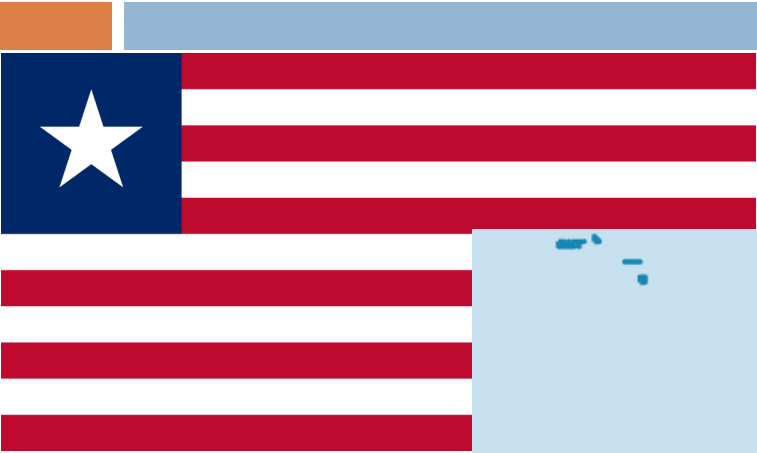




The connection between the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the Commonwealth of Liberia

# Liberia, location in West Africa



# Liberia, 1830

□ Arrow points to Monrovia



# Liberia, 1830, Detail



# THE CONSTITUTION OF LIBERIA, 1839

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the American Colonization Society, January 5, 1839.

The American Colonization Society hereby grants to the colonies or settlements in Liberia, on the western coast of Africa, under its care, the following Constitution:

Article I. The colonies of settlements of Monrovia, New Georgia, Caldwell, Millsburg, Marshall, Bexley, Bassa Cove, and Edina, and such other Colonies hereafter established by this Society, or by Colonization Societies adopting the Constitution of the American Colonization Society, on the Western coast of Africa, are hereby united into one Government, under the name and style of the Commonwealth of Liberia.

# Settlements in 1839



Liberia in 1839 – note all the settlements and colonies named for US states – PA, MS, LA, MD.

These, except for Maryland, united together in 1838 as the Commonwealth of Liberia.

The Maryland colony was annexed to the Commonwealth of Liberia in 1854.

# Why Liberia?

- British had established Sierra Leone by 1787 as colony for Blacks freed in the Am Revolution
- Planters might be more willing to free slaves if they had a place to go
- American Blacks could bring “civilization and Christianity” to Africa
- Moving Blacks to other areas of the US one idea; others saw it as temporary solution or no solution at all

# American Colonization Society

- ❑ American Colonization Society, founded 1816, Washington DC
- ❑ Members included Rev Robert Finley, pres of U Georgia
- ❑ Francis Scott Key, Henry Clay, Bushrod Washington, Elias Boudinot Caldwell
- ❑ Founders of ACS believed free Blacks would clamor to leave US for Africa – not so.

# Convention of Free Negroes of KY

## Convention of Free Negroes of Kentucky

- A convention of Free Negroes was organized in Philadelphia by James Forten in 1813. The National Convention of Free Negroes was called in 1830 by Arthur Tappan and Simeon S. Jocelyn.
- The convention members were anti-colonizationist, against deporting former slaves and free persons, and stood for the abolition of slavery and for equal citizenship to all free persons.
- The Convention of Free Negroes of Kentucky was also established with branches in various cities.
- The exact starting date of the organization is not known, and very little has been written about the group.

# Whose Country?

- David Walker, leading abolitionist from Boston:  
“America is more our country than it is the whites – we have enriched it with our blood and tears. “Will they drive us from our property and homes, which we have earned with our blood?”
- US law on captured slave ships – must be resettled “beyond the limits of the United States”

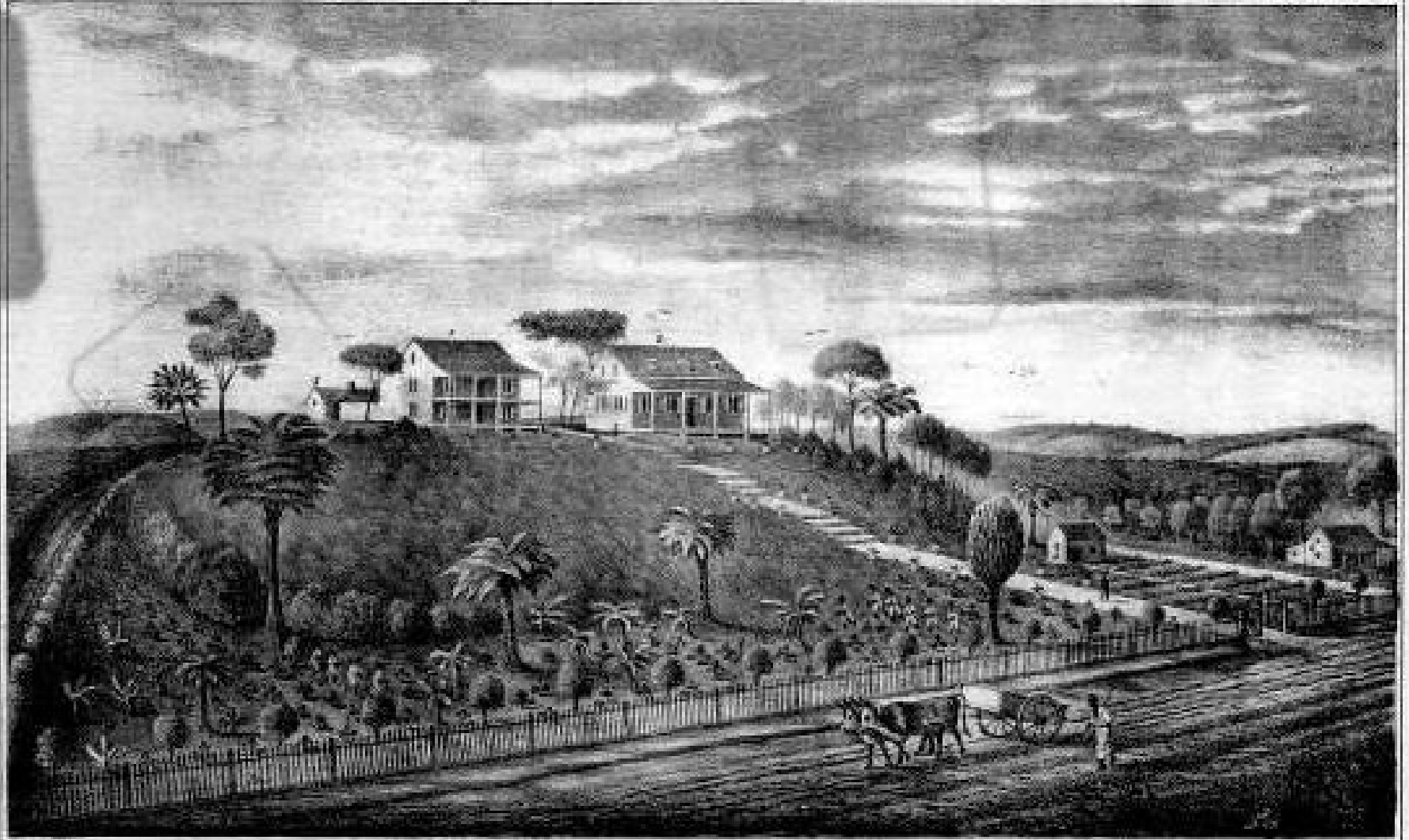
# In Liberia, the Beginning, 1822

- Conditions at first American settlement were horrible, swampy, disease-infested
- Many from first shipload soon moved to Cape Montserrado
- ACS forced local leaders to sell 4,200 acres of land for \$300 (which was never paid in full)
- 25 April 1822, pioneers raised American flag, and named colony “Liberia” and the town, “Monrovia” after President James Monroe

# Early Liberia

- Between 1820 and 1843 (First Census), battles between settlers and natives claimed 74 lives; drowning, 67; childbirth, 13; disease, <1,800
- Soon, state societies of ACS set up colonies – Sinoe by MS, Bassa Cove, by PA, Cape Palmas, by MD (Reef, p31)
- 13 Mar 1825, the *Hunter* reached Liberia; led by Jehudi Ashmun, 66 immigrants from VA, NC and DC settled in new farming community, named “Caldwell” after secretary of ACS

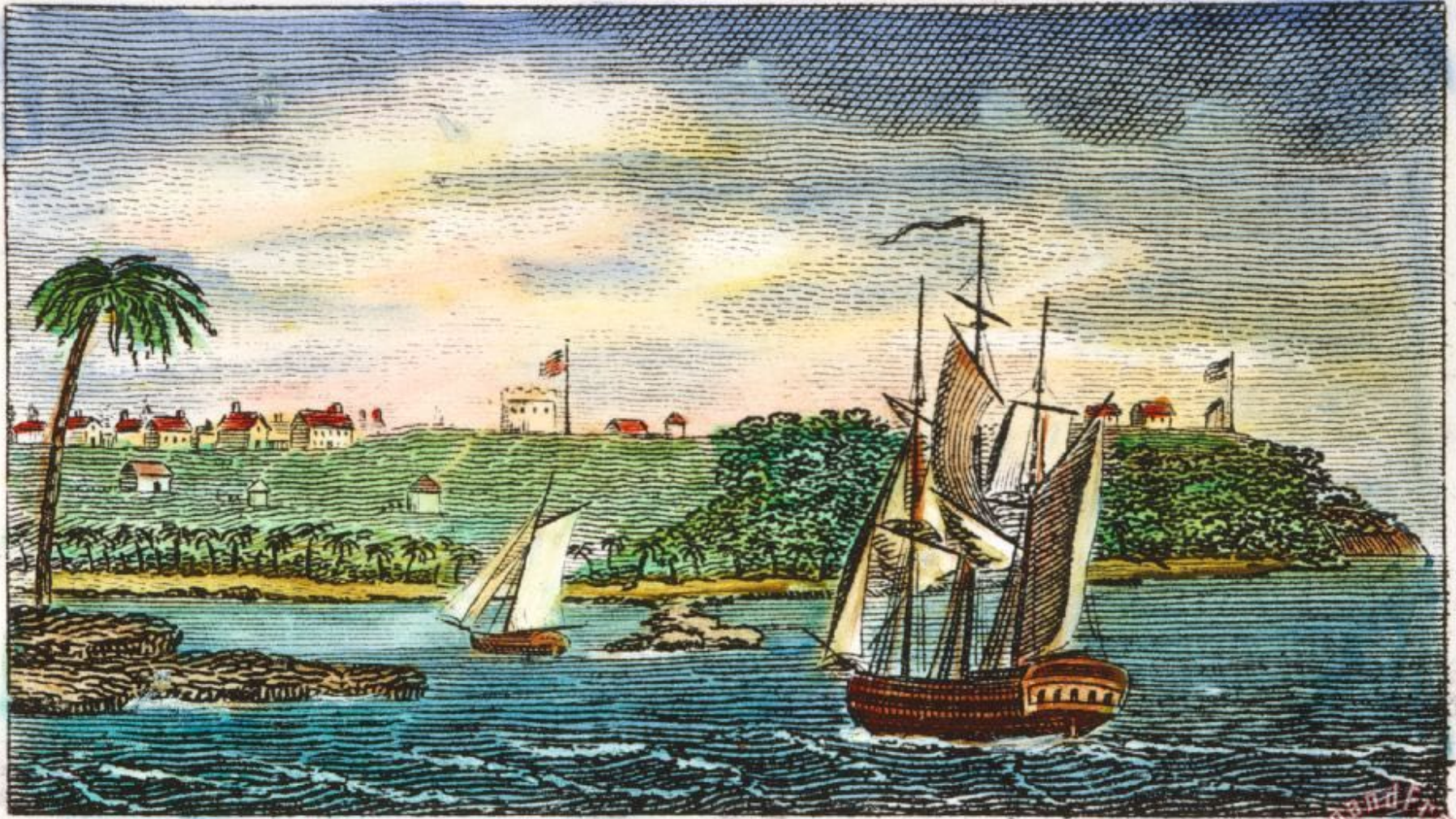
# Early Settlements, Cape Palma, in the Maryland Colony



*1. View of Mission Building. 2. Church. 3. House of the Rev. Mr. Smith. 4. House of the Rev. Mr. Smith. 5. House of the Rev. Mr. Smith. 6. House of the Rev. Mr. Smith. 7. House of the Rev. Mr. Smith. 8. House of the Rev. Mr. Smith. 9. House of the Rev. Mr. Smith. 10. House of the Rev. Mr. Smith.*

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL MISSION, CAPE PALMAS WEST AFRICA.

# Monrovia, in the early days



MONROVIA,

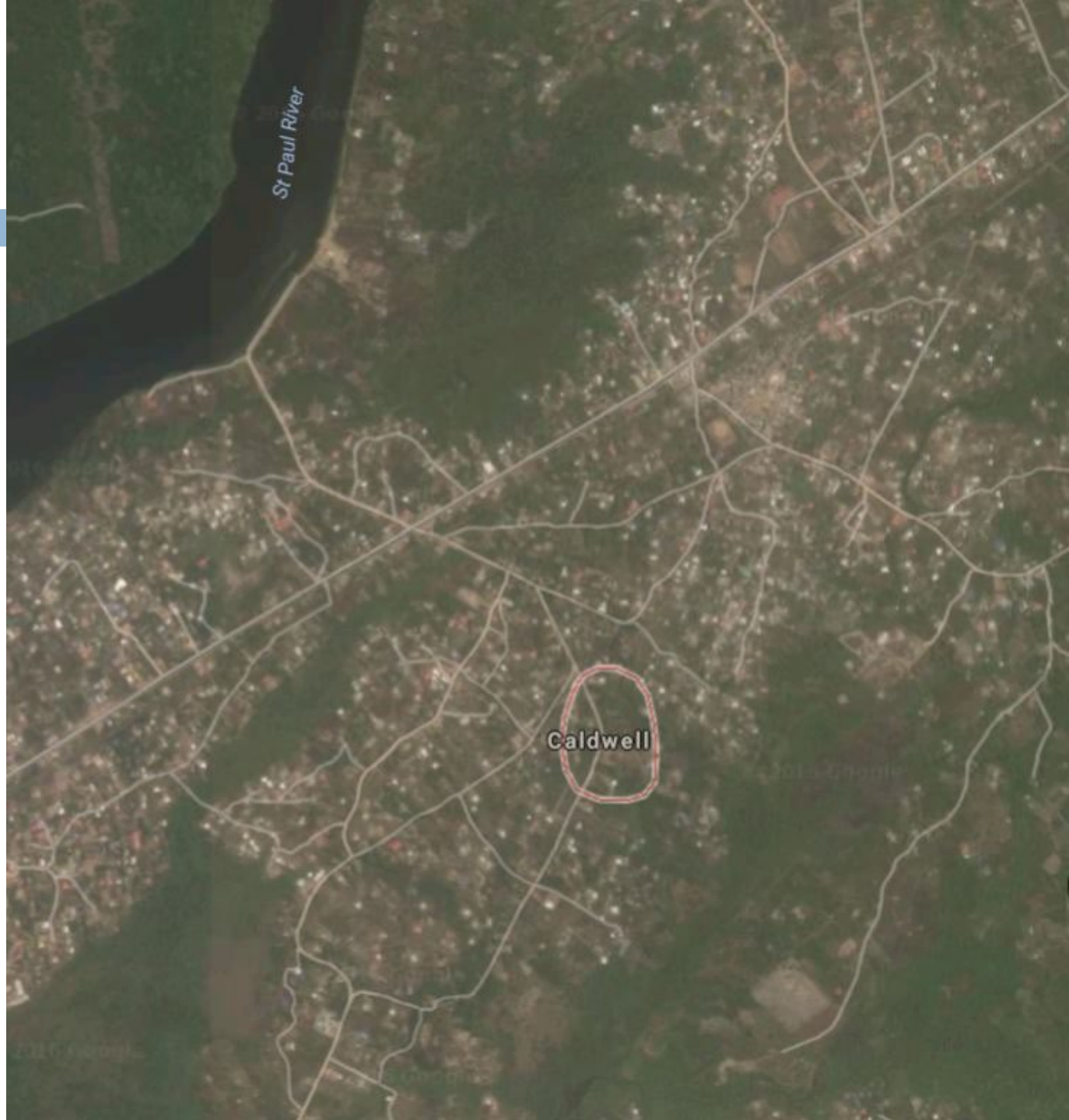
*a settlement of the American Colonization Society in Liberia.*

Painting and Frame.com

# Towns in Liberia – Monrovia, Caldwell, Clay-Ashland



# Caldwell



# Caldwell, Liberia

- Caldwell, Montserrado County, Liberia.
- One of the original settlements comprising the Commonwealth of Liberia in the 1839 Constitution, which was drafted by the American Colonization Society.
- Named for the secretary of the American Colonization Society

# Caldwell, Liberia, 1840

## □ Caldwell described in 1840 by Capt. Bell, USN:

Here are a number of farms delightfully situated. Near the banks of the [St Paul] river is an avenue opened, extending in a straight line for six miles, lined with plantain, banana, and orange trees. On this road, the farms, each of ten acres, are situated; having comfortable dwellings, and cultivated with cassava, Indian corn, rice and sweet potatoes. ... The ground is undulating, elevated from ten to fifteen feet above the water, and commanding beautiful views of the river and opposite banks, which are nearly three quarters of a mile distant, and enjoying the sea breeze throughout the day.” (Reef, p52-53)

# Establishing a Society

- The freedmen developed a society in West Africa much like the one they had left but taking the dominant position in relation to indigenous natives.
- They built houses in the style of Southern mansions and established a hierarchical society with strong continuities to what they had known in the United States.
- They established plantations and battled local tribes for control of the territory, believing their American culture and Christianity made them superior.

Alan Huffman, *Mississippi in Africa: The Saga of the Slaves of Prospect Hill Plantation and Their Legacy in Liberia*,  
University Press of Mississippi, 2004

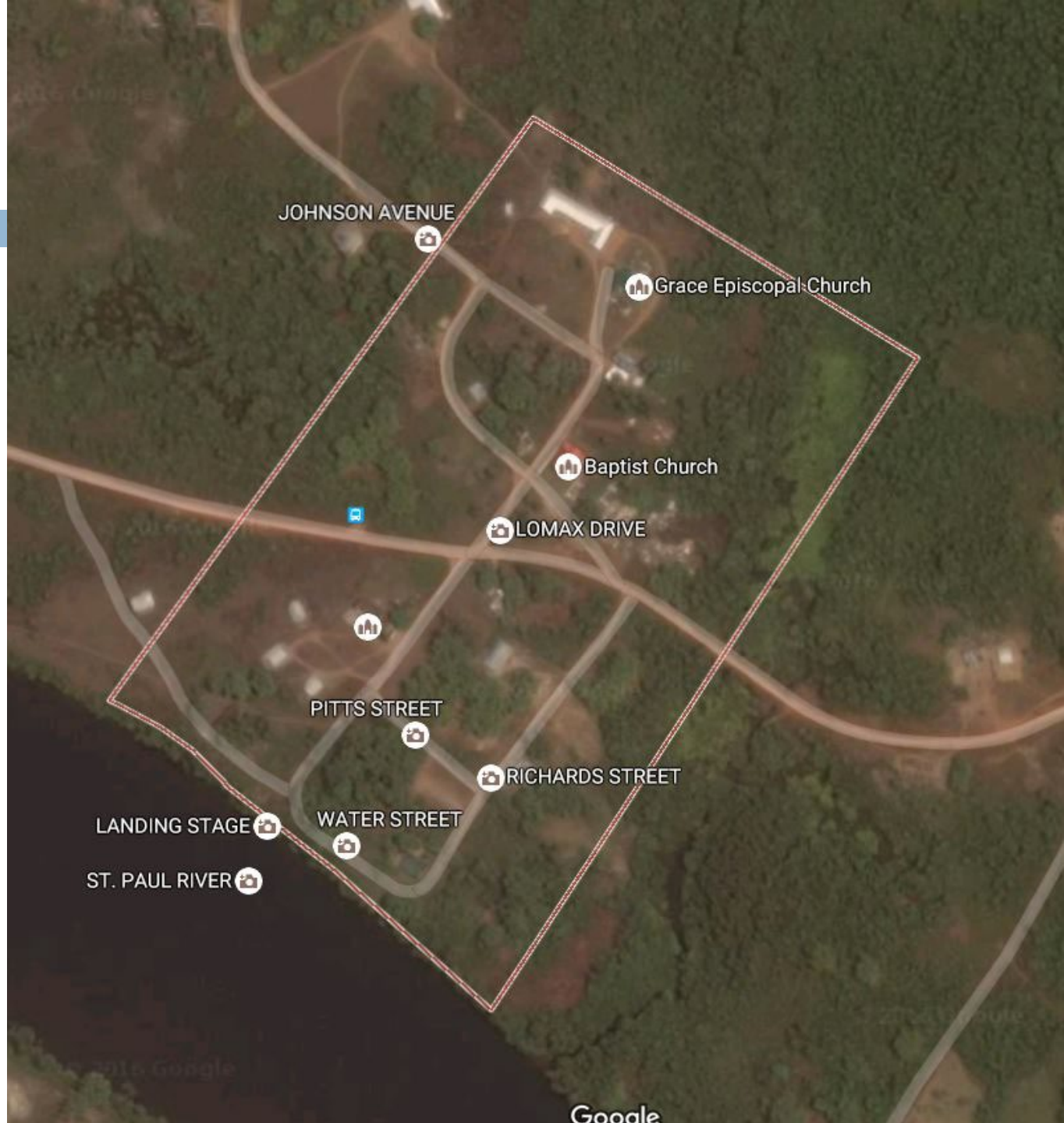
# Home on the St Paul River, near Caldwell and Clay-Ashland



# Moving toward a Republic, 1840-46

- By 1840, Liberia had population of about 2,000 African-American immigrants
- Most educated people lived in Monrovia, center of commerce and government
- Unhappiness with white governors of ACS grew
- Other nations did not recognize ACS's right to tax pass laws
- Joseph Jenkins Roberts, from VA, took lead, and in Oct 1846, settlers voted to become an independent republic; Roberts elected first president.

# Clay-Ashland, Liberia



# Clay-Ashland, Liberia, 1846

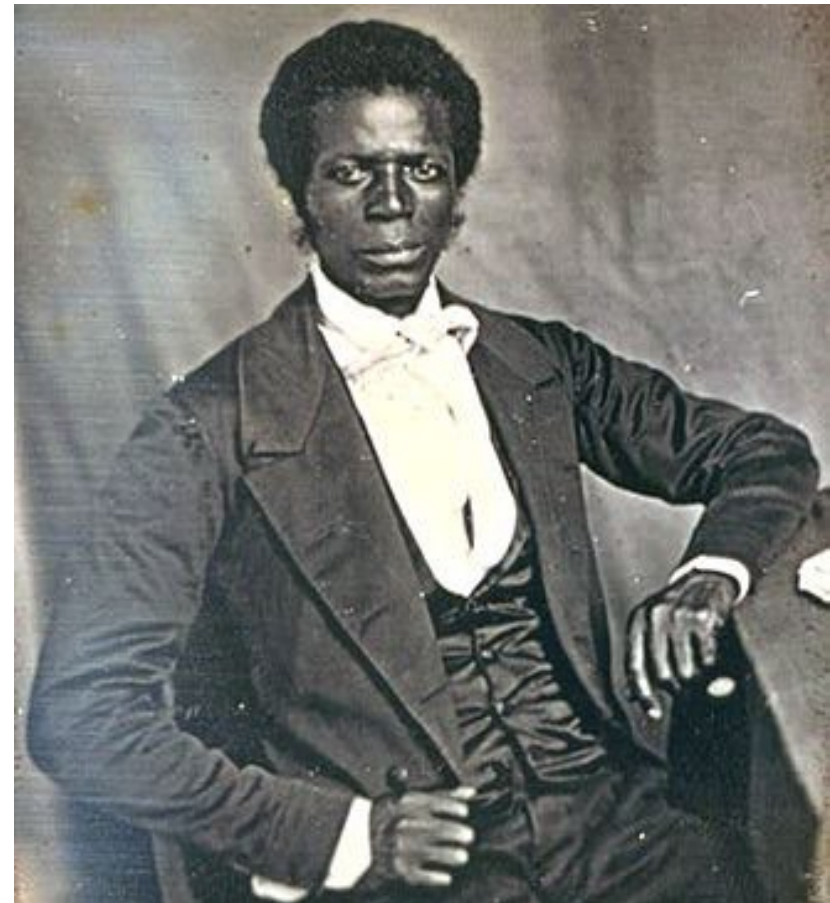
- A Kentucky state affiliate of the ACS was formed in 1828, and members raised money to transport Kentucky blacks — freeborn volunteers as well as slaves set free on the stipulation that they leave the United States — to Africa.
- Township located 10 miles from Monrovia, in the St. Paul River District of Montserrado County.
- Named after Henry Clay — a slave owner and American Colonization Society co-founder who favored gradual emancipation — and his estate Ashland in Lexington, Kentucky.
- Established in 1846, though settled prior to that, Clay-Ashland was part of a colony called Kentucky In Africa, because it was settled by African-American immigrants from Kentucky.
- Clay-Ashland was the colony's main town.

# Convention of Free Negroes of KY, 1847

- According to an article in The Lima Argus newspaper, in 1847, the Kentucky Convention of Free Negroes and the Kentucky Colonization Society had agreed that a representative party of free Negroes from Kentucky would be allowed to go to Liberia for one year to inspect the colony, then return to make a full report to their constituencies. Persons were nominated from Lexington, Maysville, Danville, Richmond, and Louisville.
- The purpose of the proposed plan was to convince more free Negroes in Kentucky to migrate to Liberia. The chosen delegates were Stephen Fletcher, J. Merriwether, H. Underwood, and A. Hooper. They left the United States in 1847, and returned August 1848, along with S. Worrell, a North Carolina delegate.
- The Kentucky delegates' report on the Liberia Colony was favorable, the colony was healthy and prospering satisfactorily. However, Jesse Merriwether wrote an unfavorable report and advised against emigration to Liberia.

# James M Priest

- ❑ Slave of Jane Anderson Meaux, who was born 1780 in St. Asaph [later Fort Logan], Lincoln County.
- ❑ She stipulated in her will that all of her slaves were to be freed after her death, under the condition that they go to live in Liberia.
- ❑ Prior to her death, she educated and freed James M. Priest.
- ❑ He was sent to Liberia to evaluate situation of former slaves.
- ❑ On return, sent to school, 1840-1843; graduated to become an ordained Presbyterian minister under direction of Rev. Samuel Taylor in Jessamine County.



# James M Priest

- Priest was such a good student that Meaux and Taylor decided he needed a more formal education, tried to get him admitted to Centre College in Danville, KY, around 1835.
- The school would not accept Priest as a student, and he was enrolled in McCormick Theological Seminary located in New Albany, IN.
- After graduation, James M. Priest returned to Liberia and was the first foreign missionary from McCormick Theological Seminary.
- Priest would become the Vice President of the Republic of Liberia, 1864-1868.
- He was serving as the Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia when he died in July of 1883.

# Liberia in Washington, DC, 1862

- US until 1862 refused to recognize Liberia – southerners did not want black diplomat residing in DC
- Emigration slowed after Civil War as many former slaves hoped for better conditions in US
- As Jim Crow laws and KKK rose, immigration to Liberia again increased but not as much as migration to northern cities



*Joseph Jenkins Roberts, first president of Liberia. After leaving office in 1856, Roberts became president of the newly founded Liberia College. He served again as the nation's president from 1872 until 1876.*

# Emigrants from Kentucky (Fiftieth Annual Report of the ACS; Washington, Colonization Society, 1867, pp56-64)

Ajax, May 1833, 99 emigrants  
Saluda, Feb 1840, 12 emigrants  
Union, May 1841, 20 emigrants  
Chipola, Nov 1844, 21 emigrants  
Rothschild, Jan 1846, 34 emigrants  
Mary Wilkes, Jan 1847, 3 emigrants  
Nehemiah Rich, Jan 1848, 28 emigrants  
Clinto'a Wright, Apr 1849, 19 emigrants  
D C Foster, Mar 1850, 19 emigrants  
Alida, Feb 1851, 42 emigrants  
Julia Ford, Jan 1852, 16 emigrants  
Zebra, Dec 1852, 13 emigrants  
Banshee, Apr 1853, 5 emigrants  
Banshee, Nov 1853, 69 emigrants

Sophia Walker, May 1854, 44 emigrants  
Gen. Pierce, Dec 1854, 3 emigrants  
Cora, May 1855, 52 emigrants  
Elvira Owen, May 1856, 67 emigrants  
M C Stevens, Dec 1856, 19 emigrants  
M C Stevens, May 1857, 42 emigrants  
M C Stevens, Dec 1857, 10 emigrants  
M C Stevens, May 1858, 14 emigrants  
M C Stevens, Nov 1858, 6 emigrants  
M C Stevens, Nov 1859, 1 emigrant  
M C Stevens, May 1860, 1 emigrant  
M C Stevens, Nov 1860, 2 emigrants  
Justina, Jan 1862, 13 emigrants  
M C Stevens, Nov 1862, 1 emigrant

# Emigration to Liberia by 1867

TABLE OF EMIGRANTS—Continued.

Number.	Names of Vessels.	Date of Sailing.	Massachusetts.	Rhode Island.	Connecticut.	New York.	New Jersey.	Pennsylvania.	Delaware.	Maryland.	Dist. Columbia.	Virginia.	North Carolina.	South Carolina.	Georgia.	Alabama.	Mississippi.	Louisiana.	Tennessee.	Kentucky.	Ohio.	Indiana.	Illinois.	Missouri.	Michigan.	Iowa.	Wisconsin.	Texas.	Ind. Territory.	Barbados.	Total.	Total by Years.
144	Edith Rose.....	Mar., '66	..	..	..	..	..	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4	621
145	Golconda.....	Nov., '66	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	282	194	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	600	
146	Edith Rose.....	Dec., '66	..	..	..	..	..	14	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	144	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14	
147	Forest Oak.....	Dec., '66	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3	
Totals.....			63	36	55	295	77	337	9	580	109	3733	1371	722	1341	105	551	309	870	675	56	83	65	83	1	5	7	16	9	346	11,909	

## RECAPITULATION.

Massachusetts.....	63
Rhode Island.....	36
Connecticut.....	55
New York.....	295
New Jersey.....	77
Pennsylvania.....	337
Delaware.....	9
Maryland.....	580
District of Columbia.....	109
Virginia.....	3,733
North Carolina.....	1,371
South Carolina.....	722
Georgia.....	1,341
Alabama.....	105
Mississippi.....	551
Louisiana.....	309
Tennessee.....	870

Kentucky.....	675
Ohio.....	56
Indiana.....	83
Illinois.....	65
Missouri.....	83
Michigan.....	1
Iowa.....	5
Wisconsin.....	7
Texas.....	16
Indian Territory.....	9
Barbados.....	346
Total.....	11,909

Born free.....	4,541
Purchased their freedom.....	344
Emancipated to go to Liberia..	5,957

"Freedmen".....	753
From Barbados, W. I.....	346
Unknown.....	68
Total.....	11,909

The Maryland State Coloniza- tion Society has settled at "Maryland in Liberia".....		1,227
Total.....		13,136

NOTE.—The number of Recaptured Africans sent to Liberia by the Government of the United States—not embraced in the foregoing table—5,722.

# Liberian Presidents Born In The US

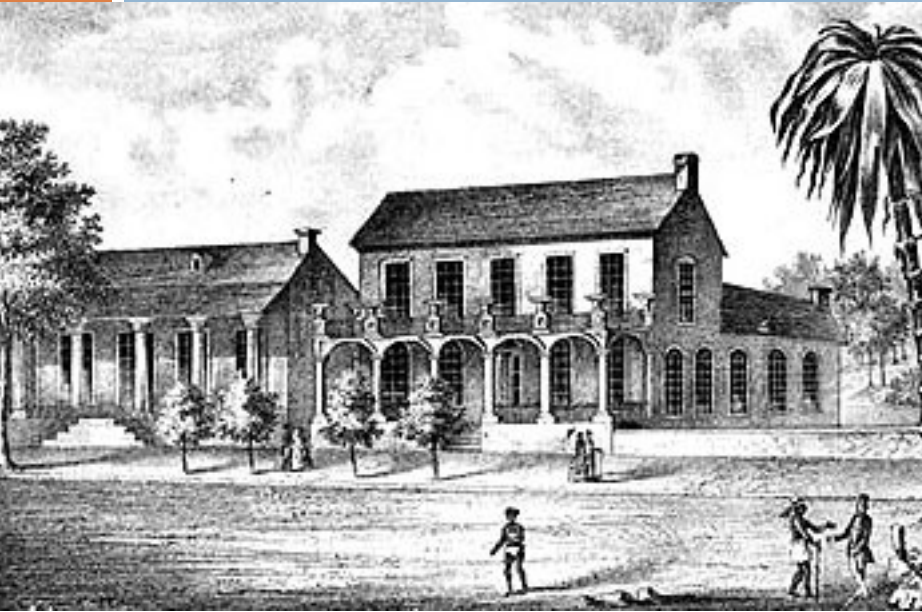
Americo-Liberians formed a cultural elite in Liberia.  
The following presidents of Liberia were born in the US:

- Joseph Jenkins Roberts, 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Born in Norfolk, VA.
- Stephen Allen Benson, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Born in Cambridge, MD.
- Daniel Bashiel Warner, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Born in Baltimore County, MD.
- James Spriggs-Payne, 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Born in Richmond, VA
- Edward James Roye, 5<sup>th</sup>. Born in Newark, OH.
- James Skivring Smith, 6<sup>th</sup>. Born in Charleston, SC.
- Anthony W. Gardiner, 9<sup>th</sup>. Born in Southampton Co, VA.
- Alfred F. Russell, 10<sup>th</sup>. Born in Bourbon Co, KY.
- William D. Coleman, 13<sup>th</sup>. Born in Fayette County, KY.
- Garretson W. Gibson, 14<sup>th</sup>. Born in Baltimore, MD

In addition, the grandparents of President William V S Tubman (1895-1971) were from Frankfort, KY.



# Monrovia, 1850-1900



1. Pres. Roberts's Home
2. Liberian Senate, 1893
3. Ashmun St, Monrovia 1895



# Why Colonization Failed

- The US was home, not Africa; few free blacks left willingly
- Returnees told many negative stories about physical living conditions in Liberia
- Many who were freed on condition of going to Liberia preferred slavery
- ACS and KCS never had enough money to support emigrants
- Emigration from KY was voluntary not forced
- Emigrationists like Birney later noted that many free blacks were substantial, hard-working citizens, and welcome to stay in KY
- Few masters could provide funds for freed slaves to emigrate
- State aid to emigrants was meager and short-lived

# President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Elected, 2005, the first female head of state in Africa, speaking at the United Nations



# US Ambassador, Christine Elder

Christine Elder was sworn in June 20, 2016 as U.S. Ambassador to Liberia. Her other Washington assignments include tours in the Bureaus of Near Eastern and European Affairs, as well as the Secretary's Operations Center, the Bureau of Economic Affairs, and the Bureau of International Information Programs. She speaks German and Portuguese.

A native of Chicago and **Kentucky**, Ambassador Elder holds degrees from the **University of Kentucky** and The George Washington University.

From a former student of mine, a Marine guard at the US Embassy in Monrovia:

“She hosted a mini Kentucky Derby back in May and invited the president along with his officials. I saw this and told her I needed to send you a pic of her holding this. She actually gifted it to me! “



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