Rev. R R Gurley
Dec 18th

Dr James Hall
Colo Office
Baltimore

Collect Office
WS Stewart

Harper Dec. 17. 1843

My Dear Friend

Your letters bearing dates June 8 – May 6. and Sept. 9 were received with papers etc. all of which were truly acceptable.

This letter is designed to be lengthy, as I must give you many particulars of news which J. B. R. may not find time to mention.

First then we have been on the point of having a war with the whole of the Gallo tribe; matters are not yet properly adjusted, nor do we believe that our colony can be secure until our Natives are thrashed.

For Mr. King Freeman determined on convening all the Kings & Head Men of the Gallo Country in grand Council. These declared object was the adjustment of all difficulties between different members of the tribe; the settlement of boundary questions, and to propose measures for the settlement of all contentions that might, could or would arise in future. This effected, they were to concert measures for reducing the price of Native products in the interior which had arisen to nearly the same standard as the prices on the beach. They gave their word that the Trade of our Colony would not be interfered with, nor obstructed.

Many of us during this extraordinary session, and indeed as soon as it was in contemplation, argued results unfavorable to the Colony. Gov. J. B. R. confidence in Old Freeman's word, led him to refrain from measures which might have prevented the meeting of the Tribe. Circumstances seemed to justify the course of the Governor, he was anxious to open the Camwood Trade & had been in the bush himself, for the purpose, and hoped that he would have it in his power to concert measures with all the Beach people for opening the path, and settling all palavers in the bush. He did not believe that Freeman would deceive him, whilst I declared that I had no confidence in any native African.

The Council was engaged nearly three weeks in settlement of their disputes, and regulating prices for the interior. On the last day they presented themselves in a body (King Freeman excepted, who affected to be opposed) and demanded of Gov. an advance on the prices of all articles purchased of them. They were told that the prices we were then giving, had been agreed upon by the King, two years previously, that we had no disposition to alter the prices except to reduce them, as they were higher than on any other part of the Coast: this at the time was considered an imposition to which we were very ~~[illegible]~~ to submit to and that we would make no advance particularly when the Kings had assured us it was not their intention to distract our trade. They ~~[illegible]~~ of no doubt and for some articles tripled the amount we ~~[illegible]~~ and ~~[illegible]~~ it on us in such a manner that Rissarum indignantly declared that, he "would eat grass first." They then left us in a rage, to put their threat in execution, but immediately sent the following Law.

"No Native of the Gallo Tribe, shall sell to the Colonist, nor shall any members of distant Tribes be allowed to trade with them."

"No Native shall be allowed to perform any manner of labor for the Colonist. All Boys, Girls or labourers, now living with or employed by either Colonist or Missionaries, in the Gallo Country, shall immediately return to their respective homes, and hold no future communication with them. No Native is hereafter allowed to carry message or note or letter to or from Colonist nor Missionary, nor shall they board vessels at sea, nor land cargo for them; individually found breaking these or any one of these rules shall forfeit, either him or his family not less than ten, nor more than twenty "women bullocks three goats &c. On a repetition of the offence, the individual and family shall be expelled from the Gallo Tribe."

"Every Gallo subject shall do all in his, her, or their power to prevent Colonist and Missionaries from procuring Wood and Water, and to starve them into an agreement with the demands of the Tribe."

"We the Members of this Constitution do declare King Freeman, the Head of the Gallo Tribe, who will concert measures for enforcing the above laws for Six years, during which time we bind ourselves to join him with our forces in the event of a war with the Americans."

Adjournment was then passed sine die, and every fellow of them made for home with all his might leaving Freeman to "kill the Cat."

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

II. Correspondence Received
A. Letter Books

8. 1843—1844

1843