Wm McLain
March 14th 1843

Washington March 20th 1843.

Sir

The President of the United States has been pleased to constitute me an agent to expend two thousand dollars in erecting buildings in Liberia in Africa, for the reception of South Africans, as may be captured by the American Navy; in suppressing the Slave trade. It is my desire to expend the money, to the best advantage for the Government, and in a manner that shall most conduce to the comfort and convenience of those who may occupy the buildings.

Your residence in Liberia several years, and your intimate knowledge of the kind of houses usually erected, the materials used, and the best mode of obtaining labor there, are my apology for troubling you in this matter. Be pleased to inform me, what kind of buildings you think it is best to erect, of what height, size of rooms, and materials to be used? Is glass generally used, and is it necessary? Would you use shingles for the roof or thatch? and if shingles, is it best to purchase them ~~here~~, or have them made in Liberia? Are there any saw mills on the coast. Why may not comfortable houses be constructed of logs, as they are in our new Settlements, and as you not