On searching for the causes of this unusual unhealthiness & mortality I find that those who reside on the cape have escaped. East Harper there were two fatal cases, and the remainder on Stance road, and the avenue. Our last dry season was peculiarly noticed as being much warmer than heretofore, the thermometer indicating an average temperature of 86 degrees; with warm & sultry nights — In March and April there was not a single shower of rain sufficient to moisten the earth.

On the North side, and running parallel with the avenue at a distance of less than a quarter of a mile there runs a tract of low and marshy land, its extent is three or four miles: this tract was selected by the natives for cultivation this year, and was cleared up in February and March — their farms butt the lands of the colonists and in many instances, where ~~[illegible]~~ permission has been given extend into the lots of the colonist — a clean sweep has been made, so that standing in the neighbourhood of Mt. Vaughan, ~~the~~ we have at a single view not less ~~than three~~ miles of land cleared of heavy timber and bushes and now producing a flourishing Rice crop. To the eye this is an agreeable view, but in other respects the clearing of this land is to be lamented — it was selected because the natives apprehended by signs unknown to us an unusual drought. The clearing of these lands, exposed this swamp or marsh to the fee rays of the sun, thus causing exhalations from its surface which were wafted over the habitations of the colonist, causing the great amount of sickness which has prevailed. On Holmes Road, there has been but one or two cases, but now fatal I have have concluded that this was owing to the belt of uncleared land which separates that Road from the Maryland avenue being a screen or acting as a screen and intercepting the miasmatic effluvia propelled by the land breeze — in Tubmantown & near Mt. Vaughan the cases were most numerous

I am happy in being able to state that at present the health of the colony is in a great measure restored, there being only two cases of disease of any severity, and of these there is ~~but~~ doubts of a favorable termination. The proportion of deaths to the number of cases treated is fourteen in an hundred & thirty of all ages and sexes — I mean cases where danger was apprehended. To me the last few months has been a season of unceasing labour & anxiety; so great indeed that altho' I have not suffered in health yet I feel both mental and physical exhaustion — and but for my occasionally engaging in the foregoing, yet exhilarating chase of the Antelope and Gazelle, I should be quite worn out. I shall hail the arrival of Dr Fletcher to share with & relieve me of a portion of my duties with satisfaction, and sincerely hope & trust that he may have made so diligent and profitable use of the advantages that he has had as to leave no doubt of the possibility of his return in our next expedition. I have have heard but little of him since his departure, and nothing at all of his progress for which I feel the most anxiety. He possesses many qualities admirable, in a physician and from his experience in Africa must succeed in America.

The Governmental affairs of our Colony are all regular and harmonious. — You have been perhaps informed of something like the formation of a Tariff by the Agent & Council in consequence of the difficulties that are in the way of procuring the ad. val of imports — I believe the revenue is increased by the alteration; but in my opinion it would have been better to have persevered in the attempt to procure from every Captain the cost of his Merchandize as per Service.

There has been but a single case of seizure, and that for landing goods valued at about ~~[illegible]~~ seventy five cents, as a sample without permit, though it was done more through forgetfulness than any disposition to evade the law.

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

II. Correspondence Received
A. Letter Books

9. 1845—1846

1846