

Letters and Notes on Liberia, 1828–1834

Documents held in the National Archives of Liberia until the civil war that began in 1989

Probably lost in the destruction of the archives building or by exposure to the elements

Originally photocopied or transcribed by Sven Holsoe in Monrovia

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Introduction

This collection is the first publication of eighteen documents from the early history of the settlement (later nation) of Liberia. The manuscripts date from 1828 to 1834. This introduction addresses the provenance of the documents and the importance of the years of composition. It is followed by short list of suggested readings and a note on transcription.

The initial collection of the manuscripts was performed at the National Archives Building in Monrovia by anthropologist Svend Holsoe (doctorate in anthropology, Boston University, 1967). Holsoe (born 1939) began publishing on Liberian topics in the 1960s, eventually becoming a major figure in anthropological scholarship on the settlers and the indigenous peoples of the Pepper Coast. When Holsoe began his research in the 1960s, many of these documents were already degraded. Faded ink, water stains, and partly torn pages were common. He photocopied some of the pages and he transcribed others onto typewritten sheets. Possibly he chose the ones in the worst condition to transcribe, since photocopies might have been nearly illegible. Holsoe performed an invaluable service. When a civil war engulfed Liberia beginning in 1989, the National Archives Building was assaulted, damaged, and looted. Some of the documents stored there were destroyed in the attacks. Some may have been stolen. Many, if not all, were exposed to weather. The Louis Arthur Grimes School of the University of Liberia now holds the remainder of the collection, but it is not known whether these early manuscripts survived. A re-cataloguing of the documents has not yet been possible. Fortunately, Holsoe's papers are now preserved at the Indiana University Libraries (Bloomington) Liberian Collections, so copies he made in his early-career research are available for scholars. This collection in *Vestiges* provides both transcriptions of manuscripts that he photocopied and versions of his typescripts.

The years from 1828 to 1834 were important for Liberia and for the Pepper Coast. First, these were years in which the Americo-Liberian settlers expanded their territorial holdings, dispelling any illusion that indigenous people might have had in the early 1820s that the settlers were there only for coastal trade and had no intent of occupying the land. From a thin strip of coastal land centered on Cape Mesurado, the settlers began moving east and north as they sought terrain for farms and, more commonly, trading outposts along waterways that would allow access to commercial relations with inland groups. Many of the place names mentioned in the collection here were created in this expansionist thrust, and disparate coastal settlements, with inhabitants from different parts of the USA, were drawn into the orbit of Cape Mesurado. These years were a period of new and greater interactions between settlers and indigenous people. Second, these were years in which the settlers were developing a complicated relationship with local slave-traders and slaveholders. Ostensibly opposed to both the slave trade and slavery itself, the settlers became immersed in a regional economy based on slavery for both production and transportation of goods. The slave trade was active in nearby coastal factories. One of the gems within this collection is a set of documents concerning Grand Cape Mount (9–13, 18). There are very few surviving documents on Grand Cape Mount from this time period, so these are especially valuable. It was a coastal northern branch of the Cape Mesurado settlement, on the border with Sierra Leone, about eight-five kilometers northwest of Monrovia. A Cuban–Spanish slave trade (soon to become infamous in the 1840–1841 *Amistad* court cases) was active in the area. Early-nineteenth-century Sierra Leone was gripped by the same paradox that entrapped early Liberia: a settlement ostensibly dedicated to freedom was situated in the middle of a regional economy resting on slave labor and the trade in slaves. The settlers at Grand Cape Mount have sometimes been thought to have taken advantage of their distance from Monrovia and to have themselves openly become slave traders. The documents here expressed hostility to the Cuban–Spanish trade, yet it is not clear whether the motivation was opposition to the slave trade or desire to muscle the Spanish out of the local trade in order to supplant them. Third, these were years of the death of the early leaders of Liberia (Jehudi Ashmun [1794–1828] and Lott Cary [c. 1780–1828]), leading to a new generation that spearheaded the territorial expansion and a new series of contacts with indigenous peoples. Traces of these contacts were recorded in this collection. Relatively unmediated accounts of interactions between settlers and natives are very rare for these early years.

Researchers who wish to utilize the collection presented here can place it in a larger set of publications and manuscripts concerning early Liberia. Publications along with some

manuscripts are available from the first generation of leaders of the Americo-Liberian settlers: Ashmun and Cary. Whenever possible, manuscripts are preferable insofar as publications by black settlers like Cary were often so heavily edited and corrected that the results were unreliable. The editor was often Ralph Randolph Gurley, to whom some of the letters reproduced here were addressed. The next generation of settler leaders—Elijah Johnson and Augustus Curtis—were much less represented in print or in manuscripts. Since Johnson and Curtis traveled between Cape Mesurado and from Monrovia to Grand Cape Mount, their manuscripts in this collection are invaluable. Topographical names here signified new settlements established in this expansionist period as well as the rivers along with settlers and traders moved. Towns mentioned are Monrovia, Millsburg, Caldwell, Halfway Farm, Fort Stockton, Bassa, and Sesters, along with regions Cape Mesurado, Grand Bassa, and Grand Cape Mount. Rivers mentioned are the Junk, the St. John, the St. Paul, and the Bar (a general term for a coastal water road but also a small river in Grand Cape Mount connecting Lake Piso to the Atlantic Ocean). Pressing concerns of the settlers appeared often: "fever" (malaria); deeds for territory; possibilities for trade or agriculture; financial dealings with American Colonization Society (the U.S. sponsoring body); and the necessity of dealing with indigenous people sometimes violently, sometimes cooperatively. Appropriately, for people who had crossed the Atlantic and had been coastal dwellers first in North America and then in the Pepper Coast, a large number of ship names appeared. Some evidence of interactions with indigenous peoples—Kru, Dei, Vai, Gola, Grebo—can be gleaned from these documents. As territorial expansion and inland trade continued, other native groups would be drawn into this network.

The first African mentioned was King Freeman (Bede Sia Pa Nieman), a Grebo ruler who in the 1820s ran into conflict with the first wave of settlers but who reached an accord with a second wave of settlers who arrived at Cape Palmas in the 1830s. Ultimately, his own people turned against him, suspicious that he had welcomed settlers who had brought them bad luck. King Bromley (more often, Brumley) was a Dei ruler with whom the settlers had sharp conflicts in the 1820s and 1830s over land and over his sale of captives to slave traders. The Dei were in a difficult situation around 1830. They had established themselves as middlemen in trade between Cape Mesurado and more remote areas controlled by groups like the Vai, Gola, and Mandingo. Yet the settlers were pressuring them to cede land that would allow new settler-controlled trade outposts distant from the coast, for instance at the headwaters the St. Paul River, where commerce from the hinterland could connect easily to the coast. The African individual most mentioned was Fan Tolo (also spelled Fantolo, Fah

Torah, Fana Toro, Gotolo, with other variations). He was a warrior in the Grand Cape Mount region who would by 1841 become dominant over the Vai, who had previously been subject to Gola rulers. Other African individuals and societies were mentioned as were features of settler–indigenous interactions: wars, deeds, palavers, and gifts such as rum, cloth, livestock, tobacco, and gunpowder.

An 1831 dispatch from Grand Cape Mount reflected the complexity of settler–native interactions in that border region. War characterized the region, Elijah Johnson asserted. He described it as a conflict between a Spanish slave trader (Gomez) and an African champion of the slaves (Prince Peter). Johnson suspected Gomez of stirring up Fan Tolo against the settlers. Prince Peter was a member of an elite Gola slave-trading family. His father, King Peter Careful (Zola Duma), having amassed riches trading slaves and various goods, had used his wealth and influence to unseat Vai rulers and put himself in their place. He died in 1827. It was unlikely that his son was liberating slaves from Spanish traders in 1831. Rather, the conflict between Gomez and Prince Peter was over dominance of the slave trade in the Grand Cape Mount region. It is further unlikely that Johnson and Augustus Curtis (also at Grand Cape Mount) misunderstood the nature of the hostilities. Conflict over control of the slave trade was not abolitionist. The fluid situation was soon to change when Fan Tolo attacked the Gola and inserted himself as ruler of the Vai and became a supplier of slaves to coastal traders. Curtis would marry one of Fan Tolo's daughters, creating an alliance for trade purposes. Fan Tolo was a signatory of an 1841 agreement with the English government that interdicted the slave trade at Grand Cape Mount, yet the trade there survived through the 1850s. Fan Tolo himself would in 1844 be challenged by a younger man who seized dozens of female slaves from one of the older man's allies. His authority notwithstanding, Fan Tolo proved unable to secure the return of the captives. Johnson seems not to have said the half of it when he called Grand Cape Mount a war zone.

The Grand Cape Mount black settlers and the white American Colonization Society agent A. D. Williams reported on African customs: a gift of a man's dismembered arm; preservation of the skulls of men of high standing who died in war; cannibalism of defeated enemies' bodies; and drums with tympani made of human skin. Curtis wrote that the gift of the arm was ostensibly meant to honor him yet he was discomfited when he recognized the arm (by skin markings, perhaps) as that of a man he knew, apparently deceased. It is significant that in these documents "barbarous" customs were described as characteristic of Africans living in Grand Cape Mount. The black settlers and the white agents always assumed that they represented civilization, while that Africans around them were savage.

Descriptions of violence in indigenous societies thus expressed a very partial perspective, and they cannot be taken at face value without consideration of the context. Around 1830 in Grand Cape Mount settlers were indeed perceiving a shocking level of conflict and violence. It is not clear whether Grand Cape Mount was actually more violent than were other areas of the Pepper Coast. It could have been an incubator of violence insofar as it was removed from Monrovia and Freetown (where there were more watchful eyes relatively hostile to slave traders) and it was a location where several groups—probably including Americo-Liberian settlers—were vying for control of the local slave trade. The trade itself was under pressure on the waters off the coast from English, American, and French naval patrols. Two topographical features perhaps made Grand Cape Mount attractive to slave traders under siege: a protected bay (where factors could reach the water unmolested) and the highest peak on the Liberian coast, 326 meters above sea level (where lookouts could scan for naval patrols). In this area, described by Johnson as a war zone, violence may have become more pronounced, either in actuality or in the minds of the settlers in the area. In brief, Grand Cape Mount, distant from Monrovia and Freetown, was a region marked by intense competition among various slave trading groups in a time when the trade itself was under attack—a place where violence could easily surface and become evident to those who were recording their experiences in letters and other documents.

Suggestions for further reading

Readers interested in the documentary history of Liberia should consult Tom W. Shick, "A Catalog of the National Archives of the Liberian Government," *History in Africa: A Journal of Method* 3 (1976): 193–202, and, for damage to the National Archives, Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 322–323. The classic work that covers the Americo-Liberian settlers is Tom W. Shick, *Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settler Society in Nineteenth-Century Liberia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), although it does not treat Grand Cape Mount. Svend Einar Holsoe, "The Cassava-Leaf People: An Ethnohistorical Study of the Vai People with a Particular Emphasis on the Tewa Chiefdom" (doctoral dissertation, Boston University, 1967), contains valuable information on early Liberia in general and Grand Cape Mount in particular, as does Holsoe, "Theodore Canot at Cape Mount, 1841–1847," *Liberian Studies Journal* 4:2 (1971–1972): 163–181. A treatment of the Kru (called Kroomen in the documents transcribed here and involved widely in coastal trade, in both slaves and goods) is

Ronald Wayne Davis, "Historical Outline of the Kru Coast, Liberia, 1500 to the Present" (doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1968). The essential study of mortality in early Liberia (mostly caused by malaria) is Antonio McDaniel, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot: The Mortality Cost of Colonizing Liberia in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). *Africa Pilot, Or Sailing Directions for the West Coast of Africa, Part I*, fourth edition (London: Hydrographic Office, Admiralty, 1885), pp. 207–232, names a large number of the features of coastal Liberia.

The nineteenth-century documentary history of the settlers should be consulted, although it was almost always pro-settler and anti-native. Ralph Randolph Gurley, *The Life of Jehudi Ashmun, Late Colonial Agent in Liberia* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 [1835]), contains a wealth of information, refracted through a pro-settlement lens. "'Circular addressed to the Colored Brethren and friends': An Unpublished Essay by Lott Cary, Sent from Liberia to Virginia, 1827," ed. John Saillant, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 104:4 (1996): 481–504, and "The 1828 Deed for Liberian Territory, Unvarnished: A Holding of the Library of Congress," ed. John Saillant, *Vestiges: Traces of Record* 2:1 (2016): <http://www.vestiges-journal.info/index.php/Vestiges>, seek to provide accurate transcriptions of two early settler documents. Miles Marl Fisher, "Lott Cary, the Colonizing Missionary," *Journal of Negro History* 7:4 (1922): 380–418, describes an early and unsuccessful attempt by the settlers to establish a missionary school for natives in Big Town, Grand Cape Mount, in 1827. Konrad Tuchscherer and P. E. H. Hair, "Cherokee in West Africa: Examining the Origins of the Vai Script," *History in Africa: A Journal of Method* 29 (2002): 427–486, discusses a possible connection of the settlers with the invention of the Vai script in the early 1830s. *Slaves No More: Letters from Liberia, 1833–1869*, ed. Bell I. Wiley (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1980), provides transcriptions of letters from Liberia from a later time period.

Similarly, the documentary history of the interdiction of the slave trade is essential, although it almost always inaccurately cast the trade as suppressible by treaties, naval patrols, and deposit of "recaptives" (victims of the slave trade seized by naval patrols at sea) in African settlements such as Monrovia and Freetown. The ineffective 1841 treaty interdicting the slave trade at Grand Cape Mount, "Convention of Amity and Commerce between King Fanatoro and Prince Grey, of the Country of Cape Mount, and Lieutenant H. F. Seagram, Commander of Her Britannic Majesty's Ship 'Termagant,' on the Part of England," is available in *A Complete Collection of the Treaties and Conventions, and Reciprocal Regulations, at Present Subsisting Between Great Britain and Foreign Powers . . . So Far as*

They Relate to . . . the Repression and Abolition of the Slave Trade (London: Henry Butterworth, 1850), 7: 15–16. *Voyage to a Thousand Cares: Master's Mate Lawrence with the African Squadron, 1844–1846*, ed. C. Herbert Gilliland (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2004), is a modern edition of a journal maintained by an officer who visited Grand Cape Mount in 1844 on a vessel charged with patrolling the ocean near the Pepper Coast. Theodore Canot, *Captain Canot Or, Twenty Years of an African Slaver*, ed. Brantz Mayer (Cambridge, U.K.: 2015 [1854]), provides a trader's view of Grand Cape Mount in the early nineteenth century.

Two periodicals are invaluable. *The African Repository and Colonial Journal*, the organ of the American Colonization Society, began publishing in 1825. It was pro-settlement and its representations of both settlers and native Africans were heavily influenced by its organizational goals, but it abounds in information. The *Liberian Studies Journal* was first issued in 1968. With Svend Holsoe as one of the early editors, it was the first consistent effort by scholars of Liberia to treat both settlers and natives.

The most recent work on early Liberia treats the settlements and settler–native interactions as instruments in the spread of imperialism, capitalism, and cultural tools like the visual arts from England and the USA into West Africa. Examples are Dalila Scruggs, "'The Love of Liberty Has Brought Us Here': The American Colonization Society and the Imaging of African-American Settlers in Liberia" (doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 2010), and Bronwen Everill, *Abolition and Empire in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Note on transcription

This transcription derives from two sources. One is a set of photocopies Holsoe made in Monrovia. Many of the pages were at the time faded, torn, and water stained. In the full transcription, editorial apparatus such as "[illegible]," "[page torn]," and, for unclear or conjectured words, "[?]" are used. "*Sic*" is not used, since much of the orthography is nonstandard. The other is a set of typescripts Holsoe himself made, without photocopying the original documents. He clearly sought to maintain nonstandard orthography and punctuation, yet he typed over errors he made in the process of transcribing and he made later additions in pen or pencil. A best guess has been made to craft a transcription that might correspond to the original documents without Holsoe's errors and handwritten notations. In all likelihood, no documents surviving from 1828 to 1834 allow us to make a comparison. However, research in Monrovia into surviving materials is necessary before any final

determination can be made.

The transcription is presented in two forms. First is a readers' transcription that removes most of the editorial apparatus. It is intended to be a clean document that offers students and others the gist of the documents without distractions. Second is a full transcription that utilizes the editorial apparatus described above. It is intended to be a scholarly transcription that provides professional readers and researchers the best version of documents that had been damaged as of their last handling, at least forty years ago, by a scholar.

These transcriptions were made in 2016 by John Saillant, with assistance from Jenifer Lynn Blouin, from sources at the Indiana University Libraries. Research in Liberian history was supported by the Ann Kercher Memorial Collection, Western Michigan University Libraries. A few editorial notes have been added in square brackets, usually to identify a person, often by a name now used in scholarly writing.

Letters and Notes on Liberia, 1828–1834: Readers' Version

1. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Ralph Randolph Gurley, between March 25 and 28, 1828, Monrovia[?]

The Millsburg settlement will soon be housed The object of the settlement is to give farmers a chance to help the colony to feed itself. The cargo boat coming from Junk filled[?] and no men got drowned. I am about to send the schooner to Junk to bring up lime The matters at St. John's River are at a stand still Mr. Warner has succeeded in getting the deeds from King Freemans war is at an end and he is waiting to make peace and restore our losses.

I think our getting lime is at an end for sometime. Cap. [illegible] went down the coast Faulk[?] who went as a passenger got drowned the boat in crossing the bar capsized. King Tom promised to take care of the things taken off. The captain returned to Mon[rovia]. and reported the conditions of the schooner and intended to return and take the boat off the beach.

The Missionaries that we were expecting arrived. I have not as yet had an interview with him. Cargo is being landed.

No changes since Ashmun left except in Half way farm Caldwell and At Millsburg. prospect of crop are good. a few commenced late to plant. The other settlers will supply them until they begin to understand the new conditions The settlers at both places are getting their timbers to erect their houses. I have given them some logs.

The Monrovia jail is completed. The Gun house will be completed this week. The houses at Fort Norris will take about three weeks. Fence around the Governors house is going up and will be finished in a few days. Factories sell[?] little[?] for a month. I have stated the cause loss of the schooner, in consequence I will have to take the goods I have on hand to pay the labors and our debts. I am sending draughts to the A.C.S. to be honored

There have been some changes in the voluntary Companies at Monrovia they had deteriorated and persons of the Military age—clergymen excepted—must drill in some company twice a Month

Courts

Murder of Mrs. Peal's son. jury returned verdict guilty of murder in Second degree Sentence to 3 years imprisonment I will forward an account of the trial.

Jacob Warner sesters[?]: these is a tract of land between Sesters and Bassa which can be purchased by the Co[lonization]. Soc[iety]. a line of coast from Monrovia to Sesters which is at present a rendezvous of slave traders with their vessels. The trade prevails to an alarming extent. Our suspense respecting the schooner is at an end and she has arrived this morning. Her hull not as damaged as was expected.

2. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Ralph Randolph Gurley, March[?] 28, 1828, Monrovia[?]

Thanks for the last order we need medicin.

The whole colony is now a S.S. Society. Sabbaths are strictly observed. Caldwell is taking pattern after Monrovia.

The Brig found the market drained of African produce. We need vessels to ply between this port and the coast to bring up the palm oil and Produce; this will enable us to send a loaded vessel home.

3. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Ralph Randolph Gurley, May 6, 1828, Monrovia[?]

Ashuman left March 26, 1828 Your letters came on the 28 of same month. Ashmans health was failing and he needed a sea trip.

The want of time has caused a falling off of the building work. The schooner was almost lost in trying to get up lime from Junk.

Putting Millsburg in a defensive condition I went up on the 13 May to Millsburg they are doing well all except two or three have their own houses.

The people are getting along well with their farms not so well with their houses. Answers Gurley letter.

Ashman is gone; You acknowledge going for the prosperity of the colony we are making government safe against any attack but at present we do not expect any.

4. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Jehudi Ashmun, June 18, 1828, Monrovia[?]

To Ashman we all are anxious about your health not hearing from you since you left the colony. Things are nearly as you left them. We expect to have lime this week. The Jail and Gun house in Monrovia have been completed. It will take about a week longer to finish the Gun house in Caldwell. The crop is very promising up the river. I was there last week. The provision at Monrovia is running very low and will soon be out. My greatest regard is your health and how you got home and the prospects of your return.

5. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, to Edwards Johns, June 18, 1828, Monrovia[?]

To Edward Johns

If you come out we[?] will give you all the support the colony can give.

6. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, to Jehudi Ashmun, June 23, 1828, Monrovia[?]

To Ashman

King Bromley town a palaver of the kings I found out what was likely to occur: They were not disposed to be hostile. The broke up one of King Gov. town and carried off ten men. I remained at Caldwell until the volunteers had assembled. I then proceeded down stopping at Stockett the half way farm and found them doing military duty; they were in Church Preparation were made the ammunition is very low. The expense of the Colony is increasing and must be met.

As to the religious and civil state every thing moves on middling well.

7. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Ralph Randolph Gurley, July 16, 1828, Monrovia[?]

Have not been able to add up repairs to the stockpile yet[?] Looking for palm oil which will help me get along a few weeks[?]. The acting governor of Sierra Leone is dead. Went up the River to Caldwell farms are fair.

The farmers of Millsburg have commenced reaping.

I went to Caldwell to meet King Bromley and other Kings in a conference to try to settle the affairs between them and the Kroomen. E. Johnson, A.D. Williams, The Kings meet but Tom Freeman did not consequently we adjourned until another time.

Conditions at Millsburg necessitates to put the settlement in better defence. I despached[?] Mr. Benson with a large gun six Pounder. Eight muskets musket balls & powder. Requesting Mr. James to call out all men of the Military age with a purpose to drill them.

8. Lott Cary, notes, August 1828

Gen inspec & Review at Caldwell. The officers are in the spirit of Military improvement. General court Marshall held in Monrovia.

Election in Monrovia and Caldwell

Civil officers

Lot Cary 67 McGill 46

c Johnson 55 Humphry 43

Council Weaver 65

Davis 55

9. Augustus Curtis, to Joseph Mechlin, November 15, 1831, Grand Cape Mount[?]

[illegible] Novr 15th 1831

Honour^d Sir I take my pen in hand to inform you that I recv^d yours about one [illegible] before I sat down to write, which deprives me of the opportunity of saying as much on the Subject as I would wish as to the Gambia, people which is descendants of King Peter of Big Town, they are known to be the rightful airts to the country & they have consented to what I have before stated I think you had Better Bring Some presents Say Rum Tobco & White cloth, you will Bring 2 white flags, as a Token of peace, I will be ready to meet you in 8 Days from this date at Jundoo or I think I shall proceed as far as Poor Bar mouth to receive you, if you Should not see me at poor Bar you will See Some person that I have Sent to conduct you, If there should be any opposer I think It will be Gomez. But thats nothing It is well known that the country do not belong to him & that will be of no consequence as to the Sale of the Lands or the disposal of it They will make it known when you comes, & they are Somewhat inclined to believe that you will take it upon yourself to come & do So great a favor for them, they have a fine Bullock present for your reception, & I candidly believe that things may be Settled in a few Days,

In great haste Sir I remain

Y^r Eve^t Ob^t Servent

Augustus Curtis

P.S. Remember I mentioned about an opposer that is in the Sale of the Land, or the distribution of it in any way. yours A.C.

[Overleaf] J. Mechlin, Cape Miserado

10. Elijah Johnson, to Joseph Mechlin, December 6, 1831, Grand Cape Mount

Grand Cape Mount

6th Dec. 1831

To His Excellency J. Mechlin, Esqr.

Sir, may it please your Excellency I have the honor to inform you of the present state of Country I find it in a state of *War* several of the parties are in favour of us having an establishment at this place particularly the Young men, and argue strongly in the palavers to

support our *Mission* we are in hops of receiving an answer today from Prince Peter and Mr. Grey [possibly Momolu Duwalu Bukele, deviser of a Vai syllabary], I think, we should have received an answer yesterday, had Mr. Grey been present [at?] the place [probably Bendoo] we have in view is on the "*Lake*" calld by the Natives *Pissoo* [today Lake Piso] and a river of fresh water runs down by it, and empties itself in this *Lake* it is a very commanding situation and I think from the appearance of it to be a healthy one, the air from the Lake appears pure, any size Vessell that can come in at the Bar [a channel connecting Lake Piso to the Atlantic Ocean], can be close at the place if we can get possession of this & then act with prudence we shall have no difficulty in getting in possession of any other part of the Cape and even now, if we were to drive Gomez out—he is one our greatest enemy and I think that he is the cause of Fah-Torah [Fan Tolo] being an Enemy he has informed us that Mr. Hornell is gone to S. Leone to supply him with *arms* and amunition to carry on his *War*. I think that Hornell is trying to get possession here for some expressions I heard from Gomez, he requested us to order all our Factories to be moved away that Prince Peter had no right to locate them here, he has also seized on three men and three *Canoes* which came down the river to Mr. Cooper, and threatens the Factories also—if we get possession of this Land we may expect to have him to[?] drive a . . . away he does not belong to this part of the country neither does Fah-Torah which has[?] been proved to our satisfaction, not only by Prince Peter, but by Gomez and F. Torahs own statement P. Peter says that he can rout him out, we find that Gomez and F. Torah Slaves are daily deserting them and joining P. Peter, there is a bloody war up in the country among the free and Slaves, we are not yet calculated to say which party will come off Victorious if it should be the free people, and we have possession here, we may expect all our powers to be tried for Gomez is determined to bring them against P. Peters as one of the supporters of the slaves we find him to be a bad man, & one that always will be troublesome to us, I find he has formed a very treacherous act with F. Torah and the said Spanired through some lucrative view he has got F. Torahs Son in the hands of the Spaniard I have the honor to be y^r ob^d Serv^t E. Johnson.

11. Augustus Curtis, to James Mechlin, December 14, 1831, Grand Cape Mount

Grand Cape Mount Dec^r 14th 1831

To His Excellency

Dear Sir The King & Prince Peter, with James Gray has sent one of their Subjects to coincide with that I have before stated in my letters to you respecting of the war Between Gomez and the other parties. I have requested of the Prince for him to send one man of good standing to the Governor to Cape Mesurado, & inform him of all that he may want, to know respecting the War at Grand Cape Mount. The Chiefs wishes you to come or Send as quick as possible, as Gomez is about to Sell the country to Englishmen, Say Capt Hornell, who is now gone to Sirreleone to purchase Shot and powder to drive the Americans & Princes' party from the beach, the Land is Secured on our part, and I wish you to send me orders to prevent any vessel or vessels from Landing powder or shot at Gomez place under a penalty of Such a Sum[?], please have this done in print or under your own hands. I intend when the force arrives to Send word to Gomez & See whether they are Still opposed to peace, or not, & If they are to proceed & Brake down his Baracade at once. The King has Sent one of his head men to Witness what I have Stated to you By order of the King & Prince & James Gray. The Young man goes by the Name of John Hardrid[?].

Nothing more at present
But Remain y^r ob^t Serv^t

Augustus Curtis

[Overleaf] His Excellency The Govr. J. Mechlin Esqr[?]
Cape Mesurado, W.A.[?]

12. Augustus Curtis, to James Mechlin, January 2, 1832, Grand Cape Mount[?]

Grand Cape Mount Jan. 2^d 1832.

To his Excellency
Joseph Mechlin Esq^r

Sir with pleasure I received yours pr. Schooner Margaret Mercer Capt. Smith which informs me of the State of affairs in the Colony, likewise your determined resolution, to prosecute, what you have undertaking in settling a colony here & also of Bringing Gomez and his ruffians to their Senses, the Kings are Still anxious for the day to come when peace and, Tranquility can be proclaimed throughout their *dominion*. I think it impossible for the Schooner to enter any Bar on this part of the coast without Sustaining some damage, I have Shipd on board, Twelve Tons of camwood, to be deliver'd to Messrs. Daily[?] & Russwurm, Three, days ago, Gomez sent about Sixty men commanded by one of his Brothers to attack a Small Town not far from Jundoo, belonging to Prince Peter, But was defeated with the Loss of Twenty Two men, & a great many wounded & Dead carried off, their is great Lamentation on Gomez's Side all appears dark and dreary—five head men of the first Standing among them is dead, their heads are deposited in mud until the flesh leaves the Bones & then they taken up again, and kept for ages yet to come, the King Honour'd me with the custom of the country by Sending a mans arm upon a Stick, for me to Look at, But it prove'd to be one of my acquaintances, a gentleman that presented me a goat, When Mr. [Elijah] Johnson & [Jacob] Prout [both signed the 1847 Liberian Declaration of Independence], were accompanying me to the Town call'd Bendoo, it—was the only Town after we Left Jundoo that refused to open their gates for us. I think this is the, fatal Stroke & here I think the war must cease in a Short time, the Land is already cleard, or rather cut down but not, burnt, the war stop'd my carrying on the house, But shall proceed on as soon as possible, I had the pleasure of conveying Mr. Casey Mate of Schooner to Gomez by Mr. Harnell as his Chief Mate, as to the conversation they had you will be able to ascertain more explicit from himself Gomez is now out of powder and is trying daily to purchase, Some,—I have ordered Mr. Harnell not to Sell him one particle of powder or Shot under the penalty of Being Stopt on shore, I think that Gomez can be taken quite handy at this time If we had Sufficient force,

Nothing more at Present

But remain Y^r Most ob^t

Humble. Serv^t

Augustus Curtis

[Overleaf]: Joseph Mechlin Esq.

13. Augustus Curtis, to A. D. Williams, February 1, 1832, Sandy Island

Sandy Island Feb. 1, 1832.

Dear Sir I have the pleasure of addressing you a few lines p^r Soop Mary ann Curtis L. Finandes Master, I am happy to inform, that I am in moderate health, at present hoping these

few lines may find you well, I have Sent my Boat down to See if I can get Some plank for the houses that I am now Building for the reception of Emigrants I want plank for doors and windows, and nails, I have received no letter from the Agent which Leaves me at a Loss how to act, in Building &^c, &^c, I have been informd that the Agent is gone to the Leeward, is the cause why I have thought proper to write you, as it will answer the Same purpose. I have a plenty of Tobacco Belonging to the public to carry on their work, But the natives will want Rum & powder & cloth when the houses is finished I should be happy to hear from the Agt. by the first Chance, Fartorah [Fan Tolo] has Lost all[?] men in an Attack lately made by Geo Peters in which attack, they reported that George was Killd but is false, George is now preparing for another attack I think a messenger for peace now, would be accepted by Fartorah [Fan Tolo] as Gomez has not returned as yet, to his assistance, please write me more concerning the Building of houses, for the reception of Emigrants.

I remain y^r Ob^t Serv^t
Augustus Curtis

[Overleaf] A.D. Williams Esqr. Cape Mesurado W.A.

14. Fragment: undated, unsigned document, in copybook immediately before a draft or a copy of a letter of April 10, 1833, Liberia; probably part of a draft or a copy of a letter from Augustus Curtis to Ralph Randolph Gurley; mentioned in first sentence is the *Hercules*, which arrived in Liberia January 16, 1833. Line breaks with ellipsis (. . .) retained in order to indicate places where the sheet is torn or stained.

R. Clarke, who came out in the Hercules [illegible on most of right margin because of stain] or [?] at our recaptured African Settlement - . . .
Philadel^a have generously contributed the funds . . .
directed me to offer him the situation he has accordingly . . .
ion[?] as he has recovered from the fever enter in the discharge . . .
him

Your suggestions respecting the importance of extending . . .
religious influence of the Colony over the neighbouring native tribes in . . .
every attention their importance demands, it is a subject which . . .
occupied my thoughts but as yet we have been able to affect but little . . .
regrets to be compelled to state that a majority of our colonists who travel
the interior for the purposes of traffic let[?] examples of profligacy which even the
most savage would hesitate to imitate, indeed so far from civilizing the
heathen they do not scruple to adapt and practice their most disgusting sins
I at one time believed that things were far different but circumstances have
induced me to alter my opinion, and although it is and ought to be a
matter of deep regret yet still when we reflect upon the kind of person . . .
tion comprising the colony we ought not to be surprised as the majority of those
who have been sent out within these few years are now & even at the time of
their arrival utterly destitute of moral rectitude & either openly profligate
or merely assumed a semblance of morality & religion to enable them the more
actively & extensively to prosecute their nefarious designs – This state of things
can alone be remedied by suffering only such to emigrate as can produce
satisfactory testimonials as to their character for morality, industry & intelli
gence[?], should such a course be adopted for one or two years we [page torn here, below]
be enabled to receive all that offer without endangering the best inter . . .
Colony – The expedition from Charleston is the most unexceptionable that ha . . .

ed in our shores since, I have resided in Africa and a few more such will . . .
doubt not have the effect of correcting many of the existing evils —

As to the establishment of Schools in the adjacent native villages there exists no obstacle, as the chiefs & headmen will readily consent to receive teachers but these will have to be supported by the liberality of our friends in the U States as the natives are either too poor or indiffent to the advantages that will accrue to their children from a proper course of instruction to contribute any thing to their support – There will always be some difficulty in procuring suitable teachers in the Colony most of the persons who are at all qualified for this business are more profitably employed in trading & could not be induced to undertake it except at such salaries as our means would not warrant I think therefore the better plan would be to educate some young men in the U. S. and when properly prepared send them out with instructions to locate themselves at such points as may be deemed the most elligible —

The reports that have reached you respecting the harsh treatment the natives receive at the hands of Colonists are as far as regards the conduct of a few individuals correct, but the practice is by no means universal[?], & in every instance where the natives have made known their [illegible, water stain here and below] promptly redressed & the perpetrators of such . . . there may have been some cases which have . . . and of course could not be properly noticed but . . . the neglect not chargeable on the public authority here – . . . your communication of the 27th Dec^r 1832 I notice a resolution of . . . and requesting you furnish the deficient vouchers in my A/C of reimbursements for 1st & 2nd quarters of last year in examining the copy of that A/C which I have retained, I find I have neglected to note what vouchers were deficient, so that it will be impossible for me to comply with the request unless you shall furnish me with the number of the vouchers wanting together with the name of the person and amount, as soon as I receive this I will procure and forward them —

I hoped to have forwarded by this conveyance the A/C of disbursements for the 3^d & 4 quarters of last year, as well as the School reports for the same period but my journey to Grand Bassa and the severe illness contracted during that journey as well as the arrival of so many Emigrants have prevented me from preparing these documents, so they will have to be defered until the next conveyance – I enclose you herewith duplicate acct^s of supplies purchased of Cap^t Hatch of the Brig Roanoke, also an acc^t of articles purchased of Cap^t Waring on acc^t of M^r Hanson for these drafts at 4 months have been given & which until he presented about the time you receive this —

With the highest respect & esteem
Your Obd^t Serv^t

15. Fragment: [Augustus Curtis?], draft or a copy of a letter to Ralph Randolph Gurley, April 10, 1833, Liberia

Rev^d R R Gurley
&^c &^c &^c

Liberia April 10th 1833

Dear Sir

The unexpected departure of the Ship Jupiter which leaves this two weeks earlier than was anticipated compels me to be very brief & omit much of interest which would otherwise have been communicated. I regret this[?] the Vice agent Mr. Williams will go in her and from him you will have an opportunity of g[a]ining much useful accurate and interesting information respecting the state and prospects of the Colony – The Schooner Hilarity will also leave this for the U. states in a few weeks & by her I will be able to communicate more fully.

I had intimated by this conveyance to have furnished you with the A/C of the disbursements for the two last quarters of 1832 as well as the statement of the revenue & report on the stage of the public Schools for the same period, but as I have before observed the vessel[?] having anticipated her time of sailing sufficient time was not afforded for preparing the necessary documents – in addition to which much of my time is taken up with the attending the sick among the newly arrived emigrants we have at present nearly 400 who may be considered as invalids and by far the greater proportion are at Caldwell it is therefore [illegible here, below] some assistance to afford them the requisite medical . . . greatly impaired his health & I have strong fears that . . . Sacrifice to his zeal in their behalf – render their[?] circum . . . alone would induce me to yield every aid in my power . . . morals[?] avocations[?] this is not much still what I can do it done freely . . .

This has been an unusually sickly season many of the . . . habitants have suffered severely although none of their cases have as yet had a fatal termination – The new comers have from the same causes suffered some & the prospect a few weeks since so flattering has become clouded & I . . . great fears that the number of deaths will exceed what I had anticipated — They will I think average 8 or 9 percent instead of one or two percent as stated in my last communication much of this is owing to the inability of any one Physician to give the requisite attention to so large a number . . . invalids so disadvantageously situated as these about two thirds of them are at Caldwell nine miles from this place & those who have been retained here are scattered over the whole town in different dwelling so that the task visiting them is arduous and irksome in the extreme had D^r Jodson remained until the present time all would have been well, but he has chosen to desert us in the hour of need & at a time when he knew that neither D^r Hall nor myself were able to afford any medical aid to those whose situation required the strictest & most unwearied[?] attention – My own health although greatly improved since I last wrote is still feeble – that of D^r Hall is wretchedly infirm he is at present confined to his bed & I have great doubts whether he will survive the approaching rainy season . . .

A subject of great importance to the welfare of the Colony . . . recently been agitated & which require the most serious & immediate . . . sideration of the Board Although not the originator still I may in a great measure be considered as the cause of its being at this time presented for your deliberation is simply this Many of the more reflecting and intelligent Colonists & those who have hitherto been the warmest & most staunch supporters of the Colonial Government are of opinion that the time has now arrived when a greater portion of self government should be committed to their hands than they have hitherto enjoyed & one of the late expeditions we have received have brought to accessions of intelligence and moral strength which will remove many of the obstacles that have hitherto existed to the judicious exercise of this power – In the opin_

ion I must confess I in a great measure concur as there are many reasons in favour of its adoption & the few objections that may be urged against it can be ready answered and I only regret that my time is too limited to allow my entering as fully into the merits of the ques_

tion as I could wish, I can merely for the present remark that I think the people may be safely trusted with the portion of power they ask for & that there is every discipline to exercise it prudently & judiciously, it will also I think have great effect in the U. States in influencing the minds of the more respectable free coloured population in our favour & induce many to emigrate who would otherwise remain unfriendly to the case of African Colonization – The Society will also be [illegible here, below] present labouring[?] under as the people here will . . . [?]ation[?] as a legislative body chosen by themselves . . . particulars I beg leave to refer you to sundry[?] . . . the magistrates & council convened by me for that . . . by the vice agent who together with the Sheriff Mr. . . . remarks in explanation as you may require by the next . . . I[?] shall[?] be able to communicate more fully I would however re_ . . . in conclusion[?] say[?] you[?] have already promised to admit the inhabitants . . . Colony[?] to all the rights and privileges of a free people whenever such could . . . your compliance in this instance will in a great measure guar_ antee[?] the integrity of your intentions —

By the vessel that conveys this you will receive drafts to a considerable number of vouchers for the most of them will be friends[?] enclosed & for the others the letter[s?]

of advice will explain the objects of expenditure – I have also certified to the account of Mr. Williams for Services rendered some time since & have given him an order on you for payment – this I hope you will pay or make such arrangements as will enable him to realize the amount

With sentiments of the highest respect —
Your Obed^t Serv^t

To
Rev^d R. R. Gurley

16. Fragment: [Augustus Curtis?,] draft or a copy of a letter to Ralph Randolph Gurley, May 16, 1832 [i.e., 1833], Liberia

&^c &^c &^c —

Liberia May 16th 1832 [i.e.,

1833]

Dear Sir

By the Ship Jupiter which sailed a few weeks since I briefly addressed you advising you of such affairs as were of pressing importance The Schooner Hilarity which has just anchored in our harbour affords me an opportunity of again communicating with you & I hasten to improve it

It was my intention to have written very fully by this vessel but my health has been so much impaired by repeated attacks of fever as to render both mental & Physical exertions very irksome added to which D^r Hall has been for several weeks

confined to his bed with a very severe indisposition, during which his life was several times despaired of & I have been forced to give as much attention to the sick as my strength would admit of this to harasses me that at night I am forced to return early to enable me to undergo the fatigues of the ensuing day, this I trust will be sufficient apology of my not complying with my promise to give you a full and detailed acc^t of the Colonial affairs during the past year

In my communication by[?] Ship Jupiter I presented for consideration of the B^d the subject of the alteration or Modification of the present form of Government so as to give the Colonists greater privileges than they at present enjoy & at the same time expressed my approbation of certain resolutions on the same subject passed at a meeting of the Council & Magistrates convened by me for that purpose; but being pressed for time & my health very infirm I could not then enter into the merits of the question or give you the reasons which induced me to adopt the [illegible, water stain here, below] this matter, these I will now endeavour briefly to state . . .

For some time past I have been aware that many . . .
fied with the existing state of things, but it was not until . . .
became fully acquainted with the real cause of this dissatisfaction which . . .
to be that they thought they should have some voice in the imposition of the . . .
these were direct or indirect, & also have the supervision of those entrusted with . . .
tion & they never expressed themselves dissatisfied with the amnt imposed, but on the . . .
said they were willing for their increase provided the power or privilege of imposing said
duties or taxes was granted & that the Collector & Treasurer should exhibit their acct . . .
a committee appointed for that purpose – Finding that their demands were reasonable
& that they were urged in a respectful & becoming manner, I at once convened the Magis
trates & Council & requested them to devise such measure as were best calculated to
remedy the existing evil & meet the wishes of the more enlightened part of the community
the result of their deliberations will be found in the resolutions handed you by the Vice Agent
M^r A. D. Williams – I thought it best that the proposition should come from myself as
representing the Colonization Society as it would have a tendency to remove the impres
sion which a few designing individuals have been labouring to produce that we
were opposed to their ever enjoying the rights & privileges of freemen & that the assurance
to this effect contained in the laws & constitution of the Colony & various addresses of the
Society were merely lures held out to induce people of colour to emigrate. I believe the
course I have adopted has convinced most of them of the purity of our motives and there
is little doubt should the Board *in a measure* second my efforts that affairs will here
after more on[?] move smoothly & that we will find the Colonists willing to relieve [page
torn here, below]
many burdens we at present find it difficult to sustain –

But although I have advocated the extension of their privileges still . . .
there are certain limits beyond which we ought not for the present pass grant . . .
portion of what they are and should we find it answer well we can then concede great . . .
er powers, such of these resolutions as I conceived objectionable were pointed out . . .
former communication & there are others which will doubtless suggest themselves whenever
the Board shall be fit to take the subject into consideration — That some alterations
in the form of Government should be made cannot in my opinion be questioned but to
what extent it remains for the Board to say & I beg leave therefore to recommend
it to their early & serious consideration –

This season has been unusually unhealthy several of the old settlers
have died & the mortality among the newly arrived emigrants has greatly exceeded
my anticipations, but much of this I am compelled to say has been owing to the want

of medical aid, you have already been informed that shortly after the departure of D^r [illegible] the emigrants f^r[?] Ship Hercules & Lafayette & Brig Roanoke, were attacked with the fever, & that we had at one time upwards of 400[?] invalids on our list, of these by far the greater numbers (say 2/3^d) were at Caldwell and the remainder scattered over the town of Monrovia in such shelters as could be procured under these circumstances it was impossible that any one physician could give them the requisite attendance – D^r Hall made the attempts but was soon attacked with the fever induced by the fatigue & exposure he underwent [illegible here, below] be considered convalescent & the consequent protraction . . . him to return to the U States in the vessel that conveys . . . probability of his recovering sufficient strength & health to be . . . temporary residence in a more healthy climate & to remain here . . . would I am convinced be to sacrifice his life – he has therefore . . . reluctantly yielded to my solicitations and should his life be spared you may . . . shortly after the receipt of this his departure will of . . . the[?] whole[?] of medical duties on me & these[?] I cannot discharge although . . . to afford all the aid & assistance in my power I have already since the departure of Dr. Jodson been twice confined to my bed with sever indisposition and [illegible] by the fatigue & exposure sun & night air during my attendance on[?] the sick & there is every probability should the necessity for my services continue that I shall have repeated attacks – but as this is unavoidable I will continue in the course I am pursuing & willingly abide the result

The state of Agriculture throughout the Colony with few individual exceptions continues contrary to my anticipations to be much depressed – the causes of this you have already been made acquainted with & these have not only continued to operate, but appear to have acquired greater force since the late acquisitions to our numbers & the only hope I now have of being able to produce a salutary change is in the example of the South Carolina emigrants who have commenced farming establishments in a more extensive scale than we have hitherto witnessed & there is little doubt from their character for industry & intelligence that their efforts will be crowned with success; others seeing the advantages to be derived from a persevering & judicious application of their time & labour to the cultivation of the soil may be induced to follow their example & produce a change in the present aspect of affairs which if suffered to continue much longer cannot fail of reducing to the Colony to great & almost irremediable distress – The late resolutions of the Board will I trust have great influence in stimulating many to make exertions in the cultivation of their farm Lands, I have not as yet fixed the periods within which application for the premiums should be made but ~~should~~ will do immediately; it may perhaps be necessary to extend the time to a more distant period than I had at first intended as many who wished to become candidates for the prizes have suffered much by sickness & are just recovering sufficient strength to enable them to attend to their Lands – The premiums offered for breaking even to the plough is in my opinion too low about two years since I offered a premium of \$50 in specie to be paid out of my private funds to any one who would break one yoke of oxen & plough one acre of Land with them – yet so great was their apathy that only one candidate offered for the prize & he failed in consequence of one of the oxen being so much injured as to die & before he could procure another he himself was taken sick and confined for several months with one of this[?] obstinant[?] ulcers of this climate – since then none have come forward to contend for the prize until lately when one of the South Carolina Emigrants has made application & I have no doubt should his health continue

good that he will succeed

You will be gratified to learn that our Settlement at Grand Bassa is in a prosperous condition we have now about 150 settlers who have established themselves & families there & many more are desirous of remaining themselves & families as soon suitable accommodations shall have been prepared [illegible here, below] ly[?] feeling & seem anxious that we should increase the limit . . . offers from several chiefs who wish us to purchase their territory . . . the sea coast about 4 or 5 miles below the mouth of the St. John . . . choice of any part of his dominions the tract of Country which he offers . . . as it forms one of the most secure harbours and landing places on the coast . . . deep indentation of the Coast commencing about half a mile below the mouth . . . extending upwards of three miles, at the Southeastern extremity of this incurvation[?] the coast

rises & juts out into the sea and a high reef of rocks continues from it for nearly a half a mile farther out into the ocean forming a natural breakwater behind which vessels may at all seasons find secure anchorage in 4 or 5 fathoms, the landing is equally safe as the reef presents any surf & at the worst season when it is dangerous to attempt to land elsewhere except in Canoes maned by experienced Kroomen boats of any description can put good as here, at this place without the least risk – It was this tract of Country that I wished to purchase when I visited Grand Bassa upwards of a year since for the purchase of establishing a settlement, but could not prevail upon them to ~~settle~~ sell it but now, since we have firmly established ourselves and they find they have derived benefit instead of sustaining injury from our prosperity, they are very anxious I should make purchase & place Colonists on their side of the river I think it will be highly advantageous to the settlement that we should possess[sic] their country & shall therefore make some arrangement for its purchase —

Many of the settlers at Grand Bassa I am informed have their lands enclosed and houses built & have made some progress in cultivation of their lots - I have lately seen some of the finest melons equal to those raised in the U. States which were raised by Hanson Leifer[?] one of the emigrants from Washington, this person has made greater progress than any of the others & is one of the most enterprising & industrious settlers we have – The land in the vicinity of the baricade is light & well adapted to the cultivation of melons Indian corn Sweet potatoes &^c but the best lands are on the other or farther side of the S^t Johns river and are included in the late purchase from King Joe Harris it is here that I intend to assign their farm lands as the country is well timbered & Watered & the soil deep and fertile I think it will not be longer than four or five years ere this settlement will rival Monrovia

With this you will receive A/C of disbursements during the 3rd & 4th quarters of 1832 – I have as far as lay in my power furnished vouchers for every item of expenditure but there are many for which this kind of evidence can not be procured these have been stated in a former A/C & consists chiefly of presents to Natives chiefs and the expenses of native Labourers, but whenever it was practicable I have endeavoured to comply with the instructions contained in the resolution of the Board – It will be seen by reference to the accompanying A/C that our expenses have been greatly increased since we have recv^d such large numbers of emigrants as have been transported within these few past Months nor can I hold out a reasonable hope that there will be any distribution of the disbursements so long as we continue to receive expeditions so scantily supplied with provisions & hospital stores as those per Brig American, Ship Hercu_

[illegible here, below] & Ship Jupiter if the necessary supplies
... purchased her at enormous advances on the first cost
... to leave nothing undone which may contribute to the
... of the Emigrants & I have followed & intend to follow the letter
... instructions you have already recvd^d drafts to a large amount & you will
... probably receive more these are chiefly for supplies which I have
... compelled to purchase to prevent the people from suffering, several of the voucher
... have[?] been forwarded & the remainder shall accompany the A/C for the 1st & 2
quarter of the present year The vice agent Mr. A. D. Williams who has had ample
opportunities of becoming well acquainted with the state of affairs as respects the
wretched manner in which expeditions have been fitted out can and will afford
you such information as will I trust prevent the like from happening in future &
knowing as I do the state of your treasury nothing nothing can be more unpleasant
than to be forced to make demands which you will find it difficult to meet, but
but as I have before remarked it is under the existing state of things unavoida
voidable & can only be remedied by sending with each expedition provisions & hospital
stores sufficient to supply them for at least six months

This season has been one of unusual scarcity rice cannot be procured
at any price the crops of last year having failed for the want of rain at the time when
the grain was forming & I have in consequence been obliged to purchase bread
stuffs of foreign growth at very high rates this will be evident from the bills which
you have & will receive I have lately been so fortunate as to purchase from Mr.
G G Willis 300 bushels of rice which he procured at Sierra Leone this supply
proved very seasonable as we were destitute of the article and the sick were
suffering for want of it I have given Mr. Willis a Draft for the Amount & the bill will
accompany this

Enclosed you will receive sundry papers relating to Colonial
affairs – viz a statement exhibiting the amount of monies collected & paid ~~out~~ into
the treasury during the year 1832 marked A, statement showing the amount of
monies drawn from the treasury during 1832 & the objects of expenditure marked B –
The A/C of the Colonial Agency with the Colonial Treasury marked C – and
the School report for the 3rd & 4th quarters of 1832 marked D – which I trust will
prove satisfactory —

I believe I have already given my opinion respecting the purchase
of Cape Palmas & stated the principal objections to our attempting for the present
to occupy it the truth is the undertaking will prove very expensive, far beyond
what our funds warrant – had we sufficient means at our disposal I
do not doubt that the purchase might be easily effected & under such circum
stances it would prove a very valuable acquisition —

Messrs[?] Finney[?] & Cox[?] are both at present residing at this place &
are just recovering from the fever of which they have had rather slightly attacks
I am much pleased with these gentlemen & have no doubt they will prove emin
ently serviceable, as they seem to be zealously devoted to the great work in which
they are engaged Mr Finney[?] has made several short excursions & visited
our settlements, he having visited Grand Bassa [illegible here, below]
Heard[?] in an excursion several day journey into ...
him to visit several principal chiefs who ...
over[?] the surrounding country he ...
[illegible] of the Country but not with this ...
bade[?], he intends as soon as the rains have ceased to attempt to ...

the interior from Be[?] Port[?] of his success I have my doubts as the . . .
ing on the sea coast are very much opposed to strangers having . . .
with the interior tribes, as they are apprehensive that a direct communication
will be opened & thus destroy the monopoly of that trade which they find so
profitable

With high esteem & respect
Your Obed^t Serv^t

17. Fragment: [Augustus Curtis?,] draft or a copy of a letter to Ralph Randolph Gurley, May
16, 1833, Liberia

Liberia May 15th 1833

Dear Sir

Enclosed you will receive a copy of a letter from AR[?] Levering
& Sons of Baltimore bearing date 27th Oct 1832 and addressed to M^r Jacob
Warner a citizen of this place

From the tenor of the letter it will be seen that the said Lever[page torn here, below]
Sons Shipped by the Sch^r Orion Capt.[?] three crates of earthen . . .
& five Boxes of Rice consigned to said Warner, but which he unfortunately never
received – On the arrival of the said Orion at this port it was found that all
the invoices & bills of lading had been left behind & I only rec^d from D^r . . .
who superintended the fitting out of the expedition a letter stating that he had
put on Board on acct of the Maryland Society certain goods without specifying
what there were, nor did Mr Warner receive any advices of the consignment of the
above goods accordingly acting under the impression that all the goods
& Merchandize on Board wer the property of the Maryland Society & intended for
the subsistence of the emigrants I had them placed in the public store, & they were
together with the goods belonging to the parent Society appropriated to that pur
pose part of the three crates were used in the Agency House being of a descrip_
tion unsuited to the Native trade, but by far the greater part were consumed
in the matter above stated

I was therefore much surprised when M^r Warner called on me a
few days since & presented the letter of which the enclosed is a copy and at the
same time claimed the property – this claim as the goods had been rec^d and
appropriated in the matter stated I could not deny, & therefore resolved to
take the opinion of some of our most respectable Merchants as to the amn^t
of remuneration which ought in[?] justice to be paid the owners &
[illegible here, below] Waring & Russwurm to whom the matter was
. . . opinion that 35 per ct exclusive of the charges on the orig_
. . . to 38 ct would be ample & sufficient & I have according_
. . . to AR Levering & Sons directing them to call on you and
. . . & I trust you will as our credit is some what involved[?]
. . . such arrangements as may prove satisfactory to the claimants

By this vessel you will receive several drafts to one of which in par_
ticular I wish to invite your attention, it is for \$1200 in favour of D^r Hall and
at thirty days might[?] & on acct of available funds placed by him at the dis=
posal of the Colonial Agency – It seems that some time since D^r Hall loaned
to family[?] of[?] Russwurm the above amnt not at that time having any idea
of his returning to the U States; but being taken sick & his health so much
impaired as to render a visit to his native land necessary the preservation of

his life & being destitute of funds he applied to me to aid him by taking Daily & Russwurms note bearing interest 10 p^t c^t & give him a draft for the note amn^t this I have done presuming that the Board would have no objection to forward the views of one who has so faithfully served them as almost to sacrifice his life in endeavouring to aid the promotion[?] of the cause which they are so strenuously[sic] labouring to advance —

I also enclose a list of medicines & hospital stores much[?] needed for emigrants on our hands the kind & quantity of each are such as D^r Hall himself approves of & to him I beg leave to refer you for further particulars, he will also answer your questions as to the size form & situation of respectables to be sent out from the U States & will be able to give much usefull[sic] information respecting the mode of fitting out future expeditions

With every sentiment of respect & esteem
Your Obed^t Serv^t

To
Rev^d R. R. Gurley
&^c &^c &^c

18. [A. D. Williams?,] An account of Cape Mount, January 15, 1834

Jany 15. 1834

Mr William Curtis to make a Factory at C. Mount 4 years ago. The people & Kings came to King F[?] & said you are going to bring war, for the American men fought at Messurado he said no but for trade [K. William?] King Grey[?] agreed—

About one year ago Messrs. Williams Prout & Johnson with Mr Curtis made a bargain with King Peter King Grey & Kai bara signed a paper agreeing to permit a settlement—King Grey is the chief King of the Vey, but his brother Fana Toro [Fan Tolo] is more powerful & being jealous because his name was not signed makes more trouble—His brother & others are now either afraid or ashamed to avow the bargain & assert that Mr Curtis made them drink & deny that they signed the paper—Bara being at Gambia swore that no school should be founded—Kai bara declared he would & built a house at Bendo—The Kings threatened him with war & he has called upon Mr C for aid & he has encouraged him with hope of help from Colony two months ago One of Mr C Friends told the Kings that he has cheated them to hinder his trade—The Kings therefore threatened to Kill Mr. C. Fai toro—&—William built a barrocade to protect him. Kai bara—would probably have done as little towards a settlement as any others had he not been enraged, by the conduct of K. Peter who Kept two of his messengers—for slaves—whom he had sent to enquire why K. Peter took Far Toro people slaves Mr C King W &c were present &c—

The war of Gomez'[?] 5 men fell—their skins were used for drums—& the flesh eaten—To the excuse of the Vey: it sh'd be said that these eaters are from a distance called Mano Sanno[?]—the following is an exact representation of the drum—my blood run cold at the sight & I stopped my ears with horror—at the sound—Poor thoughtless werches perhaps a few days hence their own skins may serve the same purpose for an enemy! can the christian church think any sacrifice too great which could[?] elevate such barbarous minds to this our exalted feelings & sentiments!

[Overleaf] An account of the State of things at C.M.

Letters and Notes on Liberia, 1828–1834: Strict Transcription

1. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Ralph Randolph Gurley, between March 25 and 28, 1828?, Monrovia?

The Millsburg settlement will soon be housed The object of the settlement is to give farmers a chance to help the colony to feed itself. The cargo boat coming from Junk filled[?] and no men got drowned. I am about to send the schooner to Junk to bring up lime The matters at St. John's River are at a stand still Mr. Warner has succeeded in getting the deeds from King Freemans war is at an end and he is waiting to make peace and restore our losses.

I think our getting lime is at an end for sometime. Cap. [illegible] went down the coast Faulk[?] who went as a passenger got drowned the boat in crossing the bar capsized. King Tom promised to take care of the things taken off. The captain returned to Mon. and reported the conditions of the schooner and intended to return and take the boat off the beach.

The Missionaries that we were expecting arrived. I have not as yet had an interview with him. Cargo is being landed.

No changes since Ashmun left except in Half way farm Caldwell and At Millsburg. prospect of crop are good. a few commenced late to plant. The other settlers will supply them until they begin to understand the new conditions The settlers at both places are getting their timbers to erect their houses. I have given them some logs.

The Monrovia jail is completed. The Gun house will be completed this week. The houses at Fort Norris will take about three weeks. Fence around the Governors house is going up and will be finished in a few days. Factories sell[?] little[?] for a month. I have stated the cause loss of the schooner, in consequence I will have to take the goods I have on hand to pay the labors and our debts. I am sending draughts to the A.C.S. to be honored

There have been some changes in the voluntary Companies at Monrovia they had deteriorated and persons of the Military age—clergymen excepted—must drill in some company twice a Month

Courts

Murder of Mrs. Peal's son. jury returned verdict guilty of murder in Second degree Sentence to 3 years imprisonment I will forward an account of the trial.

Jacob Warner sesters[?]: these is a tract of land between Sesters and Bassa which can be purchased by the Co. Soc. a line of coast from Monrovia to Sesters which is at present a rendezvous of slave traders with their vessels. The trade prevails to an alarming extent. Our suspense respecting the schooner is at an end and she has arrived this morning. Her hull not as damaged as was expected.

2. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Ralph Randolph Gurley, March[?] 28, 1828, Monrovia[?]

Thanks for the last order we need medicin.

The whole colony is now a S.S. [Sunday/Sabbath School?] Society. Sabbaths are strictly observed. Caldwell is taking pattern after Monrovia.

The Brig found the market drained of African produce. We need vessels to ply between this port and the coast to bring up the palm oil and Produce; this will enable us to send a loaded vessel home.

3. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Ralph Randolph Gurley, May 6, 1828, Monrovia[?]

Ashuman left March 26, 1828 Your letters came on the 28 of same month. Ashmans health was failing and he needed a sea trip.

The want of time has caused a falling off of the building work. The schooner was almost lost in trying to get up lime from Junk. Putting Millsburg in a defensive condition I went up on the 13 May to Millsburg they are doing well all except two or three have their own houses.

The people are getting along well with their farms not so well with their houses. Answers Gurley letter.

Ashman is gone; You acknowledge going for the prosperity of the colony we are making government safe against any attack but at present we do not expect any.

4. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Jehudi Ashmun, June 18, 1828, Monrovia[?]

To Ashman we all are anxious about your health not hearing from you since you left the colony. Things are nearly as you left them. We expect to have lime this week. The Jail and Gun house in Monrovia have been completed. It will take about a week longer to finish the Gun house in Caldwell. The crop is very promising up the river. I was there last week. The provision at Monrovia is running very low and will soon be out. My greatest regard is your health and how you got home and the prospects of your return.

5. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, to Edwards Johns, June 18, 1828, Monrovia[?]

To Edward Johns

If you come out we[?] will give you all the support the colony can give.

6. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, to Jehudi Ashmun, June 23, 1828, Monrovia[?]

To Ashman

King Bromley town a palaver of the kings I found out what was likely to occur: They were not disposed to be hostile. The broke up one of King Gov. town and carried off ten men. I remained at Caldwell until the volunteers had assembled. I then proceeded down stopping at Stockett the half way farm and found them doing military duty; they were in Church. Preparation were made the ammunition is very low. The expense of the Colony is increasing and must be met.

As to the religious and civil state every thing moves on middling well.

7. Lott Cary, draft or copy of a letter, possibly to Ralph Randolph Gurley, July 16, 1828, Monrovia[?]

Have not been able to add up repairs to the stockpile yet[?] Looking for palm oil which will help me get along a few weeks[?]. The acting governor of Sierra Leone is dead. Went up the River to Caldwell farms are fair.

The farmers of Millsburg have commenced reaping.

I went to Caldwell to meet King Bromley and other Kings in a conference to try to settle the affairs between them and the Kroomen. E. Johnson, A.D. Williams, The Kings meet but Tom Freeman did not consequently we adjourned until another time.

Conditions at Millsburg necessitates to put the settlement in better defence. I despached[?] Mr. Benson with a large gun six Pounder. Eight muskets musket balls & powder. Requesting Mr. James to call out all men of the Military age with a purpose to drill them.

8. Lott Cary, notes, August 1828

Gen inspec & Review at Caldwell. The officers are in the spirit of Military improvement. General court Marshall held in Monrovia.

Election in Monrovia and Caldwell

Civil officers

Lot Cary 67 McGill 46

c Johnson 55 Humphry 43

Council Weaver 65

Davis 55

9. Augustus Curtis, to Joseph Mechlin, November 15, 1831, Grand Cape Mount[?]

[illegible] Novr 15th 1831

Honour^d Sir I take my pen in hand to inform you that I recv^d yours about one [illegible] before I sat down to write, which deprives me of the opportunity of saying as much on the Subject as I would wish as to the Gambia, people which is descendants of King Peter of Big Town, they are known to be the rightful airts to the country & they have consented to what I have before stated I think you had Better Bring Some presents Say Rum Tobco & White cloth, you will Bring 2 white flags, as a Token of peace, I will be ready to meet you in 8 Days from this date at Jundoo or I think I shall proceed as far as Poor Bar mouth to receive you, if you Should not see me at poor Bar you will See Some person that I have Sent to conduct you, If there should be any opposer I think It will be Gomez. But thats nothing It is well known that the country do not belong to him & that will be of no consequence as to the Sale of the Lands or the disposal of it They will make it known when you comes, & they are Somewhat inclined to believe that you will take it upon yourself to come & do So great a favor for them, they have a fine Bullock present for your reception, & I candidly believe that things may be Settled in a few Days,

In great haste Sir I remain

Y^r Eve^t Ob^t Servent

Augustus Curtis

P.S. Remember I mentioned about an opposer that is in the Sale of the Land, or the distribution of it in any way. yours A.C.

[Overleaf] J. Mechlin, Cape Miserado

10. Elijah Johnson, to Joseph Mechlin, December 6, 1831, Grand Cape Mount

Grand Cape Mount

6th Dec. 1831

To His Excellency J. Mechlin, Esqr.

Sir, may it please your Excellency I have the honor to inform you of the present state of Country I find it in a state of *War* several of the parties are in favour of us having an establishment at this place particularly the Young men, and argue strongly in the palavers to

support our *Mission* we are in hops of receiving an answer today from Prince Peter and Mr. Grey [possibly Momolu Duwalu Bukele, deviser of a Vai syllabary], I think, we should have received an answer yesterday, had Mr. Grey been present [at?] the place [probably Bendo] we have in view is on the "*Lake*" calld by the Natives *Pissoo* [Lake Piso] and a river of fresh water [the Bar] runs down by it, and empties itself in this *Lake* it is a very commanding situation and I think from the appearance of it to be a healthy one, the air from the Lake appears pure, any size Vessell that can come in at the Bar, can be close at the place if we can get possession of this & then act with prudence we shall have no difficulty in getting in possession of any other part of the Cape and even now, if we were to drive Gomez out—he is one our greatest enemy and I think that he is the cause of Fah-Torah [Fan Tolo] being an Enemy he has informed us that Mr. Hornell is gone to S. Leone to supply him with *arms* and amunition to carry on his *War*. I think that Hornell is trying to get possession here for some expressions I heard from Gomez, he requested us to order all our Factories to be moved away that Prince Peter had no right to locate them here, he has also seized on three men and three *Canoes* which came down the river to Mr. Cooper, and threatens the Factories also—if we get possession of this Land we may expect to have him to[?] drive a[?] away he does not belong to this part of the country neither does Fah-Torah which has[?] been proved to our satisfaction, not only by Prince Peter, but by Gomez and F. Torahs own statement P. Peter says that he can rout him out, we find that Gomez and F. Torah Slaves are daily deserting them and joining P. Peter, there is a bloody war up in the country among the free and Slaves, we are not yet calculated to say which party will come off Victorious if it should be the free people, and we have possession here, we may expect all our powers to be tried for Gomez is determined to bring them against P. Peters as one of the supporters of the slaves we find him to be a bad man, & one that always will be troublesome to us, I find he has formed a very treacherous act with F. Torah and the said Spanired through some lucrative view he has got F. Torahs Son in the hands of the Spaniard I have the honor to be y^r ob^d Serv^t E. Johnson.

11. Augustus Curtis, to James Mechlin, December 14, 1831, Grand Cape Mount

Grand Cape Mount Dec^r 14th 1831

To His Excellency

Dear Sir The King & Prince Peter, with James Gray has sent one of their Subjects to coincide with that I have before stated in my letters to you respecting of the war Between Gomez and the other parties. I have requested of the Prince for him to send one man of good standing to the Governor to Cape Mesurado, & inform him of all that he may want, to know respecting the War at Grand Cape Mount. The Chiefs wishes you to come or Send as quick as possible, as Gomez is about to Sell the country to Englishmen, Say Capt Hornell, who is now gone to Sirreleone to purchase Shot and powder to drive the Americans & Princes' party from the beach, the Land is Secured on our part, and I wish you to send me orders to prevent any vessel or vessels from Landing powder or shot at Gomez place under a penalty of Such a Sum[?], please have this done in print or under your own hands. I intend when the force arrives to Send word to Gomez & See whether they are Still opposed to peace, or not, & If they are to proceed & Brake down his Baracade at once. The King has Sent one of his head men to Witness what I have Stated to you By order of the King & Prince & James Gray. The Young man goes by the Name of John Hardrid[?].

Nothing more at present

But Remain y^r ob^t Serv^t

Augustus Curtis

[Overleaf] His Excellency The Govr. J. Mechlin Esqr[?]
Cape Mesurado, W.A.[?]

12. Augustus Curtis, to James Mechlin, January 2, 1832, Grand Cape Mount[?]

Grand Cape Mount Jan. 2^d 1832.

To his Excellency
Joseph Mechlin Esq^t

Sir with pleasure I received yours pr. Schooner Margaret Mercer Capt. Smith which informs me of the State of affairs in the Colony, likewise your determined resolution, to prosecute, what you have undertaken in settling a colony here & also of Bringing Gomez and his ruffians to their Senses, the Kings are Still anxious for the day to come when peace and, Tranquility can be proclaimed throughout their *dominion*. I think it impossible for the Schooner to enter any Bar on this part of the coast without Sustaining some damage, I have Shipd on board, Twelve Tons of camwood, to be deliver'd to Messrs. Daily[?] & Russwurm, Three, days ago, Gomez sent about Sixty men commanded by one of his Brothers to attack a Small Town not far from Jundoo, belonging to Prince Peter, But was defeated with the Loss of Twenty Two men, & a great many wounded & Dead carried off, their is great Lamentation on Gomez's Side all appears dark and dreary—five head men of the first Standing among them is dead, their heads are deposited in mud until the flesh leaves the Bones & then they taken up again, and kept for ages yet to come, the King Honour'd me with the custom of the country by Sending a mans arm upon a Stick, for me to Look at, But it prove'd to be one of my acquaintances, a gentleman that presented me a goat, When Mr. When Mr. [Elijah] Johnson & [Jacob] Prout [both signed the 1847 Liberian Declaration of Independence], were accompanying me to the Town calld Bendoo, it—was the only Town after we Left Jundoo that refused to open their gates for us. I think this is the, fatal Stroke & here I think the war must cease in a Short time, the Land is already cleared, or rather cut down but not, burnt, the war stop'd my carrying on the house, But shall proceed on as soon as possible, I had the pleasure of conveying Mr. Casey Mate of Schooner to Gomez by Mr. Harnell as his Chief Mate, as to the conversation they had you will be able to ascertain more explicit from himself Gomez is now out of powder and is trying daily to purchase, Some,—I have ordered Mr. Harnell not to Sell him one particle of powder or Shot under the penalty of Being Stopt on shore, I think that Gomez can be taken quite handy at this time If we had Sufficient force,

Nothing more at Present

But remain Y^r Most ob^t

Humble. Serv^t

Augustus Curtis

[Overleaf]: Joseph Mechlin Esq.

13. Augustus Curtis, to A. D. Williams, February 1, 1832, Sandy Island

Sandy Island Feb. 1, 1832.

Dear Sir I have the pleasure of addressing you a few lines p^t Soop Mary ann Curtis L. Finandes Master, I am happy to inform, that I am in moderate health, at present hoping these few lines may find you well, I have Sent my Boat down to See if I can get Some plank for the

houses that I am now Building for the reception of Emigrants I want plank for doors and windows, and nails, I have received no letter from the Agent which Leaves me at a Loss how to act, in Building &^c, &^c, I have been informd that the Agent is gone to the Leeward, is the cause why I have thought proper to write you, as it will answer the Same purpose. I have a plenty of Tobacco Belonging to the public to carry on their work, But the natives will want Rum & powder & cloth when the houses is finished I should be happy to hear from the Agt. by the first Chance, Fartorah [Fan Tolo] has Lost all[?] men in an Attack lately made by Geo Peters in which attack, they reported that George was Killd but is false, George is now preparing for another attack I think a messenger for peace now, would be accepted by Fartorah as Gomez has not returned as yet, to his assistance, please write me more concerning the Building of houses, for the reception of Emigrants.

I remain y^r Ob^t Serv^t

Augustus Curtis

[Overleaf] A.D. Williams Esqr. Cape Mesurado W.A.

14. Fragment: undated, unsigned document, in copybook immediately before a draft or a copy of a letter of April 10, 1833, Liberia; probably part of a draft or a copy of a letter from Augustus Curtis to Ralph Randolph Gurley; mentioned in first sentence is the *Hercules*, which arrived in Liberia January 16, 1833. Line breaks retained in order to indicate places where the sheet is torn or stained.

R. Clarke, who came out in the Hercules [illegible, water stain here and below]
or[?] at our recaptured African Settlement - [illegible]
Philadel^a have generously contributed the funds [illegible]
directed me to offer him the situation he has accordingly[?] [illegible]
ion[?] as he has recovered from the fever enter in the discharge [illegible]
him

Your suggestions respecting the importance of extending[?] [illegible]
religious influence of the Colony over the neighbouring native tribes in [illegible]
every attention their importance demands, it is a subject which [illegible]
occupied my thoughts but as yet we have been able to affect but little [illegible]
regrets to be compelled to state that a majority of our colonists who travel
the interior for the purposes of traffic let[?] examples of profligacy which even the
most savage would hesitate to imitate, indeed so far from civilizing the
heathen they do not scruple to adapt and practice their most disgusting sins[?]
I at one time believed that things were far different but circumstances have
induced me to alter my opinion, and although it is and ought to be a
matter of deep regret yet still when we reflect upon the kind of person[?] [illegible]
tion comprising the colony we ought not to be surprised as the majority of those
who have been sent out within these few years are now & even at the time of
their arrival utterly destitute of moral rectitude & either openly profligate
or merely assumed a semblance of morality & religion to enable them the more[?]
actively & extensively to prosecute their nefarious designs – This state of things
can alone be remedied by suffering only such to emigrate as can produce
satisfactory testimonials as to their character for morality, industry & intelli[?]
gence[?], should such a course be adopted for one or two years we [page torn]
be <en>abled to receive all that offer without endangering the best inter [page torn]
Colony – The expedition from Charleston is the most unexceptionable that ha [page torn]
ed in our shores since, I have resided in Africa and a few more such will [page torn]

doubt not have the effect of correcting many of the existing evils —

As to the establishment of Schools in the adjacent native villages there[?] exists no obstacle, as the chiefs & headmen will readily consent to receive teachers[?] but these will have to be supported by the liberality of our friends in the U States as the natives are either too poor or indiffent to the advantages that will accrue to their children from a proper course of instruction to contribute any thing to their support – There will always be some difficulty in procuring suitable teachers in the Colony most of the persons who are at all qualified for this business are more profitably employed in trading & could not be induced to undertake it except at such salaries as our means would not warrant I think therefore the better plan would be to educate some young men in the U. S. and when properly prepared send them out with instructions to locate themselves at such points as may be deemed the most elligible —

The reports that have reached you respecting the harsh treatment the natives receive at the hands of Colonists are as far as regards[?] the conduct of a few individuals correct, but the practice is by no means universal[?], & in every instance where the natives have made known their [illegible, water stain here and below] promptly redressed & the perpetrators of such [illegible] there may have been some cases which have [illegible] and of course could not be properly noticed but [illegible] the neglect not chargeable on the public authority here – [illegible] your communication of the 27th Dec^r 1832 I notice a resolution of [illegible] and requesting you furnish the deficient vouchers in my A/C of reimbursements for 1st & 2nd quarters of last year in examining the copy of that A/C which I have retained, I find I have neglected to note what vouchers were deficient, so that it will be impossible for me to comply with the request unless you shall furnish me with the number of the vouchers wanting together with the name of the person and amount, as soon as I receive this I will procure and forward them —

I hoped to have forwarded by this conveyance the A/C of disbursements for the 3^d & 4 quarters of last year, as well as the School reports for the same period but my journey to Grand Bassa and the severe illness contracted during that journey as well as the arrival of so many Emigrants have prevented me from preparing these documents, so they will have to be deferred until the next conveyance – I enclose you herewith duplicate acct^s of supplies purchased of Cap^t Hatch of the Brig Roanoke, also an acc^t of articles purchased of Cap^t Waring on acc^t of M^r Hanson for these drafts at 4 months have been given & which until he presented about the time you receive this —

With the highest respect & esteem
Your Obd^t Serv^t

15. Fragment: [Augustus Curtis?,] draft or a copy of a letter to Ralph Randolph Gurley, April 10, 1833, Liberia

Rev^d R R Gurley
&^c &^c &^c

Liberia April 10th 1833

Dear Sir

The unexpected departure of the Ship Jupiter which leaves this two weeks

earlier than was anticipated compels me to be very brief & omit much of interest which would otherwise have been communicated. I regret this[?] the Vice agent Mr. Williams will go in her and from him you will have an opportunity of g[a]ining much useful accurate and interesting information respecting the state and prospects of the Colony – The Schooner Hilarity will also leave this for the U. states in a few weeks & by her I will be able to communicate more fully.

I had intimated by this conveyance to have furnished you with the A/C of the disbursements for the two last quarters of 1832 as well as the statement of the revenue & report on the stage of the public Schools for the same period, but as I have before observed the vessel[?] having anticipated her time of sailing sufficient time was not afforded for preparing the necessary documents – in addition to which much of my time is taken up with the attending the sick among the newly arrived emigrants we have at present nearly 400 who may be considered as invalids and by far the greater proportion are at Caldwell it is therefore[?] [illegible] some assistance to afford them the requisite medical [illegible] greatly impaired his health & I have strong fears that [illegible] Sacrifice to his zeal in their behalf – render their[?] circum[?] [illegible] alone would induce me to yield every aid in my power[?] [illegible] morals[?] avocations[?] this is not much still what I can do it done freely[?] [illegible]

This has been an unusually sickly season many of the [illegible] habitants have suffered severely although none of their cases have as yet had a[?] fatal termination – The new comers have from the same causes suffered some[?] & the prospect a few weeks since so flattering has become clouded & I [illegible] great fears that the number of deaths will exceed what I had anticipated — They will I think average 8 or 9 percent instead of one or two percent as stated in my last communication much of this is owing to the inability of any one Physician to give the requisite attention to so large a number [illegible] invalids so disadvantageously situated as these about two thirds of them are at Caldwell nine miles from this place & those who have been retained[?] here are scattered over the whole town in different dwelling so that the task visiting them is arduous and irksome in the extreme had D^r Jodson[?] remained until the present time all would have been well, but he has chosen to desert us in the hour of need & at a time when he knew that neither D^r Hall nor myself were able to afford any medical aid to those whose situation required the strictest & most unwearied[?] attention – My own health although greatly improved since I last wrote is still feeble – that of[?] D^r Hall is wretchedly infirm he is at present confined to his bed & I have[?] great doubts whether he will survive the approaching rainy season [illegible]

A subject of great importance to the welfare of the Colony [illegible] recently been agitated & which require the most serious & immediate [illegible] sideration of the Board Although not the originator still I may in a great measure be considered as the cause of its being at this time presented for your[?] deliberation is simply this Many of the more reflecting and intelligent Colo_ nists & those who have hitherto been the warmest & most staunch supporters of the Colonial Government are of opinion that the time has now arrived when a greater portion of self government should be committed to their hands than they have hitherto enjoyed & one of the late expeditions we have received have brought to accessions of intelligence and moral strength which will remove many of the ob - stacles that have hitherto existed to the judicious exercise of this power – In the opin_ ion I must confess I in a great measure concur as there are many reasons in favour of its

adoption & the few objections that may be urged against it can be ready answered and I only regret that my time is too limited to allow my entering as fully into the merits of the ques_ tion as I could wish, I can merely for the present remark that I think the people may be safely trusted with the portion of power they ask for & that there is [illegible] <every> discipline to exercise it prudently & judiciously, it will also I think have great effect in the U. States in influencing the minds of the more respectable free coloured population in our favour & induce many to emigrate who would otherwise remain unfriendly to the case of African Colonization – The Society will also be [illegible] present labouring[?] under as the people here will [illegible][?]ation[?] as a legislative body chosen by themselves [illegible] particulars I beg leave to refer you to sundry[?] [illegible] the magistrates & council convened by me for that [illegible] by the vice agent who together with the Sheriff Mr. [illegible] remarks in explanation as you may require by the next [illegible] I[?] shall[?] be able to communicate more fully I would however re_ [illegible] in conclusion[?] say[?] you[?] have already promised to admit the inhabitants [illegible] Colony[?] to all the rights and privileges of a free people whenever such could [?] your compliance in this instance will in a great measure guar_ antee[?] the integrity of your intentions —

By the vessel that conveys this you will receive drafts to a considerable number of vouchers for the most of them will be friends[?] enclosed & for the others the letter[s?] of advice will explain the objects of expenditure – I have also certified to the account of Mr. Williams for Services rendered some time since & have given him an order on you for payment – this I hope you will pay or make such arrangements as will enable him to realize the amount

With sentiments of the highest respect —
Your Obed^t Serv^t

To
Rev^d R. R. Gurley

16. Fragment: [Augustus Curtis?,] draft or a copy of a letter to Ralph Randolph Gurley, May 16, 1832 [i.e., 1833], Liberia

&^c &^c &^c —

Liberia May 16th 1832 [i.e.,

1833]

Dear Sir

By the Ship Jupiter which sailed a few weeks since I briefly addressed you advising you of such affairs as were of pressing importance The Schooner Hilarity which has just anchored in our harbour affords me an opportunity of again communicating with you & I hasten to improve it

It was my intention to have written very fully by this vessel but my health has been so much impaired by repeated attacks of fever as to render both mental & Physical exertions very irksome added to which D^r Hall has been for several weeks

confined to his bed with a very severe indisposition, during which his life was several times despaired of & I have been forced to give as much attention to the sick as my strength would admit of this to harasses me that at night I am forced to return early to enable me to undergo the fatigues of the ensuing day, this I trust will be sufficient apology of my not complying with my promise to give you a full and detailed account of the Colonial affairs during the past year

In my communication by[?] Ship Jupiter I presented for consideration of the Board the subject of the alteration or Modification of the present form of Government so as to give the Colonists greater privileges than they at present enjoy & at the same time expressed my approbation of certain resolutions on the same subject passed at a meeting of the Council & Magistrates convened by me for that purpose; but being pressed for time & my health very infirm I could not then enter into the merits of the question or give you the reasons which induced me to adopt the [illegible, water stain here and below] this matter, these I will now endeavour briefly to state [illegible]

For some time past I have been aware that many[?] [illegible] fied with the existing state of things, but it was not until [illegible] became fully acquainted with the real cause of this dissatisfaction which [illegible] to be that they thought they should have some voice in the imposition of the [illegible] these were direct or indirect, & also have the supervision of those entrusted with [illegible] tion & they never expressed themselves dissatisfied with the amount imposed, but on the [illegible] said they were willing for their increase provided the power or privilege of imposing said[?] duties or taxes was granted & that the Collector & Treasurer should exhibit their account[?] a committee appointed for that purpose – Finding that their demands were reasonable & that they were urged in a respectful & becoming manner, I at once convened the Magistrates & Council & requested them to devise such measure as were best calculated to remedy the existing evil & meet the wishes of the more enlightened part of the community the result of their deliberations will be found in the resolutions handed you by the Vice Agent Mr A. D. Williams – I thought it best that the proposition should come from myself as representing the Colonization Society as it would have a tendency to remove the impression which a few designing individuals have been labouring to produce that we were opposed to their ever enjoying the rights & privileges of freemen & that the assurance to this effect contained in the laws & constitution of the Colony & various addresses of the Society were merely lures held out to induce people of colour to emigrate. I believe the course I have adopted has convinced most of them of the purity of our motives and there is little doubt should the Board *in a measure* second my efforts that affairs will hereafter move on[?] move smoothly & that we will find the Colonists willing to relieve [page torn] many burdens we at present find it difficult to sustain –

But although I have advocated the extension of their privileges still [page torn] there are certain limits beyond which we ought not for the present pass grant [page torn] portion of what they are and should we find it answer well we can then concede greater powers, such of these resolutions as I conceived objectionable were pointed out [page torn] former communication & there are others which will doubtless suggest themselves whenever the Board shall be fit to take the subject into consideration — That some alterations in the form of Government should be made cannot in my opinion be questioned but to what extent it remains for the Board to say & I beg leave therefore to recommend it to their early & serious consideration –

This season has been unusually unhealthy several of the old settlers

have died & the mortality among the newly arrived emigrants has greatly exceeded my anticipations, but much of this I am compelled to say has been owing to the want of medical aid, you have already been informed that shortly after the departure of Dr [illegible] the emigrants f[?] Ship Hercules & Lafayette & Brig Roanoke, were attacked with the fever, & that we had at one time upwards of 400[?] invalids on our list, of these by far the greater numbers (say 2/3^d) were at Caldwell and the remainder scattered over the town of Monrovia in such shelters as could be procured under these circumstances it was impossible that any one physician could give them the requisite attendance – Dr Hall made the attempts but was soon attacked with the fever induced by the fatigue & exposure he underwent [illegible] be considered convalescent & the consequent protraction [illegible] him to return to the U States in the vessel that conveys [illegible] probability of his recovering sufficient strength & health to be [illegible] temporary residence in a more healthy climate & to remain here [illegible] would I am convinced be to sacrifice his life – he has therefore [illegible] reluctantly yielded to my solicitations and should his life be spared you may [illegible] shortly after the receipt of this his departure will of [illegible] the[?] whole[?] of medical duties on me & these[?] I cannot discharge although [illegible] to afford all the aid & assistance in my power I have already since the departure of Dr. Jodson been twice confined to my bed with severe indisposition and [illegible] by the fatigue & exposure sun & night air during my attendance on[?] the

sick & there is every probability should the necessity for my services continue that I shall have repeated attacks – but as this is unavoidable I will continue in the course I am pursuing & willingly abide the result

The state of Agriculture throughout the Colony with few individual exceptions continues contrary to my anticipations to be much depressed – the causes of this you have already been made acquainted with & these have not only continued to operate, but appear to have acquired greater force since the late acquisitions to our numbers & the only hope I now have of being able to produce a salutary change is in the example of the South Carolina emigrants who have commenced farming establishments in a more extensive scale than we have hitherto witnessed & there is little doubt from their character for industry & intelligence that their efforts will be [illegible] crowned with success; others seeing the advantages to be derived from a persevering & judicious application of their time & labour to the cultivation of the soil may be induced to follow their example & produce a change in the present aspect of affairs which if suffered to continue much longer cannot fail of reducing to the Colony to great & almost irreparable distress – The late resolutions of the Board will I trust have great influence in stimulating many to make exertions in the cultivation of their farm Lands, I have not as yet fixed the periods within which application for the premiums should be made but ~~should~~ will do immediately; it may perhaps be necessary to extend the time to a more distant period than I had at first intended as many who wished to become candidates for the prizes have suffered much by sickness & are just recovering sufficient strength to enable them to attend to their Lands – The premiums offered for breaking even to the plough is in my opinion too low about two years since I offered a premium of \$50 in specie to be paid out of my private funds to any one who would break one yoke of oxen & plough one acre of Land with them – yet so great was their apathy that only one candidate offered for the prize & he failed in consequence of one of the oxen being so much injured as to die & before he could procure another he himself was taken sick and confined for several months with one of this[?] obstinant[?] ulcers of this climate – since

then none have come forward to contend for the prize until lately when one of the South Carolina Emigrants has made application & I have no doubt should his health continue good that he will succeed

You will be gratified to learn that our Settlement at Grand Bassa is in a prosperous condition we have now about 150 settlers who have established themselves & families there & many more are desirous of remaining themselves & families as soon suitable accommodations shall have been prepared [illegible] ly[?] feeling & seem anxious that we should increase the limit[?] [illegible] offers from several chiefs who wish us to purchase their territory [illegible] the sea coast about 4 or 5 miles below the mouth of the St. John [illegible] choice of any part of his dominions the tract of Country which he offers[?] [illegible] as it forms one of the most secure harbours and landing places on the coast[?] [illegible] deep indentation of the Coast commencing about half a mile below the mouth [illegible] extending upwards of three miles, at the Southeastern extremity of this incurvation[?] the coast rises & juts out into the sea and a high reef of rocks continues from it for nearly a half a mile[?] farther out into the ocean forming a natural breakwater behind which vessels may at all seasons find secure anchorage in 4 or 5 fathoms, the landing is equally safe as the reef presents any surf & at the worst season when it is dangerous to attempt to land elsewhere except in Canoes maned by experienced Kroomen boats of any description can put good as here, at this place without the least risk – It was this tract of Country that I wished to purchase when I visited Grand Bassa upwards of a year since for the purchase of establishing a settlement, but could not prevail upon them to ~~settle~~ sell it but now, since we have firmly established ourselves and they find they have derived benefit instead of sustaining injury from our prosperity, they are very anxious I should make purchase & place Colonists on their side of the river I think it will be highly advantageous to the settlement that we should possess their country & shall therefore make some arrangement for its purchase —

Many of the settlers at Grand Bassa I am informed have their lands enclosed and houses built & have made some progress in cultivation of their lots - I have lately seen some of the finest melons equal to those raised in the U. States which were raised by Hanson Leifer[?] one of the emigrants from Washington, this person has made greater progress than any of the others &[?] is one of the most enterprising & industrious settlers we have – The land in the vicinity of the baricade is light & well adapted to the cultivation of melons Indian corn Sweet potatoes &^c but the best lands are on the other or farther side of the S^t Johns river and are included in the late purchase from King Joe Harris it is here that I intend to assign their farm lands as the country is well timbered & Watered & the soil deep and fertile I think it will not be longer than four or five years ere this settlement will rival Monrovia

With this you will receive A/C of disbursements during the 3rd & 4th quarters of 1832 – I have as far as lay in my power furnished vouchers for every item of expenditure but there are many for which this kind of evidence can not be procured these have been stated in a former A/C & consists chiefly of presents to Natives chiefs and the expenses of native Labourers, but whenever it was practicable I have endeavoured to comply with the instructions contained in the resolution of the Board – It will be seen by reference to the accompanying A/C that our expenses have been greatly increased since we have recv^d such large numbers of emigrants as have been transported within these few past Months nor

can I hold out a reasonable hope that there will be any distribution of the disbursements so long as we continue to receive expeditions so scantily supplied with provisions & hospital stores as those per Brig American, Ship Hercule & Ship Jupiter if the necessary supplies purchased her at enormous advances on the first cost to leave nothing undone which may contribute to the of the Emigrants & I have followed & intend to follow the letter instructions you have already received drafts to a large amount & you will probably receive more these are chiefly for supplies which I have compelled to purchase to prevent the people from suffering, several of the vouchers have been forwarded & the remainder shall accompany the A/C for the 1st & 2nd quarter of the present year The vice agent Mr. A. D. Williams who has had ample opportunities of becoming well acquainted with the state of affairs as respects the wretched manner in which expeditions have been fitted out can and will afford you such information as will I trust prevent the like from happening in future & knowing as I do the state of your treasury nothing nothing can be more unpleasant than to be forced to make demands which you will find it difficult to meet, but but as I have before remarked it is under the existing state of things unavoidable & can only be remedied by sending with each expedition provisions & hospital stores sufficient to supply them for at least six months

This season has been one of unusual scarcity rice cannot be procured at any price the crops of last year having failed for the want of rain at the time when the grain was forming & I have in consequence been obliged to purchase breadstuffs of foreign growth at very high rates this will be evident from the bills which you have & will receive I have lately been so fortunate as to purchase from Mr. G G Willis 300 bushels of rice which he procured at Sierra Leone this supply proved very seasonable as we were destitute of the article and the sick were suffering for want of it I have given Mr. Willis a Draft for the Amount & the bill will accompany this

Enclosed you will receive sundry papers relating to Colonial affairs – viz a statement exhibiting the amount of monies collected & paid out into the treasury during the year 1832 marked A, statement showing the amount of monies drawn from the treasury during 1832 & the objects of expenditure marked B – The A/C of the Colonial Agency with the Colonial Treasury marked C – and the School report for the 3rd & 4th quarters of 1832 marked D – which I trust will prove satisfactory —

I believe I have already given my opinion respecting the purchase of Cape Palmas & stated the principal objections to our attempting for the present to occupy it the truth is the undertaking will prove very expensive, far beyond what our funds warrant – had we sufficient means at our disposal I do not doubt that the purchase might be easily effected & under such circumstances it would prove a very valuable acquisition —

Messrs Finney & Cox are both at present residing at this place & are just recovering from the fever of which they have had rather slight attacks I am much pleased with these gentlemen & have no doubt they will prove eminently serviceable, as they seem to be zealously devoted to the great work in which they are engaged Mr Finney has made several short excursions & visited our settlements, he having visited Grand Bassa Heard in an excursion several day journey into him to visit several principal chiefs who

over[?] the surrounding country he [illegible]
[illegible] of the Country but not with this[?] [illegible]
bade[?], he intends as soon as the rains have ceased to attempt to [illegible]
the interior from Be[?] Port[?] of his success I have my doubts as the [illegible]
ing on the sea coast are very much opposed to strangers having [illegible]
with the interior tribes, as they are apprehensive that a direct communication
will be opened & thus destroy the monopoly of that trade which they find so
profitable

With high esteem & respect
Your Obed^t Serv^t

17. Fragment: [Augustus Curtis?,] draft or a copy of a letter to Ralph Randolph Gurley, May
16, 1833, Liberia

Liberia May 15th 1833

Dear Sir

Enclosed you will receive a copy of a letter from AR[?] Levering
& Sons of Baltimore bearing date 27th Oct 1832 and addressed to M^r Jacob
Warner a citizen of this place

From the tenor of the letter it will be seen that the said Lever[page torn]
Sons Shipped by the Sch^r Orion Capt.[?] three crates of earthen [page torn]
& five Boxes of Rice consigned to said Warner, but which he unfortunately never
received – On the arrival of the said Orion at this port it was found that all
the invoices & bills of lading had been left behind & I only rec^d from D^r [page torn]
who superintended the fitting out of the expedition a letter stating that he had
put on Board on acct of the Maryland Society certain goods without specifying
what there were, nor did Mr Warner receive any advices of the consignment of the
above goods accordingly acting under the [influence] impression that all the goods
& Merchandize on Board wer the property of the Maryland Society & intended for
the subsistence of the emigrants I had them placed in the public store, & they were
together with the goods belonging to the parent Society appropriated to that pur
pose part of the three crates were used in the Agency House being of a descrip
tion unsuited to the Native trade, but by far the greater part were consumed
in the matter above stated

I was therefore much surprised when M^r Warner called on me a
few days since & presented the letter of which the enclosed is a copy and at the
same time claimed the property – this claim as the goods had been rec^d and
appropriated in the matter stated I could not deny, & therefore resolved to
take the opinion of some of our most respectable Merchants as to the am^t
of remuneration which ought in[?] justice to be paid the owners &
[illegible] Waring & Russwurm to whom the matter was
[illegible] opinion that 35 per ct exclusive of the charges on the orig_
[illegible] to 38 ct would be ample & sufficient & I have according_
[illegible] to AR Levering & Sons directing them to call on you and
[illegible] & I trust you will as our credit is some what involved[?]
[illegible] such arrangements as may prove satisfactory to the claimants

By this vessel you will receive several drafts to one of which in par_
ticular I wish to invite your attention, it is for \$1200 in favour of D^r Hall and
at thirty days might[?] & on acct of available funds placed by him at the dis=
posal of the Colonial Agency – It seems that some time since D^r Hall loaned

to family[?] of[?] Russwurm the above amnt not at that time having any idea of his returning to the U States; but being taken sick & his health so much impaired as to render a visit to his native land necessary the preservation of his life & being destitute of funds he applied to me to aid him by taking Daily & Russwurms note bearing interest 10 p^t c^t & give him a draft for the note amn^t this I have done presuming that the Board would have no objection to forward the views of one has so faithfully served them as almost to sacrifice his life in endeavouring to aid the [promotion?] of the cause which they are so strenuously labouring to advance —

I also enclose a list of medicines & hospital stores much[?] needed for emigrants on our hands the kind & quantity of each are such as D^r Hall himself approves of & to him I beg leave to refer you for further particulars, he will also answer your questions as to the size form & situation of respectables to be sent out from the U States & will be able to give much usefull information respecting the mode of fitting out future expeditions

With every sentiment of respect & esteem
Your Obd^t Serv^t

To
Rev^d R. R. Gurley
&^c &^c &^c

18. [A. D. Williams?,] An account of Cape Mount, January 15, 1834

Jany 15. 1834

Mr William Curtis to make a Factory at C. Mount 4 years ago. The people & Kings came to King F[?] & said you are going to bring war, for the American men fought at Messurado he said no but for trade [K. William?] King Grey[?] agreed—

About one year ago Messrs. Williams Prout & Johnson with Mr Curtis made a bargain with King Peter King Grey & Kai bara signed a paper agreeing to permit a settlement—King Grey is the chief King of the Vey, but his brother Fana Toro [Fan Tolo] is more powerful & being jealous because his name was not signed makes more trouble—His brother & others are now either afraid or ashamed to avow the bargain & assert that Mr Curtis made them drink & deny that they signed the paper—Bara being at Gambia swore that no school should be founded—Kai bara declared he would & built a house at Bendo—The Kings threatened him with war & he has called upon Mr C for aid & he has encouraged him with hope of help from Colony two months ago One of Mr C Friends told the Kings that he has cheated them to hinder his trade—The Kings therefore threatened to Kill Mr. C. Fai toro—&—William built a barrocade to protect him. Kai bara—would probably have done as little towards a settlement as any others had he not been enraged, by the conduct of K. Peter who Kept two of his messengers—for slaves—whom he had sent to enquire why K. Peter took Far Toro people slaves Mr C King W &c were present &c—

The war of Gomez'[?] 5 men fell—their skins were used for drums—& the flesh eaten—To the excuse of the Vey: it sh'd be said that these eaters are from a distance called Mano Sanno[?]—the following is an exact representation of the drum—my blood run cold at the sight & I stopped my ears with horror—at the sound—Poor thoughtless werches perhaps a few days hence their own skins may serve the same purpose for an enemy! can the christian church think any sacrifice too great which could[?] elevate such barbarous minds to this our exalted[?] feelings & sentiments!

[Overleaf] An account of the State of things at C.M.

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