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RELUCTANT REFORMERS

RESEARCH

A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF LIBERIAN
COLONIZATION FROM 1820 TO 1843 WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MORTALITY¹

BY TOM W. SHICK

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were one million black people in America, of whom 108,000 were legally free citizens. During the next twenty years both freemen and slaves increased, so that in 1820 there were over 233,000 freemen and 1,500,000 slaves.² This population represented a serious race problem for white America at a time when the slavery solution was becoming increasingly unprofitable. Emancipation was considered by many as simply another problem, of equal if not greater magnitude. A small minority of the black population 'had been freed only to exchange compulsory servitude for a travesty of liberty . . . many liberal citizens had voted for the African's liberty but nobody wanted his company'.³ One solution which attracted a disparate group of supporters was the idea of complete black removal. The American Colonization Society (A.C.S.) was formed in 1817 with the immediate goal of removing all free blacks and eventually the entire black population. The Society was organized and controlled by whites attracted to 'benevolent causes'. It was destined to fail as a viable solution, but nevertheless its activities represented the most elaborate attempt at black deportation.⁴

In 1844 a table containing a listing of all emigrants sent by the American Colonization Society to Liberia in West Africa was read into the Congressional Record.⁵ The table contained all known facts regarding the names, ages, point of departure, point of arrival, education, occupation, date of death, cause of death, and date of re-emigration for each emigrant by date of arrival in Liberia. In the present study, the known data for each individual emigrant has been coded and key-punched on IBM cards.⁶ This procedure enabled the statistics to be programmed and analysed by

¹ The author wishes to express his gratitude for the assistance given him by Professor Philip D. Curtin and Mr Norman Ryder.

² John H. Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967), 184-5.

³ Charles I. Foster, 'The Colonization of Free Negroes in Liberia, 1816-1835', *The Journal of Negro History*, xxxviii (1953), 41.

⁴ Two major works on the American Colonization Society: Early L. Fox, 'The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840', *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, v (1919), Vol. 37. P. J. Staudenraus, *The African Colonization Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

⁵ U.S., Congress, Senate, *Roll of Emigrants That Have Been Sent To The Colony of Liberia, West Africa, By The American Colonization Society and Its Auxiliaries, To September, 1843 & c.*, 28th Cong., 2nd sess., 1844, v, Vol. ix.

⁶ Both the IBM cards and programme cards will be on deposit in the Memorial Library of the University of Wisconsin, Madison Campus.

computer. All of the tables found here have been derived by this method unless otherwise stated. Whenever information pertaining to an individual was omitted in the Congressional Record Table, it has been treated as an unknown. Consequently, although we know that 4,571 emigrants arrived in Liberia from America during the period, we have data on the educational

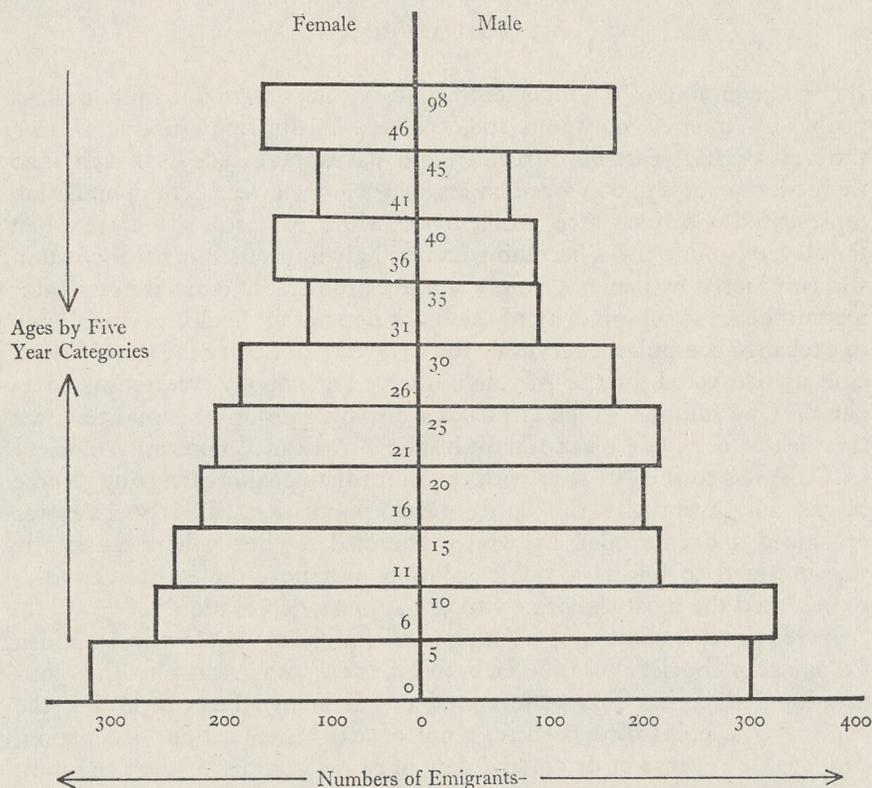


Fig. 1. Population distribution for Liberian emigrants, 1820-43

level of far less than that total. This problem has been minimized by avoiding categories such as 'occupation', where the data on each individual is generally missing. The most reliable category in the table is that of death and re-emigration from the Liberian settlements. Here we can assume that those individuals not recorded as deceased during the period, or as having re-emigrated, can be considered to have lived until at least 1843, when the record closes. This is the basis for the present study of Liberian mortality experiences from 1820 to 1843. A quantitative analysis of this type affords the opportunity to re-examine various historical generalizations that have been advanced about the period in Liberian history.

The sex ratio for the emigrants as a group was balanced, while the age

distribution shows a wide base of infants and young children, with a gradual reduction until age 46 (see Fig. 1). The even sex ratio and the age distribution indicates a pattern of family emigration and also suggests the prospect of steady population growth. New emigrants were constantly arriving in Liberia throughout the period in question. For the first six

Table 1. *Emigration to Liberia in Each Year, 1820-1842*

Years	No.	%
1820	87	1.9
1821	33	0.7
1822	37	0.8
1823	64	1.4
1824	103	2.3
1825	65	1.4
1826	177	3.9
1827	236	5.2
1828	302	6.6
1829	146	3.2
1830	325	7.1
1831	165	3.6
1832	676	14.8
1833	718	15.7
1834	237	5.2
1835	207	4.5
1836	242	5.3
1837	38	0.8
1838	208	4.6
1839	56	1.2
1840	113	2.5
1841	87	1.9
1842	249	5.5
Total	4,571	100.00

years the new arrivals were limited to less than 150 per year. During the next ten years the numbers rose markedly, with 718 emigrants arriving in the year 1833. After 1837, the rate of emigration fluctuated from year to year, but never again reached the 1833 level (see Table 1). The actual number of people who emigrated from each state, as well as the percentages, is shown in Table 2. The greatest number came from Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland with 1,603, 750 and 478 people respectively. Although most emigrants came from southern states, eight northern states were also represented.

One fact about the emigrants, indicating their ability to understand the affairs around them, was the very large proportion of literacy, which was far greater than one might have suspected to be the case among either freed

blacks or slaves in that period. Table 3 represents literacy by region and state. Some elementary forms of instruction were given to slaves in certain areas, while free blacks had more opportunities for education. The types of instruction given to free blacks varied from school facilities in the north to tutorial activities in the south.⁷ The emigrants to Liberia included a

Table 2. *Point of Origin for Liberian Emigrants, 1820-1842*

Origin	No.	%
<i>Free States</i>	270	6.0
New York	78	1.7
Pennsylvania	69	1.5
Rhode Island	5	0.1
Washington, D.C.	28	0.6
Ohio	56	1.3
Iowa	17	0.4
Illinois	3	0.1
<i>Slave States</i>	3,927	87.5
Missouri	2	0.1
Virginia	1,603	35.7
Maryland	478	10.7
So. Carolina	160	3.6
No. Carolina	750	16.7
Delaware	2	0.1
Tennessee	185	4.1
Kentucky	193	4.3
Georgia	253	5.6
Louisiana	116	2.6
Alabama	7	0.2
Mississippi	178	4.0
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	288	6.5
Port au Prince	1	0.1
At Large*	287	6.4
Total	4,485	100.0

* Slaves seized at sea by the United States Naval Squadron and turned over to the American Colonization Society.

surprisingly large percentage of people with the fundamentals of literacy. The A.C.S. system of recruitment among free blacks tended generally to reach those who could read the literature published by the Society, which may have been a somewhat selective mechanism.

Though the total number of emigrants sent to Liberia between 1820

⁷ Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 202-3, 228-9.

and 1843 was 4,571, the numbers living in the settlement in 1843 were only 1,819. Re-emigration from the settlements might account for part of the difference, but we know that only 11 per cent of the colonists actually left Liberia after settling there (see Table 4). There must therefore have

Table 3. *Literacy among emigrants to Liberia by point of origin, 1820-1824*

Origin	Some literacy		Illiteracy*	
	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Northern States</i>	356	47.3	396	52.7
New York	44	56.4	34	43.6
Pennsylvania	29	42.0	40	58.0
Connecticut	3	60.0	2	40.0
Rhode Island	10	35.7	18	64.3
Washington, D.C.	25	44.6	31	55.4
Ohio	0	0.0	17	100.0
Iowa	0	0.0	3	100.0
Illinois	1	7.1	13	92.9
Maryland	242	50.6	236	49.4
Delaware	2	100.0	0	0.0
Missouri	0	0.0	2	100.0
<i>Southern States</i>	632	17.3	2,813	82.7
Virginia	272	17.0	1,331	83.0
So. Carolina	83	51.9	77	48.1
No. Carolina	125	16.7	625	83.3
Tennessee	28	15.1	157	84.9
Kentucky	0	0.0	193	100.0
Georgia	52	21.0	201	79.0
Louisiana	52	44.8	64	55.2
Alabama	5	71.4	2	28.6
Mississippi	15	8.4	163	91.6
Total	988	32.0	3,209	68.0

* All unknowns included in this category.

been more serious impediments to population growth than might have been expected on grounds of the sex ratio and pattern of family emigration. Another possible answer might come from the conflicts between the settlers and the neighbouring African people. Such population losses appear not to have been very great.⁸ The emigrants, although few in numbers, were much better armed and, after the first attack by Africans,

⁸ For the military details see Harry Johnston, *Liberia* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1906), I, 136-40. William Innes, *Liberia* (Edinburgh: Waugh & Innes, 1831).

they were able to protect their settlements. Only seventy-four people were recorded during the entire period as having died as a result of military action. The real impediment to population growth was the high mortality rate of the emigrants. The major cause being disease, particularly malaria or 'fever' (see Table 5).

Table 4. *Removal from the Liberian settlements during the period 1820 to 1842*

Place of removal	No.	%
Other parts of Africa	401	8.8
United States	117	2.6
Other	11	0.2

Table 5. *Principal causes of death among Liberian emigrants*

Causes	No.	%
Fever*	896	45.7
Drowning	67	3.4
Childbirth	13	0.7
Female disease	45	2.3
Decline	192	9.8
Old age	36	1.8
Diseased brain	93	4.8
Diseased lung	106	5.4
Consumption	192	9.8
Pleurisy	88	4.5
Casualty	79	4.0
Anasarca	95	4.9
Whooping Cough	11	0.6
Cholera	3	0.2
Worms	2	0.1
Total	1,918	100.0

* This designation probably refers to malaria.

The data presented in Tables 6-8 reflect several problems. One such problem is the very low representation in certain categories. Significant generalizations can be made about the mortality rate of all males (2,419), but little can be said about the mortality rate of emigrants from the state of Connecticut, because the total number is just five. The size of the population sample must be reasonably large in order to have statistical value. Expected high mortality for certain age groups must also be taken into account. Infants represent one such group, and in the nineteenth century one could anticipate high infant mortality. Therefore age categories have been used as a way of minimizing possible false interpretations.

Two related problems are also involved when dealing with mortality

Table 6. *Central death rate for emigrants by region and state* of origin*

Age	North	South	Virginia	Maryland	North Carolina
0-5	145	97	120	126	59
6-25	74	63	68	68	46
26-45	87	77	78	90	65
46-98	268	159	156	319	167
Total	95	78	84	88	56

* Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina represent the only states where the population sample was large enough to be meaningful:

Number of Emigrants during the period 1820-43

Virginia	1,603
Maryland	478
North Carolina	750

Table 7. *Central death rate for emigrants by sex and age*

Age	Males	Females	Total
0-5	101	100	100
6-25	75	59	67
26-45	72	89	79
46-98	201	153	178
Total	85	78	82

Table 8. *Central death rate for emigrants by region and place of landing*

Age	Coastal*	Monrovia	Caldwell	Interior	Millsburg
0-5	118	107	92	96	101
6-25	68	61	61	63	75
26-45	73	70	98	90	73
46-98	164	154	194	185	155
Total	83	77	80	81	85

* The Coastal and Interior central death rates include all emigrants; while Monrovia, Caldwell and Millsburg are the only settlements which had populations large enough to be represented individually.

records of the past. In most situations of high mortality, records are poorly kept. This becomes particularly significant when the recorded causes of death are examined. In the first half of the nineteenth century medical knowledge of tropical diseases was very limited.⁹ The Liberian

⁹ The best general account of the level of medical knowledge concerning African tropical diseases is found in Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1965), 177-97.

emigrants had few if any men with medical knowledge available, which further reduces the reliability of the data concerning the causes of death. This study will focus on the general recording of death which can be depended upon most for consistent accuracy. The American Colonization Society records also give no information about the morbidity of the population. Here it is only possible to make inferences about morbidity from the mortality rate. If mortality is found to be high, then one would expect a correspondence with morbidity.

The mortality figures for Liberian emigrants was computed as a Central Death Rate from the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Sum of Death}}{\begin{array}{l} \text{Date of death (if applicable)} \\ \text{or date of removal (if applicable)} \\ \text{or 1843} \end{array}} \times 1000$$

(expressed in terms of deaths per thousand per year)

The record includes people who enter the population at different ages and in different years. This formula provides a means of capturing the mortality experience of the Liberian emigrants during the period. The Central Death Rate calculation has been used when combining variables such as sex, place of landing and the like. This procedure makes it possible to analyse mortality patterns while at the same time reducing the effect of built-in biases. Tables 6-8 contain the results of such cross tabulations. A clear pattern of mortality persists throughout the tables. The first age category of 0 to 5, and the last category of 46 to 98, have the highest incidence of mortality in both tables, while the two age categories of 6 to 25 and 26 to 45 show a significantly lower mortality level. This pattern is expected for any population. Infant mortality can be expected to be high, with mortality dropping off in the middle years and rising again from the impact of adult diseases and old age.

As a basis for comparison between the Liberian example and other cases, Table 9 represents the mortality expectations of a society with a very low life expectancy—in this case limited to just twenty years. For any stable society which continues through time, this life expectancy represents the gravest mortality experience on which there is available data. The difference between the age categories of Coale and Demeny and those of this study is statistically trivial.¹⁰ It is important to note, however, that the 0 to 1 category of Table 9 is probably not included in the Liberian tables. Figure 2 shows the pattern of infant mortality. We can assume that the Liberian records would report infant mortality somewhere after the first months of life. Consequently the 1 to 4 category probably reflects the Liberian category of 0 to 5. Similar reasoning applies to the upper age category as well; the age distribution of the emigrants would be younger

¹⁰ Personal communication from Professor Norman Ryder, University of Wisconsin, Sociology Department.

Table 9. Mortality rates by age, for high mortality situations*

Life expectancy at birth = 20		Males				
Mortality pattern†	0-1	1-4	5-24	25-44	45-up	
West	595	75	11	28	68	
North	503	93	19	25	65	
East	784	71	11	19	58	
South	441	107	14	19	57	

Life expectancy at birth = 20		Females				
Mortality pattern	0-1	1-4	5-24	25-44	45-up	
West	492	76	15	25	59	
North	413	88	18	23	58	
East	613	70	12	20	56	
South	393	114	15	20	54	

* The source of these data is: Ansley J. Coale and Paul Demeny, *Regional Model Life Tables and Stable Populations* (New Jersey).

† These mortality patterns refer generally to populations found in Europe. These mortality rates represent the worse conditions for demographic growth found in stable societies that continue through time.

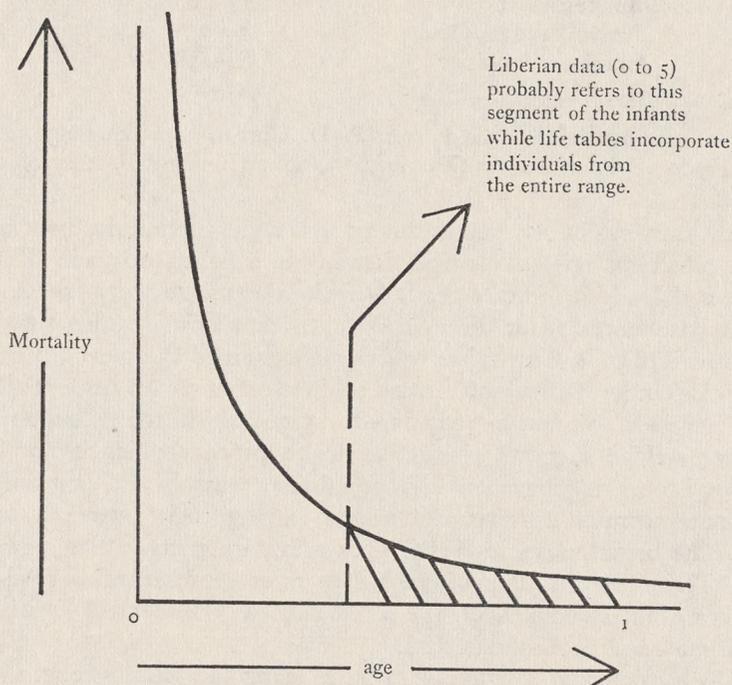


Fig. 2. General Pattern of Infant Mortality*

* Emigration parallels infancy in that both represent the hazards of the transformation from one life to another. Mortality as a likely consequence for both experiences that decreases the longer an individual survives in the new life.

than that of a general population, within that age range, and therefore the death rate, *ceteris paribus*, somewhat lower.¹¹ Useful comparisons can be made only in the middle categories.

Once the Liberian emigrant mortality tables are compared to the life table for high mortality situations, the appalling mortality figures of the emigrants becomes more apparent. In most cases the emigrant mortality rate is three times as great as the life table rates. In the life tables, people between the ages 5 and 24 have the lowest mortality rate, between ten and twenty deaths per thousand. Among the Liberian emigrants within this age range the Central Death Rate was never below fifty deaths per thousand. Clearly the emigrants were experiencing very high mortality, even in age ranges generally considered the most healthy for any population. Without the constant immigration through the years, it would be impossible to imagine any population growth at all.

Table 10. *Mortality rates for British soldiers serving overseas, 1817 to 1836**

Area of Service	Mortality (per thousand mean strength per annum)
Mediterranean	12-20
Tropical Indian Ocean	30-75
American Tropics	85-138
West Africa	483-668

* This information was taken from P. D. Curtin, 'Epidemiology and the Slave Trade', *Political Science Quarterly*, 83, no. 2 (June 1968), 202-3.

It was universally believed at this time that the immunities now known to be based on epidemiological factors were based on race. Existing statistics do indeed indicate that the white death rate was high. A comparison with mortality for whites in West Africa will clarify this assumption. Professor Philip D. Curtin has previously examined the mortality data of Major Alexander Tulloch on British soldiers serving overseas.¹² Tulloch's data, however, cannot be compared directly with the Liberian case. Military service suggests a selective health process which is not found for the Liberian emigrants. His population was also in constant flux, with new recruits arriving and others leaving their overseas' assignment. The British posts in West Africa were rarely larger than a garrison force. Therefore the data on mortality rates represented in Tulloch's survey are not calculated on the same basis as the Central Death Rate calculated from the Liberian data.

Tulloch calculated a crude death rate, using the mean strength of the British troops as the basis of his analysis. Table 10 shows some of the

¹¹ Personal communication from Professor Norman Ryder.

¹² Philip D. Curtin, 'Epidemiology and the Slave Trade', *Political Science Quarterly*, 83 (June 1968), 2.

results of his study. The mortality rates for male emigrants to Liberia appear to be most in line with the mortality for British soldiers serving in the tropical Indian Ocean and the American tropics (see Table 7 and 10). One possible explanation is that many of the Liberian emigrants came from the south where *vivax* malaria was endemic. This would have given the emigrants some degree of immunity to *falciparum* malaria of West Africa that was not available to soldiers recruited in Britain. Nevertheless the Liberian society, formed from black people sent from America, could not sustain itself from internal growth alone. The general assumption in the early nineteenth century that black people, by virtue of their race, should have certain advantages for survival in Africa is not supported by the Liberian example.¹³ Their mortality rate, although never as high as those of British soldiers in West Africa, was clearly not representative of a prospering population.

The problem of survival among the emigrants to Liberia was definitely a major concern that could not be ignored by the American Colonization Society. The officers of the organization received a letter from London in 1820 reporting the outcome of the first attempt to settle black emigrants in West Africa, the expedition landed in Sierra Leone, while making plans to purchase land.¹⁴ Of the eighty-seven emigrants, fifteen died in the first year, including all but one of the whites that accompanied them. The attitude of the A.C.S. managers was stated during an executive meeting as follows:

At present we would request our friends not to be discouraged. The Board laments the unfortunate issue of this first effort, but they had no right to calculate upon the absence of those disasters, difficulties, and disappointments, which attend all human affairs, and which are ordered, or permitted, to attend them, for purposes the wisdom and goodness of which, though we may not see, we cannot doubt. We lament also the loss sustained by the society and our country, and the cause of humanity, in the death of those who so freely offered themselves in the Service of God . . . their example and fate we rejoice to know, instead of deterring has encouraged others to assume their posts. To these dispensations of the Almighty we bow in submission and at the same time resolve to go in the path of duty.¹⁵

The problem of survival, however, did not disappear after this self-righteous proclamation. In fact, the Society, faced with continuing reports of high death tolls among emigrants, ordered a medical investigation to determine the causes for the high mortality and the possible ways that the same could be reduced. The report was presented to the Board of Managers by Dr Henderson in May of 1832.

¹³ See Curtin, *Image of Africa*, ch. 14.

¹⁴ Minutes of the Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society, MS, 16 Oct. 1820, proceedings 1817-28. The papers of the American Colonization Society are located in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

¹⁵ Minutes of the Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society, MS, 16 Oct. 1820, proceedings 1817-28.

The medical report was not sophisticated, but it did attempt to isolate the possible causes for high mortality. Acclimatization or 'seasoning' was expected to produce a high death rate initially. Dr Henderson linked certain circumstances to the high mortality during acclimatization. Emigrants who came from non-malarial regions of the United States were said to have experienced the worst mortality. Locating emigrants on the

Table 11. *The percentages of deaths for all emigrants by each year of survival in Liberia*

Years of Survival	Percentages of deaths
1	21.4
2	6.1
3	3.4
4	3.1
5	4.2
6	3.1
7	3.1
8	3.1
9	2.2
10	3.1
11	2.4
12	2.2
13	2.1
14	1.2
15	0.9
16	1.2
17	0.6
18	0.3
19	0.4
20	0.4
21	0.0

coast immediately, and landing in the wet season, were considered the next two most unfavourable conditions for survival. The medical report advised a correction of the conditions as the best method for removing the problem of high mortality:

The emigrants should leave America in November, say the 21st, so as to arrive about the first of January. If suitable receptacles, at suitable places, be erected, and Physicians reside at these places, any number can be received and attended to. The committee thinks that emigrants from Georgia, and probably South Carolina and similar latitudes, may go safely at any season. It is, however, essential to give the emigrants from the other states every advantage of season, especially as this can be done without detriment or difficulty.¹⁶

The data from this study enables an examination of the validity of these assumptions.

¹⁶ Minutes of the Board of Managers, MS, Monday, 14 May 1832, 273 ff.

The 'seasoning' theory is supported by the data. Table 12 shows the percentages of deaths for all emigrants in the first year after arrival and every year thereafter. Twenty-one per cent of all emigrants died in their first year of colonization. Of those that survived the first year, 6.1 per cent of that group died in the second year. For those emigrants who lived through their first and second year of settlement in Liberia, a new pattern developed. Each new year of survival tended to decrease the likelihood of death. The experiences of the emigrants did in fact include a period of acclimatization. The same pattern is found among European settlers in Sierra Leone. In the first year of settlement they had a 49 per cent death rate which then dropped to 10 per cent in the second year.¹⁷

Table 12. *Central death rate for Liberian emigrants by region of origin, settlement and season of landing*

Age	Dry season	Wet season
	South-interior	North-coast
0-5	87	116
6-25	61	54
26-45	89	48
46-98	178	185
Total	78	63

The actual suggestions set forth in Dr Henderson's medical report for reducing mortality are not substantiated by the mortality rate. Table 11 contains the Central Death Rate for two different forms of emigrations. People who emigrated from malarial regions in America (South), and were sent to the interior settlements of Liberia during the dry season, were believed to have the best possible chances for survival. Emigrants from non-malarial regions (North) who were settled on the coast in the wet season were believed to be the least likely to survive. Table 12 does not show, however, any major differences between the mortality patterns of these two groups. Both categories remain in line with the other mortality rates of Liberian emigrants.

The Society developed a propaganda system both to encourage black colonization in Africa and to alleviate fears of harsh conditions in Liberia. Under the guidance of Ralph Gurley, the *African Repository and Colonial Journal* was printed as the publicity organ of the society. In the pages of the *Journal*, Gurley argued that disease and death were not as severe as in some parts of America. He often blamed fatalities on the settlers themselves:

In case after case the colonial agent attributed death to foolish mistakes, such as leaving bed too soon after the initial attack, taking too much sun, or

¹⁷ Curtin, *Image of Africa*, 483-4.

eating too much raw fruit. He insisted that the climate at Liberia was basically healthful...¹⁸

These arguments and explanations were inadequate to counter the obvious. The most interesting aspect is not that the Society failed to solve the problem of disease and deaths for which medical science had yet to provide the answers, but that the organization continued to send people to Liberia while very much aware of the chances for survival.

The organizers of the A.C.S. considered themselves to be humanitarians performing the work of God. This attitude prevented them from accepting certain realities of their crusade. Any problems, including those of disease and deaths, were viewed as the trials and tribulations that God provides as a means of testing the fortitude of man. After every report of disaster in Liberia the managers simply renewed their efforts. Once the organization was formed and the auxiliaries established, a new force developed which also prevented the Society from admitting the seriousness of the mortality problem. The desire to perpetuate the existence of the corporate body became a factor. To have admitted that the mortality rate made the price of emigration far too high to be continued would have meant the end of the organization. The managers were seemingly unprepared to advise the termination of their project and by extension, their own jobs.

Many black leaders of the period, as well as the white abolitionists, believed that Liberian colonization represented a terrible scheme organized by racists. Some historians have since considered the effort to have been the work of idealists convinced that their plan was the most humane answer to America's race problem. The mortality rates and the Society's response during the period hardly represent a humane answer to any problem. This study has demonstrated that the colonization of black people in Liberia between 1820 and 1843 was extremely costly; so costly that it came closer to being a death sentence than the start of a new life.

SUMMARY

It is well known that during the eighteenth century and most of the nineteenth century the problem of mortality limited the European presence in West Africa. Disease and death in appalling proportions plagued whites who settled along the coast. Phrases such as 'the white man's grave' popularized theories concerning survival in West Africa that were based mainly on race. The belief that black people by virtue of their race would fare better than whites in Africa affected certain historical events. Hence religious groups began to train blacks in the Caribbean for missionary work and then sent them to Africa, while other groups such as the American Colonization Society encouraged black people to emigrate back to Africa. The present study is a quantitative examination of the black population that emigrated to Liberia through the American Colonization Society from 1820 to 1843. Particular attention is given to their mortality experience.

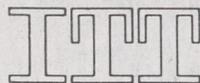
Although a total of 4,571 emigrants arrived in Liberia during the 1820 to 1843 period, by the year 1843 only 1,819 emigrants were still living in the settle-

¹⁸ Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*, 102-3.

ments. The overwhelming reason for the Liberian population decline, despite constant additions throughout the period, was a high death rate after arrival in Liberia. By examining the various characteristics of the population such as age, sex, place of origin, place of arrival and the like, a clearer picture of mortality in West Africa emerges. A picture which seems to have little relationship to race per se, but rather to the ways in which disease environments in isolated areas affect incoming populations.

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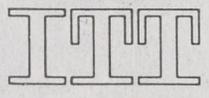
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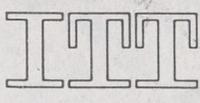
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THE BOBBS - MERRILL
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The Persistence of the Idea of Negro Colonization*

BRAINERD DYER

THE IDEA that the "Negro problem" in the United States could be solved or alleviated by removing the Negroes or a portion of them to distant lands, preferably beyond the confines of the nation, has persisted with amazing tenacity from colonial days to the very present. As early as 1691 the colony of Virginia prohibited the "further emancipation of slaves unless the owner provided for their transportation beyond the limits of the colony within six months from the date of manumission."¹ As recently as 1939, Senator Theodore G. Bilbo of Mississippi introduced into Congress a bill calling for federal government support of a large-scale voluntary migration of Negroes to Liberia, as the only solution of all the discriminations, abuses, and hardships complained of by the black man in this country.² During the long years between these dates numerous schemes and plans for the colonization of the Negroes were promulgated and given support by public men in all sections of the country.

During the late eighteenth century there were no more vigorous champions of colonization than the Reverend Samuel Hopkins of Rhode Island, vigorous opponent of the slave trade who is sometimes called the father of abolition, Dr. William Thornton, Philadelphia and Washington architect, inventor and humanitarian, and Thomas Jefferson.³ In his notes on Virginia, written just at the close of the Revolution, Jefferson declared that continued attempt by the two races to live side by side would probably end in the extermination of one or the other, and he proposed the emancipation of all Negroes at birth, their education at public expense under the guidance of their parents and their deportation when they reached the age of eighteen, in the case of the females, and twenty-one in the case of the males.⁴ Nearly forty years later, with death not far distant, Jefferson reaffirmed his belief that this was the only practicable plan for solving the Negro problem and admonished the younger generation "to rise and be doing" for "A million and a half are within

* A paper prepared for the 1942 meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association to have been held at Davis, California. It was read before the History Guild of Southern California, at Pasadena, on December 30, 1942 [EDITOR].

¹ H. N. Sherwood, "Early Negro Deportation Projects," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, II (March, 1916), 484-508.

² *Congressional Record*, 76 Cong., 1 sess., LXXXIV, 4647, 4650-4676.

³ Sherwood, *loc. cit.*; Gaillard Hunt, "William Thornton and Negro Colonization," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, n.s., XXX (1920), 32-61.

⁴ Thomas Jefferson, *Writings* (New York, 1892-1899), III, 243-244.

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William Wells Brown, Social Reformer

W. EDWARD FARRISON

Chairman, Department of English, North Carolina College at Durham

For a while William Wells Brown was known in New England as "a great lecturer," as a Boston maiden of some eighty summers called him in conversation I recently had with her. Outside of New England, where he is remembered at all, he is known as America's first Negro man of letters. As far as anyone yet knows, he was the first American Negro to publish a book of travels, a novel, and a drama. Also—if there is any value in recording "firsts"—he was probably America's first Negro foreign newspaper correspondent. Yet at no time in his life did Brown devote himself exclusively to writing as a profession. From 1847, when he published his first book, until 1880, when he published his last one, he was busy reading and writing; but throughout his life as a free man he was a zealous social reformer, in an age of great reformers.

Before the Civil War Brown was primarily interested in the abolition of American slavery. After the Civil War his chief concern was, in a phrase he loved to use, "the religious, moral, and social elevation of his race." With most of his fellow-abolitionists, however, he was actively interested at one time or another in all of the principal reform movements of his age. Before he became an anti-slavery leader and long after the Civil War had ended, he was an ardent supporter of the temperance movement, as were Henry Highland Garnet and William Still.

With Lucy Stone, Angelina Grimke Weld, Abby Kelley Foster, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and others, he shared views in favor of woman suffrage, and he was also interested in pacifism, prison reform, and anti-tobaccoism.

While still a slave in his teens in St. Louis, Missouri, Brown discovered that as bad as sober slave masters were, drunken ones were still worse. On several occasions he himself was brutalized by intoxicated masters and slave-drivers, and he also saw other slaves maltreated by them. From such experiences he learned to abhor strong drink as well as slavery. In Cleveland, Ohio, where he resided for the first two years after he escaped from slavery in January, 1834, and in Buffalo, New York, where he maintained a home for the next nine years, he worked simultaneously as an agent of the Underground Railroad and as a promoter of temperance. In Buffalo, having helped many fugitives to make good their flight from physical slavery, he started a crusade against servitude to intoxicants. He organized a temperance society and within three years brought into its membership five hundred of the seven hundred Negroes then living in Buffalo. In the meetings of this society, of which he was president for several years, he got his first experience as a public speaker—experience which prepared him for his work as an anti-slavery lecturer.

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By S. P. FULLINWIDER

Jean Toomer: Lost Generation, or Negro Renaissance?

NOW THAT THE Jean Toomer papers have found a home at the Fisk University library it is no longer necessary to speculate as to why Toomer ceased to write after he published *Cane* in 1923. In fact, he did not cease to write. He continued to write, and write voluminously; but to no avail — he could find no publisher. The story of Toomer's literary efforts after 1923 is a story of frustration, despair and failure — this after what was surely one of the most promising beginnings in the history of American literature. Toomer's story is one of a young man caught up in the tangled skein of race relations in America. But it goes beyond even that. For a time, at least, it was the story of modern man; the story of a search for identity — for an absolute in a world that had dissolved into flux. It is a story of success — at the age of thirty-one his search for an identity-giving absolute was over. It is a story of tragedy. As long as he was searching he was a fine creative artist; when the search ended, so did his creative powers. So long as he was searching, his work was the cry of one caught in the modern human condition; it expressed modern man's lostness, his isolation. Once Toomer found an identity-giving absolute, his voice ceased to be the cry of modern man and became the voice of the schoolmaster complacently pointing out the way — his way. It now seems possible to take a few hesitant steps toward a closer understanding of the Negro American literary tradition by asking the question: "Who was Jean Toomer?"

Toomer's overriding concern for the human condition grew out of an early lack of self-esteem, a concomitant tendency towards introspection and soul-searching, and a loss of his childhood absolutes. His problem with self-esteem was a product of his early family life, particularly, his relationship with an imperious grandfather, P. B. S. Pinchback. The former Reconstruction lieutenant governor of Louisiana had suffered political and financial reverses when the Republicans lost power in the South, and had removed to an imposing house on Washington's Bacon Street, an all white neighborhood. There Pinchback lived a high life — the life of a social lion — while his prestige lasted. But a politician out of office quickly loses status and influence. As his fortunes declined, Pinchback became increasingly autocratic toward his daughter Nina and his sons. The beautiful Nina married twice, first to a young Southern planter who disappeared after a year, and then to a ne'er-do-well who misrepresented his wealth. The second marriage, with

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THE ALL-NEGRO COMMUNITIES OF OKLAHOMA:
THE NATURAL HISTORY OF A SOCIAL
MOVEMENT¹

I

The development of all-Negro communities in Oklahoma was an integral part of the Great Western Movement in this country during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In order to comprehend thoroughly the establishment of the all-Negro society on the Oklahoma frontier, it becomes necessary to relate this racial movement in which Negroes attempted to "escape" the social pressure of the dominant white culture, to the larger social movement toward the Great West.

It was Frederick Jackson Turner² who insisted upon a naturalistic interpretation of American history. American development, he explained, has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West, the existence of an area of free land, its continuous retirement, and the advance of American settlement westward. Turner points out that the peculiarity of American social forms resulted from the necessity of continuous social changes due to the nature of frontier developments. American institutions have been constrained to adjust to the changes of a restless, mobile, and expanding people.

Turner, moreover, has shown the significance of the frontier for sociological inquiry, especially for the study of comparative social organization. He shows conclusively that the points of view of sectionalism, provincialism, racialism, and perhaps, regionalism, do not penetrate the

¹ This paper is a portion of a dissertation, "The All-Negro Society in Oklahoma," submitted to the Faculty of the Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, March 1946.

² Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920.

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The Congressional Controversy over School Segregation, 1867-1875

ALFRED H. KELLY

ON a certain day in March, 1867, Charles Sumner of Massachusetts arose from his seat in the United States Senate to offer an amendment to the Second Reconstruction Act, then under consideration by the Congress. His proposal would have required the states under reconstruction to establish "public schools open to all without distinction of race or color."¹ The amendment, itself of little import, was the opening move in what proved to be an eight-year campaign for federal legislation to abolish racial segregation generally and in particular to prohibit segregation in the nation's public schools. The campaign was ultimately to culminate, with frustration and substantial failure, in the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1875.

Controversy over the "mixed school" question, as the school segregation

¹ *Cong. Globe*, 40 Cong., 1 sess., 165 (Mar. 16, 1867).

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THE NEGRO IN GOLD RUSH CALIFORNIA

When Marshall discovered gold on the South Fork of the American River, he initiated a change in the lives of tens of thousands of people of many races and nationalities. The Negroes of the United States, slave and free, were not exempt from this change. Even the Negroes of the West Indies and Latin America were caught up in the sweep of the Gold Rush. The literature of this period frequently mentions the slave and "persons of color," but too often they are merely noted as "someone's cook" or as a member of a passing party of immigrants. Some of the "mug books" of California's history refer to Negroes who "struck it rich," and other books report the fact of slave miners in the gold fields. There are places in the Mother Lode country that bear the name "Negro" or "Nigger" indicating that Negroes were present, but specific accounts of Negroes in California during the Gold Rush are not numerous. The most ambitious book attempting to show the role of the Negro in early California is marred by "mug book" deficiencies.¹

From the first days of the conquest by the Americans, Negroes could be found in California,² but after the discovery of gold was reported in the Eastern states, their number rapidly grew. By 1850, there were nearly a thousand in the state;³ by 1852, over two thousand;⁴ and by 1860, over four

¹ Delilah Beasley, *Negro Trail Blazers of California* (Los Angeles, 1919).

² Alcalde Walter Colton had a San Domingan mulatto cook who came to California with the Fremont party. Walter Colton, *Three Years in California* (Stanford, 1949), 235.

³ Compendium, *Ninth Census* (Washington, 1872), 29.

⁴ Governor Bigler's Message and Report of the Secretary of Census of 1852 (published by state printers).

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The *Roberts* Case: Source of the "Separate but Equal" Doctrine

LEONARD W. LEVY AND HARLAN B. PHILLIPS

IN mid-nineteenth century Massachusetts the prejudice of color sought its last legal refuge in Boston's system of public schools. But no institution was safe from the pitiless criticism of conscience, for it was an age, presided over by the universal reformers, which pulsated with the spirit of social justice. Only the intoxicated visions of a perfect society delimited their imagination. Quite proper then that in William Lloyd Garrison's state the reformers should devote some measure of their energies toward improving the status of the colored American. The law prohibiting intermarriage had been rescinded in 1843, and railroads had been forced to abandon Jim Crow cars.¹ Separate schools for Negroes had been abolished, where they had existed, in Salem, Lowell, New Bedford, Nantucket, and in the smaller towns.² In the Supreme Judicial Court, in 1849, Charles Sumner, arguing the cause of Sarah Roberts before the great Chief Justice Shaw, eloquently coupled the "civilization of the age" to an appeal for the abolition of segregated education in Boston.³

For half a century schools for the exclusive use of colored children had been maintained in Boston. It was agreed by both parties to the *Roberts* case that the first school was originally established, in 1798, at the request of Negro citizens "whose children could not attend the public schools on account of the prejudice then existing against them."⁴ Boston refused to incur the expense of the colored school which was made possible by the benefactions of white philanthropists, including John Lowell, Jedidiah Morse, and John T. Kirk-

¹ *St.* 1843, ch. 5; *Twelfth Annual Report, Presented to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, by its Board of Managers, January, 1844*, pp. 5, 7; *Argument of Charles Sumner, Esq. against the Constitutionality of Separate Colored Schools, in the Case of Sarah C. Roberts vs. The City of Boston. Before the Supreme Court of Mass., Dec. 4, 1849* (Boston, 1849), p. 32. (Hereafter cited as *Sumner's Argument*.)

² See letters to Edmund Jackson from school committees of various towns on the results of abolishing separate schools, in *Report of the Minority of the Committee of the Primary School Board, on the Caste Schools of the City of Boston with some remarks [by Wendell Phillips] on the City Solicitor's Opinion* (Boston, 1846), Appendix, pp. 21-27.

³ *Sumner's Argument*, p. 31.

⁴ *Roberts v. City of Boston*, 59 Mass. 198, 200 (1849). See also *Sumner's Argument*, pp. 27-28.

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ORGANIZED NEGRO COMMUNITIES:
A NORTH AMERICAN EXPERIMENT¹

From the Revolution to the Civil War the American Negro lived in bondage, either the bondage of outright servitude or that of prejudice and discrimination. Of the many ways by which he tried to free himself, one of the most interesting but least known was the establishment of organized communities in the United States and Canada. Although these communities had similar aims and purposes, they varied widely in size, were diverse in their methods of operation, and enjoyed markedly different degrees of success. The earliest of these communities, located primarily in the American Midwest, were simple efforts at white philanthropy. They were little more than settlements of manumitted slaves, set free and colonized either directly or indirectly by their owners. In no case were they eminently successful as colonizing ventures, in many they were never more than the projection of an idea.² In a few cases, however, these early settlements were more ambitious, adding to the general notion of philanthropy specific projects in formal academic and vocational training and consciously directing all their efforts toward making the Negro self-sufficient.³

The most important of the Organized Negro Communities, however, were more complex. Four communities, all of them Canadian, went well beyond their more primitive sister settlements in their concern for providing land, economic independence, basic education, and community self-sufficiency.⁴ A

¹ I should like to express my gratitude to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, for making available to me several grants which have, in large measure, made possible the research upon which this article is based. William H. Pease.

² Outstanding among these early settlements were the settlement of Samuel Gist's slaves from Virginia in Ohio, the abortive settlement in Mercer County, Ohio, of John Randolph's slaves, and the settlement in Illinois of the slaves of Edward Coles. Also among these early communities was Frances Wright's Nashoba, differing from all the others in its Utopian character and noted particularly for miscegenation and free love.

³ For example, Augustus Wattles' settlement in Mercer County, Ohio, and the settlement of Robert Rose at Silver Lake, Pennsylvania.

⁴ Wilberforce, founded in 1830 near London, in Ontario; Dawn, established in the 1840's outside of Dresden; Elgin, begun in 1849 south of Chatham; and the Refugee Home Society, active out of Windsor in the early 1850's.

Prod. No. 67612

The Colonial Militia and Negro Manpower

BY BENJAMIN QUARLES

In the mainland colonies of British America there existed no homogeneous militia system, operating under a central command. Instead, each colony maintained and controlled its own independent militia force. Yet on one point, the use of the Negro for military service, policy became uniform throughout the colonies. Slave or free, Negroes were excluded from the militia, save as noncombatants or in unusual emergencies. This policy of semi-exclusion became so prevalent as to constitute a basic tenet of American military tradition.¹

Since most of the Negroes were slaves, one of the major reasons for their exemption from military service was the concept that the servant's duty to his master superseded any obligation owed as a citizen to the colony or local community. Provincial legislatures, sensitive to the property rights of the master, were impressed by claims that tampering with his labor supply struck at the roots of colonial prosperity.² Hence legislation to enlist non-freemen for

¹ The preparation of this article was made possible by a Social Science Research Council grant for research in the history of military policy.

² This feeling was also demonstrated in the difficulties encountered by crown officials in trying to recruit indentured servants for the royal army. Governor Horatio Sharpe, for example, informed William Shirley in February, 1756, that unless recruiting officers stopped signing up apprentices and servants in Maryland, "an insurrection of the people is likely to ensue." William H. Browne *et al.* (eds.), *Archives of Maryland* (66 vols., Baltimore, 1883-), VI, 342. A similar letter came from the governor of Pennsylvania. Robert Hunter Morris to William Shirley, February 16, 1756, Charles H. Lincoln (ed.), *Correspondence of William Shirley* (2 vols., New York, 1912), II, 391-92. "I did give private orders," wrote a New Jersey governor, "to be very cautious of inlisting servants." Lewis Morris to William Gooch, July 14, 1740, *The Papers of Lewis Morris* (Newark, 1852), 96. This "cautious" attitude toward the enlistment of servants in the provincial armies is dealt with in Cheesman A. Herrick, *White Servitude in Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1926), 233-53; Abbot E. Smith, *Colonists in Bondage* (Chapel Hill, 1947), 278-84; and Richard B. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America* (New York, 1946), 282-90.

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**THE BOBBS - MERRILL
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by LOUIS RUCHAMES

The author of Race Jobs and Politics analyzes an early New England Segregation Oasis.

Jim Crow Railroads in Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS is today in the forefront of those states that have sought to achieve equality of status and opportunity for all racial groups. Its fair employment and fair educational practice laws are among the finest in the country and have achieved notable successes in opening up new opportunities for racial and religious groups within the state. Segregation of Negroes and whites, although it still exists to some extent, is a steadily shrinking element in the social structure of Massachusetts.

How different is this situation from what obtained a century or more ago. In the 1830's and 1840's segregation was the dominant pattern in the state. As late as 1843 Negroes were forbidden to marry whites; they were segregated in the churches, where they occupied the "Negro pew"; they were confined to the most menial occupations; they could not attend the same schools as white children—in Boston this situation continued to 1855; they were segregated on stagecoaches, railroads and steamboats. Writing in 1836, Lydia Maria Child, a prominent author and Abolitionist, charged that "our prejudice against colored people is even more inveterate than it is at the South. The planter is often attached to his Negroes, and lavishes caresses and kind words upon them, as he would on a favorite hound: but our cold-hearted, ignoble prejudice admits of no exception—no intermission."¹

The basic causes of this change are well known. The expansion of industry and the rise of large urban centers seriously weakened the system of caste. The growth of a large middle class whose interests and ideals favored individual freedom and equality before the law was a no less significant factor.

¹*An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*, (New York, 1836), p. 195.

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THE PREJUDICE-INTERACTION HYPOTHESIS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE NEGRO MINORITY GROUP¹

ERNEST WORKS

ABSTRACT

Research conducted among white tenants in integrated and segregated housing projects validate what may be called a general prejudice-interaction hypothesis, that outgroup prejudice is reduced through intimate group contacts of those equal in status. This study investigates the hypothesis from the point of view of the Negro, that antiwhite prejudice is diminished through intimate and interracial contacts of persons equal in status. Our data in general support the hypothesis.

Recent studies reveal that white tenants in integrated housing are more likely than are their counterparts in segregated housing to experience intimate interracial contacts of persons equal in status.² These studies also reveal that the integrated tenants, when compared with the segregated, exhibit less prejudice against the Negro minority. This may be said to validate a prejudice-interaction hypothesis: that outgroup prejudice is reduced when contacts are intimate and of those of equal status. The present study was designed to test this hypothesis among the Negro minority.³ We assume that the hypothesis is merely a specific demonstration of a hypothesis with general applicability. If so, it should hold in all instances of in-

group-outgroup relations, for members of the minority and the dominant group.

HYPOTHESES

The independent variable in the hypothesis is intergroup contact, and the dependent variable is intergroup prejudice. Intergroup contact is seen as reducing outgroup prejudice. The earlier studies reveal that such contacts are more probable in integrated than in segregated housing. (We assume this but will demonstrate its validity below.) Therefore, Negro tenants in integrated housing are expected to be less prejudiced toward whites than are their counterparts in segregated housing, and this should hold for husbands as well as for wives (hypothesis 1). The earlier studies failed to test the hypothesis among husbands.

Integrated housewives have more opportunities for interracial contacts than do their husbands. Greater opportunity should result in greater contact (hypothesis 2; to be tested below). Assuming no sexual difference in outgroup prejudice, integrated housewives are expected to be less prejudiced toward whites than are their Negro husbands.

The opportunities for interracial contacts of segregated wives are about equal to those of their husbands (to be tested below). We therefore expect to find no significant difference in antiwhite prejudice between housewives and husbands in all-Negro housing (hypothesis 3).

The initial plan was to conduct the interviews among tenants residing in an inte-

¹This study was supported by grants from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues and from the National Institutes of Health. The author also wishes to acknowledge the advice and assistance of Professors Daniel Glaser and Bernard Farber of the University of Illinois and Richard Dewey of the University of New Hampshire and of Paul D. Strait and the staff of the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority for making their facilities available.

²For a summary of these studies see Daniel M. Wilner, Rosabelle P. Walkley, and Stuart W. Cook, *Human Relations in Interracial Housing* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955).

³For studies on Negro prejudice against whites see Tilman C. Cothran, "Negro Conceptions of White People," *American Journal of Sociology*, LVI (March, 1951), 458-67. Also see Robert Johnson, "Negro Reactions to Minority Status," pp. 192-214, in Milton L. Barron (ed.), *American Minorities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1957).

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*Slavery as an Obstacle to Economic Growth in
the United States: A Panel Discussion*

PANEL MEMBERS: Alfred H. Conrad (City University of New York); Douglas Dowd (Cornell University); Stanley Engerman (University of Rochester); Eli Ginzberg (Columbia University); Charles Kelso (Harvard University); John R. Meyer (Harvard University); Harry N. Scheiber (Dartmouth College); Richard Sutch (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

ALFRED H. CONRAD (for JOHN R. MEYER and himself): Every economist must be pleased to start some hares; it can become embarrassing, however, when they begin to breed like rabbits. In the ten years since we first tried our slavery model in public, in Professor Gerschenkron's history seminar, more than thirty published arguments addressed to that model have come to our attention. We don't pretend to know whether that represents an increased output over preceding decades. Besides, in our youthful enthusiasm we gave the impression that we were disposing, once and for all, of a piece of intellectual game that was already rather high. In any event, the apparent egocentricity that turned up all those papers and articles may be explained, if not justified, by Ralph Barton Perry's dictum that every reader looks up two references in an index: sex, and his own name.

The recent discussion on the profitability of slavery in the antebellum South can be surveyed along three lines. First, a number of questions of fact, or evidence, have been raised. Second, the capital model that we used has been criticized as irrelevant. And third, the model, as a piece of economic analysis, has been attacked as insufficient to answer the historical questions we put to it.

As for factual or data questions, Fritz Redlich is not a man to

EDITOR'S NOTE: This panel discussion, held under the chairmanship of Professor Moses Abramovitz, was recorded on tape, transcribed, and edited. In its present printed version it represents the editor's interpretation of what each participant intended to say. Many uncertainties in transcription were encountered, however, particularly during the discussion from the floor. An attempt has been made to preserve the atmosphere of oral debate, and statements made should not necessarily be taken as representing the considered judgments of the persons involved. The staff of the Eleutherian Mills Historical Library carried out the initial transcription, and their help is gratefully acknowledged.

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*The "Forgotten Years" of the Negro
Revolution*

RICHARD M. DALFIUME

A RECENT president of the American Sociological Society addressed himself to a puzzling question about what we know as the Civil Rights Revolution: "Why did social scientists—and sociologists in particular—not foresee the explosion of collective action of Negro Americans toward full integration into American society?" He pointed out that "it is the vigor and urgency of the Negro demand that is new, not its direction or supporting ideas."¹ Without arguing the point further, the lack of knowledge can be attributed to two groups—the ahistorical social scientists, and the historians who, until recently, have neglected modern Negro history.

The search for a "watershed" in recent Negro history ends at the years that comprised World War II, 1939-1945. James Baldwin has written of this period: "The treatment accorded the Negro during the Second World War marks, for me, a turning point in the Negro's relation to America. To put it briefly, and somewhat too simply, a certain hope died, a certain respect for white Americans faded."² Writing during World War II, Gunnar Myrdal predicted that the war would act as a "stimulant" to Negro protest, and he felt that "There is bound to be a redefinition of the Negro's status in America as a result of this War."³ The Negro sociologist E. Franklin Frazier states that World War II marked the point where "The Negro was no longer willing to accept discrimination in employment and in housing without protest."⁴ Charles E. Silberman writes that the war was a "turning point" in American race relations, in which "the seeds of the

Mr. Dalfiume is assistant professor of history in the University of Wisconsin.

¹ Everett C. Hughes, "Race Relations and the Sociological Imagination," *American Sociological Review*, XXVIII (Dec. 1963), 879.

² Quoted in J. Milton Yinger, *A Minority Group in American Society* (New York, 1965), 52. Many Negroes agreed with James Baldwin in recalling the bitterness they experienced. William Brink and Louis Harris, *The Negro Revolution in America* (New York, 1964), 50.

³ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, 1944), 756, 997.

⁴ E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States* (rev. ed., New York, 1957), 682.

Prod. No. 67542

Modern Tensions and the Origins of American Slavery

By WINTHROP D. JORDAN

THANKS TO JOHN SMITH WE KNOW THAT NEGROES FIRST CAME TO the British continental colonies in 1619.¹ What we do not know is exactly when Negroes were first enslaved there. This question has been debated by historians for the past seventy years, the critical point being whether Negroes were enslaved almost from their first importation or whether they were at first simply servants and only later reduced to the status of slaves. The long duration and vigor of the controversy suggest that more than a simple question of dating has been involved. In fact certain current tensions in American society have complicated the historical problem and greatly heightened its significance. Dating the origins of slavery has taken on a striking modern relevance.

During the nineteenth century historians assumed almost universally that the first Negroes came to Virginia as slaves. So close was their acquaintance with the problem of racial slavery that it did not occur to them that Negroes could ever have been anything but slaves. Philip A. Bruce, the first man to probe with some thoroughness into the early years of American slavery, adopted this view in 1896, although he emphasized that the original difference in treatment between white servants and Negroes was merely that Negroes served for life. Just six years later, however, came a challenge from a younger, professionally trained historian, James C. Ballagh. His *A History of Slavery in Virginia* appeared in the *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science*, an aptly named series which was to usher in the new era of scholarly detachment in the writing of institutional history. Ballagh offered a new and different interpretation; he took the position that the first Negroes served merely as servants and that enslavement did not begin until around 1660, when statutes bearing on slavery were passed for the first time.²

¹ "About the last of August came in a dutch man of warre that sold us twenty Negars." Smith was quoting John Rolfe's account. Edward Arber and A. G. Bradley (eds.), *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith . . .* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1910), II, 541.

² Philip A. Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (2

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A modified and much more complete description of the origin of American slavery is in Winthrop D. Jordan, *WHITE OVER BLACK: AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEGRO, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill, 1968).