of African Colonization.

Your Committee consider the tax in question to be unjust

1st Because the Parent Society have no right to impose any tax, or interpose any unnecessary impediment to emigration.

2. Because it exceeds the fair proportion which Maryland is willing to pay of those expenses that it is apparently intended to cover.

1 The Constitution of the American Colonization Society does not give the power to tax now exercised, either expressly or by inference. That it does not give it expressly is evident from a perusal of the instrument; and that it does not give it by inference is almost equally plain from the consideration, that the circumstances under which the right to tax is thus claimed are of first occurrence now, and could not have been contemplated by the founders of the Institution; nor is it an incident to the character and objects of the Parent Society. The American Colonization Society was established for the purpose of freeing the United States from the free people of colour by transporting them, with their own consent, to the coast of Africa and the colony of Liberia was purchased there, Maryland being then one of the largest contributors, for the purpose of receiving them. The great object in view is their removal. The Parent Society has no powers or rights independent of such object. It may limit the number of emigrants in any one year, because an overflow, by destroying the Colony, may defeat the object. It may prescribe the qualifications, as to character, of those who emigrate, because the contamination of the Colony, by the introduction of a vicious population might affect the great object as much as its destruction. But when for other causes, it checks emigration, whether by the imposition of a tax like that in question or by capricious legislation, or in any other manner, that moment its acts are at variance with its spirit, destructive of its object, & of consequence most manifestly unjust. It is admitted that occasions may arise when it would be equitable that each Emigrant should contribute beyond the cost of transportation to the general expences of the parent Society. Such contribution however can only be ascertained by conference and agreement. The right to tax without limitation of amount that is now exercised, was never intended to be given and never should have been claimed. If yielded to, it puts it at once in the power of the Parent Society to stifle, at pleasure, any auxiliary that may be formed; a result which is not to be anticipated, perhaps, but to which it must be evident is by no means impossible.

2. The tax of $20 exceeds Maryland's fair proportion of the expenses that it is apparently intended to cover. The number of Emigrants at Liberia may be stated, in round numbers, at 2000, the colonial expenses incurred for which in Africa & in this country exclusive of their transportation & subsequent maintenance by the Society, amounted in 1830 to $3603.99 or rather more than $2.75 per head; but as the same expenditure would suffice for a much larger population, even if it did not entirely cease, with the increase & prosperity of the Colony. This sum would be annually & proportionably abated. The conclusion therefore is that the tax of $20 relates chiefly to the cost of maintaining the emigrants in Africa until they can maintain themselves. The Maryland State Society believed that it was impossible to fix the average cost of maintaining emigrants after their arrival in Africa, because it was impossible to

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

I. Minutes
A. Records of the Meetings of the Board of Managers

1. February 1831—December 1831

1831