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*Interracial Cooperation and Strategic Framing in 19th-Century Southern Black Emigration Movements**

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly, scholars have begun to employ social movement theory to historical studies of the 19th century. This article uses political process, resource mobilization, and framing theories to examine black southern emigration movements to Liberia before and after the Civil War through historical-narrative analysis. It argues that the draconian racial environment in the South pushed black southerners to utilize strategies of interracial cooperation in order to minimize the number of whites' repressive tactics against them and to accrue the support of white sponsorship when orchestrating territorial separatist movements. Elite individual whites, white colonization societies, and U.S. government organizations provided black southern separatists with benefits such as financial and material assistance, physical protection, and character references, along with logistical and general information about traveling to and living in Liberia. Additionally, during the antebellum era, black southerners used religion and culture frames to garner sympathy from supportive whites, while justice and oppression frames calling for the redress of racial grievances were more widely used during the era of Reconstruction. Historical evidence suggests that black southern nationalists utilized strategic cooperation with elites and strategic framing to facilitate movements for territorial separatism both before and after the Civil War.

KEY WORDS Social Movement Theory; Political Processes Theory; Resource Mobilization; Black Nationalism; Black Southerners

On May 14, 1868, Isaac Hall departed from the port of Savannah, Georgia, and bid a final farewell to the United States. This was not a rash decision. He had made up his mind years prior to leave Eufaula, Alabama, the South, and the United States to try for a better life in the West African republic of Liberia. Hall was an accomplished man by

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contemporary standards. At 37 years of age, he supported a young wife and four small children, served as a Methodist minister, and could read and write. He was also a local leader in the emigration movement in Eufaula, where he and several of the town's black residents organized a movement to Liberia including nearly forty individuals, more than twenty of whom were members of Hall's immediate and extended family. Territorial separatists such as Hall believed that the best strategy for achieving self-determination lay in forming an independent black nation where they could progress free from the restrictions and racial discrimination found in the United States. The Eufaula Company of emigrants embarked aboard the brig *Golconda* with the help of the American Colonization Society (ACS), an organization founded by whites in 1816 for the purposes of removing free blacks from the United States and resettling them in Africa. Hall's group had also attempted to secure funds from the federal government for their transportation overseas ("List of Emigrants for Liberia" 1868).

One must pause and acknowledge the paradoxes and questions that arise from this event. Why did these ex-slaves seek help from the federal government to emigrate? Did the injustice and oppression from which they were fleeing not emanate from the very government they were asking for assistance? How could black separatists in Eufaula, who were aware that the ACS was known to use inflammatory statements against blacks, actively seek assistance from such a biased organization? Did they choose to betray their separatist philosophy in order to ultimately facilitate emigration to Africa? The answers to these questions reveal the unique interracial character of black nationalist movements in the 19th-century South that is often overlooked.

This article focuses on southern black agency as historical evidence to empirically ground social movement theory. Political-process and resource-mobilization theories ground the analysis of letters written by black southerners for support from whites and to explain the particular interracial nature of black separatism in the South. Because of limited political opportunity and relative scarcity of black resources both before and after the Civil War, any chance of movement success required substantial aid from whites, the dominant political, demographic, and economic group in American society. De facto and de jure legal codes restricted black economic opportunities for wealth and land ownership through the systems of slavery, discriminatory employment, and sharecropping, while disenfranchisement through violence, voting restrictions, and the denial of citizenship effectively nullified black political power. In addition to financial, logistical, and material assistance to black emigrants, white sympathizers provided physical protection, letters of reference, and detailed information on Liberia. In the context of a paternalist discourse, southern black emigrants, though committed to black nationalism and the all-black nation of Liberia, used culture and religion frames before the Civil War to garner white sympathy and to avoid being seen as subverting the racial order by showing their acceptance of racial difference and a shared Christian culture. Although paternalist rhetoric continued after the Civil War, free status allowed southern blacks to display increased confidence when attempting to gain white support, as evidenced by their use of justice and oppression frames calling for the redress of racial grievances and white altruism.

This article is organized into three sections. The first offers a literature review of the southern political context, theoretical models, and methodology guiding this study. The second and third sections use historical-narrative analysis to explain black strategic framing and interracial cooperation during the antebellum and postbellum periods. This research has implications for a revised historiography of black nationalism, eschewing its development among a literate, free, and northern black intelligentsia and instead privileging the philosophies of the black lower class in the nascent formation of this racial ideology. Researchers in history and sociology should continue to disentangle these perspectives and social engagement of traditional subaltern groups.

BLACK NATIONALISM

Black nationalism is an ideology that argues that because people of African descent share a distinct identity based on their race, they should collectively seek autonomy and solidarity. Generally, it can be classified by emphasis on political, economic, religious, and/or cultural sovereignty as evidenced by the appeals of 20th-century black leaders such as Marcus Garvey, Booker T. Washington, Maulana Karenga, and Elijah Muhammad for distinct black polities, businesses, cultures, and/or religious denominations (Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick 1970; Brown and Shaw 2002; Clegg 2006; Robinson 2001).

Hall (1974) argues that territorial separatism is one component of black nationalism whereby advocates seek to physically relocate to an area away from whites and operate as an independent civic entity. While some black territorial separatists may have sought to form a separate nation-state, others may have simply wished to form an all-black town or community. All, however, sought to remove themselves from the immediate vicinity of whites and, in doing so, increase their level of self-determination. While southern black emigrants accepted this standard, in the 19th century, their vision of territorial separatism never completely disavowed white support or interaction. For these subjects, separatism involved a physical parting but maintained a cooperative relationship with whites.

POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY

Any aspect of black nationalism by definition possesses aspirations of racial solidarity and various forms of collective self-determination; however, faced with a political environment of white supremacy, southern blacks chose to pursue these rationalizing temporary alliances with racists, accepting segregation as legitimate and resigning to leave the only land that many had ever called home. The southern context largely determined the trajectory that black nationalism would take among the black lower classes. While abolition began to increase more rapidly in the North after the American Revolution, avenues to freedom in the South decreased. The more south one traveled, the more draconian the laws regarding slavery became (Egerton 2009). The southern environment lacked moderate alternatives for blacks to achieve land or liberty. This circumstance, rather than nullifying the development of black

nationalism, influenced the decision of blacks in the region to support more radical agendas such as territorial separatism.

McAdam (1988) and Pedriana (1988) offer a thorough study of the political opportunities after World War II and the community resources such as the black church and legal resources, which helped to facilitate blacks' and women's collective action during the Women's and Civil Rights Movement. Hahn (2003) loosely applies this theoretical model in his study of political organizing during the Civil War and Reconstruction by lower-class blacks in the South.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Resource mobilization is an integral part of political process theory and offers added insight into the separatist movements of southern black nationalists. Though this model is widely used in studies on the Civil Rights Movement, few historians have attempted to apply it to social movements of the 19th century. Resource mobilization emphasizes that social movements possess resources such as leadership, communal organizations, active membership, or members who are particularly skilled. One of the most effective resources employed by black leadership was its alliance with and support from whites in a level of cooperation with an elite group who had access to political connections, economic capital, or information necessary for social movements to achieve broad social goals or changes (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; McAdam 1988). This development is readily observable in the black southern separatist movements, which operated in an extremely repressive environment throughout most of the 1800s. In many cases, black participants needed both protection and monetary assistance from whites. The fact that racists belonged to the ACS and/or supported emigration was irrelevant as long as these basic needs were met. Applying this theoretical model to early black separatists allows for a more critical and systematic study of movement structure and dynamics at the grass roots.

Jenkins and Eckert (1986) have found that cooperating with elites does not fundamentally alter social-movement goals and, likewise, cooperation with whites did not detract from the commitment that southern black emigrants had to black nationalist goals nor invalidate the level of agency that black participants exercised. During the 19th century, black separatist leaders worked under the auspices of the ACS and similar organizations predominantly controlled by whites. Although emigrants could not always decide logistical issues such as what month to depart or where to disembark upon arrival, they could decide issues immediately concerning their organization and participants, such as to what local areas emigration materials and information should be distributed, which individuals should initially petition to be relocated, who should maintain correspondence with government officials or philanthropic sponsors, and whether they should choose Africa or another possible destination to achieve autonomy. Though not working in total racial seclusion nor being able to independently orchestrate movement logistics, southern black separatists nevertheless were able to organize emigration movements and clubs initiated, headed, and governed by themselves.

PATERNALISM AND PATRONAGE

This interracial character of separatist movements developed out of a paternalistic discourse during the antebellum era. Twentieth-century historians have argued how paternalism effectively increased servile traits, or “Uncle Tomism,” in American slaves but also noted how the characterization of black dependency on white masters had some basis, as it often latently functioned for enslaved persons as a form of protection and/or restorative (Elkins 1959; Genovese 1971, 1972; Phillips 1933). Unable to earn extra income, restricted by mobility laws, and denied the legal right to defend themselves or even to secure familial stability, American southern slaves often turned to the only powerful figures to whom they had access, their owners or sympathetic whites. Blacks and whites engaged in subversive activity to further emigration goals. Often, both risked harm for participating in separatist movements, experiences that ultimately served to cultivate greater trust between the two groups.

After the Civil War, the relationship between black separatists and white supporters, similar to those between blacks and whites throughout the South, is more appropriately characterized as patronage than paternalistic, as black separatists showed more confidence when claiming their political, economic, and social entitlements as free persons (Hargis 2004). White assistance was especially advantageous, as blacks often had insufficient funds for the expedition. During the 19th century, the ACS presented a paradox for progressive race relations in the United States by promoting the removal of acculturated black Americans to aid in the proselytization and education of native Africans while simultaneously trumpeting the negative stereotypes of laziness, immorality, and ignorance regarding their progress and character (Davis 2008, 2014). To gain assistance, black southerners had to convince whites of their worthiness by dispelling racist views while combating a host of social mechanisms designed to impede their economic and political uplift.

FRAMING

Framing is the process used by movement leaders and organizations to relay their ideology to the public. It is the process of defining how social-movement ideologies should be interpreted by and transferred to the masses in order to gain support (McCammon et al. 2007; Snow and Benford 1988). In the context of a paternalist discourse, four distinct frames emerge in black lower-class territorial separatist movements in the South: oppression, justice, culture, and religion. Oppression frames sought sympathy from whites for violence committed against blacks; justice frames implored white defense for black rights; culture frames appealed to white notions of racial distinction; and religion frames fostered a shared moral and Christian identity between blacks and whites. Black separatists used these strategic frames at specific times to receive the most support from white sympathizers and to provoke the minimal number of repressive tactics.

Although social-movement participants may be constrained by a dominant discourse, they use alternative interpretations and repertoires to achieve movement goals

(Pedriana 2006; Steinberg 1999). To both challenge and take advantage of the paternalist discourse, southern blacks utilized strategic frames of Christian religion and shared African heritage when acquiring financial and material aid, protection, and character recommendations from whites. After the Civil War, these types of relationships continued, but blacks also began to turn to the federal government for financial assistance and, in addition, framed arguments for emigration using strong calls for justice and an end to oppression.

HISTORICAL-NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

Increasingly, scholars have begun to validate social movement theory by use of historical-narrative analysis (Pedriana 2005; Steinberg 1994, 1998). Often, such studies employ deductive reasoning by using macro theoretical arguments with evidence supported through analysis of a particular case study. To examine the dynamics of interracial cooperation, I utilize records of the American Colonization Society, including its published journal *The African Repository* and its collection of letters written by black southerners for support in immigrating to Liberia. Black southerners conformed to racial etiquette while simultaneously challenging white supremacy by their desire for political and economic self-determination for the race. This type of methodology allows for the analysis of diverse perspectives on black nationalism outside traditional publicized views of upper-class, free black, professional, northern, and educated elites (Power-Greene 2014; Rael 2002; Wilson 1978, 1989, 1996).

Although a pastor in Columbus, Mississippi, Reverend Hardy Ryan was far from the elite class of black professional clergymen who led large and wealthy black congregations. Ryan was a separatist supporter and led a small group of emigrants to Liberia in 1868, the same year that Hall and the Eufaula emigrants departed. Through examination of Ryan's letters to ACS Secretary William Coppinger on behalf of black Lowndes County residents, we can see how Ryan articulated and interpreted black nationalist ideology: "It is said by the rebel this is a white man government if so we are willing as a colored emigrant to leave it to them and seek a government of our own."¹ In his own words, Ryan illustrates the uniqueness of southern black nationalism in walking a fine line between black separatism and accommodation. Although Liberian-emigration movements manifested support for the radical idea of a separate all-black nation, they also accommodated southern racism by subscribing to the idea that blacks and whites could never live side by side and that separation of the races was both desirable and necessary. This ideological ambiguity is mirrored in the structure of southern black separatism and is perhaps one of the reasons that separatism contains a distinct interracial nature.

When Rev. Ryan appealed for aid from whites, he also wrote directly to the United States Senate: "We want to go because we see no prospect of success here. The white people have too much the advantage of us. They have all the land, all the money, and all the education. These things might soon be remedied if there was plenty of work for us to do, and the people were disposed to favor us" ("Petitions from Mississippi" 1868). Rev. Ryan did not appeal to local whites, who could be particularly brutal and who often exploited black laborers, but he did comprehend the benefit that white support could bring,

so instead, he made a national appeal when he wrote to the government, which, he reasoned, would be his most effective ally in fulfilling his group's desire to emigrate. Examination of personal writings such as Ryan's can provide researchers with material for textual analysis and, in doing so, complicate the discourse on black nationalist ideology and a more representative perspective from social-movement participants.

ANTEBELLUM COOPERATION

Southern blacks began to align themselves with whites and to pursue an interracial strategy of cooperation during the antebellum period. At times, they confessed to slave owners or whites who seemed honest and would keep their ideas in confidence their desire to emigrate. In Daviess County, Kentucky, a local white postmaster, James Lashbrooks, seemed to be widely regarded among blacks in the area as just such a person. Though never expressing a proslavery or antislavery political philosophy, between 1852 and 1854, Lashbrooks smuggled information about Liberia and the *African Repository* for local black separatists and white supporters.

During the turbulent 1850s, slavery advocates saw literature on African colonization as inflammatory and as indirectly supporting abolition by encouraging manumission even if it was tied to deportation. Lashbrooks risked being fired from his post and possibly risked his life to aid local blacks. In May 1852, he was approached by a free black man from an adjoining county "who informed he designed emigrating to Liberia, and he wished to get all the information necessary."² Such a request of a total stranger would be extremely risky and highly unlikely, so it is probable that the free man had already heard about Lashbrooks's reputation. Although Lashbrooks could have chided the man for supporting abolition, Lashbrooks instead told him "if he would give me a few cents to pay the postage of a letter, and the document," he would "no doubt supply him with the desired information."³ As far as the historical record suggests, Lashbrooks did just that and forwarded copies of the *African Repository*, Dr. James W. Lugenbeel's *Sketches of Liberia*, and a copy of the Liberian constitution. Though he could have, he did not cheat black advocates out of their money but continued to receive subscriptions to the *African Repository* and forward it to them. In one of his last writings dated February 1854, he writes on behalf of a free man named Singleton Sprigs, who may have been a little dubious of Lashbrooks's intentions, as he had first given his name as Singleton Cole. A year later, as Singleton sought to renew his subscription, he disclosed his true name to Lashbrooks, as a trust between the two must have developed. In any regard, Lashbrooks seemed undeterred by the deception, included one dollar for Sprigs's renewal, and instructed ACS Secretary William McLain to use whatever name he deemed proper.⁴

Not only were blacks, enslaved or free, barred from reading or circulating such materials, but even whites feared social repercussions if their support for colonization were to become known. In 1852, an unnamed Owensboro woman credited her ability to write to Secretary McClain and to send materials to Mary Triplett, the enslaved woman she had manumitted a few years earlier, to "the kindness of Mr. Lashbrooks."⁵ Without such elite support, black southerners could not learn about Liberia, much less immigrate to the country.

Blacks utilized interracial cooperation through paternalism as a strategy in a racially hostile environment after the Civil War as well. This strategy is a condition of the racist political structure and a product of the physical closeness of whites and blacks in the South (Crowther 1955; English 2009). Regarding interracial cooperation in the South after the Civil War, historian C. Vann Woodward (1966:51) writes,

While there was a certain amount of fawning Uncle-Tomism among the Negroes, there is little doubt that the prouder of them secretly despised the patronizing pose and self-flattering paternalism of the whites with whom they found refuge. It was not sentimentality for 'ole Marstar that inspired the freedmen, but the hot breath of cracker fanaticism they felt on the backs of their necks.

While the writings of black separatists in the South do not indicate an intense resentment toward all whites, they differentiate between "good" whites, who ultimately wished to help and support them, and "bad" whites, who ultimately sought to harm and exploit them. Southern blacks needed aid from some whites and protection from others. They could not forsake their relationships with all whites.

Support for colonization thrived in the South, though in the North, cynicism prevailed among the black population. In the North, it was possible to debate the merits of colonization in a public forum, and thus, northern black newspapers were often filled with editorials, convention proceedings, and letters condemning the "colonization scheme." At an anti-colonization meeting in Rochester, New York, it was

1. Resolved, That the scheme of the American Colonization Society is a scheme concocted for the expatriation of the FREE colored people, thereby tending to perpetuate Slavery, and involving in itself everything inimical to their best interests; and as such, it cannot be too strongly deprecated, nor too vehemently opposed.

2. Resolved, That it is the right and duty of every colored American to remain in this country, and use every possible effort for the overthrow of Slavery; and that we will act in accordance with this resolution. ... [T]hat the colored man who from love of filthy lucre or any other motive can lend his talents and energies to the Colonization scheme is a traitor, compared with whom Benedict Arnold was a pure patriot and Judas Iscariot an exemplary Christian. (Moore and Nell 1852)

While many black northerners viewed separatism as a defeatist position, black southerners tended to view the philosophy as a means of improving their lives. Blacks became empowered by forming independent institutions and facilities separate from

whites. They achieved greater autonomy by managing all-black churches, schools, and businesses than they could have achieved through participation in institutions dominated by whites. Woodward (1966) also points out that historians often overlook the third alternative to segregation or integration, the option of exclusion. After the political “Redemption of the South,” the exclusion of blacks from public institutions and larger society was a real possibility. Segregation and separatism, though deeply flawed, offered a compromise, one in which blacks could participate to some degree in public life. Because of segregation, southern blacks could freely make organizational decisions independent of white control regarding schools, churches, financial institutions, and so on. Black institutions actively recruited black teachers, doctors, and other professionals. How far was it, then, for southern blacks to envision a separate nation where the same could be achieved?

Contemporary black journalist T. Thomas Fortune (1884) reasoned, “Colored people are like white people. When they see nothing but white ministers in the white churches they conclude that it is best to have nothing but colored ministers in their own pulpits, and they are perfectly consistent and logical in their conclusion.” After the Civil War, blacks gained solidarity and self-determination by developing local emigration organizations that worked toward their own specific goals and ideals and not toward those of whites. J. M. Whitmeyer (2002) observes that cooperation with elites in nationalist movements does not significantly alter participant agency. Likewise, although white colonizationists supported black separatism, they did not orchestrate the ideological tenets of the popular movement for black participants. Ordinary blacks created different expressions of nationalism based upon land ownership and personal liberty; however, because of the South’s repressive environment, interracial cooperation, even if tarnished by paternalist rhetoric, remained a pivotal component of achieving social-movement success.

In the antebellum South, legal and social restrictions were placed upon blacks, both enslaved and free. For enslaved persons, activities such as learning how to read or write, gathering in groups without the presence of whites, earning wages, and traveling without a pass could be deemed criminal offenses. Potential emigrant E. Douglas Taylor, a free black man living in Mobile, Alabama, urged Dr. J. Lugenbeel, agent, physician, and recording secretary for the ACS, to have patience when reading his letters, as Dr. Lugenbeel undoubtedly knew “what the laws of the south is,” and relayed that he “have no teacher to give mee any help.”⁶

Free blacks also faced laws restricting their mobility, their ability to hold gatherings, and their choice of occupations. Both groups also could experience social condemnation for supporting black separatism. Burrell W. Mann, an enslaved person living in Virginia, wrote of how, after he announced his desire to go to Liberia, “the man who have been hireing me is much closer & harder with me now than he ever were.”⁷ When in the spring of 1847, Secretary McLain requested S. Wesley Jones, a free black man living in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to identify any sympathetic local whites who could receive the *African Repository*, Jones cautioned that he had “not ventured to make any inquiries among the white citizens in regard to the matter from the fact that this is a very difficult part of the country in such things and it would not do for one like me to talk to them about such things with very few esceptions.”⁸ Jones may have found a white ally or

circumstances may have changed, however, as he informed McLain in August that he “need not entertain any fears as to what you write me doing harm write freely upon any subject for your letters comes safely and no one see them but my self.”⁹

Although not illegal, black nationalist aspirations undermined the racial order and reeked of racial insubordination. Whites too were cognizant of the social repercussions and the perceived threat that separatist activity had in the region. Charlotte J. Duggett, a mistress in Milledgeville, Georgia, desired to send an enslaved family to Liberia but regarded it as “a subject that I seldom dare to speak upon here,” and John Chitwood, a Tennessee contact working with Secretary McLain, suspected that McLain’s letters to him “are stoped to prevent me from getting them [black emigrants] off to Liberia” and advised McLain to instead write him at an alternate address.¹⁰ White supporters endangered themselves and willingly broke the law to aid black emigrants.

Other actions that whites took to aid blacks were illegal, but social custom ensured that they usually went unenforced. For example, H. C. Balody had annually rented Peter Boling, a local slave, from Thomas Batte, for hiring out. Balody was so pleased with Boling that, in 1848, he also agreed to purchase Boling’s father, wife, and children. He lauded Boling, who was “never once onerous with me,” and believed him to be “qualified to become a pioneer in the enterprise” of colonization.¹¹ Though hiring out in Alabama was illegal, Balody certainly had no real fear of any legal repercussion. In this sense, hiring out was seen as more of a situation in which criminal acts occurred, but usually with no private plaintiff to press charges.

This restrictive environment, though not nullifying black separatism, forced separatism to navigate the political landscape and to work with white colonizationists. For black separatists, whites served as character referees, protectors, and providers of material and financial support. Although far from equal, the relationship shared between the two groups was not one characterized by distrust and hatred.

Particularly during the antebellum period, potential emigrants used framing strategies that would not alienate whites and that would counter negative racial stereotypes. In 1829, Henry Clay delivered an address to the Colonization Society of Kentucky in which he declared free blacks “by far, as a class, the most corrupt, depraved, and abandoned” (Clay 1830). Clay further explained, “They occupy a middle station between the free white population and the slaves of the United States, and the tendency of their habits is to corrupt both. They crowd our large cities, where those who will work can best procure suitable employment and where those who addict themselves to vice can best practice and conceal their crimes.” Religion and culture frames, citing evangelization goals and shared African heritage, were the most widely used to discredit such beliefs. Burrell W. Mann, the enslaved person living in Richmond, Virginia, was also a preacher and used a religion frame when he first wrote the ACS about emigration to Liberia. Owned by John Cosby, regularly hired out, and in contact with white Methodist ministers, Mann was careful not to alienate these potential white gatekeepers and thus employed diplomatic religion and culture frames when trying to gather support. In 1847, he wrote to the ACS:

I wish you to know that the only object I have in view is
my God and the Glory of his son and in these Southern

States We African Sons in the Church of God are cut off for our part So that we can not become wise unto Salvation our selves and can not be the instrument in the hand of God in turning Many to Righteousness and the deprivation of church Rights and priviledges here has made me willing and ready to give up this part of the world and any other object for the Sake of Christ and the Glory of his people in that continent.¹²

Mann is careful not to admit that he is motivated to emigrate by any desire for liberty, nor to make any disparaging remarks about the institution of slavery, although it could be implied. Instead, he focuses on religious rhetoric in the hopes of ingratiating himself with sympathetic whites who could help him achieve his goals. He even goes so far as to offer his servitude to the ACS, Secretary McLain, or any other white person if they would buy him, allow him to pay back the purchase cost, and emigrate as a missionary to Liberia.¹³

Mann's story is particularly disheartening. After Mr. Cosby agreed to allow Mann to purchase himself for \$150, which the ACS had agreed to assist in raising, he then increased the amount to over \$400, and although Mann was regularly hired out to the local tobacco factories, he was not allowed to keep any of his earnings, thus realistically ending any possibility of him achieving his dream. In 1849, even after years of disappointment and dashed hopes, he continued to withhold his anger and frustration when writing to the ACS and to ministers in Boston, in Baltimore, and throughout Virginia for aid. "Sir, the chains of Slavery Do hold me" was his most impassioned plea written about the institution; while not blaming the system of slavery directly, he relayed his pathetic situation:

Sir, Great is the difficulties that I have had to contend with since I offered My Self to Missionary Board, The Scattering of my children to the four winds of heaven, and the selling of My bellowed [sic] Wife! Together with other heart breaking Circumstance! are all discouraging and serious in their tendency. But in the words of one of old, None of these things moves me. I do not Weep to stay in any part of America, But to go home to my forefathers Land! The triumph of God, I trust will bring my Wife and children together at the day of judgement at which time Sinful parting will be done a way.¹⁴

At an extremely stressful time in his life, when slavery had not only stymied his aspirations but also destroyed his family, Mann continued to utilize tact when corresponding with whites. Eventually, supportive white ministers and the ACS seemed to have grown weary of Mann's letters and pleas. His letter dated August 3, 1849, was the last in a series of letters that went unanswered.

Black southerners placed a great amount of trust in local whites with whom they had previous positive experiences; however, social custom made it unorthodox for blacks to initiate correspondence or even conversation with whites, especially those they did not know personally. Southern slaves and free blacks, when writing to the ACS, therefore often asked a friendly white person to write on their behalf and to request more information or to provide favorable recommendations for them as potential emigrants. Marshall Hooper was described as “a straight forward sort of fellow—a man of action but few words” by William H. Payne, a local white whom Hooper had requested to write the ACS.¹⁵ Hooper had already raised \$40, “neither more nor less,” for his and his wife’s passage to Liberia and wanted to know the total cost of the expedition.¹⁶ After he learned the final cost, Hooper promised that they would “see what can be done” to raise the balance.¹⁷ Although Hooper did not pen a letter to McLain himself, Payne’s description gives readers some insight into Hooper’s racial consciousness. He had been the slave of Colonel Hooper and had been bought by a free black man, probably a relative or close friend. Eventually, Hooper was able to buy himself and his wife but, sadly, not his children. At the age of forty-five, with no regular occupation except “jackley” carpenter, he sought to immigrate to Liberia without his offspring, as they “are, slaves and he would rather not be where they are, unless he could buy them.”¹⁸

Such experiences were familiar among emigrants with enslaved family members. One can infer the emotional toil that the system of slavery had taken on Hooper, yet he went to a local white man for assistance. Payne seemed to think highly of Hooper and described him as being of robust health and an independent spirit and who did not expect the ACS to take care of him. Perhaps Hooper had sensed Payne’s sympathy and chose him as his confidant when he found “no one here who would aid him. Indeed, as strange as it may seem, almost every one is much more ready to persuade him not to go, than help him to get off.”¹⁹ Payne continued praising Hooper as “sober, honest, remarkably industrious and commercial” in addition to being “apt and handy at anything he undertakes. His character is as good as any man need desire.”²⁰ Perhaps Payne was not being overzealous in his recommendation of Hooper, but displaying a sincere admiration. Payne showed esteem for Hooper rarely seen among whites toward blacks in the South. He told Hooper that “if he gets to Liberia, and has good luck, he can be rich in ten years,” and reinforced in the letter to Secretary McLain “and I believe it.”²¹

Several free blacks requested H. Talbin, the white pastor of the First Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama, to write the ACS on their behalf. Talbin provided a solid recommendation for their acceptance and described them as poor but possessing good character and connected with local congregations. The company comprised five families, roughly 41 individuals. They asked Talbin to inquire about practicalities such as the cost of freight and baggage in addition to other expenses. Talbin demonstrated his paternalism by questioning the group’s decision to include Parker, described as an elderly man “not of much account,” as a potential emigrant.²² Talbin could have given Parker a negative review to McLain, but he did not, and although he probably did not completely understand the importance of elders in the eyes of these local black emigrants, he eventually agreed to include the 71-year-old Parker, who acted as “a kind of father to the families who go” and whom the families all wished “to be of their company.”²³

Talbin did extol one man, Jesse J. Jeffs, as intelligent, a man of some property, and “the only one who has handed me anything [money]” thus far.²⁴ Jeffs seems to have been a leader among the company, paying Talbin \$50 for his and his family’s passage to Liberia and agreeing to pay \$50 more for Jack Dimery; his wife, Eliza; and their two children, John and Amanda. As the date of embarkation grew closer, Talbin, with an air of condescension, begrudgingly agreed to collect the money from each family and to hold it jointly in something akin to a “common fund.” He resigned himself to the task, stating, “I do not wish to receive their money and have consented only at their constant solicitation to do so.”²⁵ The amount of faith placed in Talbin by the Montgomery company is remarkable and is reflective of the racial hierarchy and interracial mutuality informed by the southern context. If Talbin were to take their money, they could expect no recourse; their only assurance was Talbin’s promise “to return it in case they do not go.”²⁶ Paternalism aside, they trusted him enough to take such a chance, and apparently, their trust paid off, as Jeffs, along with the Hansford, Dimery, and Blount families, successfully departed for Liberia in January 1849.

Some black separatists faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles when attempting to move to Liberia. In some areas, colonization materials were distributed covertly, separatist meetings had to be held in secret, and potential emigrants or supporters were forced to remain hidden in order to escape the repressive tactics of white opponents. When potential emigrants were harassed, often, a white authority figure was the most effective intercessor to whom they could turn for help. In Augusta, Georgia, separatist leader Isaac Mayson counseled potential black emigrants from the vicinity. By March of 1851, Mayson was confident that at least sixty emigrants from his neighborhood, another forty from Augusta and its vicinity, and at least fifty others from Savannah and Charleston would be ready to go that fall. In addition to coordinating efforts among the three groups, Mayson also offered detailed information to the ACS regarding local slave owners such as John W. Houghton who were willing to emancipate their slaves for emigration to Liberia. In Mayson’s estimation, Houghton, a shoe merchant originally from Massachusetts who had recently died after living in Augusta for more than thirty years, had willed that his forty slaves be liberated and sent to Liberia. The actual number that made up the Houghton company was around 48.

When writing to the ACS, Mayson argued that it would be “foolish” for any black man to stay in the United States and that all could benefit by immigrating “to the American Colored man’s land of promise.”²⁷ Though probably lacking a formal education, he grasped elegantly conveyed black southerners’ interpretation of the racial climate and their motivations for supporting emigration:

I am confident that there will be know backing out our list will be increased from the fat we see so much confuson in the North—and also see from the taxes we have to pay—we have to leave our homes—and if we go to the North we are not welcome there . . . so we are willing to move and to trust in God and live in Liberia—For I must think that one day of liberty is woerth a hundred years of half liberty in

our country. So as there we can bring up our children to
love God and liberty It is time we can live under our own
vine and fig tree and call home ours—Our cause is just and
with God we have nothing to fear.²⁸

Mayson experienced repressive measures firsthand when he and 54 members of his party were incarcerated in Savannah while en route to the brig *Baltimore* for embarkation to Liberia. Throughout the South, free blacks were required to have papers proving their free status. These documents were especially crucial when traveling, as one was assumed to be enslaved if legal evidence to the contrary could not be produced upon request. While a handful of members of the Augusta party were able to escape detention, all others, including women and children, were imprisoned at the local jail. Mayson urgently wrote Secretary McClain for help. After learning of the group's incarceration, McClain sent ACS agent Lugenbeel to calm the situation. Lugenbeel was taken aback by the overt injustice and mistreatment of the black emigrants, writing, "I must confess that my blood boils a little; and were I not fearful of injuring our cause, and perhaps defeating the object I have in view that of sending a company of emigrants from Savannah in the *Barque Baltimore* I should be strongly tempted to enter a solemn protest against the course pursued by the authorities of this city in regard to our people."²⁹

Despite numerous setbacks, Mayson was ultimately successful in his separatist endeavor. In April 1851, about 70 blacks from Augusta and another 48 from surrounding Burke County immigrated to Liberia, in addition to 27 from Savannah and 14 from Charleston. Their attempt would have undoubtedly failed if not for the intervention of trusted and sympathetic whites who could verify the group's story and intentions. When trying to implement a separatist agenda before the Civil War, southern black emigrants, slave and free, would continue to utilize sympathetic whites as a strategic resource.

The relationship between enslaved persons and slave owners is innately hierarchical. Though holding a sense of superiority, some slave owners genuinely cared about the well-being of their human property, and subsequently after the former slaves' emigration to Liberia, some emancipators continued to care about their plight. In 1847, Cornelia Dabney urgently wrote the ACS about sending supplies to the family of slaves whom she had liberated and sent to Liberia in 1847. She had received letters from them "begging for all kinds of garden seed" and implored McLain to use the enclosed money to purchase onions and potatoes and to forward them to S. Dabney Harris, the family's patriarch.³⁰ Other ex-slave owners unabashedly voiced their frustration with the ACS about the condition of their former bondsmen. After accounts of war between Americo-Liberians and indigenous groups in Sinoe County, Liberia, reached the United States, William W. Rice wrote to Secretary McClain with concerns about "his people," who had settled in the area near Blue Barre.³¹ Rice indicated that one of his former slaves owned a farm in Greenville, Sinoe County, but had been managing a farm in Monrovia, having left the farm in Greenville in the hands of his two daughters, when the attack occurred. Although neither of the girls was killed, both had been forced to "fly for their lives" and abandon the farm.³² Rice explained how current circumstances would not permit him to send more money himself, as many owners had used much of their assets in paying

expenses for their slaves' emigration, yet he still desired to know what arrangements the ACS was making "to send relief to those who have had their houses burnt and their property destroyed in this attack."³³ Though almost all slaves aspired to be free, emancipation brought with it its own perils, and the best chances for survival lay with black Americans keeping the beneficial connections they had established with whites and/or their previous owners.

The story of William Kennedy's slaves in Tennessee demonstrates the connection between antebellum and postwar paternalism in emigration movements. On a series of expeditions throughout the 1850s, the retired Maury County judge and state senator freed 56 of his slaves and sent them to Liberia (Blackett 2010). Although a slave owner, Kennedy was a trusted acquaintance among blacks in Maury County, writing the ACS on behalf of several free and enslaved blacks in the vicinity, including Harry Mitchell, a free brickmaker and stove blaster, William Armor, a free boat maker and shoemaker with "good habits and good character," and Davy, whom he described as an "orderly, well-disposed man" and recommended for purchase from Colonel Webster Mcletter.³⁴ Kennedy devoted the last years of his life and much of his estate to black emigration and possessed only enough to "give me a comfortable support in a humble style" at the time of his death.³⁵

Led by 60-year-old Squire Kennedy and his wife, 59-year-old Zany Kennedy, a total of 26 formerly enslaved persons departed New Orleans for Liberia in 1852. William Kennedy sought to ensure "comforts on their passage and that such a vessel and crew shall be provided for them as will not expose them to insult or abuse."³⁶ He even acknowledged how his unorthodox concern could be annoying, writing, "I fear Sir you will regard me as troublesome but the anxiety that I have for the welfare of my people is my apology."³⁷ Such particulars were of course outside of Kennedy's control. In fact, even healthy conditions on board could not be guaranteed, as evidenced by the three Maury County emigrants who died from a cholera outbreak. In Liberia, his aid was also limited, as he could not monetarily assist his former bondsmen after the 1856 war between settlers and natives. Expenses must have been high and funds limited, as he could only manage to send clothing. Despite his infirmity, Kennedy continued to send the freedmen aid: nearly \$500 in 1858, and material aid in the form of clothing, mechanical and farming tools, nails, cotton cards, needles, and pins.³⁸

Kennedy's former slaves continued to utilize elite whites as resources after Kennedy's death in 1859 and after the Civil War. In 1852, 31-year-old Harriet Kennedy had been among the first contingent of emigrants emancipated and sent to Liberia. Despite the deaths of some of her friends and family, Harriet survived and continued to correspond with the Kennedy estate for years after the group's departure. J. W. Frierson, the executor of the Kennedy estate, worked to ensure that none of Justice Kennedy's relatives successfully deprived Harriet or the other former slaves of their due inheritance. A letter written to Secretary McClain from Frierson suggests Harriet Kennedy's relative importance to the Kennedy family and the concern that her former owners had for her, how she "was held in high esteem by both her Master and Mistress during their lifetime, and held a post of honor in their household either as waiting maid or cook or both—as she was needed for either purpose."³⁹

POSTBELLUM COOPERATION

While black southern separatists prior to the Civil War could expand their resources by working with whites, the development of grassroots separatist organizations and movements independently orchestrated by blacks was impossible in the repressive conditions of the slave South. Even after the Civil War, however, black southerners could ill afford to sever connections with whites, as they faced legal impediments, vigilantism, social customs, and economic policies designed to keep them in a subordinate status. During the peak of emigration movements in South Carolina during the 1860s and 1870s, economic inequality proliferated. Freedmen primarily equated freedom with land, so their inability to purchase land after the war, combined with their coercion into land tenancy, caused many to leave the state and seek better prospects elsewhere. C. R. Reeves of Marion County had settled all his “business with Col. Mullin peaceable” when he wrote the new ACS secretary, William Coppinger, in 1867.⁴⁰ Others in his party, however, “had to leave in the night not that there is any crimes among them but because they don’t want any words with Ole Master.”⁴¹ Reeves listed his occupation as a minister, so his acquired debts may have been somewhat less than those of the other farmers, carpenters, and coopers who together emigrated with more than 100 members of their families in 1867.

Strained economic conditions prompted black southerners to pursue all avenues of support, including white aid, when seeking to relocate to Liberia. In Eufaula, Alabama, local separatists first left the state in 1868 as residents suffered episodes of acute violence in the wake of increased black political activity in the mid-1860s (Kolchin 1972). The experiences of separatists in Barbour County, Alabama, and neighboring Stewart County, Georgia, illustrate the trend of black southerners seeking information and financial assistance from the federal government and federal organizations in addition to aid and protection from individual whites and private organizations when attempting to emigrate in the postwar period.

Willis Fort was a separatist leader in Eufaula who worked with Isaac Hall. He had initially sought aid from the government when attempting to relocate. He corresponded regularly with Secretary McClain and boasted about the diverse occupations found among the potential emigrants, including teachers, farmers, carpenters, brick masons, barbers, shoemakers, and blacksmiths.⁴² The Eufaula movement, however, like most black emigration movements, suffered from a perpetual lack of funds. One way to counter this problem was to seek financial support directly from the U.S. government. In 1868, Eufaula’s separatists did just that; they, along with neighboring blacks in Columbus, Georgia, petitioned the U.S. Senate to support their cause, writing, “Having been set free from slavery by the blessing of Almighty God and an act of Congress, we are desirous on account of the animosity evinced towards us as a people, and the injustice and oppression to which we are obliged to submit, and which wrongs are likely to continue so long as we remain here” (“Petitions from Colored People” 1868).

This petition illustrates the kind of paternalistic rhetoric utilized at times by black separatists to garner sympathy and, they hoped, support from whites. It indicates that the petitioners have no malice or ill will toward whites but instead allude to the antebellum

idea of dependency and the obligation of owners to take care of their slaves. The petitioners stated their case frankly to the Senate:

We are poor. Many of us are without employment or the means of obtaining any. Many of us have been cheated out of a part, and some of us out of the whole of our last year's wages, and are quite unable to meet the expense of going to another country.

We therefore petition your honorable body that an appropriation of one hundred dollars (\$100) be made for each person who shall embark under the auspices of the American Colonization Society for Liberia. ("Petitions from Colored People" 1868)

Although numerous petitions by black separatists such as this one were read to Congress, there was no national action taken to assist them. The post-Civil War environment was too racially charged to allow federal funds to be allocated to emigration projects. Potential emigrants did, however, find more success when requesting aid from government agencies working within a locale.

After the Civil War, ex-slaves lived in a hostile racial climate, as illustrated by the Freedmen's Bureau's records, which recount case after case of white-on-black violence largely going unpunished throughout the South. Blacks, who sought redress in the Freedmen's Bureau courts, were probably quite comfortable with this type of interracial appeal, which had been first employed during the antebellum era, when slaves and freedmen seeking vindication for wrongdoings would appeal to the slave master, overseer, or other influential yet sympathetic white.

Often spurred by the desire to alleviate racial tensions, Bureau agents encouraged emigration through the ACS and offered security to blacks, who would have faced greater risks by openly and independently pursuing their endeavors. In May 1868, just days after the departure of the Eufaula emigrants, A. Sweeney of the Freedmen's Bureau wrote Secretary Coppinger, requesting circulars on behalf of the large number of people in the area still desiring to emigrate.⁴³

Although possessing various occupational skills and resources, all black emigrants still needed the protection and aid of supportive whites to see their endeavor through to completion. Potential emigrants in Mobile, Alabama, also thought it would be beneficial to work with Freedmen's Bureau agents, as some officials were also movement sympathizers or colonizationists. The Mobile company sought the assistance of James Gillette, assistant sub-commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, in writing to Secretary Coppinger. The Mobile company consisted of three primary families who were organized by a local coppersmith and separatist advocate, John A. Stewart. Just as with the Eufaula emigrants, the Mobile company was a diverse group ranging from professionals such as preachers and undertakers to those in working-class trades, such as tailors, carpenters, mechanists, smiths, and farmers.

In Mobile, work with Gillette and the Freedmen's Bureau proved invaluable, as black emigrants encountered transportation problems surrounding their departure. Captain Gillette was forced to intercede on behalf of the emigrants with railroad agents in order for the U.S. transportation orders to be accepted and to ensure the safe transport of Stewart and his 23 followers to Savannah, where they were to board the ship *Golconda* for Liberia. It seems, however, that transportation problems and physical threats prompted as many as two-thirds of the potential emigrants to decide at the last minute not to go. While waiting at the wharf in Mobile, Gillette reported that "great influence was exerted by a number of gentleman to prevent their departure."⁴⁴

Charles Flynn's (1983) study of postwar Georgia argues that despite extreme economic and political repression, ongoing violence in Georgia was most connected to a climate of moral protection. Black separatists, though choosing to emigrate, were also choosing self-determination; thus undermining the racial economic and political order in Georgia and inviting white opposition. Without Gillette's assistance, Stewart probably would have departed Mobile with even fewer than the nine emigrants from his original company who chose to continue the journey. In spite of these repressive measures, Gillette continued his support for the emigrants' cause, declaring that any further participants who desired to go would have transportation provided to them for free.

Support was more likely to come from private organizations such as the ACS than directly from the government, and southern black separatists unabashedly sought help from such societies. Assistance was not without its challenges, however. Blacks working with the ACS had to contend with the overtly racist dogma that the ACS used to solidify support among conservative whites in the South. In 1874, *The African Repository* reprinted an article authored by Major John M. Orr of Leesburg, Virginia, entitled "The African in the United States: His present position, his future course and his ultimate destiny," which espoused the benefits that slavery provided to American blacks and their need for continued moral instruction:

[H]e has been rescued from the savage life by the only means through which he could have been placed in contact with Christian civilization, and in the only condition which it was, humanly speaking, possible for him to remain in that contact. In that condition of slavery he was in the process of education. . . . The stage of his education being passed, he has been advanced to a higher grade, but still he is only in the process of being educated up to that point when he will be imbued with the powers, internal and external, intellect and moral, needful, to make him, not a despot, but a citizen of a free, separate and self-governing nation of his own.

Despite such biased racial thinking, black southerners understood how cooperation with ACS could prove immensely beneficial.

Black northerners continued their skepticism regarding the ACS and separatism after the Civil War, and they lambasted white supporters for plotting to uphold racial

stratification through colonization. In Philadelphia, J. G. Steward (1869) declared, "Mr. Editor, I have no patience with these white men that are continually thinking, plotting and doing, for the negro." He continued to deprecate white supporters as truly "enemies of the negro [who] come out with some new measure or with a new color to their pet project of relieving the country of the troublesome negro." Steward and other black northerners regarded the efforts of white sympathizers as clothed in the hypocritical garb of a mawkish philanthropy whose objective now "is to induce emigration for the purpose of Christianizing Africa. The real purpose is to maintain the supremacy of the white race and justify themselves in history for their past treatment of the negro" (Steward 1869).

After Reconstruction, blacks continued to use strategic framing as well; however, unlike in the antebellum period, freedmen readily employed oppression and justice frames, which garnered white sympathy while also calling for redress for black mistreatment. Imbued with a new self-confidence that accompanied emancipation, southern blacks were now less apprehensive about reporting racial injustices and demanding the civil rights legislated during Reconstruction. Although still not wanting to alienate white supporters, freedmen and freedwomen after the Civil War were more assertive about their rights and recognized their mistreatment. In 1868, Rev. Ryan, the separatist leader in Columbus, Mississippi, employed a justice frame in relaying a disturbing situation in his area to Secretary Coppinger. Ryan comments that a "hundred ... have work al the year and have not now a dime in the pocket."⁴⁵ He goes on to describe a particularly dire situation that he saw: "I was with a woman the other day with three or four children and had walked one hundred mile working two years and had not a cent of money to live on."⁴⁶ This case was not exceptional. After the Civil War, numerous cases were reported of whites who had taken advantage of, cheated out of wages, or robbed freedmen and -women. Ryan was confident enough to point out common injustices to Secretary Coppinger, but without going so far as to denounce individual whites as exploitative; rather, he alludes to general conditions and common practices that had created and maintained black poverty.

In 1867, Willis Fort used an oppression frame to describe to the ACS the lack of hope among Barbour County's black residents, stating they were "still desiring to leave day after day as we have no other refuge."⁴⁷ Concerns over violence were also seconded by local leader W. H. Rhodes. Rhodes and Fort were especially troubled by the atrocities committed by a "secret society the K. K. K.," and reported that "everybody wants to leave this county."⁴⁸ When writing whites for support, movement participants framed their argument in ways designed to elicit maximum sympathy without provoking the threat of aggression. Black southerners, like those in Eufaula, emphasized their victimization and their noble attempts to avoid further conflict by leaving. Eufaula emigrants' bleak prognosis for the future was not unfounded; less than five years after their departure, Eufaula whites killed nearly 100 black residents during an election-day riot in an attempt to extinguish all signs of black Republican political activity (Bailey 1993). Because of these strained conditions, rural blacks in Alabama tended to be more politically extreme and to advocate emigration as an acceptable method of uplift. In total, 38 emigrants left the region for Liberia in 1868 ("List of Emigrants for Liberia: by the Ship Golconda, from Savannah, Georgia" 1868).

Emigrants from neighboring Stewart County settled in the Liberian capital of Monrovia, while the Eufaula Company settled in Bexley, Grand Bassa County. In December of 1870, more than three years after his departure, Isaac Hall, now a member of the Liberian legislature, wrote back to the blacks who had stayed in Eufaula, giving them an update of the company's progress. From Fortsville,⁴⁹ he wrote, "My desire is to let you know how we are getting along. All my family are enjoying very good health. Our new settlement is improving very fast. Our soil is rich, and the water is pure and healthy. We have very fine crops of corn, rice, peas, beans, tomatoes, potatoes, cassada, &c. I have also raised sugar-cane and made my own sirup"(Hall 1871). Hall immediately acknowledges that separatism and emigration to Liberia allowed him to achieve his goals of securing a livelihood. He details how his life has improved, how he has achieved economic independence, and the promising auspices the future held. He sends regards to his friends and members of the AME Church whom he had left behind, asking "them to remember me continually in their prayers to God" and to send any "spelling and Sabbath-school books" that could be spared. Finally, he gives a last call for Africa, pleading with his brethren in Eufaula to remember that "Liberia is a good country, and that it is the home of the children of Africa."

Although the literature on Reconstruction is filled with instances of interracial conflict, there are also instances of sympathetic whites furthering interracial cooperation, albeit through black separatism. John Rhoe was a resident in nearby Quitman County, Georgia, who often frequented Eufaula and sympathized with black separatists in the area. Although he did not travel with the 1868 emigrants, he continued to correspond with them and to support the ACS for years after their departure. In February 1871, in one of his numerous letters to Secretary Coppinger, Rhoe began a candid discussion on race relations. He had probably never had the opportunity to have such a frank conversation about race with a white man, and he emphasized his desire not to offend Coppinger when he stated, "so therefore I speak as I do in this letter but hope that this will not interfere with you."⁵⁰ He acknowledged local black exploitation: "[T]he White people in this vicinity are very much opposed to the idea and of the Colored people of this vicinity even thinking of going to that benighted place they calls it but I think that is the land of our for Fathers and they would like very much for to keep us here when they can get our labor as they always has."⁵¹ Yet, Rhoe, like other black separatists, also recognized the existence of white charity, appreciated white assistance, and maintained, "I do believe that there is some of the Southerners are very warm friends and not enemies to the Africans and I do believe that there some just Gentel is any one may want My reason is for saying so because I am a living with them and I know that it has friended me on a great many places and I have no right to speak against them all."⁵² Black southerners such as Rhoe could not afford to reject whites completely, especially if they wanted to successfully leave the South and immigrate to Liberia. Rhoe continued his analysis of race relations, pointing out that although there were kind whites, "there are some have not done right by me and a great many others."⁵³ Rhoe and other black southerners understood the difficulties involved in such a pursuit and wisely sought aid from supportive whites, while simultaneously attempting to minimize the repression displayed toward them by others.

Although they probably never met, Rhoe and Coppinger developed an amicable relationship over the years and remained close through correspondence. Rhoe wrote to Coppinger about the plight of blacks in Eufaula, of any news about his friends who had chosen to immigrate to Liberia, and about the quotidian aspects of life. Nearly a decade after their initial correspondence, Rhoe continued to write Coppinger for information about Liberia, but his letters became imbued with more personal touches. In 1879, he apologized to Coppinger for not writing sooner but was very excited to inform Coppinger about his new job serving as a local schoolteacher in Quitman County. "Very strange thing to see a kinky head Negro open school in Quitman," Rhoe reported, in addition to the information that his pupils were progressing quite well.⁵⁴ Later, he thanked Coppinger for the books that Coppinger had sent about Liberia and expressed the joy that he had received from distributing the books in Barbour and Quitman Counties, whose residents "are very much delighted about Liberia whenever they can get the chance to hear one read."⁵⁵

Despite an era of white supremacy, genuine support and concern such as that between Secretary Coppinger and John Rhoe characterized some interracial relationships in the South. Examples of blacks needing aid from whites during this transitional period, and examples of whites sincerely seeking to help blacks, are not necessarily outliers in the story of southern race relations. Though the preponderance of atrocities and injustices against blacks during Reconstruction may lend itself to presenting a one-sided picture of black agency despite attempts at Southern repression, the reality is much more complex and should also highlight the efforts of those white southerners who helped facilitate black agency.

CONCLUSION

In the South, separatist leaders endorsed unique strategies, which are revealed by the writings of grassroots organizers. Blacks in the South were also less opposed to working with white organizations and patrons, while northern leaders were more skeptical, more often than not viewing these efforts as racist. Southern black separatism never adhered to a policy of exclusive segregation but always envisioned a degree of interracial cooperation and sustained interaction. Separatist leaders used distinct strategies of interracial cooperation to gain both private and public financial support and protection.

The strategy of interracial cooperation is not suggestive of a lack of commitment, sophistication, or agency on the part of southern black nationalists. Separatists rationalized the practice as a way to minimize suppression and maximize resources in an antagonistic environment; it simply was the most expedient and effective way to realize their movement goals. Some whites supported black emigration because of racial prejudice, while others sincerely sympathized with the freedmen and wanted to aid them in their quest for self-determination through emigration to Liberia. Black southerners cooperated with both; the environment of white supremacy and the scarcity of black resources necessitated it. By seeking the help of the U.S. government, white private organizations such as the American Colonization Society, public agencies such as the Freedmen's Bureau, and understanding individuals, black southern separatists were able to navigate and successfully immigrate to Liberia, carrying with them hopes of a better

life. Although much has been written on the development of a radical protest culture in the North, few researchers have sought to examine this phenomenon in the South. Although manifesting itself differently than in the North, black separatism in the South was used as an effective means of racial uplift, and its study will continue to elucidate early black nationalism and the specific contributions of black southerners.

ENDNOTES

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4. J. Lashbrooks. (personal communication, February 21, 1854). Reel 72, ACS Papers.
5. Unnamed. (personal communication, July 20, 1852). Reel 66B, ACS Papers.
6. E. Douglas Taylor. (personal communication, September 2, 1850). Reel 61, ACS Papers.
7. Burrell Mann. (personal communication, November 21, 1847). Reel 53, ACS Papers.
8. S. Wesley Jones. (personal communication, May 2, 1847). Reel 53, ACS Papers; S. Wesley Jones. (personal communication, August 4, 1847). Reel 53, ACS Papers.
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10. Charlotte Duggett. (personal communication, September 13, 1852). Reel 66B, ACS Papers; J. Chitwood. (personal communication, May 1, 1857). Reel 82, ACS Papers.
11. H. C. Balody. (personal communication, March 1848). Reel 54, ACS Papers.
12. B. W. Mann. (personal communication, June 21, 1847), in Woodson (1926:17–41).
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15. W. H. Payne. (personal communication, December 20, 1848). Reel 57, ACS Papers; W. Payne. (personal communication, December 13, 1848). Reel 57, ACS Papers.
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21. W. H. Payne. (personal communication, December 20, 1848). Reel 57, ACS Papers; W. Payne. (personal communication, December 13, 1848). Reel 57, ACS Papers.

22. H. Talbin. (personal communication, November 12, 1848). Reel 57, ACS Papers; H. Talbin. (personal communication, October 12, 1848). Reel 57, ACS Papers.
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29. I. Mayson. (personal communication, March 4, 1851). Reel 64, ACS Papers; J. W. Lugenbeel. (personal communication, March 29, 1851). Reel 64, ACS Papers; J. W. Lugenbeel. (personal communication, April 3, 1851). Reel 64, ACS Papers; J. W. Lugenbeel. (personal communication, April 1, 1851). Reel 64, ACS Papers.
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31. W. W. Rice. (personal communication, April 17, 1856). Reel 79, ACS Papers.
32. W. W. Rice. (personal communication, April 17, 1856). Reel 79, ACS Papers.
33. W. W. Rice. (personal communication, April 17, 1856). Reel 79, ACS Papers.
34. William Kennedy. (personal communication, May 1853). Reel 70, ACS Papers; W. Kennedy. (personal communication, November 3, 1852). Reel 69, ACS Papers; W. Kennedy. (personal communication, September 17, 1852). Reel 68, ACS Papers.
35. William Kennedy. (personal communication, October 14, 1852). Reel 68, ACS Papers.
36. William Kennedy. (personal communication, October 14, 1852). Reel 68, ACS Papers; W. Kennedy. (personal communication, November 18, 1852). Reel 69, ACS Papers.
37. William Kennedy. (personal communication, October 14, 1852). Reel 68, ACS Papers; W. Kennedy. (personal communication, November 18, 1852). Reel 69, ACS Papers.
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39. J. Frierson. (personal communication, April 12, 1866). Reel 98, ACS Papers; J. W. Frierson. (personal communication, July 30, 1867). Reel 100, ACS Papers; H. Kennedy. (personal communication, May 28, 1867). Reel 100, ACS Papers; H. Kennedy. (personal communication, July 7, 1867). Reel 100, ACS Papers.
40. C. R. Reeves. (personal communication, April 12, 1867). Reel 100, ACS Papers.
41. C. R. Reeves. (personal communication, April 12, 1867). Reel 100, ACS Papers.
42. W. Fort. (personal communication, November 28, 1867). Reel 101, ACS Papers.
43. A. Sweeney. (personal communication, May 20, 1868). Reel 102, ACS Papers.
44. A. Sweeney. (personal communication, May 20, 1868). Reel 102, ACS Papers.

45. Rev. H. Ryan. (personal communication, January 7, 1868). Reel 101, ACS Papers;
Rev. H. Ryan. (personal communication, January 19, 1868). Reel 101, ACS Papers;
Rev. H. Ryan. (personal communication, February 11, 1868). Reel 101, ACS Papers.
46. Rev. H. Ryan. (personal communication, January 7, 1868). Reel 101, ACS Papers;
Rev. H. Ryan. (personal communication, January 19, 1868). Reel 101, ACS Papers;
Rev. H. Ryan. (personal communication, February 11, 1868). Reel 101, ACS Papers.
47. W. Fort. (personal communication, November 28, 1867). Reel 101, ACS Papers; W.
Fort and A. Graves. (personal communication, January 30, 1868). Reel 101, ACS
Papers.
48. A. E. Williams, W. Fort, and W. H. Rhodes. (personal communication, April 18,
1868). Reel 102, ACS Papers.
49. Fortsville is presumably named after Willis Fort, Hall's friend and co-organizer.
50. J. H. Rhoe. (personal communication, February 26, 1871). Reel 108, ACS Papers.
51. J. H. Rhoe. (personal communication, February 26, 1871). Reel 108, ACS Papers.
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