very well disposed to the objects of my mission when explained to them; but from their never having seen any effects produced by the operations of the Parent Institution; and from the means calculated to produce an interest in the cause having never been put in operation in this County, it had attracted but little attention; and nothing further was known of the history & present condition of the Colony, than what had been gleaned from occasional extracts from the newspapers.

On Friday the 18th a meeting was called in the Courthouse, for the purpose of explaining the objects of our Society, in the intended organization of the State of Maryland, with a view of more effectually aiding the free people of Color, of this State who wish to emigrate to Liberia, & to form a Society.

I addressed the meeting, in explanation of these views at considerable length - after which the meeting was addressed by — Bradford Esq: in an eloquent & forcible manner, with much effect. The meeting passed a resolution, approving of our undertaking, & resolved to proceed to the formation of a Society, auxiliary to the Maryland State Colonization Society. They adopted a form of Constitution, and appointed their officers, which will appear in the list of Societies.

The Inhabitants of Harford, appear disposed to aid, to the utmost of their ability, in giving effect to our operations; and if I am not much mistaken, this County will soon become relieved from the burden of their Slave population - One gentleman, who has twenty slaves expressed to me a determination to release them, and I have since heard of several others who have expressed a similar determination, if their slaves will consent to go out of the County.

This County is favourably circumstanced, for deciding upon the [illegible] value of free and slave labor: near the Pennsylvania line, the farmers are constant witnesses of the rapid increase of population, improvement of soil; accumulation of wealth, & the enjoyment of a competent independence on one side; on the other, where slavery abounds, a soil deteriorated, a white population barely holding its own; the County having increased but forty seven whites in the last ten years - while the free blacks have increased three hundred & forty four in the same time - The extremely low price of land in this county has induced a few farmers from the adjoining State, to purchase, who cultivate their lands with white labourers; and there is a settlement of Friends who have never cultivated their lands with slaves. On these plantations, I am told, they raise as high as forty bushels of wheat to the acre, & from fifty to sixty bushels of corn; while a few miles farther south, where the lands were, when in a state of nature, equally good, they raise from eight to ten of wheat, & twelve of corn per acre. Strike the balance between these results, and you have one item, out of many, whereby to judge of the relative value of a slave, and a labourer who feels an interest in the result of his labor.

The instructions of the Board left it discretionary with me, to form Societies where it might seem most desireable. Having formerly experienced the entire inutility of forming Societies where there is a sparse population; and having seen great numbers of the Societies formed by the Parent Institution, with the sole view of collecting a temporarily fund, become extinct immediately after the meeting which gave them birth, I determined to try to avoid a like result by a more systematic procedure. I have given to each County & to each Committee, a geographical limit, and to each officer an assigned duty, and thus by having responsibilities entire & known, we hope

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