



## Lincoln's Plan for Colonizing the Emancipated Negroes

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## LINCOLN'S PLAN FOR COLONIZING THE EMANCIPATED NEGROES<sup>1</sup>

The colonization of the emancipated slaves had been one of the remedies for the difficulties created by the presence of freedmen in the midst of slave conditions. The American Colonization Society was founded in 1816 with the object of promoting emancipation by sending the freedmen to Africa. Some of the slave States, moreover, had laws compelling the freedmen to leave the State in which they had formerly resided as slaves. With an increasingly large number securing legal manumission, the problem caused by their presence became to the slaveholding group a most serious one. The Colonization Society, therefore, sought to colonize the freedmen on the west coast of Africa, thus definitely removing the problem which was of such concern to the planters in slaveholding States.

The colony of Liberia, on the west coast of Africa, was chosen as a favorable one to receive the group of freed slaves. Branches of the Colonization Society were organized in many States and a large membership was secured throughout the country. James Madison and Henry Clay were among its Presidents. Many States made grants of money and the United States Government encouraged the plan by sending to the colony slaves illegally imported. But to the year 1830 only 1,162 Negroes had been sent to Liberia. The full development of the cotton gin, the expansion of the cotton plantation and the consequent rise in the price of slaves forced many supporters of both emancipation and colonization to lose their former ardor.

As the antebellum period of the fifties came on these questions loomed larger in the public view. The proposition for colonizing free Negroes grew in favor as the slavery question grew more acute between the sections. Re-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter XVII, Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, a History*.

formers favored it, public men of note urged its adoption and finally, as the forensic strife between the representatives of the two sections of the country developed in intensity, even distinguished statesmen began to propose and consider the adoption of colonization schemes.<sup>2</sup>

Abraham Lincoln, as early as 1852, gave a clear demonstration of his interest in colonization by quoting favorably in one of his public utterances an oft-repeated statement of Henry Clay,—“There is a moral fitness in the idea of returning to Africa her children, whose ancestors have been torn from her by the ruthless hand of fraud and violence.”<sup>3</sup> In popular parlance, however, Lincoln is not a colonizationist. He has become not only the Great Emancipator but the Great Lover of the Negro and promoter of his welfare. He is thought of, popularly always, as the champion of the race's equality. A visit to some of our emancipation celebrations or Lincoln's birthday observances is sufficient to convince one of the prevalence of this sentiment. Yet, although Lincoln believed in the destruction of slavery, he desired the complete separation of the whites and blacks.

Throughout his political career Lincoln persisted in believing in the colonization of the Negro.<sup>4</sup> In the Lincoln-

<sup>2</sup> President Fillmore in his last message to Congress proposed a plan for Negro colonization and advocated its adoption. This part of his message was suppressed on the advice of his cabinet; but even had this not been done, there is no reason to suppose that the plan would have been adopted. President Buchanan made arrangements with the American Colonization Society for the transportation of a number of slaves captured on the slaver, *Echo*, in 1858.

<sup>3</sup> Eulogy on Henry Clay, delivered in the State House at Springfield, Illinois, July 16, 1852. The quotation here noted is taken from a speech by Henry Clay before the American Colonization Society, 1827. Lincoln continued: “If as friends of colonization hope, the present and coming generations of our countrymen shall by any means succeed in freeing our land from the dangerous presence of slavery, and at the same time in restoring a captive people to their long lost fatherland with bright prospects for the future, and this too so gradually that neither races nor individuals shall have suffered by the change, it will be a glorious consummation.” *The Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Federal Edition, edited by A. B. Lapsley, VIII, pp. 173-174.

<sup>4</sup> “The political creed of Abraham Lincoln embraced among other tenets, a belief in the value and promise of colonization as one means of solving the

Douglas debates the beginning of this idea may be seen. Lincoln said: "If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do as to the existing institution. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves and send them to Liberia—to their own native land. But a moment's reflection would convince me that, whatever of high hope (as I think there is) there may be in this, in the long run its sudden execution is impossible. If they were all landed there in a day, they would all perish in the next ten days; and there are not surplus shipping and surplus money enough in the world to carry them there in many times ten days. What then? Free them all and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? I think that I would not hold one in slavery at any rate, yet the point is not clear enough for me to denounce people upon. What next? Free them and make them politically and socially our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this, and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of whites will not. Whether this feeling accords with sound judgment is not the sole judgment, if indeed it is any part of it.'<sup>5</sup>

A few years later in a speech in Springfield, Lincoln said:<sup>6</sup> "The enterprise is a difficult one, but where there is a will there is a way, and what colonization needs most is a hearty will. Will springs from the two elements of moral sense and self-interest. Let us be brought to believe it is morally right, and at the same time favorable to, or at least not against our interests to transfer the African to his native clime, and we shall find a way to do it, however great great race problem involved in the existence of slavery in the United States. . . . Without being an enthusiast, Lincoln was a firm believer in Colonization."<sup>7</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln—A History*, VI, p. 354.

<sup>5</sup> Speech at Peoria, Ill., in reply to Douglas. *Life and Works of Abraham Lincoln*, II, Early Speeches. Centenary Edition, edited by M. M. Miller. The Lincoln-Douglas Debates, October 16, 1854; p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> In the same speech, Lincoln said: "I have said that the separation of the races is the only perfect preventive of amalgamation. . . . Such separation, if ever effected at all, must be effected by Colonization." *The Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Federal Edition, edited by A. B. Lapsley, II, p. 306.

the task may be."<sup>7</sup> It is apparent, therefore, that before coming to the presidency, Lincoln had quite definite views on the matter of colonization. His interest arose not only with the good of the freedmen in view, but with the welfare of the white race in mind, as he is frank enough to state.

After being made President, the question of colonization arose again. Large numbers of slaves in the Confederate States not only became actually free by escape and capture but also legally free through the operation of the confiscation acts. In this new condition, their protection and care was to a considerable extent thrown upon the government. To solve this problem Lincoln decided upon a plan of compensated emancipation which would affect the liberation of slaves in the border States, and he further considered the future of the recently emancipated slaves and those to be freed.<sup>8</sup>

Taking up this question in his first annual message, he said: "It might be well to consider, too, whether the free colored people already in the United States could not so far as individuals may desire be included in such colonization," (meaning the colonization of certain persons who were held by legal claims to the labor and service of certain other persons, and by the act of confiscating property used for insurrectory purposes had become free, their claims being forfeited). "To carry out the plan of colonization may involve the acquiring of territory, and also the appropriation of money beyond that to be expended in the territorial acquisition. Having practiced the acquisition of territory for nearly sixty years, the question of constitutional power to do so is no longer an open one to us. . . . On this whole proposition, including the appropriation of money with the acquisition of territory, does not the expediency amount to absolute necessity—that without which the government itself cannot be perpetuated?"<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *Speeches, Letters and State Papers, Abraham Lincoln*, I, p. 235. Lincoln's Springfield Speech, June 26, 1857.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, p. 356.

<sup>9</sup> Richardson, *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, VI, p. 54. First Annual Message, December 3, 1861.

Congress responded to this recommendation in separate acts, providing in an act, April 16, 1862, for the release of certain persons held to service or labor in the District of Columbia, including those to be liberated by this act, as may desire to emigrate to the Republic of Hayti or Liberia, or such other country beyond the limits of the United States, as the President may determine, provided the expenditure does not exceed one hundred dollars for each immigrant.<sup>10</sup> ~~The act provided that the sum of \$100,000 out of any money in the Treasury should be expended under the direction of the President to aid the colonization and settlement of such persons of African descent now residing in the District of Columbia.~~<sup>11</sup> It further provided that later, on July 16, an additional appropriation of \$500,000 should be used in securing the colonization of free persons.<sup>12</sup> A resolution directly authorizing the President's participation provided "that the President is hereby authorized to make provision for the transportation, colonization and settlement in some tropical country beyond the limits of the United States, of such persons of the African race, ~~made free by the provisions of this act, as may be willing to emigrate, having first obtained the consent of the government of said country to their protection and settlement within the same, with all the rights and privileges of freemen.~~"<sup>13</sup> The consent of Congress was given under protest and opposition from some individual members. ~~Charles Sumner in and out of Congress attacked the plan with vigor,~~<sup>14</sup> but in spite of this opposition the recommendation was carried.

<sup>10</sup> Section XI of Act approved April 16, 1862.

<sup>11</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, VI, p. 356. Act approved July 16, 1862.

<sup>12</sup> Raymond, *Life, Public Services and State Papers*, p. 504.

<sup>13</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*, VI, p. 357.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Sumner in a speech before a State Committee in Massachusetts, said: "A voice from the west—God save the west—revives the exploded theory of colonization, perhaps to divert attention from the great question of equal rights. To that voice, I reply, first, you ought not to do it, and secondly, you cannot do it. You ought not to do it, because besides its intrinsic and fatal injustice, you will deprive the country of what it most needs, which is

On several occasions Lincoln seized the opportunity to present his views and plans to visiting groups and committees. On July 16, 1862, when the President was desirous of securing the interest of the border State representatives in favor of compensated emancipation the plan for colonization came to light. His appeal to these representatives was: "I do not speak of emancipation at once but ~~of a decision to emancipate gradually.~~ Room in South America for colonization can be obtained cheaply and in abundance, and when numbers shall be large enough to be company and encouragement to one another the freed people will not be so reluctant to go."<sup>15</sup>

Again on the afternoon of ~~August 14, 1862,~~ the President gave an audience to a committee of men of color at the White House. They were introduced by Rev. J. Mitchell, Commissioner of Emigration. E. M. Thomas, the chairman, remarked that they were there by invitation to hear what the executive had to say to them. Having all been seated the President informed them that a sum of money had been appropriated by Congress and placed at his disposal for the purpose of aiding colonization in some country, of the people, or a portion of those of African descent, thereby making it his duty as it had been for a long time his inclination to favor that cause. "And why," he asked, "should the people of your race be colonized and where? Why should they leave this country? You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races. Whether

labor. Those freedmen on the spot are better than mineral wealth. Each is a mine, out of which riches can be drawn, provided you let him share the product, and through him that general industry will be established which is better than anything but virtue, and is, indeed, a form of virtue. It is vain to say that this is a white man's country. It is the country of man. Whoever disowns any member of the human family as brother disowns God as father, and thus becomes impious as well as inhuman. It is the glory of republican institutions that they give practical form to this irresistible principle. If anybody is to be sent away, let it be the guilty and not the innocent."—*Charles Sumner's Complete Works*, XII, Section 3, p. 334.

<sup>15</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, II, p. 205. Nicolay and Hay, *A History of Abraham Lincoln*, VI, p. 356.

it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think. Your race suffer very greatly, many of them, by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word we suffer on each side. If this is admitted it affords a reason why we should be separated. If we deal with those who are not free at the beginning and whose intellects are clouded by slavery we have very poor material to start with. If intelligent colored men, such as are before me, would move in this matter much might be accomplished. It is exceedingly important that we have men at the beginning capable of thinking as white men and not those who have been systematically opposed."

The place the President proposed at this time was a colony in Central America, seven days' run from one of the important Atlantic ports by steamer. He stated that there was great evidence of rich coal mines, excellent harbors, and that the new colony was situated on the highways from the Atlantic or Caribbean to the Pacific Oceans. He told this delegation of men to take their full time in making a reply to him. The delegation withdrew, and we are unable to discover any information regarding the reply. Evidently the group of men never returned to make reply to the appeal of the President.<sup>16</sup>

In the Second Annual Message December 1, 1862, more practical suggestions were made to Congress by the President. Says he: "Applications have been made to me by many free Americans of African descent to favor their emigration, with a view to such colonization as was contemplated in recent acts of Congress. Other parties at home and abroad—some upon interested motives, others upon patriotic considerations, and still others influenced by philanthropic sentiments have suggested similar measures; while on the other hand several of the Spanish American Republics have protested against the sending of such colonies to their respective territories. Under these circum-

<sup>16</sup> Raymond, *Life, Public Services and State Papers of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 504. Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, VIII, p. 1.



stances I have declined to move any such colony to any State without first obtaining the consent of the government, with an agreement on its part to receive and protect such emigrants in all the rights of freemen. I have at the same time offered to several States situated within the tropics, or having colonies there to negotiate with them, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, to favor the voluntary emigration of persons of that class to their respective territories upon conditions which shall be equal, just and humane. Liberia and Hayti are as yet the only countries to which colonies of African descent from here could go with certainty of being received and adopted as citizens; and I regret to say such persons contemplating colonization do not seem so willing to go to those countries as to some others, nor so willing as I think their interest demands. I believe, however, opinion among them in this respect is improving; and that ere long there will be an augmented and considerable migration to both countries from the United States."

Later in the same message Congress is requested to appropriate money and prepare otherwise for colonizing free colored persons with their own consent at some place without the United States. The President continues: "I cannot make it better known than it already is, that I strongly favor colonization and yet I wish to say there is an objection urged against free colored persons remaining in the country, which is largely imaginary, if not sometimes malicious. It is insisted that their presence would injure and displace white labor and white laborers. Is it true then that colored people can displace any more white labor by being free than by remaining slaves? If they stay in their old places they jostle no white laborers; if they leave their old places they leave them open to white laborers. Logically then there is neither more nor less of it. Emancipation even without deportation would probably enhance the wages of white labor and very surely would not reduce them. Reduce the supply of black labor by colonizing the black laborer out of the country and by precisely so much

you increase the demand for and wages of white labor."<sup>17</sup>

Pursuant to the power given the President, negotiations were begun with the foreign powers having territory or colonies within the tropics, through the Secretary of State, W. H. Seward, mainly to ascertain if there was any desire on the part of these governments for entering into negotiation on the subject of colonization. Negotiations were to be begun only with those powers which might desire the benefit of such emigration. It was suggested that a ten years' treaty should be signed between the United States and the countries desiring immigration. The latter were required to give specific guarantees for "the perpetual freedom, protection and equal rights of the colonies and their descendants." Before and after the transmission of the proposals to foreign countries, propositions came from the Danish Island of St. Croix in the West Indies, the Netherland Colony of St. Swinam, the British Colony of Guiana, the British Colony of Honduras, the Republic of Hayti, the Republic of Liberia, ~~New Granada and Ecuador. The Republics of Central America, Guatemala, Salvador, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua, objected to such emigration as undesirable.~~<sup>20</sup>

Great Britain rejected the proposal as a governmental

<sup>17</sup> Richardson, *The Messages and Papers of the President, 1789-1897*, p. 127. *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, VIII, p. 97.

<sup>18</sup> A section of the emancipation proclamation states that it is the President's purpose upon the next meeting of Congress to recommend the adoption of a practical measure so that the effort to "colonize persons of African decent with their consent, upon this continent or elsewhere with the previously obtained consent of the governments existing there," will be continued. Nicolay and Hay, *A History*, VI, p. 168.

<sup>19</sup> It is interesting to note that the colored population seemed very little in favor of colonization. "It is something singular that the colored race—those in reality most interested in the future destinies of Africa—should be so lightly affected by the evidences continually being presented in favor of colonization." *The National Intelligencer*, October 23, 1850. But an address issued by the National Emigration Convention of Colored people held at Cleveland, Ohio, urged the colored inhabitants of the United States seriously to consider the question of migrating to some foreign clime. See also JOURNAL OF NEGRO HISTORY, "Attitude of Free Negro on African Colonization," I.

<sup>20</sup> *Diplomatic Correspondence*, Part I, p. 202. Nicolay and Hay. *Complete Works*, p. 357.

proposition on the ground that it might involve the government in some difficulty with the United States government because of fugitives, and therefore expressed her disagreement with such a convention. Seward had asserted that there was no objection to voluntary emigration; the government of British Honduras and Guiana then appointed immigration agents who were to promote the immigration of laborers by using Boston, New York and Philadelphia as emigration ports.

The President came to be of the firm opinion that emigration must be voluntary and without expense to those who went. This was repeatedly asserted according to reports of the Cabinet meeting by Gideon Wells.<sup>21</sup> The Netherlands sought to secure a labor supply for the colony of Swinan for a term of years, using the freedmen as hired laborers. Seward objected to the acceptance of such a proposal.

Of all the propositions offered President Lincoln seemed satisfied with two—one was for the establishment of a colony in the harbor of Chiriqui in the northeastern section of the State of Panama,<sup>22</sup> near the republics of New Granada and Costa Rica. The situation seemed favorable not only because of the ordinary advantages of soil and climate but also because of its proximity to a proposed canal across the Isthmus of Darien and because of its reputedly rich coal fields. There were two objections to this plan. One was the existence of a dispute over territory between the republics of Costa Rica and Granada. The other grew out of a

<sup>21</sup> "Mr. Bates was for compulsory deportation. The Negro would not," he said, "go voluntary." "He had great local attachment but no enterprise or persistency. The President objected unequivocally to compulsion. The emigration must be voluntary and without expense to themselves. Great Britain, Denmark and perhaps other powers would take them. I remarked there was no necessity for a treaty which had been suggested. Any person who desired to leave the country could do so now, whether white or black, and it was best to have it so—a voluntary system; the emigrant who chose to leave our shores could and would go where there were the best inducements." *Diary of Gideon Wells*, I, p. 152.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Account by Charles K. Tuckerman, *Magazine of American History*, October, 1886.

specific examination of the coal fields by Professor Henry of the Smithsonian Institute.<sup>23</sup> ~~His report doubted the value of the coal bed and advised a more thorough examination before closing the purchase.~~ Before the project could be examined a more acceptable proposition appeared. In addition it also developed that there was opposition to Negro emigration from several of the States of Central America.<sup>24</sup>

An effort was then made to establish a colony on the island of A'Vache in the West Indies. This colony was described in a letter to the President by Bernard Kock, represented to be a business man. This site was described as the most beautiful, healthy and fertile of all the islands belonging to the Republic of Hayti, and in size of about one hundred square miles. "As would be expected," writes Kock, "in a country like this, soil and climate are adapted for all tropical production, particularly sugar, coffee, indigo, and more especially cotton which is indigenous. Attracted by its beauty, the value of its timber, its extreme fertility and its adaptation for cultivation, I prevailed on President Geffrard of Hayti to concede to me the island, the documentary evidence of which has been lodged with the Secretary of the Interior."<sup>25</sup>

~~On December 31, 1862, there was signed a contract by which, for a compensation of \$50 per head, Kock agreed to colonize 5,000 Negroes, binding himself to furnish the colonies with comfortable homes, garden lots, churches, schools and employ them four years at varying rates. He~~

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Henry said to Assistant Secretary of State, September 5, 1862: "I hope the government will not make any contracts in regard to the purchase of the Chiriqui District until it has been thoroughly examined by persons of known capacity and integrity. A critical examination of all that has been reported on the existence of valuable beds of coal in that region has failed to convince me of the fact." Chiriqui is described in report Number 148, House of Representatives, 37th Congress, Second Session, July 16, 1862, by John Evans, geologist.

<sup>24</sup> "There was an indisposition to press the subject of Negro Emigration to Chiriqui at the meeting of the Cabinet against the wishes and remonstrances of the states of Central America." *Diary of Gideon Wells*, I, p. 162.

<sup>25</sup> Manuscript Archives of the Department of the Interior.

further agreed to obtain from the Haytian government a guarantee that all such emigrants and their posterity should forever remain free, and in no case be reduced to bondage, slavery or involuntary servitude except for crimes; and they should specially acquire, hold and transmit property and all other privileges of persons common to inhabitants of a country in which they reside. It would be further stipulated that in case of indigence resulting from injury, sickness or age, any such emigrants who should become pauperous should not thereupon be suffered to perish or come to want, but should be supported and cared for as is customary with similar inhabitants of the country in which they should be residents.<sup>26</sup>

Kock also proposed a scheme to certain capitalists in New York and Boston. This had nothing to do with the contract with the President. He proposed to transport 500 of these emigrants at once, begin work on the plantations, and by the end of the following September—a period of eight or nine months—he estimated that this group could raise a crop of 1,000 bales of cotton. It was planned that the colonists should secure from the island a profit of more than 600 per cent in nine months. Kock estimated his necessary expenses as \$70,000, and all expense incurred by freighting ships and collecting immigrants was to be borne by the government. It soon became known to the government that Kock had sought the aid of capitalists and money makers. Suspicion as to the honesty of his purposes was then aroused. It was finally discovered also that he was in league with certain confederates to hand over slaves to him as captured runaways on the condition of receiving a price for their return. Lincoln investigated the matter and discovered that Kock was a mere adventurer and the agreement with him was cancelled.<sup>27</sup>

A certain group of capitalists, whose names are not mentioned, then secured the lease from Kock and entered into contract with the government through the Secretary of the

<sup>26</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *A History*, VI, p. 361.

<sup>27</sup> Richardson, *Message and Papers of the President*, I, p. 167.

Interior, April 6, 1863.<sup>28</sup> Under this agreement a shipload of colonists from the contrabands at Fortress Monroe, said to number 411-435, were embarked.<sup>29</sup> An infectious disease broke out through the presence on board of patients from the military hospital on Craney Island and from twenty to thirty died. On the arrival in the colony no hospitals were ready, no houses were provided, and the resulting conditions were appalling. Kock was sent along as Governor, and he is said to have put on the air of a despot and by his neglect of the sick and needy to have made himself obnoxious.

Rumors of the situation came to the President and he sent a special agent, D. C. Donnohue, who investigated the matter and made a report. Donnohue elaborately described the deplorable situation of the inhabitants, the wretched condition of the small houses and the prevalence of sickness. He further reported that the Haytian government was unwilling that emigrants should remain upon the island and that the emigrants themselves desired to return to the United States. Acting upon the report, the President ordered the Secretary of War to dispatch a vessel to bring home the colonists desiring to return.<sup>30</sup> On the fourth of March the vessel set sail and landed at the Potomac River opposite Alexandria on the twentieth of the same month. On the twelfth of March, 1864, a report was submitted to the Senate showing what portion of the appropriation for colonization had been expended and the several steps which had been taken for the execution of the acts of Congress.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *A History*, VI, p. 362.

<sup>29</sup> Complete records to substantiate this statement have not been discovered.

<sup>30</sup> Lincoln addressed thus the Secretary of War, February 1, 1864: "Sir; You are directed to have a transport . . . sent to the colored colony of San Domingo to bring back to this country such of the colonists there as desire to return. You will have a transport furnished with suitable supplies for that purpose and detail an officer of the quartermaster department, who under special instructions to be given shall have charge of the business. The colonists will be brought to Washington unless otherwise hereafter directed to be employed and provided for at the camps for colored persons around that city. Those only will be brought from the island who desire to return and their effects will be brought with them."

<sup>31</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works*, II, p. 477.

On July 2, 1864, Congress repealed its appropriation and no further effort was made at colonization.<sup>32</sup>

The failure of this project did not dim the vision of the successful colonization of the freed slaves in the mind of President Lincoln. As late as April, 1865, according to report, the following conversation is said to have ensued between the President and General Benjamin F. Butler: "But what shall we do with the Negroes after they are free?" inquired Lincoln. "I can hardly believe that the South and North can live in peace unless we get rid of the Negroes. Certainly they cannot, if we don't get rid of the Negroes whom we have armed and disciplined and who have fought with us, to the amount, I believe, of some 150,000 men. I believe that it would be better to export them all to some fertile country with a good climate, which they could have to themselves. You have been a staunch friend of the race from the time you first advised me to enlist them at New Orleans. You have had a great deal of experience in moving bodies of men by water—your movement up the James was a magnificent one. Now we shall have no use for our very large navy. What then are our difficulties in sending the blacks away? . . . I wish you would examine the question and give me your views upon it and go into the figures as you did before in some degree as to show whether the Negroes can be exported." Butler replied: "I will go over this matter with all diligence and tell you my conclusions as soon as I can." The second day after that Butler called early in the morning and said: "Mr. President, I have gone very carefully over my calculations as to the power of the country to export the Negroes of the South and I assure you that, using all your naval vessels and all the merchant marines fit to cross the seas with safety, it will be impossible for you to transport to the nearest place that can be found fit for them—and that is the Island of San Domingo, half as fast as Negro children will be born here."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Statutes at Large*, XIII, p. 352.

<sup>33</sup> Butler's *Reminiscences*, pp. 903-904.

This completes all of the evidence obtainable concerning Lincoln's thought and plan for the colonization of the slaves freed by his proclamation. From the earliest period of his public life it is easily discernable that Abraham Lincoln was an ardent believer and supporter of the colonization idea. It was his plan not only to emancipate the Negro, but to colonize him in some foreign land. His views were presented not only to interested men of the white race, but to persons of color as well. As may have been expected, the plan for colonization failed, both because in principle such a plan would have been a great injustice to the newly emancipated race, and in practice it would have proved an impracticable and unsuccessful solution of the so-called race problem.

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