

Clark University

## Clark Digital Commons

---

History Honors Papers

---

Spring 5-17-2021

# The Expansion of the Colonization Movement in Antebellum Massachusetts

Steven J. Mooney  
*Clark University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://commons.clarku.edu/history\\_honors\\_papers](https://commons.clarku.edu/history_honors_papers)



Part of the [History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Mooney, Steven J., "The Expansion of the Colonization Movement in Antebellum Massachusetts" (2021).  
*History Honors Papers*. 3.  
[https://commons.clarku.edu/history\\_honors\\_papers/3](https://commons.clarku.edu/history_honors_papers/3)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Clark Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Honors Papers by an authorized administrator of Clark Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [larobinson@clarku.edu](mailto:larobinson@clarku.edu).

The Expansion of the Colonization Movement in Antebellum Massachusetts

Steven J. Mooney

May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

AN HONORS THESIS

Submitted to the History Department of Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor. of Arts degree with Honors  
in History.

And accepted on the recommendation of

Dr. Ousmane Power-Greene

## Abstract

The colonization movement got its inception right after the establishment of the United States; however, it would truly take shape in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The American Colonization Society (ACS) would form in the late 1810s, and its growth throughout the nation would see varying levels of success from state-to-state. Scholarship of the colonization movement has often ignored Massachusetts' impact on the larger movement. While the state would not see much progress in the early years of the movement, Massachusetts would grow into a significant member of the ACS and the movement as whole. Massachusetts often gets ignored in the movement due to other anti-slavery movements such as Abolition and Free-Soil having a strong presence in the state. However, with these oppositions, the leaders of the state movement would lead Massachusetts into becoming an important member of the movement than history has mentioned.

## Table of Contents

<u>Introduction:</u> Context for the Study of the Colonization Movement in Massachusetts.....	1
<u>Chapter One:</u> The Progress of Massachusetts Colonization Through its Opposition.....	17
<u>Chapter Two:</u> The Fruits of Labor: Massachusetts Growth the Colonization Movement....	32
<u>Conclusion:</u> The Impact of the Colonization Movement in Massachusetts and the Nation...	65
<u>Bibliography:</u> .....	71

## Introduction: Context for the Study of the Colonization Movement in Massachusetts

Upon its inception in 1841, the Massachusetts Colonization Society would be a group that would take time to grow to its potential. In the earliest days of the colonization movement, Massachusetts had been a state of key focus and desire. In the earliest days of the society, the state's impact on the larger movement was scarce. Financial donations were not adequate in comparison to other significant states for the ACS. Whether there was a sick field agent who was tasked with collecting donations or a seemingly lack of true desire for the movement, the prospects of Massachusetts were not great. In 1842, the state would garner only \$735.96 for the Parent Society.<sup>1</sup> The state society worked to give reasoning for this low number and explain that hope had not been lost for the state. Over time, the state and the movement would progress into more significance over the nation. The colonization movement in Massachusetts looked dire in the early days but would eventually blossom into a more significant player in the entire colonization movement. While the state would not be placed as the leader of the colonization movement, scholarship around the movement in the state has often been ignored.

Scholarship around the colonization movement has focused on individual states, however one on Massachusetts is absent from the discussion. Rather than look in New England, previous scholarship examines the colonization's impact more southern in the nation, specifically in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Other scholarship on the movement also looks at the bigger picture, choosing to look at the movement's progress and impact on the entire nation. Massachusetts gets ignored from this conversation from the most part, and it is

---

<sup>1</sup> The African Repository, v. 19, 200

easy to see why. Significant abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison based their operations out of Boston, and the growth of abolition throughout the 1830s is evident. Also, the Free-Soil Party came into Massachusetts in the late 1840s, especially in Worcester, providing another opponent to colonization. Another factor is the statistics of the colonization movement in Massachusetts compared to those from other states. Massachusetts numbers in terms of financial donations and emigrants sent to Liberia do not compare to a state such as Virginia.

P.J. Staudenraus' work around the colonization movement lays the groundwork for following scholarship on the movement. This book examines the larger picture and history of the movement dating back to Paul Cuffe and the establishment of the ACS. This overview of the entire colonization movement throughout the United States is important to get a scope of how the movement progressed in different regions. Staudenraus mentions Massachusetts and its overall growth within colonization. Scholarship on the colonization movement, whether state focused or nationally focused, is based on the initial study of Staudenraus. This work also provides general statistics for the entire American Colonization Society, allowing for individual state studies to examine the proportionate impact of their state in the larger movement. This book is a good introduction to the study of the colonization movement and proceeding books that come afterwards build on the initial groundwork done by Staudenraus.

Claude Clegg's book takes another look at the colonization movement, but this time focusing primarily on North Carolina.<sup>2</sup> This work looks at the over 2,000 emigrants that

---

<sup>2</sup> Clegg, Claude Andrew. *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia*. University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

would be sent by the ACS from NC, as well as the longer history of the colonization movement. This work is important as it goes in contrast to Massachusetts. North Carolina was one of the most involved states in the colonization movement, which could not be said for Massachusetts in terms of emigrants sent to Liberia. Still, this book serves a valuable purpose for a state study for colonization, as Clegg's work dates to earlier days of the movement in North Carolina. Clegg discusses in his book slave owners in the state attempted to entice their slaves to move to Liberia if they were granted their freedom. Clegg's work also discusses the resurgence of colonization and emigration in the 1850s in North Carolina and the nation. While North Carolina being a slave state makes for an important distinction between there and Massachusetts, Clegg's work still serves valuable in the study of the colonization movement.

Beverly Tomek's book is important for this work as it shows an individual state study for the colonization movement and its battles with antislavery movements. The Pennsylvania Colonization Society (PCS), Pennsylvania Abolition Society (PAS), and the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society (PAAS) were the three main antislavery groups that would compete with one another for the Antebellum period.<sup>3</sup> Abolition and colonization battled for control of the narrative throughout the first half the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with abolition dominating in the 1830s. this work is important as it examines various anti-slavery movements in Pennsylvania and potential ramifications with their presence. Tomek examines how the PCS efforts in the state signified their focus on being a part of the overall abolition movement. abolitionists wanted to clearly separate the two ideologies, however colonizationists in the state would

---

<sup>3</sup> Tomek, Beverly C. *Colonization and Its Discontents: Emancipation, Emigration, and Antislavery in Antebellum Pennsylvania*. Early American Places. New York University Press, 2011.

view each other as fighting for similar causes. However, Tomek does note how PCS efforts of raising money for the Liberia colony was due to their beliefs that blacks did not belong in the United States. This work is important for examination in the greater colonization study as it is just one look at how a state dealt with the colonization and abolition battles.

Power-Greene's book takes a closer look at African American pushback to the colonization movement across the nation.<sup>4</sup> While there was some support for emigration to Africa by black leaders, the majority of African Americans resisted all efforts to be removed from the United States during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Instead, most emigration efforts were focused on Haiti and Canada. This book looks at the important distinction made between emigration and colonization, as emigration garnered more African American support than colonization. Emigrationists would attack colonizationists, even after a period in the 1850s where the two were linked to the naked eye. This book also serves an important purpose to colonization scholarship as it looks at the larger movement through the scope of its opposition. While previous scholarship looks at the movement's growth, among the nation and within individual states, this is unique in its approach. To better understand the colonization movement, an understanding of opposition is necessary.

The book *New Directions in the Study of African American Recolonization* attempts to make historical interventions to reframe the colonization movement.<sup>5</sup> The term of "recolonization" is new to the study around the movement and goes largely undefined in this

---

<sup>4</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Tomek, Beverly C., Matthew J. Hetrick, Stanley Harrold, and Randall M. Miller. *New Directions in the Study of African American Recolonization*. Southern Dissent. University Press of Florida, 2017.



book. However, it can be assumed that the term is referencing the colonization of the Americas as the first area of colonization, with the British colonizing Sierra Leone and the ACS with Liberia being the following era. This book does look to examine the interactions between white and black people at the time, especially around opposing arguments to colonization. A focus on William Lloyd Garrison is mentioned, as he was one of the leading voices against colonization in Boston during the 1830s and 1840s. The book breaks itself down into various essays under broader themes, political reasoning behind the movement, missionary motives, and the recontextualization of the colonization movement. These three areas are important for broader study of the movement as it can be taken into state-by-state approaches. While following scholars may avoid the term recolonization, the essays serve the purpose as a potential outline for how one could examine a specific state further.

Brandon Mills' book is a recent addition to scholarship around the colonization movement, and he attempts to reframe the story of the ACS and the larger colonization movement.<sup>6</sup> Mills looks to show the movement in a different light and show how colonization plans could be seen to move the United States into a greater global power. Mills starts in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and Thomas Jefferson, and works through the Civil War, examining important steps in the movement and its progress. This larger scale focus on the movement is not rare, however the overall thinking of the movement is unique. Previous scholarship does not examine the possibility of the colonization movement being a method for the nation to expand their physical borders. Colonization of African slaves as a method

---

<sup>6</sup> Mills, Brandon. *The World Colonization Made. The Racial Geography of Early American Empire*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.

for the nation to expand globally is a unique reframing of the movement. Colonization, in the eyes of Mills, is a failed attempt by Americans to expand their physical borders.

The colonization movement from its inception attempted to extend throughout the nation no matter how long it took. The movement has its origins back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as Americans at that time attempted to answer the question of what to do with slavery. While some answered with emancipation, there was still a fear of what may happen when slaves were freed. With much uncertainty on the future of slavery, the colonization movement began to build. A concrete society would not form until the later 1810s, but the groundwork that was set for the movement allowed for the American Colonization Society (ACS) to hit the ground running. However, a rise of abolition would nearly halt the progress of the American Colonization Society. Abolitionism dominated the narrative in the 1830s, and it would take some time for the ACS to regain its popularity and notoriety among Americans.

Thomas Jefferson provides an early look into the fears of Americans with the idea of emancipation. Jefferson is an intriguing figure to examine in the emancipation context due to his history with slavery and the legacy he would build in the newly formed United States. He is often remembered as the man who penned the Declaration of Independence, and the famous line that “all men are created equal”, however, this may not have been his true beliefs. For example, Jefferson believed that “the blacks, whether originally a distinct race or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments of both body and mind. While Jefferson was not alone in these ideas at the time, to hear words from him just years after the United States was founded brings questions to his intentions. Even if Jefferson would appear to compliment the black race, it was often backhanded. Stating that

even though blacks were superior in terms of music, they “lacked artistic, oratorical, and poetic talents”.<sup>7</sup> Comparisons between the races were meant to emphasize Jefferson’s greater idea, separation of the two from mixture. This is shown through the descriptions of the bodies of blacks, seemingly to fear whites from the possibility of mixture. Describing their “immovable veil of black” and how they “secrete more by the glands of the skin and less by the kidneys which gives them a strong and disagreeable odor”.<sup>8</sup> These beliefs go along with Jefferson’s idea that the rising black population was a “blot in this country”, and the fear of potential reversal of roles as master and slave was too much for him to think about.<sup>9</sup>

Jefferson was not alone in his ideas, and a reason these beliefs are brought up is because of the man he became within American history. His beliefs will be critiqued and discussed more due to the size of his historical stature, but his ideas were shared by many. Inspired by Jefferson’s thoughts, St. George Tucker was a professor of law at William and Mary College and often criticized slavery. He stated in 1796 that if free blacks could stay in the United States, that they would become “the caterpillars of the earth, and the tigers of the human race.”<sup>10</sup> Virginia would become a hotbed for the colonization movement and plans for colonization date back to Thomas Jefferson himself.

The intentions of colonization from Jefferson show a different picture than what was the truth. Jefferson believed that if slaves were emancipated, they should be colonized

---

<sup>7</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 1-2

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Jefferson, and Nicholas E. Magnis. “Thomas Jefferson and Slavery: An Analysis of His Racist Thinking as Revealed by His Writings and Political Behavior.” *Journal of Black Studies* 29, no. 4 (March 1, 1999): 494

<sup>9</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 1

<sup>10</sup> Staudenraus. 3

outside of the United States.<sup>11</sup> A constant argument from Jefferson regarding his idea for colonizing freed blacks from the United States was the potential for bloodshed. Jefferson feared that any effort toward equality of the races would lead to constant attacks and the “extermination of the one or the other race”.<sup>12</sup> He fed off the fear many white Americans had at that time, “what will the blacks do after they are freed?”. Jefferson would propose a plan for emancipation of all slaves once they reached a mature age while in the Virginia Assembly, and this question would be on the forefront.<sup>13</sup> His plan would also include an immediate and outright abolishment of slavery in Virginia. The possibility of reparations would be due to the “deep rooted prejudices” that would have split the state into two parties.<sup>14</sup> The differences between the races would be too great to overcome in the eyes of Jefferson. Just getting out of a war for the nation’s independence, the thought of further bloodshed was too much of a burden to think of. The thought of coexistence among the races would not gain traction in Virginia, and the mixture of the two was hard to comprehend for many. Even if blacks could “improve themselves” in the eyes of Jefferson and other white Americans, there was still too much divide to overcome. Stating, “the improvement of blacks in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by everyone, and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition in life”.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Jefferson, and Nicholas E. Magnis. “Thomas Jefferson and Slavery: An Analysis of His Racist Thinking as Revealed by His Writings and Political Behavior.” *Journal of Black Studies* 29, no. 4 (March 1, 1999): 491

<sup>12</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 2

<sup>13</sup> Staudenraus. 1

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Jefferson, and Nicholas E. Magnis. “Thomas Jefferson and Slavery: An Analysis of His Racist Thinking as Revealed by His Writings and Political Behavior.” *Journal of Black Studies* 29, no. 4 (March 1, 1999): 493

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Jefferson, and Nicholas E. Magnis. 497

Fairfax did however agree with Jefferson that the long-lasting divide between whites and blacks would make integration nearly impossible. Simply put, the races would never be able to live in harmony in a society that provided equal rights to both races.<sup>16</sup> A proposal of his own would include a complete removal of free blacks from the United States, with the assistance of Congress, to a colony in Africa. This would be a plan that would encompass the entire United States, regardless of their opinions on colonization. This plan would prevent a mixture of blacks and whites, and the preservation of the community in Fairfax's eyes. A colony in Africa would allow for a "homogenous society" and prevent blacks from damaging themselves or the greater society.<sup>17</sup> Africa was a location chosen by many whites for a mixture of reasons, one example of such being that blacks would do better there since it was more of their "native climate".<sup>18</sup> Liberia would be tested in 1816 by Paul Cuffe on the practicality of the region for colonization, which would in turn lead closer to the beginnings of the American colonization society.

Paul Cuffe was a staunch supporter of the return to Africa movement in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Cuffe was the youngest of seven children, born in Westport, Massachusetts on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1759.<sup>19</sup>

Cuffe was a devout Quaker in Massachusetts as well as a figure who looked out for the interests of blacks across Massachusetts. Faith became a key part of the lives of free blacks, especially Cuffe as he became a Quaker in 1808.<sup>20</sup> Cuffe was able to connect with

---

<sup>16</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 2-3

<sup>17</sup> Staudenraus. 3

<sup>18</sup> Staudenraus. 2-3

<sup>19</sup> Salvador, George Arnold. *Paul Cuffe, the Black Yankee, 1759-1817*. [Reynolds-DeWalt Printing], 1969. 12

<sup>20</sup> Salvador. 222

audiences as he was a powerful orator, likely a result of his focus on education while on his voyages at sea. His accession into leadership among blacks in Westport with his knowledge of the sea would lead to him looking for ways for “rescuing enslaved peoples from America and establishing a homeland in Africa”. This location would also bring Christian faith and order to the inhabitants of Africa by Cuffe.<sup>21</sup> Cuffe would begin planning for a voyage for himself to scope out the land for future colonists. After some delays, Cuffe would finally arrive in West Africa in a town called Freetown after a fifty-eight-day voyage on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1811. Cuffe would run into further issues upon his arrival, as British authorities were the ones who received him in town. With ongoing tensions between the United States and Britain at the time, Cuffe was not very well received. British officials in Sierra Leone would send false and negative reports about Cuffe back to London. Cuffe and his crew would sail to Liverpool and then onto London in May of that year to look for more support on their plans for African emigration.<sup>22</sup> The men would go on to befriend key contacts in London that would help in spreading their message. Cuffe would stay in London until late-September of 1811, and along with his crew would travel back to Sierra Leone. Cuffe would establish “The Friendly Society of Sierra Leone”, which was a black-run trading organization before leaving for the United States in December. Over the months of his voyage, Cuffe began to feel confidence in his plans, however tension between the United States and Britain would force him to halt his plans for a group of blacks to go to West Africa.

The War of 1812 would complicate Cuffe’s plans for future voyages to Sierra Leone.

---

<sup>21</sup> Walker, Paul. “Captain Paul Cuffe (1759–1817): Nineteenth-Century African American Seafarer and Entrepreneur.” *Black Theology: An International Journal* 13, no. 3 (November 2015): 222

<sup>22</sup> Walker. 223

With this colony being controlled by the British, he would then need approval from the federal government for travel into enemy waters. On January 27, 1814, through Senator Christopher Gore from Massachusetts, a bill proposed regarding Cuffe's request to sail back to Sierra Leone was passed by the Senate. This step toward Cuffe's greater vision was shut down after the House of Representatives voted 72 to 65 against letting Cuffe travel for his purposes.<sup>23</sup> The question of whether it would be safe for Cuffe to travel could not be assured by British intelligence. Cuffe would now be forced to wait until after the war was over for him to travel to Sierra Leone once again. Cuffe never was discouraged, as he felt that he still attained a great amount of support from free blacks in New England, however he still sought to garner more support from outside areas. He remained ready for his next chance, which came after the War of 1812 was officially over on February 13, 1815. Upon hearing this news, while in his home in Weston, Cuffe began to formulate plans for a second voyage to Sierra Leone from the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Paul Cuffe would make plans to sail back to Sierra Leone for December 10, 1815, however this trip would be different. This plan would include thirty-eight blacks with him to become citizens in Sierra Leone.<sup>25</sup> Of this group, thirty-two were from Boston, four from Philadelphia, and two from New York.<sup>26</sup> His boat, the *Traveller*, would include other various cargo such as tobacco, soap, candles, naval stores, and flour. Cuffe and his group would land in Freetown on February 3, 1816.<sup>27</sup> However, Cuffe would make a few costly errors during

---

<sup>23</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 10

<sup>24</sup> Staudenraus. 10

<sup>25</sup> Staudenraus. 11

<sup>26</sup> Salvador, George Arnold. *Paul Cuffe, the Black Yankee, 1759-1817*. [Reynolds-DeWalt Printing], 1969. 54

<sup>27</sup> Salvador. 55

his trip, the first of which being he never attained a license from the British government. This would be problematic as American sailors were not allowed to dock in British ports without a license. He would be allowed to dock for over two months in Sierra Leone, while waiting for a license that would never show. Other trading concessions Cuffe made evaporated upon landing, as the governor of Sierra Leone would allow the passengers to receive land grants, but not Cuffe. Cuffe was forced to hastily travel back to the United States, after a voyage that meant so much to him. While this trip was a failure for Cuffe personally, he would soon travel back to a nation where the idea of black colonization would begin to form itself into concrete organizations.

Paul Cuffe's travel to Sierra Leone caused a stir in the conversation around black emigration, and the conversation began to formulate. Upon his return from Sierra Leone, Cuffe would receive a letter from Robert Finley, a presbyterian minister from New Jersey who was named the President of the University of Georgia in 1816.<sup>28</sup> Finley supported Cuffe's cause and believed that emigration from willing blacks would lead to the gradual end to slavery. In the eyes of Finley, Cuffe was the only true colonizationist in the United States and he was a figure that Finley wanted to talk to very much. Finley was a part of a larger coalition that would work to set up a society of the colonization of blacks in Africa, and he would travel to Washington, D.C. in December of 1816 to hopefully persuade "representatives of this great and free people".<sup>29</sup> His plan would be to try to influence political leaders to sponsor a society with a large amount of money to remove blacks from the United States. A key ally of Finley's would be his brother-in-law, Elliot Boudinot

---

<sup>28</sup> Salvador, George Arnold. *Paul Cuffe, the Black Yankee, 1759-1817*. [Reynolds-DeWalt Printing], 1969. 65

<sup>29</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 22



Caldwell, who was also the Clerk of the Supreme Court.<sup>30</sup> Caldwell's upbringing placed him in social circles and had contacts that a man like Finley would not have. The two men shared ideas about colonization, and Caldwell agreed with Finley's plan to move forward. Francis Scott Key, a friend of Caldwell's and the author of the *Star-Spangled Banner*, would also become an ally of the movement.<sup>31</sup> Key was a chief citizen in Washington at that time, so his prominence in society also assisted in making connections. These three men would work quickly in December 1816 to get their plans in the hands of men in the government, and their movement began to quickly take off.

Finley would begin to go around Washington delivering sermons to build upon his message from his *Thoughts on Colonization* pamphlet, where He mentions the need for government assistance for the colony. A notion he tries to get across is how contrast messaging to free blacks that "it would be in their best interests" to be removed from the United States.<sup>32</sup> Any difficulties that could rise, would not have been insurmountable in the eyes of Finley and other colonizationists. Attacks on free blacks who oppose colonization also are included, posing them as an enemy of the movement and portraying them as less human. Resistance toward colonization meant that blacks did not seek happiness, pride, or normal feelings of men.<sup>33</sup> This portrayal of the resistance attempts to show an enemy of the movement, as well as show why the movement is a just one. This pamphlet would serve to be a useful piece for Finley and other colonizationists in their attempt to gain support for the

---

<sup>30</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 24

<sup>31</sup> Staudenraus. 25

<sup>32</sup> "Thoughts on the Colonization of Free Blacks," *African Repository and Colonial Journal*, January 1834, vol. 9, 332

<sup>33</sup> "Thoughts on the Colonization of Free Blacks," 332

creation of a colony in Africa. While Finley was going around Washington giving speeches, Caldwell and Key were succeeding in their attempts to get support from high-ranking politicians. The first of these individuals to endorse colonization was Bushrod Washington, a veteran Supreme Court justice and squire of Mount Vernon.<sup>34</sup> The name Washington was important to Caldwell and Key, as the name itself would garner some attention from people across the nation.

A second major figure Caldwell was able to gain support from, while somewhat skeptical at first, was Speaker of the House of Representatives Henry Clay from Kentucky.<sup>35</sup> Clay would be an integral figure due to his prominence in the nation within his role. He could choose what legislation comes up and what does not. His participation and endorsement would almost guarantee the success of building a society for this movement. These men were able to set up a meeting for December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1816 at the Davis Hotel that would include more prestigious names that would look to aid their cause.<sup>36</sup> The meeting would consist of congressmen, senators, clergymen, and wealthy citizens of Washington. Some of the key names include Clay, Ferdinando Fairfax, Thomas Dougherty, Senator Robert H. Goldsborough, and Congressmen Robert Wright of Maryland, Daniel Webster of New Hampshire, and John Carlyle Herbert.<sup>37</sup> Clay attending and presiding over the meeting influenced who came to the meeting, as his prominence gave reason for some to attend. However, some reasoning for attending was the expectation that Clay would not fully support the movement. In sharp contrast to expectations, Clay would go on to talk about Finley's

---

<sup>34</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 27

<sup>35</sup> Staudenraus. 27

<sup>36</sup> Staudenraus. 27

<sup>37</sup> Staudenraus. 27

pamphlet he recently released and largely agree with the notion that blacks had to be removed from the United States, however the only ones to be sent have too already been free. Colonization was not to be for slaves, and the idea must work to avoid the question of emancipation at all costs. This served as a rebuke to Finley's idea that colonization would eventually lead to the end of slavery.<sup>38</sup> This meeting became the point of no return, and the movement toward the creation of a society for the colonization of free blacks would move forward.

On December 28<sup>th</sup>, 1816, in the hall of the House of Representatives, the "American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color in the United States" adopted a constitution and became official and eventually became known as the American Colonization Society. Bushrod Washington would be elected the first president of this society, with thirteen vice-presidents being high ranking politicians or notable citizens. This list includes:

Secretary of the Treasury William Crawford; Speaker of the House Henry Clay; William Phillips of Massachusetts; Colonel Henry Rutgers of New York; John Eager Howard, Samuel Smith, and John C. Herbert of Maryland; John Taylor of Caroline; General Andrew Jackson; Robert Ralston and Richard Rush, Pennsylvania; General John Mason, District of Columbia; and, in the recognition of his early role, the Reverend Robert Finley.<sup>39</sup>

The American Colonization Society had officially taken its place in the larger scheme of American society, and it looked to grow its existence throughout the nation. While pushback would come from outlets such as the Abolition movement, this would not deter leadership of the colonization movement. Their desire to grow and see their dreams come to fruition would come down to their ability to get northern states involved. States such as

---

<sup>38</sup> Staudenraus. 28-29

<sup>39</sup> Staudenraus. 30

Massachusetts would become an important battleground for the movement due to the abolitionist presence in the state. Massachusetts would grow from a state who was not a significant member of the society, to one that would aid the ACS to almost see their vision become a reality.

## Chapter One: The Importance of Resistance in the Growth of the Massachusetts Colonization Movement

One of the earliest key moments in Massachusetts for colonization came in 1826, where a ship would leave from Boston for Liberia. On January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1826, a ship containing thirty-four emigrants would leave a port in Boston and land in Liberia on February 7<sup>th</sup> of that year.<sup>1</sup> However, while this was an encouraging moment for the state movement, tragedy would strike. Nearly half of the emigrants on this ship would pass away upon arrival in Liberia.<sup>2</sup> This ship would be the first of several to leave American ports for Liberia that year, with the ship from Massachusetts seeing the highest death rate. This was viewed by the ACS as logic that those from southern states would do fine in Liberia due to similar climates. While on the other hand, a greater adjustment period for emigrants from the North would be required. With the changing climates that they would have to transition to, colonizationists now looked to minimize the harmful effects.

The colonization movement in Massachusetts would not be an immediate success and would require constant effort to progress the movement. Of all the eastern states, Massachusetts lagged the most. In 1829, William Ropper and John Tappan, members of the Boston Correspondence Committee, replied to Gurley's pleadings to establish an auxiliary by stating that "the time was not ripe".<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts would become a state where serious

---

<sup>1</sup> The American Colonization Society, *Tenth Annual Report*, 32

<sup>2</sup> The African Repository, v. 3, 199

<sup>3</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 130

work within the colonization movement would have to be done. Missionary goals and desires would drive the movement towards Liberia after Cuffe's initial actions. In February 1831, it would take two Connecticut men, Thomas Gallaudet, and Leonard Bacon, to succeed in establishing the Massachusetts Colonization Society (MCS).<sup>4</sup> While a leading figure for the creation of the American Colonization Society was from Massachusetts, the state itself would have to wait some time for real progress to take place.

An issue that arose with obtaining funds from the federal government for the colonization movement was what the true intentions of the movement were. Was the colony to be used as a form of United States expansion globally? Or was the intention to deal with the potential threat of a black revolt like that of Native Americans.<sup>5</sup> Missionary motives behind the movement were important as many colonizationists argued on its morality. Colonization provided an opportunity for Americans to unify themselves and the black community from a "fractured American Christianity".<sup>6</sup> In New England, colonizationists would paint missionary work along the same side as colonization, arguing the two are very similar in their intentions. The prospects of spiritual connection were emphasized, even when at the same time focusing on the physical separation.<sup>7</sup> Even though colonization was going through the nation quickly in the 1820s, the ACS still needed to find more ways to recruit more members to get funding. They understood by getting at the heart of churchgoers and spirituality, they could stir up a crowd and gain support. Image and funding were always on

---

<sup>4</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 134

<sup>5</sup> Tomek, Beverly C., Matthew J. Hetrick, Stanley Harrold, and Randall M. Miller. *New Directions in the Study of African American Recolonization*. Southern Dissent. University Press of Florida, 2017. 19

<sup>6</sup> Tomek et al. 58

<sup>7</sup> Tomek et al. 38

the mind of the ACS, and they would look to find more and more over the years.

A colony in Liberia from the work of the ACS would be focused on the establishment of Christianity as a dominant religion. The faith aspect of natives in Liberia and the region was a harsh critique of the colonization movement, viewing the additions of American emigrants as a method to purify the land. Faith in Liberia was different to that in the United States, with faith being more superficial and undefined in the eyes of Colonizationists.<sup>8</sup> When Christianity would be established, it had the potential to run rampant throughout the colony due to this nature of native religion. Opposition would come from natives naturally, as changing their customs simply because outsiders saw their methods of practice as undefined did not interest them. Faith and missionary purpose would continue to be a focus from the ACS and state auxiliaries, as often preachers and ministers would take leadership roles in the branches. Their ability to communicate to larger masses proved to be an asset for spreading the message and hope of colonization. The aspect of faith was key for the movement's growth in the northern states such as Massachusetts, where the movement was not quick to take off. The ACS would look to prove worthy of support from the North, using the missionary focus of the colony for its main appeal. Asking, "who then that loves missions will not love the colonization cause", the goal of the Recorder in an 1832 article was to seek further support in an era where abolition was beginning to dominate the movement.<sup>9</sup> The Sunday School, Tract, and Education systems also taking place in Liberia would hopefully

---

<sup>8</sup> The African Repository, v. 4, 3

<sup>9</sup> J. N. D., and the Boston Recorder. "African Colonization." *Liberator*, December 29, 1832, 206. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

garner further Northern support in the attempt for an effective “Renovation of Mankind”.<sup>10</sup>

The attempt to gain support for the movement in Massachusetts came as they tried to appeal to people as citizens, philanthropists, and as Christians.<sup>11</sup> The appeal as citizens came as looking at what would be best for the entire nation. People should not object to the movement if it comes as the best for the larger nation. Slavery is acknowledged as an evil, however the society would not directly touch the issue. While not directly touching it, Osgood’s piece does acknowledge that the society does not work with slaveholders to preserve their practice. Instead, colonization’s positive impact would come on decreasing the colored population in the nation. In the eyes of colonizationists, the evil of slavery would be greatly diminished with colonizing in Liberia, and eventually the practice would be eradicated.<sup>12</sup> The appeal of colonization as a citizen goes directly in line with the desire to end slavery. While colonization’s argue they want to bring the end of slavery, they attempt to appeal to the public that colonization is the best route to do so, even when other opposition to this idea would eventually come up.

An appeal as a philanthropist seeks to find the option that gives the most happiness to a certain group of people. Colonization would be able to decrease the power of the slave-states, however if the practice is not adopted, slave-states might be able to have a profound impact on the ways of general society. If the colored population remained in the nation, colonizationists argue that they will never be able to escape the confines of the slave culture

---

<sup>10</sup> J. N. D., and the Boston Recorder

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Osgood. Sermon Delivered at Springfield, Mass. Before the Colonization Society of Hampden County. July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1827. 4

<sup>12</sup> Osgood. 7



they lived in. however, establishing a new land in Africa would provide an opportunity to aspire to become greater than their cultural confines. Liberia would provide an opportunity for these aspirations. The success of the colony in the 1820s gave promise that this land and possibility could come to fruition, however continuous support would be required. Charity to the society and the movement could ensure Liberia remains progressive and full of promise. Philanthropists could provide a colored population, entrenched in a slave culture within the southern US, a possibility for a new start if they supported the colonization movement. With this movement, progress could be made for those who will inhabit the land.

The Christian goals of the colonization movement in Liberia were evident early in the framework of the society. The ACS was viewed in the light as “a Missionary character and is undertaken in the name of the Lord”.<sup>13</sup> Christians were to seek opportunities for others to better themselves and do good, and in the eyes of the colonization movement, this was a way. The faith aspect and focus of the movement was significant, and the ploy to try to get more people involved came from a faith-based maneuver. Liberia is painted as a place for evangelical change for African Americans and appealing to the public on this idea was important. The ability of religion to connect with people was a key resource of the ACS and Massachusetts in particular. The presence of ministers in the entire colonization movement made powerful orators, which in time was able to gain more support. The support of colonization in the eyes of a Christian was simple, if they truly wanted the best for all people, then they would support this practice. While obviously biased, leaders of the colonization movement fed off this idea, urging further expansion of this ideology to the masses. Liberia

---

<sup>13</sup> Tomek, Beverly C., Matthew J. Hetrick, Stanley Harrold, and Randall M. Miller. *New Directions in the Study of African American Recolonization*. Southern Dissent. University Press of Florida, 2017. 34

could serve as a perfect location for freed slaves to make their lives anew, and supporters of the colonization movement would work to try to gain supporters by expressing this belief.

In the first five years of the American Colonization Society, the organization experienced some hardships with funding, however succeeded in sending over emigrants. From 1817 to 1822, the ACS would raise just over \$19,000 and send over 200 colonists to Liberia.<sup>14</sup> However the years of 1823 and 1824 would prove to be a true crisis for the organization, and the lack of funding received would threaten their existence. Issues in their colony with the livelihood of their colonists and the actions of Jehudi Ashmun would get back to the board of directors. Ashmun was an agent of the ACS, sent over in May 1822 to launch a new commercial organization for a few weeks, however this turned into staying for six years. Ashmun assumed the role of acting governor of Liberia after Dr. Ayres' absence from the colony. After his wife's death on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1822, Ashmun would place the colony under martial law and put all colonists at his mercy.<sup>15</sup> Ashmun would lead a defense against native warriors in November of that year, however constant enemy presence did not allow the colony to grow the way they intended. Ayres would eventually be sent back to the colony, but damage was already done. Another key figure would travel to Liberia in 1824 looking to solve some issues of the land, Ralph Randolph Gurley.

Gurley was a graduate of Yale and became an agent of the ACS upon graduation. He became an integral part of the message of colonization being spread in his role as Secretary,

---

<sup>14</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>15</sup> Staudenraus. 88

dealing with correspondence, expeditions, and affairs in the colony.<sup>16</sup> He would travel on behalf of the ACS to places like Britain to advocate for the cause he adored. He would be the agent sent to investigate the reports surrounding Ashmun in 1824. After some time examining Ashmun and the colony's actions, he later derived the "Plan for Civil Government in Liberia".<sup>17</sup> This report and plan led to Ashmun being appointed a colonial agent for the ACS, rather than just sending him to the wayside. Gurley would also go on to organize the African Education Society in 1829, intended to "train persons of color destined for Africa".<sup>18</sup> Gurley would become an integral figure in the ACS, and would have a significant interest in the establishment of an auxiliary in Massachusetts. However, to Gurley's dismay, Massachusetts would not be a site where colonization would take off in the manner he had hoped.

The colonization movement is one built on the impact of individuals who advocated for the practice. Massachusetts, while not seemingly an immediate player in the movement, had an impact on the overall leadership of the entire movement. Rev. Joseph Tracy was a Protestant minister originally from Hartford, Vermont who graduated from Dartmouth College in 1814. From there Tracy would study law and eventually change his life path towards the ministry. Using his studies within his faith, Tracy would become an editor of the Boston Recorder in 1834 and then the New York Observer in 1835.<sup>19</sup> Tracy would become a target for abolitionists, as his stance on slavery and colonization would be very clear to the

---

<sup>16</sup> "Ralph Randolph Gurley." In *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936. *Gale in Context: Biography*"

<sup>17</sup> "Ralph Randolph Gurley."

<sup>18</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 192

<sup>19</sup> "Joseph Tracy." In *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936. *Gale in Context: Biography*

public. Tracy would become more involved in colonization in Massachusetts as well as the Parent Society as the years would go on. Like Tracy, the movement would face fierce opposition throughout the 1830s, leading to an increase in abolitionist participation.

The colonization movement and the American Colonization Society would gain serious momentum throughout the United States in the 1820s, however they would soon face a fierce opponent. Abolitionism was a direct opponent of colonization and would soon take its place as the more notable movement in the nation. Prior to the 1830s, it was not uncommon to see many would-be abolitionists support the colonization movement. This change in attitudes toward the colonization movement started with the free blacks, and then would spread to larger parts of the population. Abolitionism primarily was focused on the north, as the South was becoming more and more paranoid of any attack on slavery. It took until the late 1820s into the early 1830s for people to turn on colonization in some parts, and out of this grows the abolition movement. A key figure of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century would show how the feelings toward colonization would change, William Lloyd Garrison.

Garrison is known for being an abolitionist fighting for the end of slavery, however that was not always his stance. Initially, Garrison was a supporter of colonization at first, but changed his tune beginning in the 1830s after interacting with black communities in Boston. The newspaper editor from Boston would bring out papers dedicated to destroying colonization and advocating for immediate abolition in 1831.<sup>20</sup> The constant attacking of the movement would be too sharp for the time, and his calls for ending colonization and slavery would land him in a Baltimore jail for various criminal and libel suits. Garrison would then

---

<sup>20</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 193

go on to create his own paper dedicated to his cause, *The Liberator*. The paper would originate in Boston and appeal to the free Blacks of the area, attaining over 500 black subscribers over the first six months of the paper's launch. However, in that same time, Garrison would not acquire a single white subscriber.<sup>21</sup> Garrison would continue to grow and be an example for the larger abolition movement, gradually over time gaining white supporters who also began to switch from colonization to abolition. Garrison claimed that the ACS had "deceitful principles" and had "shamefully duped" the intentions of good men.<sup>22</sup> Garrison, along with other abolitionists who attacked colonization, attacked the leadership behind the movement and not the participants per say. Instead, Garrison supported black resistance to the movement and attempted to show the morality of man was greater than the colonization movement. Garrison's support from black Americans was largely due to his updated stance against colonization.<sup>23</sup> Black resistance towards colonization was consistent and key towards the overall spread and dominance of abolition over colonization in the 1830s. an 1835 meeting of the Colored Citizens of Boston would directly attack the "Agent and Champion of the Colonization Society" and also denounce the society as a whole.<sup>24</sup> Further attacks on the ACS came as the paper would describe their values as "unchristian, proscriptive, and dangerous", and the abolitionist cause would remain focused on repudiating the ACS entirely until its complete extinction.<sup>25</sup>

Colonization sympathizers came through print media at that time, allowing members

---

<sup>21</sup> Staudenraus. 194

<sup>22</sup> Staudenraus. 199

<sup>23</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 50

<sup>24</sup> "The Difference!" *Liberator*, June 6, 1835, 91. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

<sup>25</sup> "The Difference!"

of the society to push back against abolitionism and specially Garrison. Prior to Tracy joining in 1834, the Boston Recorder was a newspaper that would spread messages of colonization. In 1831, the paper would release a piece attacking Garrison's critique, arguing he is too deep over his head. The piece looks to defend colonization, stating how beneficial the colony would be for free people of color. Seeing how well new emigrants have done in their time there, the colony in Liberia proved how people of color can be provided an opportunity for equal privileges with whites.<sup>26</sup> Garrison also became a target of the ACS within the African Repository, albeit mostly in response to Garrison's paper for the most part. They claim that Garrison's "misrepresentation of the Colonization Society" is due to Garrison himself leaving facts out and writing about only what serves his purpose.<sup>27</sup> Garrison's "fraudulent practices" show him as a dishonest man who does not serve the will of his readers, and therefore damages his audience due to his inability to be impartial.<sup>28</sup> Attacks on Garrison also increased after he released his "thoughts on African Colonization" in the early 1830s. The notorious abolitionist released his "bitter tirade against the Colonization Society" and the ACS represents him again as a misrepresentative opponent to the movement.<sup>29</sup>

Garrison's paper would begin to target Tracy in the 1830s as he became a more prominent figure in the movement. In January of 1834, Garrison would release a review of a sermon of Tracy's, in which a discussion on Tracy's views on slavery and immediate emancipation occurs. Garrison attacks Tracy's idea of immediate emancipation as it is in

---

<sup>26</sup> "Defence of the Colonization Society." *Liberator*, September 3, 1831, 143. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

<sup>27</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 10, 227

<sup>28</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 10, 228

<sup>29</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 14, 235

conjunction with colonization. Tracy depreciates immediate abolition of slavery by showing some sympathy to slave holders. Tracy then advocates to “build up a civilized, well-governed nation of free colored people”.<sup>30</sup> at the time, two-thirds of the members of the ACS owned slaves, making the society and Tracy easy targets for Garrison and other abolitionists. This piece also demonstrates northern colonizationists in a different light than others, saying while they are sincere, they do not constitute the ACS.<sup>31</sup> Attacks on Tracy and the ACS would continue in the following years by Garrison and fellow abolitionists.

The next year would see Garrison become harsher with his criticism, calling out men like Tracy and Gurley by name for their roles in the colonization movement. Referring to them as instigators of outrage and crime, Garrison attacks these men among others for their active participation in the greater movement. Also, Garrison attacks news outlets such as the Boston Recorder, New-York Observer, Vermont Chronicle, and the African Repository for being used as methods to inspire pro-slavery mobs.<sup>32</sup> Attacking the missionary view colonizationists have attempted to build up, Garrison makes these men and news outlets appear to be disgraceful and sinners to God. Their lives have been damaging to the cause to end slavery and provide equality to enslaved African Americans. Tracy becomes a special target for Garrison, with the following year reporting on a meeting with the New England Anti-Slavery Society. Tracy did not attend and chose not to “give a fair account of it”. However, Tracy is mocked by Garrison, claiming “he is not worthy of belief in any charge

---

<sup>30</sup> Garrison, William Lloyd, and James Brown Yerrinton. "The liberator." Newspaper. Boston, Mass.: William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp, January 4, 1834. *Digital Commonwealth*,

<sup>31</sup> Garrison, William Lloyd, and James Brown Yerrinton. "The liberator." Newspaper. Boston, Mass.: William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp, January 4, 1834. *Digital Commonwealth*,

<sup>32</sup> Garrison, William Lloyd, and James Brown Yerrinton. "The liberator." Newspaper. Boston, Mass.: William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp, August 15, 1835. *Digital Commonwealth*,

that he makes either against abolitionists or the anti-slavery cause”.<sup>33</sup> His opinion is not being cut out however, as Garrison still shows his comments to hopefully provide a greater pushback against him. Abolitionists would never associate themselves with Tracy, as his views were ones they seek to directly attack within their cause.

Tracy in 1836 especially becomes a focused target of Garrison, and their opposition to one another becomes prevalent. Tracy is becoming a larger voice in the movement in Massachusetts, and with these men competing for an audience, they surely would collide. Garrison sought to destroy colonization in the 1830s, and Tracy was his method of doing so, referring to the movement as “Mr. Joseph Tracy’s corrupt little party, who are for indemnifying the masters for their slaves”.<sup>34</sup> Later that summer Garrison would continue his attacks in hopes to question Tracy’s intentions and methods. Asking the question on why Tracy choses to work in the North, rather than in a region such as Texas where his ideas could be better received. At the Anti-slavery Convention in Boston, Garrison described Tracy’s comments as in character for him, drenched in a “stick of Mr. Tracy”.<sup>35</sup> Asking in his paper, “How long will the Christian community patronize a paper which pits itself against the grand moral movement of the age”? At a time where abolition was supreme over colonization, this note is important as it shows that colonization is still prevalent. Garrison would not acknowledge Tracy or the moment this severely if it were not.

---

<sup>33</sup> Garrison, William Lloyd, and James Brown Yerrinton. "The liberator." Newspaper. Boston, Mass.: William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp, June 11, 1836. *Digital Commonwealth*,

<sup>34</sup> Garrison, William Lloyd, and James Brown Yerrinton. "The liberator." Newspaper. Boston, Mass.: William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp, June 25, 1836. *Digital Commonwealth*,

<sup>35</sup> Garrison, William Lloyd, and James Brown Yerrinton. "The liberator." Newspaper. Boston, Mass.: William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp, July 2, 1836. *Digital Commonwealth*,



The rivalry between Garrison and Tracy would continue for the remainder of the decade. Tracy became a consistent name in Garrison's paper at the time, showing the impact Tracy was having in the region. The colonization movement was not large in Massachusetts at the time, but its presence was still felt. Continuous acknowledgement by Garrison of Tracy shows the potential for colonization to take off in the state. If the movement were so suppressed by abolition, Garrison would not have felt the need to attack a local figure like Tracy. Tracy's role in the entire ACS scheme would grow over the following years, giving validation to Garrison's attacks on him. Tracy was an example of how local leaders of the movement influenced the larger scale movement. He knew how to communicate with people and to get them to listen to him. Tracy was an example of how this movement was not large initially, but the state was becoming more and more ripe as the years went by. Abolition was still a dominant force in the state, however the groundwork for the movement to grow in Massachusetts was becoming evident. While pushback would still ensue, the impact and importance of Joseph Tracy in the Massachusetts movement would become very apparent. Also, during this time, a student colonization society at the Andover Seminary would purchase 100 slaves to emigrate them out of the nation. While this was not a larger depiction of the movement in the state, it still was one that was worth the attention of anti-slavery and abolitionist groups across the region.

Across the northeast in the early 1830s, African Americans would organize all over and continue to disavow the American Colonization Society, explaining how state auxiliaries spread the message that vilified them and made them appear as lesser beings.<sup>36</sup> Black

---

<sup>36</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 47

Americans struggled throughout the 1820s on getting across their distaste for colonization, working to appeal to people about the organization's true intentions versus what they would publicly say. Often black Americans would attempt to see through the ACS's public ideas and show the racist ideology that laid at the forefront of any proposition sent forth by the organization. For the ACS, black resistance was a serious obstacle for them, and they would send Gurley to the Second Annual National Black Convention.<sup>37</sup> Black leaders were willing to listen to ACS members, however their opinions toward the movement were not expected to be swayed much. After Gurley finished his speech discussing actions on behalf of the ACS, John Vashon gave a speech denouncing the colonization movement, stating that the only reason the ACS would work towards the end of slavery was so that blacks could be moved to Liberia.<sup>38</sup> Vashon's speech attacked the society Gurley held dear to him, but he held no resentment toward the black delegation there. Instead, Gurley focused his frustration with men like Garrison, who had turned his back on the movement after his initial support. Resistance toward colonization would continue throughout the decade of the 1830s, and the ACS would be forced to wait some time for the opportunity for a revival of the movement.

Opposition to the colonization movement provided obstacles for expansion but did not make things impossible. The pushback the movement received instead urged those who devoutly supported the movement to continue in their work. Agents of the Massachusetts branch still saw purpose in their efforts, even during the times where seemingly abolition was defeating them everywhere they went. While abolition won in the 1830s, the colonization

---

<sup>37</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 51

<sup>38</sup> Power-Greene. 51

cause still survived. Massachusetts itself had shown that even in the darker times for the larger movement, it was a state still worth the attention of the leadership of the movement. the following decade would prove this idea to be true, as the movement would take off and the state would grow into a larger figure in the movement.

Massachusetts came into true play for the American Colonization Society in the 1830s but did not become one of the most prominent members of the organization for some time. While various members of the state can be found listed as key participants, the state had not yet established an auxiliary for the organization. This was a frustrating idea for some in the organization, as they would press throughout the 1820s on establishing in the state. It is important to understand the times Massachusetts was organizing at the time, as movements like abolition grew and dominated over the ACS. The state also did not have the reasoning for colonization that others may have had. Due to efforts from men like Paul Cuffe, blacks moved toward equal rights at a much faster rate than other states.<sup>39</sup> These were the times Massachusetts began getting a foothold in the ACS, and it is understood why there was such hesitancy in establishment and support of this movement. From there, the organization would slowly begin to build traction. Beginning in the 1840s, whole numbers to the naked eye may prove otherwise, the MCS began to become an important member in the larger colonization movement and its establishment in the nation.

---

<sup>39</sup> Salvador, George Arnold. *Paul Cuffe, the Black Yankee, 1759-1817*. [Reynolds-DeWalt Printing], 1969. 25

## Chapter Two: The Fruits of Labor: Massachusetts Growth the Colonization Movement

Colonization was overcome by abolition in the United States in the 1830s, with many colonizationists sympathizers joining the cause for the immediate end to slavery. Even while the American Colonization Society was still acquiring donations and creating state auxiliaries, the overall movement had slowed down drastically in this decade. States like Massachusetts were slow to join the greater colonization movement, even when figures such as Paul Cuffe were from the state who inspired the ACS. Abolition would find a stronghold in Massachusetts throughout the 1830s, as abolitionists like Garrison took hold in the state. While Massachusetts would not rise to the level of activity as other states, the decade of the 1840s would prove to spark the colonization movement across the state. The spread of colonization into Massachusetts would be difficult, as movements such as abolition and eventually free soil came into cities. Garrison's opposition to the movement would only become stronger with the formation of the MCS.<sup>1</sup> However, even with some push back, the ACS movement would begin to progress in 1841.

Massachusetts would officially organize a colonization society on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1841.<sup>2</sup> With the creation of this state society, came the commitment to the constitution of the ACS. The constitution attempted to mirror the U.S. constitution in many ways, including the usage of two senators for a county.<sup>3</sup> This constitution was broken down into five divisions; Declaration of Rights, Legislative Powers, Executive Power, Judicial Department, and

---

<sup>1</sup> "Boston Anniversaries." *Liberator*, June 11, 1841. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Fourth Annual Report*, 5

<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Seventh Annual Report*, 21

Miscellaneous Provisions.<sup>4</sup> The rights and powers given in this constitution attempted to give the notion of independence for the Liberia colony with the free blacks that would be sent. The independence they would have there could be promising for people, along with the services the United States would still supply to aid the growing colony, colonizationists saw no faults in their plan. However, with the continuous pushback against the movement, it would take participation from more states, such as Massachusetts, to potentially see their plan come to fruition.

The following years after its inception would not provide much to report to the public within their annual reports. These would become important for spreading the message of the ACS as it dealt with the movement on a smaller level. These reports would also mention the work and progress of other states, which for Massachusetts, would be important to attempt to gain more supporters or “friends”. Women of the ACS helped form an auxiliary in Springfield in 1841, beginning the revival of the movement in the state.<sup>5</sup> Women served a key purpose, as they would be important on the ground members of the society. While leadership remained male dominated for Massachusetts, it was women who served an essential purpose on the ground for the movement. In smaller communities, female leaders and voices aided MCS agents in gaining supporters and donations. At this time, the only man from Massachusetts that was a Vice President of the ACS was Daniel Webster, a former member of the House of Representatives and Secretary of State to Presidents William Henry Harrison and John Tyler.<sup>6</sup> Webster was not always a supporter of the movement, but his mere

---

<sup>4</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Seventh Annual Report*, 18 – 26

<sup>5</sup> American Colonization Society, *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report*, 5

<sup>6</sup> Brown, Norman D. “Daniel Webster.” *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2020.

presence helped to add some prominence to the general ACS. Dating back to a meeting in 1822, Webster had stated, "I see through this business. It is a scheme of the southern slaveholders to get rid of their free negroes. I'll have nothing to do with it".<sup>7</sup> Even Webster, a prominent white man of the time, saw the point of view opponents of colonization saw. After this meeting where Webster refused his support, the plan for forming a Massachusetts state society went dead.

Further opposition came through the existence of the slave trade, as many anti-colonizationists viewed colonization as promoting the practice. The slave trade also brought potential for war, which the ACS worked to immediately put down. The slave trade, previously outlawed, still was a topic of discussion for many. Colonization, to its opposition, seemed like a way around the slave trade, and therefore keeping the practice in existence. ACS members worked to push this narrative away and refute it, claiming that colonization was a way to rid the slavery and that their supporters did not endorse the slave trade. While the talking point of the opposition would continue, the idea that colonizationists supported the slave trade would be one that would take time to suppress.

Supporters of the movement, such as Rev. Dr. E.P. Humphrey, a Presbyterian Pastor from Massachusetts attempted to show the positives of colonization to the public. Dr. Humphrey mentions the trip Burgess and Mills went on years prior and how they explored the region for the possibility of colonization, predicting no obstacles after their trip's completion. Dr. Humphrey also discusses the "blessing to our country" colonization would be, ending slavery at once and providing the African region with a great economic potential.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> L. T., and A. S. Reporter. "Colonization Reminiscences." *Emancipator and Free American*, October 14, 1841, 96. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

<sup>8</sup> "Miscellany." *Vermont Chronicle*, June 16, 1841, 96. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

Humphrey's remarks point at a larger theme for the ACS; their image. They were engulfed with the need for acquiring more money and supporters, and a tactic they would use would become their yearly reports.

The ACS was very aware of their image and the messages they would send. This was clear in their 1841 annual report, where Ebenezer Burgess, from Dedham, Massachusetts, comes back into the scene. Prior to this year, Burgess was not a Vice President of the ACS or even the Massachusetts Colonization Society. Even after he and Samuel Mills traveled to Liberia in the past to explore possibilities there on behalf of the ACS, Burgess was not a major figure at the time. This would change in 1841, when the yearly annual report directly mentions him. A native from Dedham, Massachusetts, Burgess would donate \$1,000 to the ACS. The report also goes to mention that, "the report of Dr. Burgess places his name among the first and most devoted friends of the ACS. he now gives a thousand dollars to sustain the colony on that coast which, 20 years ago, he periled his life to explore".<sup>9</sup> A donation of this size was substantial and an opportunity for the ACS. The following year, Burgess would become a Vice President of the ACS, directly placing his name among the key leaders of the movement in Massachusetts and the country.<sup>10</sup> The message was simple; become a "friend" of the movement and you too can rise to prominence in the society. While Burgess' actions years prior made the appointment of him as a Vice President substantiated, the ACS still intended for a message to be sent with his appointment. Also, during a time where abolition was dominating over them, any potential opportunity to get back into the larger social scene was an opportunity they needed.

---

<sup>9</sup> American Colonization Society, *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report*, 5

<sup>10</sup> American Colonization Society, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report*, 20

The early years of the MCS did not provide hope for potential for the colonization movement. Reports consist of news of the ACS from across the east coast, as there were failures in creating a traveling agency for Massachusetts.<sup>11</sup> Optimism for the movement was not strong throughout the state at the time, and agents felt this. Field agents of the society would continue to go around seeking members and donations; however, the impacts of abolition were becoming clear. However, over time, it was clear the movement was beginning to gain some traction. Prior to 1843, the MCS used the Boston Recorder as a main line of communication for the public. However, a change in leadership no longer allowed them to promote their message in that fashion. Also, in print media, information about colonization efforts and the society were being suppressed, a decision made by editors in fear of losing their audience who supported them financially. Although there were many negatives seen in Massachusetts' colonization efforts, their donations kept hope alive. The MCS raised \$1,830.07 for the ACS across the state in 1843, a substantial increase from the year prior.<sup>12</sup> This indication of success and promise would continue as the state became a more inclusive participant of the entire colonization movement.

Prosperity within the colonization movement begins to come to fruition in the middle of the decade. Donations to the ACS had grown to \$5,143 displayed in the 1844 recordings.<sup>13</sup> The increase in donations would make news throughout the ACS report, as finally the state was showing the promise founders of the movement had hoped for. Agents had been sent throughout the state to various parishes to give lectures on the colonization movement, and

---

<sup>11</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Third Annual Report*, 3

<sup>12</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Third Annual Report*, 4

<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Fourth Annual Report*, 5



efforts seemed to finally start to pay off. Rev. Tracy, still in his role as Secretary and General Agent for the MCS, talked about the increasing prosperity Massachusetts had begun to show. Rev. Dr. Caleb J. Tenney, an agent of the society, was sent throughout the state to go to churches on behalf of the MCS. Tenney would acknowledge the weakening of the abolitionist opposition in some ways, stating how “the bitterness of opposition from the abolitionists has greatly abated since they have adopted political action”.<sup>14</sup> Stating how “by another year” agents of the MCS would be more welcome in the congregations of various ministries to spread the message of colonization.<sup>15</sup> Tracy and Tenney’s hopes would seemingly become true as the MCS continued to increase their production on the larger scale ACS. Donations in 1845 would double the previous year’s output, \$13,069.24.<sup>16</sup> In a year where the entire ACS would raise \$56,468.60, the percentage from Massachusetts was raising the profile of the state.<sup>17</sup> Tenney would be credited for his commitment to the movement, working over forty-three weeks for the MCS and lecturing in a plethora of different locations. His personal collections included around forty-five that did not donate the year prior.<sup>18</sup> “Operating with increasing energy and success”, the MCS was becoming an integral part of the movement and a state that the ACS wanted to promote.

The recent uptick in activity in Massachusetts was encouraging for the ACS. Finally, they were beginning to see the hope they had imagined years prior. The successes of the MCS in increased donations and member participation can be broken down into separate areas. The MCS finally had found a more efficient system of their agencies, truly allowing

---

<sup>14</sup> American Colonization Society, *Twenty-Eight Annual Report*, 18

<sup>15</sup> American Colonization Society, *Twenty-Eight Annual Report*, 19

<sup>16</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Fifth Annual Report*, 7

<sup>17</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>18</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Fifth Annual Report*, 6

them to use their resources better. Another area was that the idea of what colonization truly intended was becoming clearer to their audience. They were able to get across the ideas that colonization did not support the slave trade and the positives of colonization in West Africa for evangelical purposes. Encouraging accounts of activities in Liberia would assist in their messages.<sup>19</sup> The recent uptick in activity in Massachusetts also can be credited with stable leadership of the society.

In the early years of the MCS, Presidents of the Society often exchanged hands unlike the ACS. Where Henry Clay was a consistent leader of the ACS, Massachusetts was looking for a main leader to remain at the head. Upon inception, William Banister from Newburyport, Massachusetts was the President of the MCS, and would remain in his role until 1844. This would change after Banister declined re-election, as then Ebenezer Burgess would take over in 1844. Burgess too would decline re-election and would be followed by Daniel Waldo. Waldo would pass away months after his first year as President began. Burgess would stay on as a Vice President and Manager of the Society, but the head of the MCS was becoming a revolving door of leadership. That is until Simon Greenleaf would take the role of President of the MCS in 1845.<sup>20</sup> Greenleaf, a native of Newburyport, Massachusetts, was a law professor at Harvard.<sup>21</sup> He had previously been a Vice President of the MCS but ascended to the Presidency after Burgess and Waldo were not able to hold it. upon taking over the role, donations and active participation drastically increase. While Rev. Tracy and Eliphalet Kimball. Treasurer for the MCS, also remained in their roles for some

---

<sup>19</sup> American Colonization Society, *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report*, 14

<sup>20</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Fifth Annual Report*, 3

<sup>21</sup> "Greenleaf, Simon." *In the Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University. 8th ed. Columbia University Press, 2018

time, starting in 1845 Greenleaf would hold his office for the remainder of the decade.

Greenleaf's consistent leadership and presence would allow the MCS to continue in their work toward achieving the goals they set out to.

All the while Massachusetts was gaining traction in the colonization movement, the entire ACS was experiencing a slight decrease in financial donations to the naked eye, but an indicator of change was occurring. In the early days of the society, they would raise just slightly over \$10,000. However, beginning in the 1840s, the society had found a consistency in their donations unlike earlier years. While the abolition movement did have a profound impact on the growth of colonization, they seemed to come out of the 1830s stronger in some ways. They began raising more and more money each year, with their lowest outputs in the 1840s being higher than previous years the decade prior. This can be credited to states like Massachusetts, who had found their footing in the movement in the 1840s with the revival of colonization. The same year where Massachusetts saw increased success, 1845 brought the ACS one of its most successful financial years, raising north of \$56,000.<sup>22</sup> The colonization movement was now truly finding its ground after a decade where abolition was the main story.

Devout members of the colonization movement in Massachusetts were set in their ideals for the society. The goals of the society and colonizing Liberia were simple:

1. To redeem an oppressed race, or such of them as are willing to be redeemed, from their political thralldom in this their Egypt, their Babylon, and restore them to the enjoyment of political freedom and independence in the land of their fathers.
2. To favor the redemption of men from literal slavery, by affording facilities to "benevolent and conscientious masters," who desire to emancipate.
3. To diffuse, by these means, the knowledge of the great Redeemer, and of \*

---

<sup>22</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

redemption through his blood," among millions who sit in darkness.<sup>23</sup>

These goals were major sticking points agents of the society went to speak on. The hope would be to deter any opposition that still lingered based on false pretenses, in their eyes, about the goals of the entire colonization movement. Liberia offered a place for free blacks to redeem themselves with their faith and their humanity. This was to be a location where re-education of the ways of life could be taught to blacks. While colonization still was not the preferred option of many free blacks, the colonization movement still worked to change the minds of the masses in hopes of achieving their utopian fantasy. This idea seemed to be more practical as time went on in the 1840s, as seemingly no "party animosities have been revived, or bas passions excited".<sup>24</sup> Agents of the MCS were free to come to congregations and speak to the masses, and even allowed to make return visits. The state society was beginning to appeal to the citizens, as years prior to 1846, agents would likely have been turned away from giving speeches on the movement and society goals. With more success came a need for more individuals willing to work on behalf of the society. soliciting agents for the society were important as they would be on the ground workers on behalf of the state in adding members to the cause. This also assisted in receiving donations for the movement or for life memberships. All donations received by these agents were submitted to the Treasurer, Eliphalet Kimball. Spontaneous collections were a main usage for soliciting agents, a practice that was unique for Massachusetts in 1846.<sup>25</sup>

Fortunes seemed to turn slightly sour in 1847 with the death of Rev. Tenney. Starting

---

<sup>23</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Sixth Annual Report*, 6

<sup>24</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Sixth Annual Report*, 7

<sup>25</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Sixth Annual Report*, 10

in his role for Massachusetts in 1843, he was the leading agent in the state for receiving donations and giving lectures about the movement. His impact allowed the state society access to many congregations of various churches to spread the message of colonization and its positives. Tenney's actions for the state society was a strong reason for the increase in donations and participation in the colonization movement. Rev. Tracy would lean on Tenney for spreading their message, and it did not take long to see the effect of his absence. The MCS elected Rev. M.G. Wheeler to fill the role that Dr. Tenney left.<sup>26</sup> However, Wheeler could not occupy the job for some time afterwards due to other commitments, and the society struggled because of it. Massachusetts only collected \$2,449.32 during the year to give to the Parent Society, however it was not the only state to see a decrease in donations. In total, the ACS collected \$29,472.84, their lowest total since 1838 and the superiority abolition had over them.<sup>27</sup> This year was also tumultuous for the entire colonization movement as in November of 1847, the ACS sent out a request to all auxiliaries. "To meet these and other unforeseen demands, the society urgently needs to receive \$12,000 by the end of this year".<sup>28</sup> The debts of the society caught up to them for the year, however by January of 1848, the Parent Society claimed to raise over \$50,000 the following year. Various debts would continue into 1848, as another call for donations to all auxiliaries was sent out in November of 1848, this debt due to sending more blacks over to Liberia than previously expected.<sup>29</sup>

Massachusetts would improve their donation level in 1848, increasing it to

---

<sup>26</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Seventh Annual Report*, 6

<sup>27</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>28</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 98

<sup>29</sup> Power-Greene. 98

\$4,801.59.<sup>30</sup> This was largely due to Rev. Wheeler getting a full year in his new occupation as well as the contributions of other agents. Rev. Pratt started in November of 1848 and worked for four months on behalf of the Massachusetts society. Captain George Barker worked for five weeks to end the year and a thirteen-month span of working for the state. Agents of Massachusetts had found that membership and “friends” of the society were still increasing in numbers and dedication.<sup>31</sup> While donations may have not been at the level as previous years, the movement in Massachusetts was still a strong one. Memberships were still healthy and growing, and a down year with donations would not hold the movement back in the eyes of leaders such as Greenleaf, Tracy, and Kimball.

The MCS’s growth came also on the ideas of life – memberships. In a payment of typically at least \$30, members could pay to be either life members of the state or parent society. Massachusetts had seen their life memberships increase drastically over the decade of the 1840s. From initially having less than ten life members by May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1845 to having 110 by April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1850, the growth of the movement was evident throughout the decade. Most of these memberships came from Boston, and along with the surrounding suburbs of the city, colonization became more popular in these areas than others. These memberships were a way for people to hopefully rise the ranks or at least ensure their attachment to the movement. While a majority did come from the Boston Area, still other memberships were dispersed throughout the state, showing that the influence of the movement was traveling well. With the growth of the movement in the state came constant opposition. Abolition was still a main competitor for the ACS; however, it would not be the only opponent. A new

---

<sup>30</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Eight Annual Report*, 6

<sup>31</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Eight Annual Report*, 6

political party would challenge colonization in the nation and would become a hotbed in Worcester.

The Free-Soil Party formed in the latter half of the 1840s as an anti-slavery faction. The party was focused on preventing the spread of slavery to the Western Territories but did not work alongside abolitionist ideals. The party would make a run toward federal office in 1848, as it nominated former President Martin Van Buren as their candidate at their convention in Buffalo, NY.<sup>32</sup> While Van Buren would go on to lose the Presidency, the impact the party would have on discussions on slavery would be brought to the forefront. The movement would bring the politics of the North into the political arena that would become the basis for the radical faction of the Republican Party that would be founded years later.<sup>33</sup> While Free-Soil would put up a pushback against the colonization movement, the abolitionist movement would continue to prove to be the main opponent.

The abolitionist movement continued to fight back against colonization, however the results of the 1840s would differ from those of the previous decade. Previously, abolition would dominate over colonization, with many former colonizationists sympathizers now on the side of abolition. William Lloyd Garrison and his newspaper worked to continue the fight against colonization, but now with mixed results. As free blacks leaving for Liberia rose throughout the decade, as did the total donations for the ACS. Garrison had previously called the ACS a “dead horse”, however, the numbers of the decade prove the movement was as

---

<sup>32</sup> “Buffalo Free Soil Convention.” 1848. *Massachusetts Cataract & Temperance Standard* 6 (22): 87. “Free Soil Movement—Buffalo Convention.” *North star* [Rochester, New York] [Aug. 18, 1848]: n.p. *19th Century U.S. Newspapers*.

<sup>33</sup> Mayfield, John. “FREE SOIL PARTY 1840s and 1850s.” In *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, edited by David S. Heidler, and Jeanne T. Heidler. ABC-CLIO, 2000.

strong as ever before.<sup>34</sup> Colonization would strongly and publicly attack abolition, including Simon Greenleaf. He would write that the revival of colonization in the United States was due to the political nature of abolition, and this caused people to change their opinions about the movement.<sup>35</sup> Abolitionists would refuse to acknowledge the success of the colonization movement in the 1840s, including giving reasoning to why the movement stayed afloat. Garrison claimed that the only reason why the colonization movement was regaining popularity was the presence and leadership of Henry Clay.<sup>36</sup> Abolition worked to give no credit to colonization, and men like Frederick Douglass and Martin Delany would be leaders in the cause of black resistance towards colonization.

Martin Delany in the 1840s worked for his own newspaper, the *Mystery*, and eventually for the *North Star* as an anti-colonizationist. Delany however advocated for black emigration, which was different from colonization. In the latter half of the 1840s, African Americans across the nation expressed these distinctions between colonization from the ACS and black emigration.<sup>37</sup> Delany would meet Douglass and Garrison, the leading figures of the abolition movement, in August of 1847 when the two men would lead multiple antislavery meetings.<sup>38</sup> The following year Delany would accompany Douglass to the Free-Soil Convention in Buffalo. Delany was an ally of Douglass, but both did not agree entirely as both men fought the colonization movement, but for different purposes. Delany supported

---

<sup>34</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 98

<sup>35</sup> American Colonization Society, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, 23

<sup>36</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 115

<sup>37</sup> Delany, Martin Robison, and Robert S. Levine. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*. University of North Carolina Press, 2003 182

<sup>38</sup> Delany et al. 69



black nationalism that could be provided through emigration to land outside of the United States. Still antislavery, Delany would intensify his efforts in the 1850s.

Frederick Douglass was a harsh critic of colonization from the outset. As a powerful orator, Douglass would use his newspaper, the *North Star*, as a method to get abolitionist ideals out to the public. Based in Rochester, NY, Douglass would publish articles against the colonization movement and figures like Henry Clay, dismissing his dream of colonization that he still held. It was not until 1848 where Douglass would publicly attack Clay for colonization, stating how Clay's lies about the true intentions of colonization would be shown. Sarcastically, Douglass claimed Clay's speech on colonization at that time was "the most successful we ever heard or read on the subject of colonization".<sup>39</sup> Douglass was also not shy of attacking the institution Clay led, calling the ACS "one of the most impudent Societies in the world".<sup>40</sup> Douglass' focus on attacking colonization would continue into 1849, where he would release an article in his paper. In this article, titled *Colonization*, he claims colonization is only a method to divert attention from the forced free-soil states in the West. Also, Douglass acknowledges that while there is some support for emancipation, that only comes with the idea that blacks would be sent to Liberia afterwards. The final stanza of his piece tries to capture the essence of black resistance toward colonization.

For two hundred and twenty-eight years has the colored man toiled over the soil of America, under a burning sun and a driver's lash—plowing, planting, reaping, that white men might roll in ease, their hands unhardened by labor, and their brows unmoistened by the waters of genial toil; and now that the moral sense of mankind is beginning to revolt at this system of foul treachery and cruel wrong, and is demanding its overthrow, the mean and cowardly oppressor is meditating plans to expel the colored man entirely from the country. Shame upon the guilty wretches that dare propose, and all that countenance such a proposition. We live here—have lived

---

<sup>39</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 115

<sup>40</sup> Power-Greene. 116

here—have a right to live here, and mean to live here.<sup>41</sup>

Douglass's attacks on colonization would not cease, but instead intensify. The following decade would bring federal government action towards slavery that would continue to raise tensions in the nation. The future of colonization and abolition would include future attacks, with men like Douglass and Garrison at the forefront.

Closing out the decade would see more growth for the state society in terms of donations. Massachusetts was able to collect \$5,871.22 for the Parent Society, another step toward approaching the levels of years prior. Rev. Wheeler, Rev. Pratt, and Capt. Barker worked continuously for the state society, with Wheeler focusing solely on Boston.<sup>42</sup> With Boston as the main hotbed for the movement, it was a crucial city in the eyes of the movement. The ACS saw prosperity as well, as their total collections increased as well. Emigration of free blacks was hindered however, due to cholera issues. While this put a strain on the society in terms of achieving their goals, this did not affect Massachusetts. As, to date, the state had not sent a single colonist to Liberia.

Massachusetts became a larger player in the colonization movement throughout the decade, however in terms of sending colonists to Liberia, the state continued to lag. Massachusetts increased their donation levels and life memberships seemingly every year, and the movement was truly picking up steam in the state. States such as Virginia were the most active in sending colonists over and being on the forefront of the movement. The ACS's desire to send more and more emigrants over depended on a state like Massachusetts to begin

---

<sup>41</sup> "Colonization," *The North Star*, January 26, 1849

<sup>42</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Ninth Annual Report*, 6

sending colonists over. The Parent Society's history of sending colonists over was discussed in the state reports yearly. However, the dream of Massachusetts joining the trend would not come to fruition in the 1840s. The decade saw Massachusetts become a key contributor for the greater movement, but it would have to wait for the next decade to begin actively participating in sending over colonists.

Throughout the 1840s, Massachusetts did not send a single colonist to Liberia. Where the state lacked colonists, they made up with financial donations. This decade is important as it sets up what is to come and the greater trends of activity that would appear. Opposition would still be strong throughout the north as tensions between the regions grew. No longer would compromise on the issue of slavery be sufficient, and a final answer would have to come. Colonization was not an appealing option for blacks before and certainly was not during the 1850s. The ACS, MCS, and even federal government figures would be active participants in the final push for colonization before the issue of slavery would be decided once and for all.

The colonization movement was revived in the 1840s, and its presence in Massachusetts truly began to take shape. Even though the American colonization Society had experienced some issues with debt in the previous years, the movement was still growing and would soon explode throughout the country. The 1850s would bring about a time of attempted compromise that would lead to the great American struggle. Actions taken by the federal government to avoid dealing with the issue of slavery would ultimately lead to bloodshed. Colonizationists viewed this increased tension as an opportunity to strike, while opposition to the movement looked to bring an end to the larger goal. Massachusetts would

also see changes throughout the decade regarding colonization, as the state would finally begin to send colonists to Liberia. This change in the participation of Massachusetts in the larger colonization scheme was another example of how the movement had grown in the state. Colonization's expansion would be aided by federal government actions that would increase tensions around the topic of slavery.

Massachusetts would finally take the step that the leaders of the Parent Society had hopes for years prior in 1850. That May of 1850, Massachusetts would send its first colonists to Liberia to sign the inception of the state society. The state would also see an increase in donations for the ACS, the change in direction regarding physical colonists was important for the ACS to see. With the state branch only in existence for about ten years, the long and continuous effort to grow the movement in the state was finally beginning to see true progress. The ACS would send 505 colonists in 1850 to Liberia, making the Massachusetts contribution of one rather small in comparison to others. For example, the state of Virginia would send over 109 colonists that same year.<sup>43</sup> Massachusetts would bring in \$6,164.47 for the ACS and increase of over \$200 from the previous report.<sup>44</sup> Donations were not up across the state however, for example, Worcester still showed a slower movement. Although MCS President Daniel Waldo resided in Worcester, the larger scope of the city had always been disappointing in the eyes of the state. "Very generally, the people were uninformed, or misinformed, with respect to our purposes, our labors, and their results; and various influences conspired to exclude correct information".<sup>45</sup> Free-Soil had taken a stronghold in

---

<sup>43</sup> African Repository, v. 27, 150

<sup>44</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Tenth Annual Report, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Tenth Annual Report, 10

Worcester and become direct opposition to Colonization. Leaders of the state would send Rev. Pinney to give speeches to change the opinion of the society, and it seemed to work. In the eyes of Pinney and other MCS leaders, Worcester changed its sentiment on colonization and becoming more supportive of the movement.<sup>46</sup> Worcester would increase their financial donations from \$84 to \$325.86 at the start of the decade.<sup>47</sup> The entire movement saw an uptick on financial donations, as the ACS would raise just short of \$65,000.<sup>48</sup>

One of the first actions of the decade that would increase tensions within the discussion of slavery was the Compromise of 1850. This federal act passed after being proposed by Henry Clay in the House of Representatives, and Senator Stephen Douglas would be a strong supporter of the bill.<sup>49</sup> Clay at the time was still the President of the American Colonization Society, however this bill did not directly mention colonization. This law would become a topic of serious tension regarding slavery as no side was truly getting what they wanted. From the man who created the Missouri compromise in 1820, Henry Clay was looking for another way to avoid the question. Southerners attacked the bill for its support of northern ideals, and northerners attacked it for sympathizing with the southern desire to keep slavery. A supporter of Clay's bill was Daniel Webster, a Vice President of the ACS, who argued that while both sides did not love all parts of the bill, that they should put grievances aside for the best of the nation. Webster saw this by supporting the entire bill and looking to move forward.<sup>50</sup> Neither side would fully support the bill, but there was a key piece of it that would surely gain southern support.

---

<sup>46</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Tenth Annual Report, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Ninth and Tenth Annual Reports, 22 and 27 respectively

<sup>48</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>49</sup> Foner, Eric. *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*. 1st ed. W.W. Norton & Co., 2010. 59

<sup>50</sup> Clark, John G., and E. A. Reed. "Compromise of 1850." *Salem Press Encyclopedia*, 2019.

True controversy laid in the existence of the Fugitive Slave Law, which was ardently supported by slaveholders. This law aggravated the already existing sectional divides and resulted in a surge of interest in emigration.<sup>51</sup> Martin Delany would publicly go against the passing of this bill, regarding this law as “the most disgraceful act of legislation ever passed by the U.S. Government”.<sup>52</sup> Delany viewed this law differently than other southern based laws previously, as this law included some Northern support of the bill. No longer was the preservation of slavery a southern act, but now Northerners in the government were becoming passive bystanders to these actions. Delany would use this law to fully push him towards support of black emigration from the United States, however not with coordination with the ACS. Delany would strike to create plans for emigration that would instead rival the plans of ACS leaders.

Henry Clay being the one to propose this Compromise and corresponding Fugitive Slave Law is no coincidence. As aforementioned, Clay was still the President of the American Colonization Society, and a direct answer one way or another on the issue of slavery would affect his society. The turmoil and anger caused by the Fugitive Slave Law gave Clay an opportunity to strike. Clay would have the chance to advocate for the ACS from within the federal government more and try to get a federal plan for colonization.<sup>53</sup> Gradual emancipation of slaves was the issue between North and South, as many northerners supported the ACS for it while many southern rejected any advance toward the end of slavery. Recent issues regarding the spread of slavery west in the nation ignited the

---

<sup>51</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 112

<sup>52</sup> Power-Greene, 113

<sup>53</sup> Power-Greene. 114

compromise colonization served between the North and South. As a man who was known for making compromises with the federal government, Clay was proving once again to try to be in the middle of the action. Clay's bill also caused tensions among abolitionist and anti-colonizationists. While Frederick Douglass was still adamantly against blacks leaving on any terms, the movement towards emigration of blacks began to pick up steam due to the Fugitive Slave Act. Many supporters of the fight against slavery and colonization began to consider possible plans for leaving.

Delany would continue his fight against the Fugitive Slave Law in late 1850. Delany would travel to Harvard Medical School to give a fiery speech about resisting the recent bill. He was admitted to the medical school in November of 1850; however, this speech would change that. Along with two other black students sponsored by the Massachusetts Colonization Society, a majority of students would petition the medical school to remove Delany.<sup>54</sup> Explained in the December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1850 petition, students stated, "we deem the admission of blacks to the medical Lectures highly detrimental to the interests and welfare of the Institution of which we are members, calculated alike to lower its reputation in this and other parts of the country".<sup>55</sup> Students had desired Harvard Medical School to remain an all-white institution, and Delany would be dismissed shortly after the petition. Delany would not give up his fight, but progress would not look in his favor initially.

1851 would bring even more success for the Parent Society and Massachusetts. The ACS would have its greatest year to date financially that year, receiving \$97,443.77.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Delany, Martin Robison, and Robert S. Levine. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*. University of North Carolina Press, 2003 184

<sup>55</sup> Delany et al. 184

<sup>56</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

Massachusetts would have a large impact on this number, however the donations would not be as consistent or geographically spread as some had hoped. Stating, “the liberality of donors was restrained by a severe pecuniary pressure, more severely felt, perhaps, in Massachusetts, than in any other part of the United States”. Nonetheless, Massachusetts still garnered \$18, 416.54 for the ACS, with over \$13,000 coming from the family of Daniel Waldo.<sup>57</sup> This money came largely from the legacies of Elizabeth and Sarah Waldo, another way for the MCS to receive money from supporters. This year would prove to be another substantial step in the progress of the movement in Massachusetts. For the entire ACS, 676 colonists were sent to Liberia, the most they had sent in one year since 1832.<sup>58</sup> For Massachusetts, in September 1851, the state would send nine colonists to Liberia on the Barque Zeno, a sharp increase than the previous year.<sup>59</sup> The increase in donations and colonists sent in 1852 compared to the previous year is an example of how the impact of discussions on slavery in the previous years had some impact on colonization participation.

This year was also important for antislavery and black emigration causes in 1852. African Americans across the country had a renewed will in the fight to end slavery due to the release of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe. While at that same time, Delany who resisted black emigration through 1851, asks African Americans to consider emigration to Latin America in his piece, *The Condition, Elevation, and Destiny of the Colored People in the United States*.<sup>60</sup> Considering emigration brought no positive feelings for Delany

---

<sup>57</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Eleventh Annual Report, 6

<sup>58</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>59</sup> *The African Repository*, v.28, 117

<sup>60</sup> Delany, Martin Robison, and Robert S. Levine. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*. University of North Carolina Press, 2003 184



initially, believing that African Americans should have full rights in the United States.<sup>61</sup> Beginning in 1852, Delany would become the leader and most notable name of the black emigration movement in the country. Even the book that brought the new energy to fight by Harriet Beecher Stowe considers colonization at the end.

Massachusetts in 1852 would see donations and sent emigrants decrease slightly. The MCS would collect \$9,241.92 for the Parent Society.<sup>62</sup> There were no large legacies left for the MCS that year, making the yearly collection much smaller than the previous year. and the state would also send only two emigrants to Liberia in October.<sup>63</sup> 1852 would begin a four-year trend where donations for the ACS go down, however emigrants will continue at a somewhat steady pace.<sup>64</sup> The effects of the Compromise of 1850 can be seen in the immediate uptick of donations, as Clay seems to capitalize on the opportunity his bill provides. This is evident in Massachusetts as before the proposal of the bill, no emigrants were sent from the state. However, since the bill's proposal in early 1850, Massachusetts had now sent over twelve emigrants to Liberia.<sup>65</sup> The slow and steady growth in terms of emigrants displays the advancement of colonization in a state often lively with abolition and free-soil.

Massachusetts would see some significant change in the leadership of the state auxiliary in 1853. After eight years as President, Simon Greenleaf would pass away in October of 1853, making him the second of the MCS presidents to have passed away while still holding office. Greenleaf's stability in leadership allowed the MCS to take significant

---

<sup>61</sup> Delany et al. 185

<sup>62</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Twelfth Annual Report, 7

<sup>63</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 29, 89

<sup>64</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>65</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 29, 89

strides in the colonization movement, and fellow leadership of the state made sure to note Greenleaf's impact. Greenleaf "had always performed its duties with distinguished ability and faithfulness."<sup>66</sup> The following meeting of the ACS would elect William Ropes Esq. as the fifth President in the history of the MCS.<sup>67</sup> The first year of Ropes' presidency, the state would collect \$9, 254.38 for the ACS.<sup>68</sup> Six more emigrants would be sent from Massachusetts in April of 1853, raising the collective number of emigrants sent to eighteen.<sup>69</sup> The progress of the movement would continue in the state under the new President. Most of the vice presidents and state board of directors would remain in their roles following the death of Simon Greenleaf, allowing President Ropes' transition to be a smooth one. Regarding the Parent Society, the movement showed a slight decrease in financial donations, but another increase in emigrants sent.<sup>70</sup> The greater society would soon face more tension and argument over the issue of slavery in the following year, with the federal government creating legislation that would set the nation on course for disaster.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 would be the next action from the government avoid the question of slavery. The era of compromise would continue with this act and the sectional tensions in the nation would only increase more. The Act would be proposed by Stephen Douglas, Senator from Illinois, and a believer in the idea of popular sovereignty. This would allow states themselves to decide whether to allow slavery in their state when admitted into the nation. This idea was the basis of the Kansas-Nebraska Act as this law

---

<sup>66</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Thirteenth Annual Report, 6

<sup>67</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Thirteenth Annual Report, 4

<sup>68</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Thirteenth Annual Report, 11

<sup>69</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 30, 121

<sup>70</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

nullified the Missouri Compromise from 1820.<sup>71</sup> This act did not allow slavery to exist above the 36°30' north latitude, restricting where slavery could expand. Douglass included the provision for popular sovereignty to receive southern votes on the bill, as wanting to open a discussion on the expansion or restriction of slavery was not one Douglas wanted. Southern support was evident, as almost all southern Democrats voted to pass the Act.<sup>72</sup> This act allowed the possibility of further expansion of slavery no matter the administration in charge. A harsh opposition to the bill was Charles Sumner, a Senator from Massachusetts who was a member of the Free-Soil Party. Along with Senators Chase and Giddings, Sumner published the “Appeal of the Independent Democrats in Congress to the People of the United States: where the three men attack Douglas’ act stating that Douglas wanted to “subjugate the whole country to the yoke of slaveholding despotism”.<sup>73</sup> Sumner looked to create the debate that Douglas wanted to avoid, one about slavery. He pinned Douglas as a sympathizer of southern adoration for slavery and looked to directly link him to the expansion of slavery. Sumner would continue alongside other opponents to the Act, but it would not be enough. The tensions the act would bring about would impact the Colonization movement and progress in Massachusetts would hit a point previously not attained.

1854 would be a transformative year for the MCS. William Ropes would remain president of the state society and significant donations for the Parent Society would once in. Massachusetts would collect \$16,406.37, a donation for the ACS larger than any other state that year.<sup>74</sup> For the first time since its inception, Massachusetts would become the leader of

---

<sup>71</sup> Gardner, John C., and Larry Schweikart. “Kansas-Nebraska Act.” *Salem Press Encyclopedia*, 2019.

<sup>72</sup> Gardner and Schweikart.

<sup>73</sup> Blue, Frederick J. *Charles Sumner and the Conscience of the North*. American Biographical History Series. Harlan Davidson, 1994. 78

<sup>74</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Fourteenth Annual Report, 5

the state auxiliaries for the ACS financially, a significant step in the growth of the movement. Especially in 1854, the size of this donation was key for the health of the ACS as they would raise \$65,433.93 that year.<sup>75</sup> Another dip in yearly donations would continue, as well as the number of emigrants sent. Massachusetts would match their previous number of six emigrants sent to Liberia.<sup>76</sup> The steadiness of emigrants as well as the significant proportion of financial donations for the ACS is a key example of how the fruits of colonizationist labor was paying off. The state was becoming more active in the society, and even taking a key role in yearly activity. In the year of Kansas-Nebraska's passing, the colonization movement saw the need to strike on the sectional divide, however 1855 would prove to be a struggle for the national movement.

The following year would bring changes to Massachusetts and show significant regression financially. The state only would have one agent, Rev. M.G. Pratt, be able to collect for the state branch due to the retirement of Rev. M.G. Wheeler. This would slow down donations and other operations for the state. Massachusetts would see a regression of more than \$10,000 from the previous years' collection, largely due to not receiving legacy donations that would total between \$4,000 and \$6,000.<sup>77</sup> Massachusetts would be just a small example of the larger struggles of the ACS, as the Parent Society would only collect \$55,276.89, the lowest financial collection of the decade. Emigrants would also sharply decrease, down from 553 the previous year to only 207 in 1855.<sup>78</sup> Massachusetts would send four emigrants to Liberia in December of 1855, still displaying a steady hand in that regard.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>76</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 33, 155

<sup>77</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, 13 – 14

<sup>78</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>79</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 33, 155

Throughout this time of decreased funding and emigration, the tensions increased by the Kansas-Nebraska Act were beginning to result in physical violence.

Since the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, tensions around the topic of slavery had increased. Opportunity for slave holders to grow into new lands went directly against Northern sentiment to prevent the spread of slavery. Tensions would lead to violence in the region as well as in Congress. Sumner would continue his attacks on the act and the violence it caused in 1855 and leading into 1856. In May of 1856, Sumner would begin his "Crime Against Kansas" speech, calling out Douglas and Senator Andrew Butler from South Carolina as villains. Sumner would proceed to use these two men as the example of how the violence in Kansas was due to the actions of the legislation they passed. In response, Butler's second cousin, Congressman Preston Brooks of South Carolina, proceeded to beat Sumner with his cane.<sup>80</sup> This action seemed to be an example for the tensions between the North and South, and showed any hope of common ground and decency was out the window. A southerner had attacked a pro-slavery Northern senator in the Capitol, signaling the violence that would come throughout the nation.

That same year of Sumner's attack in the Capitol would see Massachusetts and the ACS rebound from previous financial down years. Massachusetts would bring in \$5,268.38, leading to optimism that the State would rebound to previous financial collections.<sup>81</sup> There was also cause for optimism for the entire movement, as financial collections, and emigrants both increased substantially since the previous year. For Massachusetts, they would again contribute six emigrants to Liberia, raising the collective number they had sent in the decade

---

<sup>80</sup> Puleo, Stephen. *The Caning: The Assault That Drove America to Civil War*. Westholme, 2012.

<sup>81</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Sixteenth Annual Report, 17

to thirty-four.<sup>82</sup> Massachusetts development in the greater movement also affected their opposition, as now colonization seemed like a greater threat to abolitionism with its new growth in the north. Delany and other opposition to colonization would also see federal court decisions responding to previous laws increase sectional tension even further than before.

The latter half of the 1850s would bring about violence and increased sectional divide surrounding the debate of slavery. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 had brought about violence in the region when it came time for individuals to vote on allowing slavery or not. The consistent bloodshed in the area was a foreshadowing for the future, but that was unknown at the time. The region would become a center for sectional divide around the debate, but further incidents would occur. The decade had been occupied by the Dred Scott Case, with its final Supreme Court decision being made in 1857. Dred Scott and his family were slaves to their owner John Emerson in the early 1840s and after Emerson's death in 1846, Scott would file in court for his freedom. Scott argued that when Emerson took him out of a slave state and into a free state, he no longer was a slave. His time in Illinois and Wisconsin would give Scott the right to claim to be a free man. His initial application to a local Missouri court granted him freedom, however this would be reversed in 1852 by the Missouri Supreme Court. Scott would appeal this decision; however, it was upheld by the US Circuit Court in 1854. The actions of the federal government and the Kansas-Nebraska Act two years later moved this case to a higher priority. Violence in the region caused the issue of whether a slave taken into a free state can become a free man was extremely important, as this action would go directly against the Fugitive Slave Law passed in 1850. This case would

---

<sup>82</sup> The African Repository, v. 33, 155

become the Dred Scott v. Sandford decision in 1857, where the US Supreme Court ruled against Scott in a 7-2 decision.<sup>83</sup> Chief Justice Taney would rule that African Americans were never intended to be citizens so Scott should not have been able to appeal for his freedom and citizen status. This case was a clear victory for southern, pro-slavery sentiment, and opposition to slavery would increase afterwards.

Northerners supporting anti-slavery movements were outraged by the decision, Frederick Douglass would even become disheartened by the Court's decision, stating in a speech shortly after "the highest satisfaction of our oppressors, is to see the negro degraded, divested of public spirit, insensible to patriotism, and to all concern for the freedom, elevation, and responsibility of the race".<sup>84</sup> While Douglass still did not support colonization or emigration efforts, actions of the decade had caused him to work more towards black elevation and emancipation. He would no longer staunchly advocate for the Garrisonian moral suasion like he had previously.<sup>85</sup> Figures like Delany, however, saw the events of the Dred Scott Case and reinvigorated their movements toward emigration. James Theodore Holly would publish *A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government and Civilized Progress* in 1857 joining Delany for the push for emigration.<sup>86</sup> This push towards supporting emigration did not phase Douglass, as he would begin attacking men like Delany and Holly for their plans. Emigrations from Delany were a different opponent to the abolition movement than colonization. While the two were not the same, these different ideas against

---

<sup>83</sup> Smith, Dale Edwyna. "Dred Scott." *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2020.

<sup>84</sup> Delany, Martin Robison, and Robert S. Levine. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*. University of North Carolina Press, 2003 182

<sup>85</sup> Delany et al. 182

<sup>86</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 133

abolition attempted to get around the question of slavery at the time. Delany encouraged emigration from the origins of personal anger, viewing African Americans as a “nation within a nation”, and emigration was a way for people to gain true independence.<sup>87</sup> However avoiding the question of slavery was what got the nation into the mess that was the decade of the 1850s, and in the eyes of Douglass, he motivated his followers to “stay where you are and fight”.

Douglass’ opposition to colonization strengthened towards the latter half of the 1850s, and the battle with colonization continued. Douglass obviously never entertained the idea of colonization, believing that it was just a way for white Americans to create a plan to end slavery without dealing with aftermath effects in the nation.<sup>88</sup> Douglass along with other abolitionists continued to view colonization negatively, increasing more as the end of the decade neared. However, the ACS was quick to push back against Douglass, as they would note in the *African Repository* every time black people supported the ACS ideology.<sup>89</sup> This was directly an attack on Douglass, who believed that African Americans should not embrace emigration nonetheless forced colonization. What would make anti-colonization sentinel stick, in the eyes of Douglass, would be to convince white Americans across the nation that the United States is where African Americans should stay, and not Liberia. Using the *North Star*, Douglass would continue his pushback against colonization, and an impact against the movement became evident.

1857 saw another increase in the financial donations of the ACS, with Massachusetts

---

<sup>87</sup> Power-Greene. 133

<sup>88</sup> Foner, Eric. *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*. 1st ed. W.W. Norton & Co., 2010. 130

<sup>89</sup> Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014. 135



continuing with its progress in the movement. Massachusetts would collect \$4,356.46 for the Parent Society, an increase from the previous collection of 1856.<sup>90</sup> President Ropes had created consistency in the Massachusetts branch similarly to what Simon Greenleaf had. While Greenleaf oversaw greater financial donations, Ropes was building a state branch that expanded on the building of Greenleaf. Massachusetts would send six more emigrants over to Liberia in 1857, keeping pace with previous years.<sup>91</sup> The larger colonization movement saw a decrease of emigrants to 370, however with the financial increase this was not a major cause for concern.<sup>92</sup> However, the following year would bring a severe decrease in donations and emigrants, as well as shift in focus for emigration.

Martin Delany prior to 1858 believed that colonization was simply a fantasy. Delany wrote about the ACS, stating how the movement's goals were just to purge the nation of blackness by emphasizing how blacks should be in Africa.<sup>93</sup> However this would change in 1858, as Delany would remain dedicated to emigration, but the location changed. Delany had entertained emigration to Latin or South America instead of Africa, where the ACS was focused. Filibustering had become a practice in the southern Americas, making emigration seem somewhat likely. Delany would change his focus to Africa at this time, beginning to create a plan to send African Americans to Africa to collaborate with natives and produce cotton.<sup>94</sup> His plans for emigration seemed to come at an opportune time, as the ACS collections saw a decrease of over \$35,000 from the previous year and emigrants decreased

---

<sup>90</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Seventeenth Annual Report, 5

<sup>91</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 34, 73

<sup>92</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>93</sup> Delany, Martin Robison, and Robert S. Levine. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*. University of North Carolina Press, 2003. 316

<sup>94</sup> Delany et al. 316

by almost 200.<sup>95</sup> However, while on the macro level things appear to be bleak for the colonization movement, Massachusetts would increase their participation and truly become a more important player in the larger movement.

Massachusetts from 1850 to 1857 had sent over forty emigrants to Liberia, which was an example of the continued growth of the movement. 1858 would bring about an entirely new story. While the state branch would see a slight increase in collections, where the state branch would truly explode would come in how many emigrants they would send. In 1858, Massachusetts would send twenty emigrants over to Liberia, nine males and eleven females.<sup>96</sup> The state would send in one year half as many as they did in the decade, an astonishing increase in participation. In the eyes of the ACS, this was hope that the movement was growing in the northern states at a rapid pace. While two females would pass away prior to the ship landing in Monrovia in December 1858, there was still reason to celebrate in the eyes of the vast movement. A northern state had sent over many emigrants, and the focus was no longer solely on states such as Virginia. This increase in emigrants sent would be a precursor for the success the ACS would see to finish the decade, and at the same time abolitionist pushback would eventually greet a new opposition.

The following year would see the ACS collect the most money in its existence, \$160,303.23, an increase of almost \$100,000 from the previous year.<sup>97</sup> The ACS would rebound from its previous down year in terms of emigration; however, Massachusetts would lag. The year after sending twenty emigrants, Massachusetts would not send one in 1859.

---

<sup>95</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>96</sup> Massachusetts Colonization Society, Eighteenth Annual Report, 5

<sup>97</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

The end of the decade would provide a new figure that colonizationists would hope to take the movement to the next level. Abraham Lincoln, a rising figure in the new Republican party, was a member of the ACS since 1833. In his race against Stephen Douglas for the Senate in 1858, Lincoln would state that he was against any effort to bring equality among the races.<sup>98</sup> He responded to attacks that he was a supporter of the abolition movement by continuously advocating his opposition to allowing blacks to become citizens. His belief in colonization came strongly from his idol, Henry Clay. Lincoln would use Clay's ideology and beliefs for many solutions he proposed to American issues.<sup>99</sup> Lincoln's support of colonization, in his eyes, was that it was the only way to end slavery. Abolitionists like Douglass would attack Lincoln and his sympathy towards colonization. These attacks would increase in 1860 as Lincoln would run for the Presidency, and the stakes would be at an all-time high.

Massachusetts would bring in \$10,492.54 in 1860, still showing a sizable participation in the larger movement.<sup>100</sup> The consistency in leadership had once again led somewhat to gradual increases in financial donations to the Parent Society. The state would also resume sending emigrants to Liberia, but on a much lesser scale than in 1858. They would send only one emigrant over to Liberia in May 1860.<sup>101</sup> The ACS would collect more than \$100,000 for the second consecutive year, however this is the last time it would reach that milestone.<sup>102</sup> The entire colonization movement was seeing a growth in participation, in Massachusetts and around the nation. The Presidential election that year would include one

---

<sup>98</sup> Blackett, Richard. "Lincoln and Colonization." *OAH Magazine of History* 21, no. 4 (October 2007): 20

<sup>99</sup> Blackett. 20

<sup>100</sup> The Massachusetts Colonization Society, Twentieth Annual Report, 6

<sup>101</sup> The African Repository, v.42, 222

<sup>102</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

of their members, Abraham Lincoln. The hope would be that, if elected, Lincoln could formulate a federal plan for emancipation with colonization. Lincoln would face opposition from abolitionists, as in 1860 he would be referred to as “the Slave-Hound of Illinois” by abolitionist Wendell Phillips.<sup>103</sup> Lincoln remained focused on preventing the spread of slavery, which while it was not what abolitionists wanted, they would still show some support toward him and the Republicans in the election. Abolitionists would criticize Lincoln for not advocating for equality in his debates with Stephen Douglas in 1858, as well as his inability to denounce colonization. While he never denounced it, Lincoln never fully endorsed the idea publicly. Border states viewed colonization in a positive light unlike some Northern states, meaning Lincoln had to seemingly play both sides to win the election.<sup>104</sup> As Lincoln would take the oath of office in March of 1861 the nation was still embroiled in chaos. Secession and the seemingly unavoidable bloodshed would have a profound impact on abolitionism, Lincoln, and colonization.

---

<sup>103</sup> Foner, Eric. *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*. 1st ed. W.W. Norton & Co., 2010. 58

<sup>104</sup> Foner. 140-141

## Conclusion: The Impact of the Colonization Movement in Massachusetts and the Nation

Lincoln's presidency provided a potential for colonization to see its true intentions. The ACS believed that having a member and a supporter of Henry Clay in the White House could finally form a federal government plan for colonization in Liberia. The hopes for Lincoln would not come to fruition, but the possibility for a federal colonization plan was one that remained on Lincoln's mind. Even in the unprecedented times Lincoln governed through, the prospects of colonization still seemed hopeful.

Lincoln himself would advocate for plans for colonization in the early years of the Civil War. With slave states already seceded and attacking the Union, Lincoln still looked for ways to avoid the issue of slavery. The early years of the war, Lincoln hesitated to make it about slavery, and the topic of emancipation was not a main sticking point. However, Lincoln would bring up colonization to reunite the union as well as deal with the effects ending slavery would have. This would infuriate men like Frederick Douglass, who was a main critic of Lincoln when it came to slavery. Douglass would meet with Lincoln a handful of times, where the men would eventually come to respect one another. However, Lincoln's sympathy for colonization did not help the relationship in early stages.

The ACS nearly became the main topic of discussion in terms of how to end slavery. In 1862, Lincoln being pressured to officially make the war a fight about slavery nearly adopted a federal government plan for colonization in Liberia. On September 22, 1862, Lincoln would create his Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation that included a plan for

colonization.<sup>1</sup> In Lincoln's eyes, the only way to reunite the nation and emancipated slaves was to draft a formal plan of colonization. This plan would force the Confederate states to rejoin the nation by the end of that year. Also, slaves would be emancipated by that date with the future to colonize them either in the United States or elsewhere. Lincoln appeared dedicated to creating this plan and convincing his cabinet on it. William Seward, the Secretary of State, had reservations about this plan. A formal meeting of the cabinet would ensue in late September, where many other cabinet members expressed their hesitancy. While Lincoln's official Emancipation Proclamation would not include a plan for colonization, it was clear that this idea was still very prevalent in his head.

Throughout the Civil War, the ACS would see drastic changes in their number of emigrants sent to Liberia. From 1861 to 1864, only 169 emigrants would be sent to the colony.<sup>2</sup> This can be credited to the number of individuals fighting in the war at the time, as there were not nearly enough men to spare for the colony versus fighting in the war. Massachusetts would be a small fraction of the emigrants sent at the time, as during the war only six emigrants were sent from Massachusetts.<sup>3</sup> The entire colonization movement would struggle due to the war, as financial donations never reached the heights of the years prior. The movement needed Lincoln to provide for them, and they viewed his intervention as their true hope. While Lincoln never closed doors on other sites of colonization, it was still the hope of ACS leaders that Lincoln would side with their desires. The impact of Henry Clay on Lincoln was reason to believe he would work with the ACS on formal plans for colonization.

---

<sup>1</sup> May, Robert E. *Slavery, Race and Conquest in the Tropics: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Future of Latin America*. Cambridge University Press, 2013. 260

<sup>2</sup> Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 251

<sup>3</sup> *The African Repository*, v. 42, 222

In terms of Massachusetts, the state was left to sit and wait until the war was over to see how the colonization movement would progress.

The war did not allow for further substantial progress to be made in the state. Abolitionist causes remained strong, and with the war ongoing, the colonization movement still worked to see their solution come to fruition. The Civil War did not halt all efforts from the ACS, but it severely hindered it. The focus was on the greatest internal conflict in the nation's history, and people wanted the nation to unite once again. Colonization was still focused on bringing people over to Liberia, however the war would severely hinder efforts. With emancipation coming through Lincoln's federal action without colonization, the movement took a severe hit. With the eventual Union victory, colonization would see an uptick in emigrants years after, but the long impact would eventually die off. The War and Lincoln provided hope for the ACS, so the actions of men such as Paul Cuffe and Robert Finely would pay off in their eyes.

Massachusetts does play a key role in the colonization movement. While scholarship around the issue often disregards the state's impact, it can be seen how the state exemplifies the growth of the entire movement. States such as Virginia and North Carolina did not experience as much pushback as Massachusetts, which allowed them to become two of the most significant states in the movement. The Antebellum Era in the United States saw the colonization movement grow, face opposition, and reignite discussions around what to do after slaves are emancipated. Massachusetts gave an avenue for the ACS to grow their influence, even if it was a state that had a strong sense of abolition. If the movement, predominantly growing in more southern regions, could expand and grow in the North, then

the movement could truly begin to make an impact nationally.

An important nature of the MCS was their leadership. In the early days of the state branch, leadership was not consistent, with the state having three Presidents between 1841 and 1845. This constant change in leadership hindered efforts to grow the movement in the state. However, this would change with Simon Greenleaf taking the Presidency. Under Greenleaf, the state would see progress like it had not before, with financial donations becoming higher and more consistent. His leadership was seen even more after his passing, as the state struggled for the year of his death in 1854. However, William Ropes would serve as another strong leader for the state society starting after Greenleaf and sending emigrants to Liberia became more consistent. Ropes and Greenleaf would serve as the two most influential leaders of the Massachusetts movement; however, they were far from the only.

The print rivalry between figures such as William Lloyd Garrison and Joseph Tracy was significant as it took shape in Massachusetts. Both men were key figures for their respective movement, and their outward distaste for their views plays out in their respective media outlets. The ability to connect with the masses came through their respective attacks on one another. Even at a time where Frederick Douglass got more recognition for his abolitionist stance, Garrison's presence in Massachusetts makes it significant for the colonization movement in the state. Garrison led the cause against colonization on the ground in the state and would make the colonization effort directly acknowledge him and abolitionist causes. Tracy, a leading figure for not only Massachusetts but the entire ACS, was the man in the 1830s trying to lessen the impact of abolition in the state. Tracy's influence on the MCS was significant as he portrayed the larger messages of the movement, both nationally and



locally. His presence as the national secretary for the ACS placed him on the stage of key leaders of the entire movement. His position as local and secretary was important also for the overall message the movement would portray to the public. Garrison and Tracy would attack one another for some time, showing a small piece of the overall interactions among abolition and colonization beliefs.

The 1850s would bring a time where the movement in Massachusetts would see the fruits of their labor. Finally, the state would begin sending emigrants of their own and in bunches. The state saw its largest number of emigrants in 1858, and by the end of the decade had sent fifty-four emigrants to Liberia. The state's continued growth and importance of the movement came at a time where conflicts over slavery reached a boiling point. Federal actions attempting to avoid dealing with slavery had only made things worse, and colonizationists saw an opportunity to strike. The movement saw advances in their ideals throughout the nation, and especially in Massachusetts. Memberships skyrocketed in the decade and it was clear that the movement was gaining traction. The growth of the movement throughout this time is why previous scholarship not addressing it can be confusing.

The colonization movement is not a common topic of study seemingly in most curriculum. The moment when examined looks more at the national stage of the movement rather than the state-by-state examination. Massachusetts does have a presence in the discussion of the colonization movement and should not be disregarded. While the state is often more attached to the ideals of abolition and Free-Soil, the colonization movement still had its fair share of influence. Men such as Garrison and Douglass would have never felt the need to address colonizationists if the movement had no traction in Massachusetts. Clearly

the movement and its leaders had an audience that was willing to listen. This evidence of a strong sense of colonization in Massachusetts required a deeper study, and the examination of its influence on society is significant.

The African Colonization movement in Massachusetts over the span of the 1840s and 1850s became a significant topic of discussion. In a region where abolition would take a stronghold due to the presence of Garrison in Boston, leaders of the colonization movement still found avenues to get their messages across. While the entire vision of the society was a failure, the impact of the movement on greater society was still significant. The growth of Massachusetts provides an anecdote on the larger society. When the state struggled to make a true impact in the 1830s, the ACS saw their struggles. Massachusetts saw growth throughout the 1840s with increased membership and financial donations at a time where the ACS needed it. Eventually, in the 1850s, Massachusetts began actively sending emigrants to Liberia at a time where the colonization movement was being reignited. The idea that a northern state such as Massachusetts was not a significant member of the movement is not true. Massachusetts, while never the main epicenter of the colonization movement, is an example of how widespread this movement truly was. The movement succeeded in the state for some time, and the continuous focus on growth within the state showed how the movement appealed to many across the country. Massachusetts grew from a state lagging behind others in creating a state auxiliary, to one who gave hope to colonizationists that the movement could become a national sensation.

## Bibliography

Primary Sources

Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Colonization Society 1841 –  
1860

Annual Reports of the American Colonization Society 1840 – 1860

"Boston Anniversaries." *Liberator*, June 11, 1841. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

Buffalo Free Soil Convention." 1848. *Massachusetts Cataract & Temperance Standard* 6

(22): 87. "Free Soil Movement—Buffalo Convention." *North star* [Rochester, New  
York] [Aug. 18, 1848]: n.p. *19th Century U.S. Newspapers*.

"Colonization," *The North Star*, January 26, 1849

"Defence of the Colonization Society." *Liberator*, September 3, 1831, 143. *Nineteenth  
Century U.S. Newspapers*

Garrison, William Lloyd, and James Brown Yerrinton. "The liberator." Newspaper. Boston,  
Mass.: William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp, *Digital Commonwealth*,

J. N. D., and the Boston Recorder. "African Colonization." *Liberator*, December 29, 1832,  
206. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

L. T., and A. S. Reporter. "Colonization Reminiscences." *Emancipator and Free American*,

October 14, 1841, 96. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

"Miscellany." *Vermont Chronicle*, June 16, 1841, 96. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

Samuel Osgood. Sermon Delivered at Springfield, Mass. Before the Colonization Society of

Hampden County. July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1827

"Thoughts on the Colonization of Free Blacks," *African Repository and Colonial Journal*,

January 1834, vol. 9

The African Repository Vol. 27 – 42

"The Difference!" *Liberator*, June 6, 1835, 91. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*

### Secondary Sources

Blackett, Richard. "Lincoln and Colonization." *OAH Magazine of History* 21, no. 4 (October

2007): 19–22

Blue, Frederick J. *Charles Sumner and the Conscience of the North*. American Biographical

History Series. Harlan Davidson, 1994. 78

Brown, Norman D. "Daniel Webster." *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2020.

Clark, John G., and E. A. Reed. "Compromise of 1850." *Salem Press Encyclopedia*, 2019.

Clegg, Claude Andrew. *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia*.

University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Delany, Martin Robison, and Robert S. Levine. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader*.

University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Foner, Eric. *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*. 1st ed. W.W. Norton

& Co., 2010.

Gardner, John C., and Larry Schweikart. "Kansas-Nebraska Act." *Salem Press*

*Encyclopedia*, 2019.

"Greenleaf, Simon." *In the Columbia Encyclopedia*, by Paul Lagasse, and Columbia

University. 8th ed. Columbia University Press, 2018

"Joseph Tracy." *In Dictionary of American Biography*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's

Sons, 1936. *Gale In Context: Biography*

Mayfield, John. "FREE SOIL PARTY 1840s and 1850s." In *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, edited by David S. Heidler, and Jeanne T. Heidler. ABC-CLIO, 2000.

May, Robert E. *Slavery, Race and Conquest in the Tropics: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Future of Latin America*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Mills, Brandon. *The World Colonization Made. The Racial Geography of Early American Empire*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.

Power-Greene, Ousmane K. *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement*. Early American Places, 2014.

Puleo, Stephen. *The Caning: The Assault That Drove America to Civil War*. Westholme, 2012.

"Ralph Randolph Gurley." In *Dictionary of American Biography*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936. *Gale in Context: Biography*"

Rosen, Bruce. "Abolition and Colonization, the Years of Conflict: 1829-1834." *Phylon* (1960) 33, no. 2 (1972): 177-92.

Salvador, George Arnold. *Paul Cuffe, the Black Yankee, 1759-1817*. [Reynolds-DeWalt

Printing], 1969.

Smith, Dale Edwyna. "Dred Scott." *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia*, 2020.

Staudenraus, P. J. *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865*. Columbia University

Press, 1961.

Thomas Jefferson, and Nicholas E. Magnis. "Thomas Jefferson and Slavery: An Analysis of

His Racist Thinking as Revealed by His Writings and Political Behavior." *Journal of*

*Black Studies* 29, no. 4 (March 1, 1999): 491–509.

Tomek, Beverly C. *Colonization and Its Discontents: Emancipation, Emigration, and*

*Antislavery in Antebellum Pennsylvania*. Early American Places. New York

University Press, 2011.

Tomek, Beverly C., Matthew J. Hetrick, Stanley Harrold, and Randall M. Miller. *New*

*Directions in the Study of African American Recolonization*. Southern Dissent.

University Press of Florida, 2017.

Walker, Paul. "Captain Paul Cuffe (1759–1817): Nineteenth-Century African American Seafarer and Entrepreneur." *Black Theology: An International Journal* 13, no. 3 (November 2015): 219–29.