To Messrs.
William Capell
and others
Committee

Baltimore Nov. 20. 1852

Gentlemen,

The Board of Managers of the State Society received in due season, and read with great interest, the proceedings of a meeting of the citizens, held in Harper on the 11 November 1852, together with the communication of your Committee, and the very able address delivered on that occasion by Mr Wm A Brent. A painfull illness, which afflicted me last spring, posponed action on the subject untill July, when the whole matter was refered to a Committee, consisting of Messrs. Charles Howard, Hugh D. Evans, William D. Gill, Geo. W. Dobbin and F. W Brune, - who gave to it their exclusive attention, and reported at length to the Board - with a resolution recommending to the people of the Colony the taking of a vote on the question of independence - appointing a convention to prepare a Constitution, and selecting an Agent to come to this Country to settle the terms of separation. Should independence be determined upon by the people - The occasion was one of very great interest, and believe me, and believe me every thing you said was most carefully and deliberately considered, not only by the committee but by the Board. the result being the report and resolutions referred to, and a letter from the Board, and a letter from the Board has been communicated to Dr McGill, with instructions to give the widest publicity to the documents in the Colony.

You will find that the Board do not enter upon any detail of the course to be pursued in the event of seperation, - nor do they dwell upon the features of the Constitution you may propose. They suggest, that the details will properly be matter of discussion when the Agent makes his appearance - the determination of the Board being to act in the most liberal manner; and the Constitution, they prefer should be perfected by yourselves, and before being

finally adopted, or submitted to the people for ratification, be sent to Baltimore, that any suggestions that may occur to us here, may be made and returned to you - the result being the combined action of such legal knowledge as may be possessed here and your own experience of the wants of the Colony. It strikes the Board that this course would be a safe and wise one.

The Board do not pretend to say that you are, in all respects, able to assume independence: but they look upon you as being forced to it by circumstances. They can give no abler argument on this point, than they have received from Africa. They concur, too, with you, in what seems to be the opinion of a large majority, that seperate independence, in view of a confederation with the Republic, one day or another, is far, far preferable to County annexation, not only on your account, but looking to the great interests of a few through all time. On this point, the Board are unanimous. The Board look to the new government advancing slowly, - But they doubt not your capacity - and they believe that the occasion will develope the power and energy that it calls for.

The letter to Dr. McGill is so full, that it is unnecessary to prolong this communication; but, I am requested by the Board, to urge on you their view in regard to trade by the government, as utterly inexpedient and unnecessary - leading to gross abuse and corruption and paralying that individual competition, that must be the soul of your prosperity - They trust too, that you exclude the white man only from trading among you - and that you will think twice before you abandon for $1000 - a year of revenue a great moral. As an independent people you will of course be your own Masters - but the words of advice of old friends, the Board feel sure you will not disregard. Renewing the expression of the satisfaction derived from all your proceedings.

I am gentlemen
Most respectfully
Jno. H. B. Latrobe.
Pres't Mt. St. Col. So.

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

III. Correspondence Sent
D. Latrobe Letter Book

1. July 1836--November 1852

1852