

**MOVEMENT IN OHIO
TO DEPORT THE NEGRO.
VOLUME VII, 1912**

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Movement in Ohio to deport the negro. Volume VII, 1912 by Henry Noble Sherwood

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HENRY NOBLE SHERWOOD

**MOVEMENT IN OHIO
TO DEPORT THE NEGRO.
VOLUME VII, 1912**

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torical and Philosophical
Society of Ohio

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MOVEMENT IN OHIO TO DEPORT
THE NEGRO

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AND

REPRINTS OF TWO PAMPHLETS UPON
COLONIZATION

CINCINNATI, OHIO
PRESS OF JENNINGS AND GRAHAM

I. PREFATORY NOTE, - - - - -	51
II. MOVEMENT IN OHIO TO DEPORT THE NEGRO,	53
III. A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE VIEWS, ETC., OF THE OHIO STATE COLONIZATION SOCIETY, -	81
IV. OHIO IN AFRICA, - - - - -	93

PREFATORY NOTE.

The two pamphlets reprinted in this number of the Quarterly relate to different phases of the removal of the negro to Africa with his consent.

The first in order is from a copy in the collection of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio entitled "A Brief Exposition, etc., etc." It sets forth in the form of an address to the people of Ohio the purposes of the Ohio State Colonization Society and of its parent, the American Colonization Society. In an appendix are contained a list of officers and managers of the Ohio State Society; a list of local societies auxiliary to the Ohio State Society; a set of "Instructions" for the organization and conduct of new auxiliary societies; and the Constitution of the Ohio State Society. At the date of this pamphlet, 1827, the abolition movement had made but little progress and it was still unthinkable that a negro should be raised to equality with his white neighbor before the law. Thus the argument in behalf of the colonization of the negro beyond the bounds of the United States is fairly summed up in a paragraph at the bottom of page four which reads,

"A manumitted slave remains a negro still, and must ever continue in a state of political bondage; and it is obvious that he who is deprived of the inherent rights of a citizen can never become a loyal subject."

"Ohio in Africa," the second pamphlet, is from a copy in the possession of Oberlin University, Oberlin, Ohio, which has been good enough to lend it for the purpose of the present reprinting. This is a "Memorial" addressed to the General Assembly of Ohio praying an appropriation of money for promoting and developing negro colonies on the west coast of Africa. It is of unusual interest for its account of what had actually been done in Africa to prepare the way for the settlement of negroes. At the date of this Memorial, 1851, the Liberian experiment was

no longer a novelty. The narrative deals rather with other settlements or purchases of land for settlement in the neighboring region, funds for which had been provided by private persons, but not in adequate amount.

Both these pamphlets are rare and it is thought that this and the essential interest of the colonization project to which they relate make them worth reprinting here.

Cincinnati, Ohio, September, 1912.

THE MOVEMENT IN OHIO TO DEPORT THE NEGRO.

ORIGIN AND SCOPE.

The Negro problem in some form has been constantly before the American people. Perhaps no other question has so often or so profoundly agitated the public mind. It exacted attention in Colonial times and was reckoned one of the causes of the American Revolution; it was debated in the Federal Convention; it has been discussed on the floor of Congress. Political campaigns have been fought on this issue alone and politicians have risen and fallen according as they took their stand for or against the negro. The editor, the preacher and the novelist have been drawn into the controversy, for it has penetrated every element in our society and every state in the Union.

Since its appearance in the ordinance of 1787 the question of the negro has held a conspicuous place in Ohio annals. Here, as elsewhere, opinion has been divided and no solution of the question has won an unanimous following. There have always been two parties each seeking to undo the work of the other. In the Constitutional Convention of 1802 the pro-slavery and anti-slavery parties formally appeared and the debates on this topic aroused such warmth of feeling that the success of the convention was endangered. Each side won a partial victory—the anti-slavery party secured the prohibition of slavery and the pro-slavery party secured a white man's constitution. Prohibition of slavery was thus fixed for Ohio, but the question—What was to be done with the free negro?—was left open.

Under the Constitution of 1802 the free negro could neither vote nor hold office. He could take no part in public affairs, and yet was considered a fit subject for legislation. The General Assembly in 1804, and again in 1807, enacted laws designed to restrict the immigration of freedmen into Ohio and to safeguard the public against the possibility of the free black becoming a

charge. Subsequent legislation strengthened these laws despite the efforts of the opposition, who, with the blacks, sent petition after petition to the legislature requesting the repeal of all laws against the colored people.

Legislation, however, did not prevent a noticeable, even an alarming, increase in the negro population. For every negro in 1800 there were six in 1810; and in 1820 the negro population was 4,723, of whom a large percentage came from the border slave states of Virginia and Kentucky. Immigrants came not only of their own accord but in some instances whole colonies were freed to settle in Ohio. In 1819, 420 settled in Brown County,¹ and in a few years over 1,000 were brought to Ohio. The most notable of these colonies was that composed of the slaves of John Randolph who were settled in Mercer and the adjoining counties.²

About this time a movement which had long been agitated by noted individuals and by the General Assembly of Virginia took national form. This was the organization of the American Colonization Society in Washington, D. C., on December 28, 1816. This Society proposed to deport to Africa, or elsewhere, with their consent, the free blacks of the United States. It offered a negro policy designed to satisfy all. Here seemed to be a plan well adapted to Ohio, where the free blacks were beginning to be alarmingly numerous. The citizens of Ohio were already divided into two hostile camps over the negro, some favoring the existing legislation against him and others crying for immediate and total emancipation. Why could not these discordant elements unite in one movement to deport the negro to Africa? This suggestion had been considered by the Union Humane Society³ at St. Clairsville in 1815, and it met with approval. The leading spirit in this Society was Benjamin Lundy, who afterward conducted manumitted slaves to Hayti and sought to establish a colony of them in Mexico; and it was probably due to his influence that the proposal met with success at its inception (*Life of Benjamin Lundy*, page 16). But the citizens of St. Clairsville were not the only ones favorable to the deportation of the negro.

¹Ohio Ho. of Rep. Jour. 1859, App. p. 60.

²A. J. Evans in *New England Mag.* V, 442 et seq.

³A manuscript containing the Constitution and the Proceedings for 1816, 1817 and 1818 of the Union Humane Society is in the MSS. Coll. of the Society.

The people of Harrison, Delaware, Warren and Hamilton Counties sent petitions to the legislature in December, 1817, praying "that measures may be taken to effect the emancipation and colonization of people of color."⁴ Their petitions received attention from the General Assembly, for in January, 1818, a resolution was adopted advising Ohio Congressmen to use their best efforts to procure the passage of a law in accordance with the desire of the Memorialists.⁵

By this time people in other parts of the state seemed to have been aroused over this new scheme and were willing publicly to advocate it. For example, the grand jury of Ross County, after completing its regular work, resolved "That, we, the grand jury in Ross County, do hereby concur in the great and benevolent plan instituted by the American Colonization Society at Washington City for the purpose of colonizing the free people of color on the continent of Africa; and do recommend it to the patronage of the good people of this country."⁶ This was in March, 1827, and eight months afterward the Ohio State Colonization Society held its first annual meeting, and thus was launched an organized movement to deport the negroes from the State.

The Ohio State Colonization Society held its first annual meeting in the hall of the House of Representatives in December, 1827. It was not the first organization in Ohio for promoting the cause of deportation, as one existed as early as 1818. A number of other societies auxiliary to the parent society at Washington had been formed.⁷ But none possessed officers and managers of so much note. The President of the Ohio Society was Jeremiah Morrow, who had been a conspicuous figure in Ohio since the Constitutional Convention of 1802.⁸ Among the Vice-Presidents were the Speaker of the Senate, Abraham Shepherd; the President of Miami University, R. H. Bishop; and the President of the Ohio University, R. J. Wilson.⁹ Like the other Colonization Societies it was auxiliary to the American Colonization Society and was designed to head the movement in the State and to serve as a medium of communication between the parent Society and the local

⁴Ohio Sen. Jour. 1817, pp. 103-137.

⁵Similar resolutions were adopted in 1824.

⁶African Repos. III, 23.

⁷Ohio State Col. Soc. 1st annual meeting, 6-9.

⁸Life of Jeremiah Morrow, by Josiah Morrow, passim.

⁹See "Exposition," p. 89 of this Quarterly.