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HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Under the Direction of the

Departments of History, Political Economy, and Political Science

THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY 1817-1840

BY

EARLY LEE FOX, PH.D. Professor of History in Randolph-Macon College

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PREFACE

The following study was undertaken at the suggestion of Professor John H. Latané, of the Johns Hopkins University. It is a genuine pleasure for me to acknowledge and express my thanks for the interest he has shown at every stage of the work. As a result of his instruction, together with that of Professor J. M. Vincent, also of the Johns Hopkins University, I have come to appreciate, I hope, the importance of a critical evaluation of historical evidence. My thanks are also due those connected with the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress, where most of the research work was done, and particularly to Mr. Fitzpatrick, whose courtesy I shall not soon forget. Rev. M. L. Fearnow very kindly read a portion of the manuscript and suggested several changes.

E. L. F.

THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY 1817-1840

INTRODUCTION

It is just a century since a group of men of distinguished talents came together in the city of Washington for an interchange of views on the solution of the negro problem. The result was the organization of the American Colonization Society. From the time of its inception the Society appealed to men in every walk of life and from every section of the Union. The whole movement was in response to a national, not a sectional sentiment. From the day of its birth to the day when, by the proclamation of the president, the slaves in the South were set free, leaders of thought and framers of national policy looked to this organization to save them from what Jefferson had called the fire bell in the night.

Between the Missouri Compromise and John Brown's raid there were few platforms upon which representative men from New England, the West, and the upper South could stand and discuss dispassionately the negro problem. But upon the platform of the Colonizationists they could, and did, stand. On that platform stood Daniel Webster of Massachusetts and William H. Crawford of Georgia, Elisha Whittlesey of Ohio and Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey. There Elijah Paine, that distinguished farmer, jurist, and philanthropist of Vermont, could, in common with his neighbor, Roger M. Sherman of Connecticut, talk with the owner of three hundred slaves, William H. Fitzhugh of Virginia. There stood Francis Scott Key, Charles Fenton Mercer, John Marshall, and James Monroe. There the author of the Olive Branch made common cause with