

## The Hampden County Colonization Society Circular

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The Auxiliary Colonization Society of the County of Hampden, at their annual meeting in September last, directed their Board of Managers to address a Circular to the inhabitants of the several towns in said country," setting forth the objects of the Society, its views and prospects, and requesting their aid and co-operation by becoming members of said Society, and by contributing to its funds." In the execution of the duty thus assigned to us, we now address you.

The last census of the United States exhibited a black population within our limits of more than two millions of souls. Of these 1,795,521 were slaves.

The character of this population need not be described. The free blacks, even among ourselves, are generally destitute of literary, moral and religious instruction. They are treated as an inferior race of beings, and under this treatment they grow up with no higher views than the present gratification of their appetites and passions. As inevitable consequence of their condition in society, we find few among them worthy of confidence. Intemperance, and the vices consequent upon its indulgence, are the prevailing features of a great proportion of this population. In this State, they constitute about 1-7th part of our numbers, and about one sixth part of the tenants of our state prison: and the proportion of convicts to their population is much less in this State than in almost any other in the Union.

The slave population is annually increasing and in some parts of the Union, with greater rapidity than the white. No hope of their emancipation can reasonably be entertained, or prudently desired, unless it be accompanied with provision for a place of retreat which shall present them with inducements for exertion and enterprise, and where they may be qualified to exercise the privilege of self-government.

The black population can never be amalgamated with the white: our nature revolts at the suggestion. What then is to be done? Shall we encourage their continuance in their present state of degradation, and permit an annually increasing number to grow up among us, or shall we attempt to ameliorate their condition, and elevate them to the rank and dignity of men and of free men? But one answer will be given to the inquiry. The only question will be, how shall it be accomplished? To this we are able to say, that the work is already begun. It is in successful operation. It only requires the zealous and persevering co-operation of the portion of our citizens, whose means will permit them to make a trifling annual contribution, without the least diminution of their own comforts, and we need not despair of realizing our high expectations.

The American Colonization Society was established at the seat of government, about ten years ago, for the purpose of endeavoring to remove our black population to their native Africa. Many difficulties have impeded and retarded their operations. Discouragements, which would have appalled hearts not impressed with the importance of the object, stood thick around them. But they persevered in their efforts, and the smiles of Heaven now seem to rest on their labors. For the last five years, all that success which could have been expected from the commencement of such an arduous undertaking has crowned their exertions.

An extensive and fertile territory has been purchased of the natives, easy of cultivation, in a healthy climate. By successive transportation's of such as were desirous of forming a colony, and selected from the best educated, the most intelligent and industrious of the colored race, a colony has been formed. Among them are several clergymen, who have been licensed to preach the gospel, and who now officiate in that character at the new settlement, and also instruct the children of the colonists in the elementary branches of education.

This colony is in a flourishing condition. They have erected more than 100 dwellings and two churches. Schools are regularly maintained. The Agent of the Society, resident at the colony, in a letter dated at the close of the last year, observes, "that the Sabbath is universally observed with all the outward marks of religious decorum – that domestic worship is common – that Sunday schools both for the native and the settlers' children, are zealously sustained, numerous attended, and productive of the happiest fruits – that there is a general attendance of all classes on the public and occasional worship of God – and that charitable and pious associations chiefly for the religious tuition and bringing up of the native children, are on foot, and appear to have been undertaken in the spirit of intelligent zeal which ensures both perseverance and success."

Numerous applications have been made to the Society by the colored people to aid them in their removal; and some proprietors of slaves have offered to surrender their whole number when the means of the Society will admit of their reception. We are sensible that the final success of the colony depends upon its gradual rise. A great and sudden accession of numbers would expose them to many sufferings and privations, and might defeat the object. But still additions may be annually made and the number of emigrants maybe increased with the resources and stability of the colony.

About 100 auxiliary societies have already been formed in different parts of the United States to aid the parent society in the accomplishment of their views. The Hampden County Auxiliary Society is one of that number. It was organized in the autumn of the last year in the firm belief that great blessings would follow from the removal of this unfortunate and despised race. At this moment preparations are making for sending out an additional number of emigrants. A ship is engaged for that purpose, and will sail in a short time with as large a proportion of those who have offered to go, as the means of the Society will permit them to send. We have seen a letter from the Secretary, calling upon the friends of colonization for renewed efforts in their behalf.

You will now permit us, fellow citizens, to inquire of you, whether in the views and objects of the Colonization Society, you do not see a work of sufficient magnitude and importance, to enlist your sympathies, and call forth your charities? What object can present higher claims upon the man of humanity, the patriot and the Christian?

Do you wish to see your own country delivered from this unnatural intermixture in her population? Do you wish to see the coloured race enjoying the blessings of education, and raised from the degraded state, in which they must ever remain, while inhabiting the same territory with yourselves? Do you wish to see slavery exterminated from our land? How can these objects be effected, but by removing the blacks, collecting them together in one body, furnishing them with the means of instruction, that they may be qualified to exercise the privileges of freemen, and imparting to them a knowledge of Christianity, that they may enjoy its hopes and consolations.

But should our expectations in regard to the abolition of slavery, and the removal of the blacks, receive only a partial accomplishment: should only a few thousands be planted on the shores of Africa, and those establish a free government, and exhibit to the natives that elevation of character and that purity of life which may be imparted to those of a common stock with themselves, by a knowledge of the arts of civilized life and the influence of Christianity, will this produce no beneficial effect upon that country? There are already, at the schools of the colony, more than sixty native children, who have been sent there by their parents and friends, for the purpose of education. This number will probably be greatly increased.

These, at no distant period will return to their families and friends, and be succeeded by others. May we not fondly cherish the hope, that the sending forth of these youth, enlightened and instructed in Christianity, will be blessed of God to the deliverance of some portion of Africa from her present state of ignorance and barbarism.

The people of Africa are pagans. The sound of the gospel has scarcely penetrated the benighted region. A few missionary establishments have been planted on the seacoast; and they have been owned by Heaven and blessed with some degree of success. But if a solitary missionary has been made the instrument of awakening the attention of the idolatrous heathen, what may we not expect from a nation of Christians, of their own colour, settled on their borders and those exhibiting to their view the practical effects of the gospel of Jesus, both upon the individual and upon society – With this people, the natives will have intercourse. Their children will be educated in the schools of the colony. These will go forth as missionaries among their respective tribes, and will not the gospel preached by some of their own nation, or by people of their own colour, be more likely to attract their attention and win their hearts than the same truths uttered by the mouths of strangers?

We have thus briefly presented to your consideration an imperfect sketch of the objects, views and prospects of the Colonization Society. To this subject we ask your serious reflection, and your ready submission to the call of duty. The exertions and influence of this society have tripled bearing upon the honor, as well as future peace and security of our own country – upon the black population resident among us – and upon the continent of Africa. It therefore presents a united claim upon the attention of all who regard the welfare of their own country, whose hearts are not frozen to the feelings of humanity, and upon the friend of missions.

Our country has been very guilty of despoiling Africa of her children. Who can say, that this will not be overruled by a righteous Providence, as the principle mean of diffusing the knowledge of salvation by a crucified Saviour to millions of our fellow beings, who are now buried in the thick darkness of the grossest superstition and idolatry.

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[Source](#)

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