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great extent personally unknown, I shall make it my business
to prepare myself with letters of introduction & by
this means I shall in some measure, save my
feelings. It is no easy job to recalculate the whole
subject of African colonization in the U.S. The number
of colonists are so few & the blacks seem so hostile
to it, that I am not infrequently told "it is an
impracticable scheme. We have poured out our
money like water & all to no purpose".
The cause seems to have languished in this region
at least, & the colonization Society has not that
magic influence it formerly possessed. Of late
years there has been so little emigration, & the
blacks have increased so rapidly, that
many of the well disposed planters are too
prone to favour compulsory legislative policy,
however. I find this feeling prevail, I strive to
soothe it down & urge that a moral rather
than a legal power be exerted. I demand
that we must obtain the confidence of
blacks by mild, kind & persuasive means,
by leaving the negro free in his election
to go to a happy & contented community in Africa
will be made, whereas if we force them
there they will make a discontented & unhappy
community. The prejudices of the negro must be
overcome in that the white man must tell him
how capable the colony is of receiving him now than
it was 12 or 15 years ago. If every white man
would impart the right kind of information to them
& the Abolitionists would for once in their lives
practise moderation, the scheme would succeed &
I will spare no pains in peaceably & properly
accomplishing so desirable a result.

Yours with high respect
J. W. Wells

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

II. Correspondence Received

A. Letter Books

10. 1847--1848--1849

1849