glebo, from Cavalla, Cape Palmas, September 17, 1885, to British colonial officials in Freetown, Sierra Leone and Protestant Episcopal Foreign Committee, RACS, reel 127, no. 127; Ronald W. Davis, *Ethnohistorical Studies on the Kru Coast* (Newark, DE, 1976), pp. 51–55; "Inaugural Address of President Joseph J. Cheeseman," *Liberia*, vol. 4 (1894), p. 66; and Aboyami Kargna, *A History of Liberia* (Liverpool, Britain, 1926), pp. 55–56.
39. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, February 12, 1837, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 3; Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, November 1, 1838, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4; Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, January 18, 1840, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4; and Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, April 7, 1842, Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4.
40. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, June 10, 1840, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4.
41. Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland June 30, 1836, to Russwurm, RMSCS, reel 2; Meetings of the Board of Managers, Baltimore, Maryland, September 29, October 10, 1837, RMSCS, reel 1; Latrobe, from Baltimore, Maryland, October 24, 1837, to Russwurm, RMSCS, reel 3; and Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, April 26, 1838, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4.
42. Laughon, "Administrative Problems in Maryland in Liberia, 1836–1851," p. 357; Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, May 31, 1841, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4; and Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, January 23, 1847, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 5.
43. Charles A. Earp, "The Role of Education in the Maryland Colonization Movement," *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 26 (1941), pp. 366–368; Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, October 27, 1844, to Hall, RMSCS, reel 5.
44. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, April 26, 1838, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4; Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, November 1, 1838, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 4; Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, December 8, 1839, to Latrobe, RMSCS 4; R. R. James, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, May 21, 1839, to Reverend John Rennard, RMSCS, reel 4; and Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, January 23, 1847, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 5.
45. Henry Dennis, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, June 12, 1836, to William McKenney and Moses Sheppard, RMSCS, reel 2.
46. Alexander Cowan, *Liberia as I Found it in 1858* (Frankfort, Kentucky), p. 122; Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, December 30, 1845, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 5; W. A. Prout, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, April 29, 1848, Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 5; Dempsey Fletcher, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, October 11, 1871, to Hall, RMSCS, reel 9; J. T. Adams, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, April 2, 1866, to W. F. Giles, RMSCS, reel 8; J. Gibson, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, March 6, 1855, to Hall, RMSCS, reel 6; John Payne, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, August 14, 1856, RMSCS, reel 6; and C. C. Hoffman, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, January 8, 1857, to Hall, RMSCS, reel 6.



47. For details of the ways in which African Americans showed tremendous interest in the education of their children in America, Liberia and in Maryland in Liberia in the nineteenth century see: Phyllis M. Belt-Beyan, *The Emergence of African American Literacy Traditions: Family and Community Efforts in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT, 2004); Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, December 30, 1845, Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 5.
48. *Constitution and Laws of Maryland in Liberia*, pp. 2–3; and Earp, “The Role of Education in the Maryland Colonization Movement,” pp. 371–372.
49. John Smith, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, September 25, 1840, to John Payne, RMSCS, reel 4; and Cowan, *Liberia as I Found it*, p. 122.
50. Hall, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, October 15, 1834, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 2; and Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, October 27, 1845, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 5.
51. Cowan, *Liberia as I Found it*, pp. 119–120; and Earp, “The Role of Education in Maryland Colonization Movement,” pp. 367–271.
52. For the absence of a large number of recaptures in Maryland in Liberia see Martin, “Dual Legacy,” and Davis, *Ethnohistorical Studies*.
53. Martin, “Dual Legacy,” pp. 108–109.
54. For the survival of African cultural values and traits in the Americas, especially in North America see the following studies: Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*, pp. 156–200, 236; William D. Pierson, *Black Legacy: America's Hidden Heritage* (Amherst, MA, 1993); Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas* (New York, 1998), pp. 179–210; Fabre and O'Meally, eds., *History and Memory in African-American Culture* (New York, 1994); Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736–1831* (Urbana and Chicago, IL, 1994), pp. 13–76, 159–214, 268–280; Nathan I. Huggins, *Black Odyssey: The Afro-American Ordeal in Slavery* (New York, 1977), pp. 57–84, 154–182; Mary F. Berry and John W. Blassingame, *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America* (New York, 1982), pp. 70–113; John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1972); Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York, 1987); Miles M. Fisher, *Negro Slave Songs in the United States* (New York, 1953); Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston, MA, 1958); Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom* (New York, 1977); Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston, 1976); Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1978); Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Urbana and Chicago, IL, 1981), pp. 74–114; and Joseph E. Holloway, ed., *Africanisms in American Culture* (Bloomington, IN, 1991).
55. Sagarin, *John Brown Russwurm*, pp. 89, 131.
56. The description, Americo-Liberian, is still used to describe the Liberians, especially those whose ancestors settled in Liberia from the United States in the nineteenth century. These Liberians also include the ones whose ancestors came from the West Indies, and the so-called Congos, or Liberians whose ancestors had been enslaved, but never experienced plantation slavery in the Americas. They were recaptured by British or American war ships and transported to Liberia or to Sierra Leone that had been established by the British in 1787. For details of the above explanation see the following works: Hollis Lynch, “Sierra Leone and Liberia in the Nineteenth Century,” in Ajayi and Espie, eds., *A Thousand Years of West African History* (Ibadan, Nigeria, 1970), pp. 333–334; Tom Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of African-American Settler Society in Nineteenth Century Liberia* (Baltimore, 1980); Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State*, pp. 84–85; P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816–1865* (New York, 1961), pp. 49–58; John T. Noonan Jr., “Antelope Case,” in Randall M. Miller and John D. Smith, eds., *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery* (Westport, CT, 1997), pp. 56–57; John T. Noonan, *The Antelope: The Ordeal of the Recapture of Africans in the Administrations of James Monroe and John Quincy Adams* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 1977); R. Earl McClendon, “The Amistad Claims: Inconsistencies of Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly*,

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57. Beyan, "The American Colonization Society and the Socio-Religious Characterization of Liberia: A Historical Survey, 1822–1900," *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 2 (1985), pp. 1–11.
  58. Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, September 28, 1837, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 3; Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, April 7, 1838, to Latrobe, RMSCS, reel 3; and Russwurm, from Harper, Maryland in Liberia, June 2, 1837, to Easter, RMSCS, reel 3.
  59. Russwurm was succeeded by McGill, his brother-in-law after the death of the former on June 17, 1851. McGill led the colony up to its independence on June 8, 1854. Independent Maryland in Liberia was first led by William A. Prout, who had been elected by the settlers of the place. Prout was succeeded by Boston J. Drayton in April 1856; and he continued to serve in this capacity up to March 3, 1857 when Maryland in Liberia became part of Liberia. Maryland in Liberia that was renamed Maryland County became the fourth county of Liberia by the Act of April in 1857. For the details of the foregoing aspects of the history of Maryland in Liberia and that of Liberia see: Charles Henry Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia*, vol. 2 (New York, 1947), p. 1708; Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, pp. 211–237; *Liberia Herald*, vol. 2, Monrovia, Liberia, 1851; William A. Prout, "Governor Prout and His Message," *Maryland Colonization Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1855), pp. 98–103; and Martin, "Dual Legacy," pp. 179–191.

## Conclusion

1. Charles Henry Huberich, *The Political and Legislative History of Liberia*, vol. 1 (New York, 1947), pp. 437–438.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 438–439.
3. Mary Sagarin, *John Brown Russwurm: The Story of Freedom's Journal* (New York, 1970), pp. 140–145.
4. For details of the origins of the poor social and leadership systems that led to the Liberian Civil War from the 1980s to 2003, see the following studies: Amos J. Beyan, "The Antitheses of Liberia's Independence in Historical Perspective, 1822–1990," *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1989), pp. 3–7; Beyan, "The American Background of Recurrent Themes in the Political History of Liberia," vol. 19, no. 1 (1994), pp. 20–40; Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State, 1822–1980* (New York, 1991), pp. 101–102, 136–138; Beyan, "The American Colonization Society and the Origin of Undemocratic Institutions in Liberia," *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1989), pp. 140–151; Beyan, "The American Colonization Society and the Socio-Religious Characterization of Liberia: A Historical Survey, 1822–1900," *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1985), pp. 1–11; Gus Liebenow, *Liberia: The Quest for Democracy* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN, 1987), pp. 11–135, 153–184; Liebenow, *Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege* (Ithaca, NY, 1969); Dwight N. Seyfert, "The Origins of Privilege: Liberian Merchants, 1822–1847," *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 6 (1975), pp. 109–128; Jane Martin, "How to Build a Nation: Liberian Ideas about National Integration in the Later Nineteenth Century," *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 6 (1969), pp. 15–42; M. B. Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule Over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841–1964," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 7 (1973), pp. 217–236; Jo M. Sullivan, Mississippi in Africa: Settlers Among the Kru, 1835–1847," *Liberian Studies Journal*, vol. 8 (1978–1979), pp. 79–94; Wolfe M. Schmokel, "Settlers and Tribes: The Origins of the Liberian Dilemma," *Boston University Papers on Africa*, vol. 4 (1969), pp. 153–173; and Tuan Wreh, *The Love of Liberty: The Rule of President William V. S. Tubman in Liberia, 1944–1971* (London, 1976).
5. Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast 1545 to 1800* (London, 1970), pp. 106–121, 200–222; Gilberto Freyre, *Portuguese Integration in the Tropics* (Lisbon, Portugal, 1961), p. 22; James Duff, *Portugal in Africa* (New York, 1962), p. 71; Christopher Fyfe, *Sierra Leone Inheritance*

- (London, 1964), pp. 169–172; Fyfe, “A Historiographical Survey,” in *The Transatlantic Trade from West Africa* (Edinburgh, UK, 1965), pp. 1–13; Claude George, *The Rise of British West Africa* (London, 1903), pp. 65–67; A. M. Falconbridge, *Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone* (London, 1788), p. 77; S. M. Despicht, “A Short History of the Gallinas Chiefdoms,” *Sierra Leone Studies*, vol. 21 (1939), pp. 218–219; C. B. Wadstrom, *Observation on the Slave Trade and a Description of Some Parts of the Coast of Guinea during a Voyage Made in 1787 and 1788* (London, 1789), pp. 75–76, 170; John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London, 1788), pp. 13–14; and Anios J. Beyan, “The Transatlantic Trade and the Coastal Area of Pre-Liberia,” *The Historian*, vol. 57, no. 4 (1995), pp. 767–768.
6. For details of the contributions of Westernized Africans in Africa and their descendants in the Diaspora have made and continue to provide to the Western World, and their rewards for such roles since fifteenth century, see the following studies: *ibid*; Edwards and Walvin, “Africans in Britain, 1500–1800” in Kilson and Rotberg, eds., *The African Diaspora*, pp. 72–204; James W. Walker, “The Establishment of a Free Black Community in Nova Scotia, 1783–1840,” in Kilson and Rotberg, eds., *The African Diaspora*, pp. 205–236; Henry Gregoire, *On the Cultural Achievements of Negroes* (Paris, France, 1808; reprinted, Amherst, MA, 1996); Loren Schweninger, *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790–1915* (Urbana and Chicago, 1990); Joseph E. Harris, *Global Dimension of the African Diaspora* (Washington, DC, 1982); Headley Tulloch, *Black Canadians: A Long Line of Fighters* (Toronto, Canada, 1975); Leslie B. Route Jr., “The African in Colonial Brazil,” in Kilson and Rotberg, eds., *The African Diaspora*, pp. 132–171; Allison Blakely, *Black in the Dutch World: The Evolution of Racial Imagery in a Modern Society* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN, 1993), pp. 251–271; Michel Fabre, *From Harlem to Paris: Black American Writers in France, 1840–1980* (Urban and Chicago, IL, 1991); Eric Foner, ed., *Freedom’s Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders During Reconstruction* (New York, 1993); and Carol P. MacCormack, “Wons: Institutionalized Dependency in Sherbro Descent Groups,” in Miers and Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison, WI, 1977), pp. 181–187.
  7. For a detailed explanation of the direct and indirect effects of Western contradictory institutional systems such as democracy, capitalism, the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, racism, and moral or religious principles on the majority of blacks in West Africa and their descendants in the Americas, since the fifteenth century, see the following studies: Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and the African Slave Trade* (Cambridge, UK); J. E. Inikori, ed., *Forced Migration: The Impact of the Export Slave Trade on African Societies* (New York, 1982); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC, 1974); Bonham C. Richardson, *The Caribbean in the Wider World, 1492–1992* (Cambridge, UK, 1992); Franklin W. Knight, *Africa and the Caribbean: The Legacies of Link* (Baltimore, MD, 1979); Hilary Beckles and Verene Sheperd, eds., *Caribbean Slave Society and Economy* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1991); Richard Price, *Alabi’s World* (Baltimore, MD, 1990); Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade* (Madison, WI, 1998); A. J. R. Russell-Wood, *The Black in Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Brazil* (New York, 1982); Patrick Carroll, *Black Race, and Regional Development in Colonial Veracruz, 1570–1830* (Austin, TX, 1991); Donald G. Nieman, *Promises to Keep African-Americans and the Constitution Order, 1776 to the Present* (New York, 1991); William A. Tucker, *The Science and Politics of Racial Research* (Chicago, 1994); Mary F. Berry and John W. Blassingame, *Long Memory: The Black Experience in America* (New York, 1982); Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery The Negro in the Free States 1790–1860* (Chicago, 1961); Arnett G. Lindsay, “The Economic Condition of the Negroes of New York to 1861,” *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 6 (1921), pp. 190–199; and Victor Perlo, *Economics of Racism, U.S.A.: Root of Black Inequality* (New York, 1975).

# BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The study is based on the views and activities of Russwurm as recorded in the Maryland State Colonization Society Papers and the American Colonization Society Papers, the *Freedom's Journal*, the *Liberia Herald*, and other unpublished and published documents that cover the experiences of African Americans, especially the ones who settled in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia in the early nineteenth century. The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers that are microfilmed on thirty-one reels, cover the period from 1817 to 1902. These records not only provide a full account of the state of Maryland's West African colonization scheme, but they also provide significant information about Russwurm's experiences in the United States, Liberia, and his role as a governor of Maryland in Liberia from 1836 to 1851.

The microfilm edition of the American Colonization Society Papers recorded on 331 reels in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, cover the period from 1816 to 1963. These records provide not only a detailed account of the ACS, but they also provide important information on state and national politics, the issues of slavery and abolition in America, and the reactions of African Americans, especially their leaders such as Russwurm, Cornish, Walkins, Walker, and Bishop Allen to the ACS West African Colonization movement. ACS' publications that include the *Annual Reports* and *African Repository* provide important information on the activities of that body in America and Liberia. The records cover reports and communications of religious and secular leaders, and American naval officials who were directly and indirectly involved with the ACS and the MSCS. These records serve as important sources of information about ACS' policy toward not only the MSCS, but also toward the settlement of Maryland in Liberia established by the former. The records also provide the lists of names of African Americans who sailed to Liberia and Maryland in Liberia, the vessels they sailed on, and the letters they wrote to relatives and friends in the United States.

The records of the ACS and those of MSCS do not, however, provide critical views of the two bodies. Authors such as Jay, Stuart, Stebbins, Smith, Wilson, Garrison, Gross, and others are used in this study to provide alternative critical views of the activities of the ACS and MSCS together with their main supporters like Roberts and Russwurm in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia respectively.

Other sources used in the study include letters written in the nineteenth century by ordinary African Americans who settled in Liberia and Maryland in Liberia. Fortunately, most of these letters are edited and published in Bell I. Wiley, ed., *Slaves no More: Letters from Liberia, 1833-1869* and Randall M. Miller, ed., *Dear Master: Letters of a Slave Family*. Other published primary and secondary sources that have directly and indirectly informed the study are subsequently listed.

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