

Rethinking Northern White Support for the African Colonization Movement: The Pennsylvania Colonization Society as an Agent of Emancipation

IN 1816 WHITE REFORMERS WHO HOPED to transport black Americans to Africa established the American Colonization Society (ACS). Over the next ten years, the ACS founded the colony of Liberia and organized scores of state and local auxiliary associations across the United States. Among these was the Pennsylvania Colonization Society (PCS), which was formed in 1826. For those PCS supporters who envisioned the group sending the Keystone State's black population to Liberia, decades of disappointment were forthcoming. Between 1820 and 1860 the number of African Americans in Pennsylvania grew from thirty thousand to fifty-seven thousand. During the same period, less than three hundred of the state's black residents moved to Africa. The PCS nevertheless remained a vibrant and conspicuous institution. But if the organization rarely sent black Pennsylvanians to Liberia, what did it do to advance the colonization cause?¹

¹ The standard work on the ACS is P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York, 1961). For black Pennsylvanians, see Joe William Trotter Jr. and Eric Ledell Smith, eds., *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives* (University Park, Pa., 1997); Julie Winch, *Philadelphia's Black Elite: Activism, Accommodation, and the Struggle for Autonomy, 1787-1848* (Philadelphia, 1988); and Julie Winch, ed., *The Elite of Our People: Joseph Willson's Sketches of Black Upper-Class Life in Antebellum Philadelphia* (University Park, Pa., 2000). On nineteenth-century Liberia, see Tom W. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia* (Baltimore, 1980). Information about the PCS can be found in Kurt Lee Kocher, "A Duty to America and Africa: A History of the Independent African Colonization Movement in Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History* 51 (1984): 118-53; and Eli Seifman, "The United Colonization Societies of New-York and Pennsylvania and the Establishment of the African Colony of Bassa Cove," *Pennsylvania History* 35 (1968): 23-44.

PCS officials spent much time trumpeting their project's supposed virtues. They insisted that it would Christianize Africans; they promised it would expand transatlantic commerce; they declared it would end the slave trade. Most importantly, though, Pennsylvania colonizationists facilitated the emancipation and emigration of southern slaves.

The PCS's concern with manumissions might seem strange, for colonizationists' standing as antislavery advocates has declined over the years. In the early twentieth century, several historians who bemoaned that the old abolitionist critique of the ACS dominated scholarship on the organization responded by illustrating colonizationists' opposition to slavery.² Early Fox's *The American Colonization Society* (1919), for example, documented not only antislavery sentiment among ACS leaders, but also the many instances wherein colonizationists freed bondpersons. Fox's work is flawed in many ways, but it remains one of the most elaborate efforts to show the ACS as an agent of emancipation.³ Moreover, Fox and his like-minded contemporaries achieved their goal: from the 1920s through the 1950s, most historians deemed the ACS a conservative, anti-slavery organization. In truth, there was little evidence to support this interpretation, the vague, equivocal statements of colonization officials notwithstanding. Even so, when Philip Staudenraus authored the definitive work on the topic, *The African Colonization Movement* (1961), he could claim that ACS partisans labored against slavery yet devote just two pages to the subject of slave liberations.⁴

From the 1960s through the 1980s, scholars grew more critical of the

² In 1912 Henry Noble Sherwood wrote that Ohio colonizationists favored gradual emancipation when coupled with deportation, but nevertheless asserted that "the essential purpose of the whole propaganda was to remove free blacks from the state." In time, Sherwood rethought his position. In 1916 Sherwood remarked of the pre-ACS colonization movement, "it was never advocated as a means of removing only the free negroes." The following year Sherwood attributed antislavery intentions to the ACS founders, arguing that they had "hoped to provide a method for the abolition of slavery." Writing at the same time, Frederic Bancroft claimed that among the volumes of ACS documents he examined, "not one positively proslavery official word has been found. The general tenor of it all was at least mildly, often positively, antislavery." Henry Noble Sherwood, "Movement in Ohio to Deport the Negro," *Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 7 (1912): 57-59, 67; Henry N. Sherwood, "Early Negro Deportation Projects," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 2 (1916): 508; Henry Noble Sherwood, "The Formation of the American Colonization Society," *Journal of Negro History* 2 (1917): 220, 225; Frederic Bancroft, "The Colonization of American Negroes, 1801-1865," in *Frederic Bancroft: Historian*, ed. Jacob E. Cooke (Norman, Okla., 1957), 190.

³ Early Lee Fox, *The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840* (Baltimore, 1919). For a critique of Fox's book, see Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 309.

⁴ Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 113-14.

ACS. Researchers increasingly focused on colonizationists' ulterior motives for opposing slavery, the group's rabid racism, and African Americans' largely negative attitudes toward the enterprise.⁵ By the 1990s many historians no longer considered the ACS an antislavery institution. Amos Beyan suggested in his *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State* (1991) that the organization reflected planter interests. In 1995 Antonio McDaniel argued that the group headed an "expatriation movement" that was primarily interested in ridding America of its free black residents. Wilson J. Moses contended in *Liberian Dreams* (1998) that most ACS members had a "sinister purpose: the elimination of the 'free colored' population." Lamin Sanneh likewise maintained that the enterprise posed little threat to black bondage. "Colonization became an alternative for antislavery," Sanneh explained in *Abolitionists Abroad* (1999), "and, accordingly, antislavery conflicted with colonization."⁶

There can be little doubt that negrophobia inspired many white northerners to embrace the ACS. Nor can one ignore the fact that the colonizationists who opposed slavery often did so for myriad social and political reasons. And it goes without saying that the movement did virtually nothing to undermine the "peculiar institution." Yet it also must

⁵ Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago, 1961), 28–29; Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana, Ill., 1967), 4–5; V. Jacque Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War* (Chicago, 1967), 22–25; Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York, 1970), 269–80; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York, 1971), 1–34; Ira Berlin, *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York, 1974), 106, 168, 355–60; Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787–1863* (Urbana, Ill., 1975); Leonard I. Sweet, *Black Images of America, 1784–1870* (New York, 1976), 23–124; Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800–1850: The Shadow of the Dream* (Chicago, 1981), 232–36. Several scholars continued to focus on the antislavery aspects of colonization. See, for example, Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831–1857* (Urbana, Ill., 1971), 242–43; Carl N. Degler, *The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century* (1974; reprint, Gainesville, Fla., 2000), 13–46; Randall M. Miller, ed., "Dear Master": *Letters of a Slave Family* (1978; reprint, Athens, Ga., 1990); Bell I. Wiley, ed., *Slaves No More: Letters from Liberia, 1833–1869* (Lexington, Ky., 1980).

⁶ Amos J. Beyan, *The American Colonization Society and the Creation of the Liberian State: A Historical Perspective, 1822–1900* (Lanham, Md., 1991); Antonio McDaniel, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot: The Mortality Cost of Colonizing Liberia in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1995), 47; Wilson Jeremiah Moses, ed., *Liberian Dreams: Back-to-Africa Narratives from the 1850s* (University Park, Pa., 1998), xvii; Lamin Sanneh, *Abolitionists Abroad: American Blacks and the Making of Modern West Africa* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), 216, 217. See also, Douglas R. Egerton, *Charles Fenton Mercer and the Trail of National Conservatism* (Jackson, Miss., 1989), 107, 243.

be conceded that manumissions dominated PCS leaders' thinking and rhetoric.

The trend in the scholarly literature on abolitionism over the last fifteen years has been to show how abolitionists' interactions with slavery and the South inspired their activities.⁷ The historiography on colonization, however, has gone in the opposite direction and ACS advocates have been cast from the antislavery circle. Yet Pennsylvania colonizationists, like their abolitionist opponents, looked southward for motivation. To borrow James L. Huston's term, manumissions were the "experiential" touchstone that inspired and guided the colonization movement in Pennsylvania. Pointing to their emancipatory endeavors, PCS officers claimed that they were fostering a national campaign in which northerners and southerners cooperated in a peaceful effort to dissolve black bondage.

If eroding slavery was the PCS's goal, the organization was an abysmal failure. Between the mid-1820s and 1860, the group facilitated the liberation of just a few hundred slaves. During the same years, the slave population of the United States increased from less than two million to nearly four million. Undeterred, PCS supporters continued to promote this manifestly inadequate scheme. The question, then, is why did so many otherwise realistic people cling to a program so pathetically flawed?⁸

The answer is that they could not conceive of any other alternative. Their antislavery beliefs were sincere; proslavery ideologues were misguided, they contended. Yet racial discord was unavoidable, they added, and thus abolitionists were courting disaster. The only solution to the "problem" posed by the presence of African Americans and slavery in the United States, they pled, was colonization. Their certitude on the matter was absolute.

Colonizationists' ideological rigidity left them impervious to evidence that conflicted with their preconceived views. As social psychologist Leon

⁷ Stanley Harrold, *The Abolitionists and the South, 1831-1861* (Lexington, Ky., 1995); Merton L. Dillon, *Slavery Attacked: Southern Slaves and Their Allies, 1619-1865* (Baton Rouge, 1990); James L. Huston, "The Experiential Basis of the Northern Antislavery Impulse," *Journal of Southern History* 56 (1990): 609-40.

⁸ For others who have discussed the visionary qualities of colonization, see Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 280; David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York, 1995), 166-67; Richard West, *Back-to-Africa: A History of Sierra Leone and Liberia* (London, 1970), 106; Gabor S. Boritt, "The Voyage to the Colony of Linconia: The Sixteenth President, Black Colonization, and the Defense Mechanism of Avoidance," *Historian* 37 (1975): 619-32. William W. Freehling has suggested that colonization was not so far-fetched. William W. Freehling, *The Reintegration of American History: Slavery and the Civil War* (New York, 1994), 138-57.

Festinger has noted, the greater one's commitment to a belief system, the more extensive one's efforts to reconcile incompatible information—that is, to reduce cognitive dissonance.⁹ In this case, PCS agents calibrated their opinion that colonization could do away with both slavery and black people with the program's patent failings. Given the gulf between their convictions and reality, PCS officials' mental labors were necessarily extraordinary. When abolitionists exposed colonization's shortcomings, when black northerners protested the scheme, when appalling reports from Liberia appeared, when census figures indicated that the slave population was growing by tens of thousands each year, PCS officers ignored, disbelieved, or reinterpreted these embarrassments.

Reducing cognitive dissonance involves more than disregarding or filtering disagreeable information; it also entails aggrandizing the presumed attributes of one's decisions. And therein lies the importance of PCS-aided emancipations. The liberations were showcased as proof that colonization was working, that PCS officials championed a worthwhile cause. Colonization was a pipe dream, in other words, and manumissions were fodder for the fantasy.

That others did not see colonization as mere reverie—that white abolitionists took it seriously and that black leaders decried the movement—made the scheme no less fantastical. In fact, these groups had to respond forcefully because colonization was a chimera with consequences. The PCS's detractors pointed out the logistical difficulties of the enterprise—those shortcomings were too obvious and enticing to pass up. But they also recognized that even if the PCS failed to remove a single black person to Liberia, the organization was still a formable foe. If nothing else, it would siphon off mildly antislavery northerners. Even more sinister was colonization's effect upon white people's attitudes: the philosophical underpinning of the movement—that African Americans would forever be inferiors in this country and therefore would be better off in Africa—impeded the abolitionist campaign for general emancipation and racial equality in America. In short, colonization ideology reinforced racism. It excused negrophobia as inevitable and discouraged self-reflection and

⁹ Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford, Calif., 1957). For modifications of Festinger's ideas, see Barry R. Schlenker, *Impression Management: The Self-Concept, Social Identity, and Interpersonal Relations* (Monterey, Calif., 1980); J. Cooper and R. H. Fazio, "A New Look at Dissonance Theory," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 17 (1984): 229–62; and C. M. Steele, "The Psychology of Self Affirmation: Sustaining the Integrity of the Self," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 21 (1988): 261–302.

moral growth among white Americans. Consequently, antislavery crusaders had to take colonization seriously, even if it was, from a practical point of view, pure nonsense.

This study thus makes three primary arguments. First, it places colonization historiography in line with the current literature on abolitionism, and emphasizes the PCS's orientation toward slavery in general and manumissions in particular. Second, it maintains that emancipations are critical to understanding why rational people subscribed to such a far-fetched scheme. Finally, it suggests that colonization's opponents were wise to repeatedly assail the PCS, for despite the movement's logistical absurdities, its untoward ideological ramifications could not have been more real.

Colonization programs had a long history in Pennsylvania. Prior to the Revolution both Anthony Benezet and Thomas Paine proposed settling African Americans west of the Allegheny Mountains. In 1787 William Thornton, a British philanthropist, came to Philadelphia with a plan for establishing a black colony in western Africa. Thornton found little support for his project. Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, Tench Coxe, James Pemberton, and many other white leaders, infused with revolutionary liberalism and optimistic about the future of race relations, had joined the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, a group that promoted gradual emancipation and provided aid to free black individuals. The city's African Americans were even less receptive to Thornton's ideas, despite the fact that many had themselves been born in Africa. It was the rebuffed Thornton, not black Pennsylvanians, who soon departed the state.¹⁰

Nevertheless, both northerners and southerners continued to promote colonization schemes. Like Thornton's plan, the proposals offered by Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Ferdinando Fairfax, St. George Tucker, and others during the 1790s and early 1800s all came to naught. But in 1816 several of the nation's most prominent figures, including Henry Clay, John Randolph of Roanoke, Francis Scott Key, and Daniel Webster, met in Washington and established the American Colonization

¹⁰ Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 101-6; Sherwood, "Early Negro Deportation Projects," 484-508; Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 1-11.

Society. The ethereal idea of expatriating black Americans had coalesced into an institutional entity.¹¹

Although some ACS members believed colonization would strengthen slavery by removing free black Americans, the philosophy of the movement teemed with antislavery implications. Colonization ideology blended an optimism about humankind's capacity for "improvement" with a pessimism about the conditions under which such changes could occur. According to ACS supporters, black people were inferior to white people. But African Americans' lowly status, they insisted, resulted from the debilitating effects of slavery and racism. Colonizationists thus challenged the proslavery notion that African Americans were hopelessly "degraded" and thus naturally suited to be slaves. There was nothing inherent in the African American mind or body that precluded mental or moral elevation, contended ACS advocates. But redemption could not take place in America, they added, because racial animosity was inevitable. In the United States, colonizationists insisted, African Americans would be forever a despised and maltreated class. Emancipation had to be coupled with emigration. Once black men and women had settled in Africa, once they were outside the canopy of bigotry, their innate abilities would blossom. Colonization ideology thus reinforced racism by assuming that prejudice was invincible, that it was an immutable law of nature or an inviolable decree of Providence. For much of the 1820s, many white northerners, including those with antislavery inclinations, rested content in this condition of moral complacency.¹²

White Pennsylvanians rallied to the colonization cause. The sanguine days of the revolutionary era were long over, and race relations in the state had soured. Industrialization, urbanization, and European immigration had wrought social and economic difficulties for many white workers, who in turn vented their frustrations on African Americans. The state's elite, who had previously championed the cause of the black community, now sought to help black Pennsylvanians by removing them from the country. The well-known Quaker merchant and philanthropist Elliot Cresson labored tirelessly on behalf of colonization, and he was joined for a short

¹¹ Donald R. Wright, *African Americans in the Early Republic, 1789-1831* (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1993), 171-78; Sherwood, "Formation of the American Colonization Society," 209-8; Douglas R. Egerton, "'Its Origin is not a Little Curious': A New Look at the American Colonization Society," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (1985): 463-80; Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (New York, 1974), 205-14.

¹² Fredrickson, *Black Image in the White Mind*, 1-34.

time by fellow Friends Sarah Grimké and Robert Vaux. Esteemed Protestant ministers such as John Breckinridge, George M. Bethune, and J. B. Pinney also lent their support. So did political and business leaders like lawyer Joseph R. Ingersoll, long-time congressman Joseph Hemphill, pamphleteer and biographer Calvin Colton, diplomat William Short, physician John Bell, and the young activist Thomas Buchanan. Colonization sentiment was strongest in Philadelphia, but as the movement gained momentum, supporters established auxiliary societies throughout Pennsylvania.¹³

Initially, Pennsylvania colonizationists anticipated black support for the ACS. Several of the state's African American leaders, worried about the hard times that had befallen their followers, had intimated interest in the project. It soon became apparent, however, that the black masses reviled the scheme. Shortly after the founding of the ACS, nearly three thousand African Americans gathered in Philadelphia to discuss the new organization. Despite speeches by James Forten, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and John Gloucester favoring colonization, the attendees voted unanimously to oppose the ACS. Another large meeting, held eight months later in August 1817, protested the formation of a Philadelphia chapter of the ACS. Acknowledging that colonizationists had benevolent motives, the assembly nevertheless insisted that the program would ultimately harm both free and enslaved African Americans, and thus those present declared their "determination not to participate in any part of it."¹⁴

In the early 1820s, few African Americans in Pennsylvania reneged on their vows of resistance. The state's black population numbered thirty thousand, but between 1820 and 1823 just sixty black Pennsylvanians moved to Africa. The tribulations endured by the few who emigrated confirmed the convictions of those who stayed. By 1825, one-third of the sixty colonists had died; among the survivors, nearly half had fled Liberia. Facing unrelenting opposition, Pennsylvania colonizationists focused on other aspects of the movement, including the emancipation and emigration of southern slaves.¹⁵

¹³ Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 223–26, 233–42; *Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society* (Philadelphia, 1838), 45–49.

¹⁴ Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 234–42; Dickson D. Bruce Jr., "National Identity and African-American Colonization, 1773–1817," *Historian* 58 (1995): 27–28; William Henry Pease and Jane H. Pease, eds., *The Antislavery Argument* (Indianapolis, 1965), 33–34.

¹⁵ Statistics and other information on the Liberian emigrant population come from ACS ship registers. I have used these documents to compile a database of all 10,939 African Americans who

Colonization portended slavery's demise; there would be no black people, and thus no slavery, in America. Yet ACS officers rarely emphasized colonization's emancipationist implications, for they did not want to alarm their southern constituency. In their speeches and publications, ACS leaders usually discussed the removal of free black individuals, a subject that appealed to virtually all white Americans.¹⁶

Unlike ACS officials, Pennsylvania colonizationists freely acknowledged the movement's antislavery aspects. The PCS's constitution actually listed the emancipation of slaves as one of the group's goals. The inclusion of such objectives partly stemmed from colonizationists' early failures among black Pennsylvanians. But PCS leaders also incorporated antislavery ideas into the organization's constitution because they longed for the gradual and peaceful demise of slavery. Indeed, PCS administrators even projected their desires onto the more cautious parent society, insisting that the ACS's founders had envisioned "the total extirpation of slavery throughout the Nation. . . ." The first step in the process, PCS officials reasoned, was to help individual slaveholders liberate their bondpersons.¹⁷

The PCS abetted manumissions in four ways. First, it contributed money to the ACS treasury—when the national organization transported "freedpersons" to Liberia, it did so with the financial support of Pennsylvanians.¹⁸ Second, the PCS periodically assumed responsibility for ACS expeditions, the parties of which consisted mostly of former bondpersons. Third, the group financed the transport of ex-slaves whose owners had liberated them, yet had not provided the means for carrying them to Africa. Finally, the PCS occasionally purchased slaves and then sent them to Liberia.

moved to Liberia during the antebellum period. The ship registers are located in four different sources: first, the ACS's *The African Repository*; second, the organization's *Annual Reports*; third, the U.S. Congress's *Roll of Emigrants that have been sent to the colony of Liberia, Western Africa, by the American Colonization Society and its Auxiliaries, to September, 1843, & c.* (28th Cong., 2d sess., S. Doc. 150); and fourth, handwritten passenger lists in the Records of the American Colonization Society, Library of Congress (microfilm edition, reel 314; hereafter RACS). I would like to thank Antonio McDaniel for generously sharing his work on the Liberian emigrant population with me.

¹⁶ See, for example, ACS, *The Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States* (1819; reprint, New York, 1969), 7–9.

¹⁷ PCS, *Constitution of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society*, Article 2, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; PCS, *The First Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society* (Philadelphia, 1827), 4.

¹⁸ "Freedpersons" refers to former slaves who were manumitted on the condition that they emigrate to Liberia.

At first, the Pennsylvanians simply helped pay for ACS expeditions to Liberia. The PCS was less than a year old when it forwarded six hundred dollars to the parent society to help defray the costs of the ship *Doris*, which sailed to Liberia in 1827 with about one hundred emigrants, half of whom were freedpersons. Two years later the Pennsylvanians resolved to send funds to the ACS, "on condition that they be applied exclusively to the outfit and transportation of slaves." In 1830 the PCS went even further by chartering its own vessels, the *Liberia* and *Montgomery*, which collectively transported ninety-one freedpersons to Africa. Pleased with their progress, the organization's leaders committed themselves to outfitting similar expeditions in the future.¹⁹

PCS leaders insisted that sending former slaves to Liberia was the most cost-efficient way to end slavery. "By . . . [any] other mode," they explained in 1830, "a large expenditure is necessary to purchase the freedom of a single individual, whose situation is, but too frequently, rendered much worse by the change."²⁰ This statement was an avowal to parsimony; it was also a critique of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, which occasionally purchased the freedom of slaves; and unbeknownst to the PCS, it was a portent of problems to come.

In the meantime, northern colonizationists' efforts in freeing slaves had done little to quell African Americans' increasingly caustic opposition to the movement. David Walker offered a searing condemnation of the ACS in his *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829), and black Pennsylvanians soon expressed similar outrage. Whereas previous objectors had depicted colonizationists as misguided philanthropists, in 1831 African Americans in Columbia, Pennsylvania, described the ACS as "a vicious, nefarious and peace-disturbing combination. . . ." Their counterparts in Lewistown thought colonizationists were "wolves in sheep's clothing" and warned that divine vengeance would soon visit them. In Pittsburgh, protesters denounced ACS supporters as "intriguers" who wanted to deport black leaders so that "the chain of slavery may be rivetted more tightly" and deemed any person "who allows himself to be colonized in Africa, or elsewhere, a traitor to our cause."²¹ Few African

¹⁹ PCS, *First Annual Report of the Board of Managers*, 7; PCS, *Report of the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society* (Philadelphia, 1830), 4-5, 7-13.

²⁰ PCS, *Report of the Board of Managers* (1830), 9.

²¹ William Lloyd Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization* (1832; reprint, New York, 1968), 42, 50; Pease and Pease, eds., *Antislavery Argument*, 37.

Americans in Pennsylvania endured such approbation. In the late 1820s and early 1830s, when the PCS was helping send scores of freedpersons to Liberia, just five black Pennsylvanians emigrated to the African settlement. Despite worsening conditions—economic hardship, relative population decline, ghettoization, race riots, and the specter of disenfranchisement—the state's black residents refused to leave America.²²

The ACS also lost support among white antislavery advocates. Many individuals who had endorsed colonization in the 1820s were now abandoning the movement in favor of abolitionism. William Lloyd Garrison was the most noteworthy defector. "It is true," Garrison remarked of his previous association with the ACS, "—but whereas I was then blind, I now see." What Garrison now saw was a self-serving, self-limiting ideology that rationalized racism and occasional manumissions that fortified slavery.²³

Garrison regarded the idea that prejudice was indomitable as unchristian and un-American. "As long as there remains among us a single copy of the Declaration of Independence, or of the New Testament," he wrote, "I will not despair of the social and political elevation of my sable countrymen."²⁴ In effect, Garrison demanded that white Americans traverse the mountains of racial prejudice that colonizationists had judged impassible. That Garrison himself occasionally stumbled in this trek reflected more about the terrain he covered than any misgivings he had about the journey itself.

Garrison also took up the issue of ACS emancipations, but he did so with some reluctance. In the preface to his *Thoughts on African Colonization* (1832), Garrison contended that moral questions were the only ones that mattered. Debates over whether colonization was practical, or whether Liberia was viable, or "whether any slaves have been emancipated on condition of their banishment" were immaterial. Even so, Garrison wanted to squash the notion that ACS manumissions were harbingers of slavery's demise. Colonizationists had to see that they were in a state of denial; they had to understand that, if anything, ACS emanci-

²² Theodore Hershberg, "Free Blacks in Antebellum Philadelphia," in *Plantation, Town, and County: Essays on the Local History of American Slave Society*, ed. Elinor Miller and Eugene D. Genovese (Urbana, Ill., 1974), 421; Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 250–59, 273–79.

²³ William Lloyd Garrison, "Address to the American Colonization Society," in *Against Slavery: An Abolitionist Reader*, ed. Mason Lowance (New York, 2000), 93–103; Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization*, 4.

²⁴ Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization*, 146.

pations aided slavery. The colonization program obstructed the progress of black freedom, argued Garrison, because "it dissuades . . . [slaveholders] from emancipating their slaves faster than they can be transported to Africa." Moreover, the liberation and removal of some slaves increased the value of those who remained in bondage. Also, calculating slaveholders would send only aged, infirm, and rebellious bondpersons overseas. Finally, freedpersons who landed in Liberia would encounter nothing but misery, poverty, and disease. "It is impossible to imagine a more cruel, heaven-daring, and God-dishonoring scheme," concluded the Boston abolitionist. Garrison's contentions concerning ACS ideology and manumissions irrevocably tarnished colonization's luster. Within a few years, Amos Phelps, James G. Birney, Arthur Tappan, Gerrit Smith, and several other well-known figures quit the ACS and joined Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society.²⁵

Reeling from the abolitionist onslaught, colonizationists futilely sought help overseas. In 1831 Philadelphian Elliot Cresson traveled to Great Britain on behalf of the ACS. Hoping to gain the favor of the British public, Cresson claimed that "one hundred thousand slaves are ready to be given up if means can be found for sending them to Africa." All that was needed to secure the bondpersons' emancipation and emigration, he claimed, were generous contributions from philanthropists. Cresson even promised that colonization would ultimately procure "the final and entire abolition of slavery." The mission appeared destined for success. The citizens of Edinburgh were especially receptive to Cresson's message, and he promised to name a settlement in Liberia "Edina" in their honor. After one year he had collected four thousand dollars and was making plans to establish a British Colonization Society.²⁶

Then the venture began to unravel. Abolitionist forces rallied against Cresson, with Charles Stuart of the British Anti-Slavery Society leading the campaign. Stuart insisted that colonization was logistically impossible, and, like American abolitionists, he bewailed the movement's wicked ideological foundations. The ACS, he argued, "corroborates against the people of color, whether enslaved or free, one of the most base, groundless, and cruel prejudices, that has ever disgraced the powerful, or afflicted

²⁵ Ibid., i-ii, 13, 23, 77, 122.

²⁶ Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844* (1933; reprint, New York, 1964), 36; Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 216. See also, Betty Fladeland, *Men and Brothers: Anglo-American Antislavery Cooperation* (Urbana, Ill., 1972), 209-20.

the weak." Stuart's invectives so incensed Cresson that the latter referred to him as "a 2nd Garrison."²⁷

To Cresson's dismay, in May 1833 the real Garrison arrived in England. Cresson refused to debate this adversary. The Bostonian's talents as a public speaker were intimidating enough, but the fact that Garrison had with him the latest ACS publications—and Cresson did not—was equally troubling. Cresson assumed that Garrison would attempt to discredit colonization by misrepresenting statements that had been made in the ACS's *African Repository* and *Annual Reports*. Yet without these materials, Cresson was helpless to counter the abolitionist's charges. Cresson blamed ACS secretary Ralph Gurley for the dilemma, thereby exacerbating tensions between the parent society and the Pennsylvania auxiliary. Frustrated and worn, Cresson finally left England in late summer 1833.²⁸

Upon his return to America, Cresson discovered that abolitionists were still lambasting the PCS. In the mid-1830s, Garrison's followers founded the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society (PASS). Committed to immediate emancipation and racial equality, PASS crusaders denounced colonization and challenged PCS leaders to public debates. The PCS declined, but the Garrisonians kept up the pressure. Colonization was founded on unchristian prejudice, they declared. Moreover, it curtailed manumissions: "Before the Colonization Society was organized, it was very common for slaveholders on their dying beds to emancipate their slaves," they proclaimed. "But since the scheme of expatriation has been got up, few have been willing in a dying hour, to incur the dreadful responsibility of banishing those whom they have already too deeply injured, from the land of their birth."²⁹ Thus, according to the PASS, even the most guilt-ridden slaveholders would not send their bondpersons to the wilds of Africa.

The abolitionists had a point. Liberia was a wretched place. African Americans who moved there suffered, in the words of demographer Antonio McDaniel, "the highest rate of mortality ever reliably recorded."³⁰

²⁷ C. Stuart, *American Colonization Society* (n.p., 1831), 2; Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 217.

²⁸ Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 216–18; Fladeland, *Men and Brothers*, 213–20.

²⁹ Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society, *Address to the Members of the Philadelphia Anti-Slavery Society to Their Fellow Citizens* (Philadelphia, 1835), 15.

³⁰ McDaniel, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, 104.

PCS officers were aware of the calamitous conditions, but the emigrants' misfortune did not sap their confidence in colonization. Instead, they rationalized the reports, reinterpreting them in such a way that made the dreadful situation seem tolerable and colonization appear destined for success. They blamed the deceased, ascribing their deaths to "thoughtless exposure to the chilly nights." They insisted that better preparation would obviate any difficulties. They assured their followers that physicians would soon learn how to treat tropical diseases. And they placed these deaths in the best possible context: "There was as much sickness and loss, perhaps, as at Plymouth in the earlier days," they declared. All things considered, they averred, Liberia was in fine shape.³¹

The PCS's deteriorating relationship with the ACS was another issue altogether. The discord mostly concerned the insolvency of the parent society. The Pennsylvanians had voiced their displeasure over the matter as early as 1830, and the passage of time, in their opinion, had only provided further evidence of fiscal incompetence. ACS officials, they asserted, had sent more emigrants to Liberia than the available means could justify, underestimated the cost of colonial administration, assumed large debts that could not be repaid on time, and harbored unrealistic expectations about the amount of money that could be raised by private donations. Indeed, by 1834 the ACS was forty-five thousand dollars in debt, and the group appeared ready to collapse. To stave off ruin, the organization's leaders finally initiated drastic measures. Among other things, they fired several agents, cut back on their promotional publications, and began to circumscribe emigration to Liberia.³²

ACS officials thus faced a dilemma when Dr. Aylett Hawes of Virginia died and willed that the ACS convey his 110 slaves to Liberia. Knowing that the national organization could not oblige Hawes's testamentary request, the Pennsylvanians took the opportunity to resolve their still-festered grievances. In April 1834 they created a new body, the Young Men's Colonization Society of Pennsylvania (YMCSP), which had only nominal ties to the ACS. The YMCSP then offered to send the Hawes freedpersons to Africa. ACS leaders bewailed the balkanization of their program: "If the state societies take colonization into their hands,"

³¹ *Colonization Herald*, 1846, Extra: Second Edition, pp. 6, 7.

³² Kocher, "A Duty to America and Africa," 126; Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 224-25.

wrote one official, "we are a nullity."³³ Nevertheless, the ACS had little choice but to accept the Pennsylvanians' invitation. Later that year the YMCSPP banded with colonizationists in New York, and by October 1834 the Hawes company was headed to Africa. Wishing to start afresh, the colonizationists decided that the freedpersons would establish a new settlement to be called Bassa Cove, which would be located sixty miles south of Monrovia.³⁴

The Pennsylvanians and New Yorkers had grand designs for their enterprise. For starters, they expected Bassa Cove's settlers to Christianize Africans and, as religious role models, to practice temperance and pacifism. But with its inhabitants committed to nonviolence, Bassa Cove was an easy target for displeased Africans. In June 1835 King Joe Harris, a native chieftain who correctly perceived that the new community would threaten his slave trade interests, orchestrated an attack that resulted in the death of nearly twenty colonists. Settlers from Monrovia led a successful retaliatory raid, exacted concessions from Harris, and began rebuilding Bassa Cove.³⁵ Within a year, eighty-nine new emigrants arrived in the settlement. Almost all of them were former bondpersons. Just four were from Pennsylvania. The manumission and resettlement of slaves thus continued to be a central component of the colonization movement in Pennsylvania.³⁶

In early 1837 the YMCSPP united with the largely defunct PCS, adopting the latter's name. Whatever the organizational nomenclature, the goals stayed the same. "Let us foster the growing desire of masters to emancipate," beseeched the Pennsylvanians. They promised to advance the cause of black freedom by encouraging "citizens of every calling in the north to provide for the new freed-men a refuge in the land of their fathers."³⁷

PCS leaders understood that without compliant slaveholders, there

³³ Quoted in Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 234. The previous year the Maryland auxiliary defected from the ACS and established its own independent colony, Maryland in Africa. Two years later, in 1836, Mississippi colonizationists announced their intention to follow a similar course and by 1838 had established the feeble colony of Mississippi in Africa. Campbell, *Maryland in Africa*, 51-57.

³⁴ Colonization Society of the City of New York, *Proceedings of the Colonization Society of the City of New York* (New York, 1835), 4-11; Kocher, "A Duty to America and Africa," 127-29.

³⁵ Seifman, "United Colonization Societies of New-York and Pennsylvania," 36-40.

³⁶ The figures are from the ACS database described in note 15.

³⁷ Young Men's Colonization Society of Pennsylvania, *Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Young Men's Colonization Society of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1837), 3, 8.

could be no manumissions, and they consequently glorified the sacrifices of their southern partners. "These gifts of emancipation . . .," asserted Pennsylvanian Calvin Colton in his *Colonization and Abolition Contrasted* (1839), "are, in fact the most substantial supports of the cause, though the donors receive little credit for it." Colton calculated the value of bondpersons who had been sent to Liberia at \$2.5 million. In 1838 alone, he argued, the PCS had been asked to transport 130 slaves, worth \$78,000. "Many [slaveholders] have given their all and impoverished themselves and their heirs—a sacrifice, we imagine, which is rarely to be found in northern charities."³⁸ Manumissions thus provided a way for northern colonizationists to fancy southerners as noble allies in the fight to end slavery.

The same emancipatory endeavors allowed PCS leaders to distance themselves from abolitionists. In less than twenty years, they announced, colonizationists had helped hundreds of slaveholders liberate thousands of bondpersons. "How many have the abolitionists emancipated during the same period?" they asked. The PCS alleged that their opponents, having refused to work with slaveholders, resorted to harassing colonization agents and spreading misinformation. "The importance of the colonization plan," PCS leaders rationalized, "is made the more evident by these efforts of the abolitionists to paralyze its operations."³⁹

Embattled Pennsylvania colonizationists also continued squabbling with ACS officials. Nationwide, the colonization movement was languishing. After sending 1,792 African Americans to Liberia in the early 1830s, the financially encumbered ACS had chartered only a few vessels thereafter. Finally, in 1838, PCS leaders, along with colonizationists from other parts of the North, seized control of the ACS by rewriting the organization's constitution. Previously, a yearly vote by ACS members determined who would serve on the powerful board of managers. Under the new system, the managers were replaced by a board of directors, and these positions were divvied up according to each state's financial contribution to the parent society, with additional weight given to those state societies that maintained their own settlement in Liberia. For all practical purposes, northerners now controlled the ACS.⁴⁰

³⁸ Calvin Colton, *Colonization and Abolition Contrasted* (Philadelphia, 1839), 3.

³⁹ *Colonization Herald*, 31 Jan. 1838, p. 17.

⁴⁰ The new regime also eliminated redundant managers, made the position of treasurer a salaried job, and centralized the administration of Liberia. State colonization societies retained much auton-

With this reorganization, the colonization movement started to revive. It was a slow process—in the ten years following the restructuring of the ACS, the organization, in an effort to conserve money, sent a yearly average of just 130 emigrants to Liberia. Then, in 1847, Liberia became an independent nation. Financially stable and relieved of the burden of colonial administration, the ACS began transporting more emigrants to Africa. In 1848, 439 African Americans departed for Liberia; the next year, 420 left; by 1850, the figure topped 500.

The PCS abetted the movement's revitalization. "Our duty as Colonizationists remains the same as ever," explained the editor of the PCS's journal, the *Colonization Herald*. Their first responsibility was to discredit proslavery theories by demonstrating black colonists' capacity for self-government in Liberia. Having done that, colonizationists were then obliged to help enlightened masters send their bondpersons to Liberia.⁴¹ In fulfilling their second duty, the PCS board of managers resolved in 1848 to raise money for the 143 freedpersons who were to emigrate aboard the *Amazon* and *Niemiah Rich*.⁴² The next year, the *Colonization Herald* solicited donations to transport African Americans that had been freed in Louisiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Virginia.⁴³ The emancipation and emigration of a few hundred bondpersons hardly crippled slavery, but PCS leaders remained steadfast. "Who refuses food to a hungry man because he cannot feed all the starving?" they queried. "We can send some; and those we send cease to be chattels or inferiors."⁴⁴

The ACS's resurgence worried many African Americans in Pennsylvania. "After all the professedly disinterested regard for us by the American Colonization Society," remarked a convention of black Philadelphians in 1845, "they have thrown off the mask of deception by their public acts." Forgetting that several African American leaders had originally endorsed colonization, the conventioners proclaimed that the ACS now openly admitted "what every philanthropist apprehended in

omy under the new system. For example, they were required to forward to the ACS only a portion of their collections. The Maryland Colonization Society's settlement in Africa did not join Liberia until 1857. Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 237–38.

⁴¹ *Colonization Herald*, 19 Mar. 1845, p. 11.

⁴² Pennsylvania Colonization Society Papers, vol. 1, 2 Feb. 1848, Lincoln University, Lincoln University, Pa. (hereafter PCS Papers); *Colonization Herald*, Mar. 1848, p. 143.

⁴³ *Colonization Herald*, Jan. 1849, p. 182; *Colonization Herald*, Oct. 1849, p. 218.

⁴⁴ *Colonization Herald*, Feb. 1851, p. 30.

the beginning of the Colonization scheme, viz., the premeditated, forcible ejection of the free colored Americans from the land of their birth." Colonizationists' primary concern, they alleged, was the deportation of free black people, and especially free black northerners. "It is we who are to be put down, if possible," the convention warned.⁴⁵

Interestingly, colonization's renaissance helped mitigate divisions among abolitionists. In the late 1830s the antislavery movement had been beset by disputes over Garrison's advocacy of women's rights, hostility toward ecclesiastical bodies, eschewal of electoral politics, and insistence on nonviolence. Those debates had climaxed in 1840, when Arthur and Lewis Tappan and their followers broke from the Garrisonian ranks and established their own abolitionist organization, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Although northern opponents of black bondage continued to argue about policies and tactics, they were united in their opposition to colonization's revivification. The Garrisonian Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society relentlessly condemned the rejuvenated movement. The Pennsylvania Abolition Society gave no quarter either. Signs of progress, it argued, were seen "not so much in isolated instances of the emancipation of slaves as in the awakening of public attention to the enormity of the system."⁴⁶ Based on this criterion, both Garrisonian and non-Garrisonian abolitionists could assert that colonization actually sustained slavery, for the occasional PCS-aided manumission merely salved the consciences of slaveholders, absolved white northerners' complicity in black bondage, and tantalized bondpersons with token gestures of freedom.

Soon the abolitionists added another charge against colonizationists: that they engaged in the morally questionable business of buying bondpersons. As previously noted, the PCS's involvement with slave emancipations usually entailed financing the transport of freedpersons to Liberia. Sometimes the PCS assumed entire responsibility for an expedition; at other times, it covered just part of the expenses. In either case, the organization did little beyond defraying the cost of settling former slaves in Liberia. But manumissions were not always tidy affairs. Situations arose wherein owners were not willing to simply free their slaves, but

⁴⁵ Convention of Colored People, *Address to the Free Colored People of these United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1845), 6, 7.

⁴⁶ Pennsylvania Abolition Society, *Annual Report of the Association of Friends for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and Improving the Condition of the Free People of Color* (Philadelphia, 1849), 3.

instead insisted on being compensated. Carrying freedpersons to Africa was one thing; purchasing slaves and then sending them to Africa was another.

Consider the case of the Corpsen family of Virginia. In 1851 Elizabeth Herbert of Portsmouth emancipated three of her five slaves—Mary Corpsen, age forty, and her young sons, John and Hezekiah. Herbert liberated these individuals on the condition that they move to Liberia, but the family was reluctant to emigrate without its father, Kiah Corpsen Sr., who was the property of David Griffith. Luckily for the Corpsens, Griffith, a fifty-year-old Welsh immigrant who owned forty thousand dollars in real estate and about a dozen slaves, agreed to manumit Kiah.⁴⁷

Even at this juncture, the episode illustrates several important aspects about manumission and colonization. Familial concerns were often paramount in the minds of potential emigrants. Bondpersons' desire to journey with their kin, in turn, could encourage "conjunctive emancipations" between neighboring slaveholders like Herbert and Griffith. The affair also reminds us that female emancipators encountered social and economic disabilities unknown to their male counterparts. In liberating their slaves, southern women such as Elizabeth Herbert not only broke taboos by entering the public sphere—voicing heterodox, antislavery opinions no less—they also divested themselves of valuable property despite living in a society which afforded them few vocational options and little financial independence. Indeed, Kiah Corpsen would later comment that Herbert, after freeing her slaves, had only her "needle and a kind providence for support."⁴⁸

David Griffith and Elizabeth Herbert had agreed to liberate various members of the Corpsen clan, but the affair was far from finished. The Corpsen family included three other children. David Griffith bought two of them, and although he was unable to send the pair to Liberia immediately, Kiah Corpsen was confident that Griffith would eventually do so.⁴⁹ Obtaining the freedom of the family's last child, fifteen-year-old Jerry, was a more complicated matter. The young man was the slave of Edward

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Herbert, Deed of Manumission, 17 Oct. 1851, and David Griffith to Rev. Wm. H. Starr, 22 Apr. 1852, both in RACS, reel 67; Bureau of the Census, Federal Manuscript Census, free and slave schedules for Norfolk and Princess Anne Counties, Virginia, 1850.

⁴⁸ *Colonization Herald*, Mar. 1852, p. 83.

⁴⁹ Corpsen's trust was well placed. His two oldest children, Rose Corpsen and John Powell, sailed to Liberia aboard the *Cora* in 1855.

Herbert, who resided in Princess Anne County, Virginia. The mere idea of departing without his son pained Kiah Corpsen: "I can't stand it," he wailed, "and I now think to myself, how can I leave this boy!" Jerry too would suffer if the family left without him: "I know he could never live under it," sighed Kiah.⁵⁰

The Corpsens had some hope for securing Jerry's freedom. Edward Herbert figured that the young bondman, who was entering his prime years during a period of rising slave prices, to be worth six hundred dollars. Kiah pleaded with his son's master, and the latter agreed to sell Jerry for four hundred dollars. How Kiah expected to amass this sum was unclear. A farmer until his late twenties, Kiah had spent the last fifteen years working as a laborer and hostler in the local navy yard. Short on skills and pressed for time, Kiah was nevertheless determined to liberate his son. He began soliciting donations from local townspeople, but after several months toil he had managed to accumulate only one hundred dollars. A three-hundred-dollar chasm still separated Jerry from freedom.

"Feeling that we have already drawn too largely upon the liberality of a large portion of our readers," began an article in the *Colonization Herald*, "we have several times determined in our own minds, that we would make no more appeals . . . at least for some time to come, in behalf of emancipated cases." But the Corpsens' plight was too compelling to ignore. New York colonizationists had already taken steps to help free Jerry Corpsen; now the Pennsylvanians joined the campaign. When PCS officials heard this slave family's travails, they responded, and they expected their supporters to respond too.

The *Colonization Herald* reminded its readers that, while northerners were being asked for financial contributions, it was southerners who made the real sacrifices. David Griffith and Elizabeth Herbert, the two Virginians that had done so much to secure the freedom of the Corpsen family, were presented as admirable examples of southern liberality. "A little of the same self-denial, on the part of a few of our citizens, will send Jerry along with them," cajoled the editor.

The solicitations proved successful. The *Colonization Herald* reported that \$325 had been raised to free Jerry Corpsen. The donations came in small increments. The average contribution was about nine dollars; nobody sent more than twenty-five. All but one of the respondents were northerners.

⁵⁰ The entire Corpsen story is reported in the *Colonization Herald*, Mar. 1852, p. 83. All quotes are from this article.

Once Jerry Corpsen had been emancipated, colonizationists used the affair to curry public approval. As was the custom, the PCS celebrated southern generosity. The *Colonization Herald* printed a letter from George Bain, a Norfolk preacher who had helped orchestrate the purchase of Jerry Corpsen. According to Bain's missive, Edward Herbert had lost money on the transaction but he had sold the bondman "cheerfully and freely." From the PCS's perspective, the lessons of the Corpsen story were manifest: southerners wanted to send their slaves to Liberia, and it was northerners' responsibility to effect these laudable desires.

To hammer home the point, PCS leaders juxtaposed their efforts in freeing Jerry Corpsen against allegedly counterproductive tactics of anti-slavery radicals. "So far as we are aware," commented the *Colonization Herald* with smug righteousness, "not a dollar of this money has come from an Abolitionist. . . ." While Garrison and other crusaders alienated southerners, the PCS claimed, colonizationists were mollifying sectional tensions. "True, the effort is a small one," the paper admitted, "but it evinces a disposition and a spirit, which will be ready for greater things, whenever any feasible plan for meliorating the condition of the slave can be devised."

The problem for the PCS was that no "feasible plan" could entail purchasing slaves' freedom. Paying for bondpersons raised three unwieldy problems. First, the financial obstacles were almost insuperable. From the start, the ACS's opponents had claimed that sending millions of black people to Africa was an impossible undertaking. Adding the expense of *buying* slaves made the program seem downright absurd. Indeed, PCS leaders themselves had once argued that purchasing bondpersons was an extraordinarily costly way to extinguish slavery. The \$325 that they raised to buy Jerry Corpsen, for example, if earmarked just for transporting freedpersons to Liberia, would have sent approximately six individuals across the Atlantic.

Second, purchasing slaves exposed colonizationists' ideological liabilities. Abolitionists could charge that PCS advocates were comfortable regarding African Americans as chattel, as things that could be bought and sold. In this sense, colonizationists' plan for weakening slavery also legitimized the institution. Of course, not all abolitionists asserted that buying a slave's freedom was ethically reprehensible. Mainstream white northerners were presumably even less sympathetic to such arguments. Still, the accusations had the potential to damage colonizationists' image,

for they came at a time when many white northerners began questioning the morality of black bondage.⁵¹

Third, buying bondpersons undermined the idea that southerners were eager partners in the colonization program. The PCS had long insisted that slaveholders would free their bondpersons if given the opportunity to do so, but the Corpsen episode suggested otherwise. David Griffith and Elizabeth Herbert manumitted some of the Corpsen family, but Edward Herbert had demanded compensation, as had the owners of Kiah Corpsen's other two children. Financially and ideologically, Pennsylvania colonizationists could not afford to reimburse southern slaveholders.

As the PCS was helping to liberate Jerry Corpsen and hundreds of other bondpersons during the late 1840s and early 1850s, the organization's leaders sensed that black Pennsylvanians were ready to embrace colonization. After decades of almost unmitigated opposition, prolonged economic and political deprivation, along with the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, convinced some African Americans to leave the United States. Most free black Americans still rejected Liberia as a refuge, but a few hazarded the transatlantic voyage. Wearied and worried, thirteen black Pennsylvanians departed for Liberia in 1850; the following year, another seventeen emigrated to the African nation; in 1852, thirteen more went. The PCS delighted in African Americans' apparent change of heart. "We want them to go *for their own good*," declared the *Colonization Herald*. "We see no possible chance for them ever to acquire in this country, social equality. We do see in Africa not a chance but a certainty of their elevation to the great brotherhood of man."⁵² PCS officials eagerly awaited the seemingly imminent exodus.

Indeed, in the early 1850s, the PCS radiated optimism. The organization was helping emancipate slaves; it was transporting black Pennsylvanians to Liberia; its coffers were being replenished. In short, it was the ideal time to ask the state government for money.

In April 1852, two PCS officials, William V. Pettit and John P. Durbin, addressed the state legislature. Pettit spoke first. He cast his net widely, first outlining the history of the movement and then explaining how colonization created commercial opportunities, undermined the slave trade, and spread civilization and Christianity in Africa. Since the

⁵¹ On the ethical and pragmatic considerations of buying slaves' freedom, see William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York, 1991), 143–45.

⁵² *Colonization Herald*, Oct. 1851, p. 62.

PCS was soliciting state monies, Pettit also wisely noted that colonization would benefit Pennsylvania by removing its black population. Yet he also directly addressed the enterprise's antislavery aspects. He twice acknowledged that the majority of emigrants to Liberia had been freedpersons, a fact, he believed, that showed "a strong disposition to emancipate, on the part of the owners." Pettit concluded by disparaging abolitionists, who he claimed had lied about the colonizationists' motives, fabricated stories about Liberia, and deceived black Americans who contemplated going to Africa.⁵³

The PCS's second speaker, John P. Durbin, was even more forthright about freeing bondpersons. Most of his speech concerned the threat that slavery posed to the nation, and how colonization could avert the impending disaster. But it could only do so with public aid. "In order to succeed, so as finally to remove the disturbing element of slavery from our country and separate the two antagonistic races," he explained, "the States, and finally the General Government, must espouse the cause of colonization." A native of the South, Durbin believed that slaveholders would embrace the program. "They see the danger in the distance, and would as gladly as we accept any safe and honorable remedy. Let them see that our measures are peaceful, are practicable, are effectual, and they will join us heartily."⁵⁴

The PCS's appeal had mixed results. In 1852 Pennsylvania allocated \$2,000 to the PCS. That sum was considerably less than what Virginia (\$150,000), Maryland (\$60,000), and Missouri (\$30,000) had recently contributed to colonization, but it was on par with the amounts dispensed by northern states like Indiana (\$2,000) and New Jersey (\$2,000). The public funds also came with a catch—they could only be used to transport black Pennsylvanians to Liberia.⁵⁵

The state subsidy sparked some controversy. Abolitionists predictably decried the measure, remarking that they viewed it with the "deepest abhorrence." Pennsylvania's colonizationists, of course, were happy to receive the aid and eager to spend it.⁵⁶

⁵³ *Addresses Delivered in the Hall of the House of Representatives, Harrisburg, Pa., on Tuesday Evening, April 6, 1852*, (Philadelphia, 1852), 3–32.

⁵⁴ *Addresses Delivered in the Hall of the House of Representatives*, 40, 47.

⁵⁵ Records of the New Jersey Colonization Society, Minutes of the Executive Committee, 6 Feb. 1852, Library of Congress; Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 244.

⁵⁶ Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, *Fifteenth Annual Report* (Philadelphia, 1852), 45; *Colonization Herald*, Jan. 1854, p. 170.

The PCS used the funds to transport thirty-five black Pennsylvanians to Liberia aboard the *Isle de Cuba*. The *Colonization Herald* began touting the venture months before the vessel embarked. The paper ostensibly aimed its message at black northerners, encouraging that group to consider the advantages of moving to Liberia. Yet there is nothing to indicate that the *Colonization Herald* circulated widely among African Americans. PCS officials were really targeting other white people and, in a way, themselves. In the parlance of social psychology, the expedition functioned as a dissonance-reducing cognition. Just as periodic manumissions helped them believe that colonization could end slavery, the *Isle de Cuba's* voyage served as proof that the program appealed to northern African Americans. This tiny undertaking of thirty-five souls, in other words, emboldened colonizationists who clung to the hope that America would one day be free of black people.⁵⁷

PCS leaders occasionally conceded that their implorations had little effect on black Americans. Shortly before the *Isle de Cuba* set sail, the *Colonization Herald* reprinted an article from a Maryland paper which bemoaned African Americans' contempt for colonization. The piece lamented that black critics distrusted all persons who praised the enterprise. Even individuals who had visited Liberia were suspect. No missive, no matter how credible or commendatory, could remove the skepticism. "Such being the case," the article continued, "we almost tire of publishing and republishing letters of this kind—we tire of piping when they not only refuse to dance, but like the deaf adder stop their ears to the music."⁵⁸ Yet PCS officials believed that endorsements by previous emigrants were critical to securing African Americans' confidence. With this in mind, the organization singled out several passengers on the *Isle de Cuba* who might serve as witnesses for the cause.

The Rev. Daniel H. Peterson was one such spokesperson. A minister who traveled between Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, Peterson apparently emigrated at the behest of colonization agents who sought testimonials for their project.⁵⁹ Peterson stayed in Liberia only briefly, and returned to America to author a glowing tribute entitled *The Looking*

⁵⁷ *Colonization Herald*, July 1853, p. 145. See also, *Colonization Herald*, Dec. 1853, p. 166.

⁵⁸ *Colonization Herald*, Nov. 1853, p. 161.

⁵⁹ Wilson J. Moses even described Peterson as a "colonizationist tool." Moses, ed., *Liberian Dreams*, xxx.

Glass: Being a True Report and Narrative of the Life, Travels, and Labors of the Rev. Daniel H. Peterson (1854). Liberia was "like a Garden of Eden," he asserted. Colonization was "the most important and beneficial philanthropic movement in the United States." African Americans who opposed the scheme uttered "slandorous falsehoods of the most glaring description." One senses, however, that Peterson did not believe his own sophisms. Following the publication of his book, he stopped campaigning for colonization.⁶⁰

The PCS placed even more faith in a group from Holladaysburg, Pennsylvania. Among this company were several literate, venturesome men, including Charles Deputie, John H. M. Harris, and William Nesbit. The emigrants' journey began amid a torrent of protest. Charles Deputie worried that he would be unable to summon his sons for the voyage because it was "un Safe for me to do any thing the Excitement was so great among the Colord People."⁶¹ The harassment prompted one colonizationist to conclude that "this event, with others, shows that to keep . . . emigrants from the influence of the false and designing, it would be wise to have them seek the sea-board by a more southern route."⁶²

More frustration and disappointment awaited on the other side of the Atlantic. Several individuals penned reports that contradicted Peterson's cheerful commentary. William Nesbit, for one, was appalled by what he saw. Claiming to have been induced to emigrate by "stool-pigeons (colored men) who decoyed me," Nesbit departed Africa after a short stay. According to his *Four Months in Liberia: Or African Colonization Exposed* (1855), Liberia was a horrid land and persons who encouraged African Americans to go there deserved derision:

On stepping ashore, I found that we had been completely gulled and done for. The statements generally circulated in this country by Colonization agents, respecting the thrift and prosperity of that country, are most egre-

⁶⁰ Daniel H. Peterson, *The Looking Glass: Being a True Report and Narrative of the Life, Travels, and Labors of the Rev. Daniel H. Peterson* (New York, 1854), in *Liberian Dreams*, ed. Moses, 47, 48, 50.

⁶¹ Carter G. Woodson, ed., *The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters Written during the Crisis, 1800-1860* (Washington, D.C., 1926), 150. Augustus Washington of Connecticut, who left the United States with his wife and two children on the same ship as Deputie, also felt stigmatized upon his departure for Liberia. Woodson, ed., *Mind of the Negro*, 136.

⁶² David McKinney to Rev. W. McLain, 5 May 1852, RACS, reel 67.

gious falsehoods. Everything is exaggerated. The whole country presents the most woe begone and hopeless aspect which it is possible for a man to conceive of . . .⁶³

Nesbit also assailed colonization's ideological underpinnings. The movement's supporters, he argued, insisted that black Americans' real home was in Africa; that black people were morally, mentally, and physically defective; that their presence in the United States was offensive to white people and disadvantageous to themselves; and that the two races would always be antagonistic and that this racial hostility was divinely ordained. "And through their wiles," charged Nesbit, "they have succeeded in verifying these dogmas."⁶⁴ Thus Nesbit, like so many abolitionists, felt colonization endangered African Americans who went to Liberia as well as those who remained in the United States.⁶⁵

Others from Holladaysburg held similar attitudes. Charles Deputie's sixteen-year-old son James wrote, "I think Mr. Nesbit gave you a very fair account of Liberia—I tell you, it is hard times. . . all of us, but father, want to go back to the States." Charles's wife, Mary Ann, admonished her husband for "deceiving his family" and bringing them to "this place of torment." Others who traveled aboard the *Isle de Cuba* also disparaged Liberia. Edmund Brown of Johnstown expressed his dismay in no uncertain terms: "More than half that come here, die in a short time, and all that escape immediate death, suffer unspeakable misery, all their lives." Curtis G. Carr of Huntingdon remarked, "it is *hell* by the mile. Mr. Nesbit *don't tell* any *lie* about this country. . . he did not stay long enough to detest it right." Another former resident of Huntingdon, Joseph P. Brooks, concurred with the comment, "taken altogether, this is the worst place any poor man could come to." John Harris of Greensburg was a little more optimistic about Liberia's prospects, but nevertheless maintained

⁶³ William Nesbit, *Four Months in Liberia: Or African Colonization Exposed* (Pittsburgh, 1855), in *Liberian Dreams*, ed. Moses, 88, 126.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁶⁵ Several years later another emigrant who sailed on the *Isle de Cuba*, Samuel Williams of Johnstown, Pa., published *Four Years in Liberia: A Sketch of the Life of the Rev. Samuel Williams, With Remarks on the Missions, Manners and Customs of the Natives of Western Africa. Together with an Answer to Nesbit's Book* (Philadelphia, 1857). Williams endorsed colonization, though he did have reservations about some of the white supporters of the movement. Still, he was hopeful about Liberia's future, especially as a missionary project, and predicted that African Americans would soon either emigrate or, short of that, "send their children to enjoy the blessings of liberty and equality." Samuel Williams, *Four Years in Liberia*, in *Liberian Dreams*, ed. Moses, 167.

that "to come here without every necessary thing, is to step into want and misery." Such denunciations naturally undermined colonizationists' efforts among African Americans in the North.⁶⁶

PCS leaders dealt with the setback in characteristic fashion. Unable to align the mission's failure with their belief that colonization was the only solution to America's racial problems, they concluded that the venture had not miscarried after all. PCS officials swore that those who brought negative news were mistaken. Emigrants that defamed Liberia, they argued, had not remained long enough to know that country's true bounty. Or, if a critic's residency had been extended, the individual lacked gumption, intellect, and energy. Liberia and the program that spawned it were almost never to blame.⁶⁷

Having dispensed with the critical accounts, PCS officers focused on positive reports. This process led them to draw peculiar, even paradoxical, conclusions about their enterprise. They boasted, for example, that the colonization movement was prospering. "The intention to emigrate to Liberia is becoming popular among the people of color," began a January 1854 article in the *Colonization Herald*, "and applications for passage are pouring in." The number of emigrants, the paper predicted later that year, would soon be on the rise. Yet the truth was that black Pennsylvanians were not going to Africa: in the five years following the embarkation of the *Isle de Cuba*, just fifteen moved to Liberia.⁶⁸

PCS officials were consequently obliged to reverse themselves and explain why African Americans shunned Liberia. Since colonization was sagacious and Liberia was praiseworthy, they reasoned, the fault must lie with black people themselves. Thus the *Colonization Herald* complained in 1854 that despite "the receipt of favorable intelligence as a general thing, doubt, stupefied, heavy fearful doubt, hangs over a majority of our colored people in regard to facts which to all others are as clear as the noon-day sun." PCS officials' unwarranted optimism, as well as their exasperated incredulity, reflected attempts to refashion reality to fit their colonizationist convictions.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Moses, ed., *Liberian Dreams*, 115, 118, 119, 120, 121, 124.

⁶⁷ *Colonization Herald*, Mar. 1856, p. 270. See also, *Information about Going to Liberia: With Things Which Every Emigrant Ought to Know: Report of Messrs. Fuller and Janifer: Sketch of The History of Liberia: and the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia* (Washington, D.C., 1852).

⁶⁸ *Colonization Herald*, Jan. 1854, p. 170; *Colonization Herald*, Aug. 1854, p. 198.

⁶⁹ *Colonization Herald*, Nov. 1853, p. 161.

Southern freedpersons were still emigrating to Liberia, though, and the PCS continued to help send them overseas. In 1853 the *Colonization Herald* asked its readers to abet the transport of Betsy Gordon's thirty-one bondpersons abroad.⁷⁰ The following year, the PCS collected emigration funds for sixty-three former slaves liberated by Virginians George Love and Thaddeus Herndon.⁷¹ Shortly thereafter, the organization successfully solicited donations to purchase the wife and seven children of Rev. Hardy Mobley, a free black Alabamian who wanted to move to Liberia. The *Colonization Herald* also served notice of similar fund-raising activities in other northern states.⁷² The success of these endeavors, insisted PCS leaders, demonstrated their program's popularity, especially among society's philanthropists. Colonization's constituency, they claimed, was "a noble band of men and women, unknown to each other, and separated by many a league or clashing interest, but united in considering this a cause of strict and pure benevolence."⁷³

Some contributors saw the cause as one of "strict and pure benevolence" and they voiced this belief when discussing southerners' willingness to cooperate on the slavery question. For example, Catherine Yeates of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, cheered northern African Americans' burgeoning interest in Liberia, but she was equally excited about colonization's emancipatory aspects. In 1854, Yeates gave ten dollars to help convey new freedpersons to Liberia, commenting, "we rejoice to see this disposition manifesting itself amongst our southern brethren."⁷⁴ Thus Yeates, like PCS leaders, viewed colonization as a means of mollifying interregional discord over slavery.

Pennsylvanians may have also funded the PCS because the organization could show its supporters the concrete consequences of their contributions. When soliciting money, the Garrisonians offered hopeful pictures

⁷⁰ Pennsylvania Colonization Society, *To the Friends of the African Race.—An Appeal in Behalf of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society* (Philadelphia, 1853); *Colonization Herald*, Mar. 1853, p. 130, Apr. 1853, p. 134, May 1853, p. 138, and June 1853, p. 142.

⁷¹ *Colonization Herald*, Oct. 1854, p. 202, and Dec. 1854, p. 210.

⁷² J. Morris Pease, *A Statement and Appeal: in Behalf of the Redemption from Slavery of the Wife and Seven Children of the Rev. Hardy Mobley, and Their Settlement in Western Africa as a Missionary Family* (Philadelphia, 1855); *Colonization Herald*, Nov. 1852, p. 114, Sept. 1851, p. 57, and Feb. 1853, p. 128. For additional solicitations in Pennsylvania, see PCS, *Appeal in Behalf of African Colonization* (Philadelphia, 1856), and *Colonization Herald*, July 1853, p. 146, Feb. 1855, and Apr. 1856, p. 274.

⁷³ *Colonization Herald*, Mar. 1855, p. 221.

⁷⁴ Catherine Yeates to Rev. W. McLane, 12 Aug. 1854, RACS, reel 173.

of abolition and racial equality—an image that few white northerners could fathom, and even fewer relish. Colonizationists, conversely, could review the characteristics of freedpersons, discuss their journey to Africa, publish their letters from Liberia, and so on. The experiential aspects of the PCS's antislavery activities, in other words, were critical to its fundraising efforts. After Pennsylvanians donated seven hundred dollars to the emancipation and emigration of George Love's and Thaddeus Herndon's slaves, for example, the *Colonization Herald* reprinted an account of the freedpersons' embarkation from Norfolk, Virginia:

They were in a special care—men, women and children; old and young, from the grey-haired patriarch to the infant in the arms. They looked cheerful in view of the enjoyment of freedom in the Liberian Republic, while there seemed to be, as was natural, a regret to part, perhaps forever, from the scenes of their childhood, with all their loved associations. They were well dressed, some of the women in the fashion, as if they were merely on a pleasure trip, instead of on the eve of a long and perilous journey to Africa.—May they have a pleasant voyage, and arrive at their place of destination, and realize their fondest anticipations!⁷⁵

Visions of well-clad, courageous, and ambitious ex-slaves must have appealed to many white Pennsylvanians. The fact that these freedpersons were leaving America, "perhaps forever," presumably made the scene all the more attractive.

Pennsylvanians answered the PCS's solicitations for one more reason: they relished the idea that an ordinary person could help free a slave. No doubt many Pennsylvanians concurred with the sentiments of Luther Paul of Newton Centre, Massachusetts, who wrote, "[I] was somewhat surprised though not displeased that so humble an individual as myself should be invited to aid in the good work of giving freedom to any who are held in bondage." "My means are limited," Paul continued, "but I send you ten dollars to be used in sending them to Liberia."⁷⁶ That common folk could further the cause of freedom, and that their pecuniary contributions would help reconcile the North and South and bring happiness to black people made the PCS's emancipatory endeavors seem, in the estimation of some white northerners, like projects worth supporting.

⁷⁵ *Colonization Herald*, Dec. 1854, p. 210.

⁷⁶ Luther Paul to "the Secretary & Treasurer of the American Colonization Society," 14 Aug. 1854, RACS, reel 173.

The exact number of manumissions abetted by the PCS is unknown. According to one report, by 1854 the organization had financed the emigration of nearly five hundred non-Pennsylvanian African Americans to Liberia, most of whom were former bondpersons. Obviously, this figure paled in comparison to the growth of the slave population during the antebellum era. Yet PCS officials maintained that the raw numbers were only part of the story. For them, the group's antislavery activities, no matter how small, were symbolically important, rhetorically valuable, and psychologically comforting.⁷⁷

The social and political utility of those manumissions was manifest in an 1854 Pennsylvania House committee report on colonization. Issued two years after the state appropriated money to the PCS, the document echoed the statements of William V. Pettit and John P. Durbin, the two men who had presented the PCS's appeal to the legislature. The committee wished that colonizationists could somehow convince the state's fifty-three thousand African Americans to go to Liberia. But it also noted that the PCS labored for slave manumissions. In fact, the report acknowledged that the organization had facilitated the emigration of far more bondpersons than it had black Pennsylvanians. The committee concluded by heartily endorsing colonization, not just as a means of removing African Americans from Pennsylvania, but also as a mechanism for helping white southerners send slaves to Africa.⁷⁸

Well into the 1850s, Pennsylvania colonizationists continued to portray southerners in general, and slaveholders in particular, positively. When the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society repeatedly confirmed its adherence to "No Union with Slaveholders," when some abolitionists advocated the use of violence to overthrow slavery, when even moderate white northerners fretted over a "slave power conspiracy," the PCS continued to insist that a latent antislavery sentiment flowed beneath the southern soil and that only colonization could tap that emancipatory well-spring.⁷⁹

That idea, however, would not survive the 1850s. Two incidents in November 1854 indicated that PCS officials were having doubts about the wisdom of their long-standing policy. First, they decided to investi-

⁷⁷ Pennsylvania House of Representatives, *The Select Committee of the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania on the Subject of Colonization* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1854), 6.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁹ Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, *Fourteenth Annual Report* (Philadelphia, 1851), 61; Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 9, 73, 97-102, 209.

gate conditions in Liberia. They acknowledged that they had received complaints for some time and decided to send the editor of the *Colonization Herald* abroad to assess the situation. "The safety and health of the new emigrants, and therefore the real progress of the cause, may be promoted by such a visit," they explained.⁸⁰ The second event involved Alfred Cuthbert of Eatonton, Georgia, who wanted to transport his seventy slaves to Liberia. William Coppinger of the PCS expressed reservations about moving scores of destitute bondpersons to a country whose resources were already overextended. William McLain, corresponding secretary of the ACS, upbraided Coppinger, writing, "I am sorry to find that you entertain so poor an opinion [of] 'newly emancipated negroes' as companions for your gentlemen negroes!!"⁸¹ Despite the rebuke, Coppinger and his PCS associates became increasingly convinced that they needed to reevaluate their philosophy on emigration.

In January 1857 a PCS committee submitted a remarkable report that advocated significant changes for the organization. Specifically, it recommended that the PCS stop financing the emigration of freedpersons and instead concentrate on persuading black Pennsylvanians to go to Liberia. Several factors influenced the committee's thinking: The ACS's original purpose was to send free black people to Africa, it contended. The men who founded that society had envisioned manumissions as only "an incidental or consequential result" of colonization. Yet the group had become chiefly a transporter of unskilled and impoverished freedpersons, a practice which had had disastrous results for Liberia. This course of action had also been harmful to the colonization movement in America. Auxiliary societies had devolved into "anxious collecting agencies" that did little to encourage free African Americans to emigrate to Liberia. "It is not easy to see how . . . we are to acquit ourselves as a pennsylvanian society," the committee remarked, "while we make no effort to correct erroneous opinions, remove prejudices, soften the asperities of hostile feeling, and diffuse information about the true nature of our enterprise" The report concluded by stating that the ACS should circumscribe emigration, permit its auxiliary societies to focus on free African Americans, and make Liberia more attractive to potential emigrants.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Colonization Herald*, Nov. 1854, p. 206.

⁸¹ William McLain to William Coppinger, 17 Nov. 1854, RACS, reel 197.

⁸² PCS, *At a Meeting of the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society* (Philadelphia, 1857), 2, 3, 9-12.

Just two months after approving the committee's report, the PCS board of managers decided to employ two individuals, Henry Cole and Isaac Kendall, to cultivate support for colonization among the state's black population. Kendall himself planned on emigrating to Liberia, and the PCS consequently expected him to be an especially persuasive agent. Yet just one month later, the board dejectedly reported that the two men had accomplished little. Kendall had become consumed with his own business affairs; Cole "had withdrawn from the work, the way being closed up against him."⁸³

Unbowed, the PCS pushed on. The organization hoped to convert more white men and women to the cause by publishing additional issues of the *Colonization Herald*. Previously, it printed 2,500–3,000 copies. Now the paper's circulation topped 4,750. The PCS board of managers also resolved that any person who procured new subscribers to the *Colonization Herald* could retain one half of the first year's fees. It is not clear whether these endeavors affected white Pennsylvanians' attitudes toward colonization; it is certain, though, that emigration patterns changed markedly during this period.⁸⁴

Between 1858 and 1860, 110 black Pennsylvanians moved to Liberia—about as many as had gone in the previous twenty years combined. Instead of devising ways to send freedpersons to Africa, the PCS board of managers now spent much of its time discussing which Pennsylvania applicants to convey to Liberia. To encourage further emigration, the organization hired a Liberian emigrant, Thomas W. Chester, to work among Pennsylvania's African American population.⁸⁵ The PCS's decision to concentrate on removing the state's black residents—a choice that was bolstered by the 1857 *Dred Scott* verdict—proved successful beyond the organization's means. In a reversal of their previous financial roles, the PCS now asked the ACS for pecuniary help to transport black Pennsylvanians to Liberia. When ACS leaders responded favorably, the PCS determined it would "continue to send emigrants at their expense until directed to cease."⁸⁶

The PCS's 1861 annual report reflected these new developments. It

⁸³ PCS Papers, vol. 2, 10 Mar. 1857, 14 Apr. 1857.

⁸⁴ PCS Papers, vol. 1, 13 June 1848, 5 Sept. 1848, 14 Dec. 1848; vol. 2, 9 June 1857, 12 Jan. 1858, 9 Mar. 1858, 11 Jan. 1859.

⁸⁵ Thomas Chester, a twenty-year-old schoolteacher, emigrated aboard the *Banshee* in 1853.

⁸⁶ PCS Papers, vol. 2, 1 Apr. 1859, 8 Nov. 1859, 10 Jan. 1860, 14 Feb. 1860.

noted that thirty-three black Pennsylvanians had recently left for Liberia, and that twenty more would soon depart. The African republic, the report continued, had ennobled its indigenous population and promised equal, if not greater, blessings to the free black men and women who might emigrate there. It even indicated that four thousand "recaptured" African slaves had been sent to the country, and that these persons were adopting the Liberians' ways. But the report contained no mention of manumission, no cheering of southern liberality, no solicitations for freedpersons. Simply put, the report lacked the interregional, antislavery vision that had characterized the PCS since its founding in 1826.⁸⁷

According to historian Kenneth Stampp, "1857 was probably the year when the North and South reached the political point of no return—when it became well nigh impossible to head off a violent resolution of the differences between them."⁸⁸ If Stampp's argument is correct, Pennsylvania colonizationists persisted in their emancipatory activities as long as one might expect.⁸⁹ For decades, they regaled manumissions, for such liberations aided PCS leaders who chafed between colonization's failings and the conviction that the program would solve the country's problems concerning race and slavery. The emancipations, in other words, eased the officials' internal tensions. Yet those dissonance-reducing endeavors proved insufficient in the tumultuous late 1850s. Psychological discomfort intensified as colonization proved incapable of averting a civil war. "*The pressure to reduce the dissonance*," posited social psychologist Leon Festinger, "*is a function of the magnitude of the dissonance*."⁹⁰ For PCS officers, something had to change. They accordingly eschewed the antislavery aspects of their enterprise, and thereby stilled the tempest within.

University of North Dakota

ERIC BURIN

⁸⁷ PCS, *Annual Report* (Philadelphia, 1861).

⁸⁸ Kenneth M. Stampp, *America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink* (New York, 1990), viii.

⁸⁹ According to Stanley Harrold, in the mid to late 1850s, abolitionists also lost interest, and perhaps faith, in their southern allies. Harrold, *Abolitionists and the South*, 44.

⁹⁰ Festinger, *Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, 18 (italics in original); *Colonization Herald*, Dec. 1854, p. 210.

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

6. The sixth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.