

## Slavery and Re-colonization of African Americans in the United States

### Overview

As the slavery dilemma became more critical to the future of the Union there were several suggestions made for its resolution. Among these was the re-colonization of the American African-American population off our continent to regions of people of similar color. What was behind these suggestions? Were any of these ideas endorsed by our government? How serious were we about this plan?

**Topic:** Did Lincoln have alternatives to abolishing slavery in the 1860's?

### Document #1

*"Applications have been made to me by many free Americans of African descent to favor their emigration, with a view to such colonization as was contemplated in recent acts of Congress. Other parties, at home and abroad--some from interested motives, others upon patriotic considerations, and still others influenced by philanthropic sentiments--have suggested similar measures, while, on the other hand, several of the Spanish American Republics have protested against the sending of such colonies to their respective territories. Under these circumstances I have declined to move any such colony to any state without first obtaining the consent of its government, with an agreement on its part to receive and protect such emigrants in all the rights of freemen; and I have at the same time offered to the several States situated within the Tropics, or having colonies there, to negotiate with them, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, to favor the voluntary emigration of persons of that class to their respective territories, upon conditions which shall be equal, just, and humane. Liberia and Hayti are as yet the only countries to which colonists of African descent from here could go with certainty of being received and adopted as citizens; and I regret to say such persons contemplating colonization do not seem so willing to migrate to those countries as to some others, nor so willing as I think their interest demands. I believe, however, opinion among them in this respect is improving, and that ere long there will be an augmented and considerable migration to both these countries from the United States."*[spelling is authentic!]

---LINCOLN'S SECOND ANNUAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS 12/1/62

### Discussion Questions

- 1) What alternatives to the "slave population" problem does Lincoln suggest other than abolishing slavery?
- 2) Does Lincoln attach any conditions to his suggestions?
- 3) Explain Lincoln's suggestions for this re-colonization.

- 4) What does Lincoln offer as an alternative suggestion to his original idea if it does not work out?
- 5) Which two foreign countries does Lincoln mention and where are they located?
- 6) Why does Lincoln attach conditions to his re-colonization ideas for “slaves”?
- 7) How do these alternatives for the African-American slave population agree or disagree with his previous slavery positions?

**Topic:** How successful were any re-colonization efforts to move our African-American population?

Document #2 (GLC3973)

Abraham Lincoln to Edward Stanton  
Washington, D.C, 1 February 1864  
Letter signed, 1 page

Executive Mansion,  
February 1st. 1864

Sir:

You are directed to have a transport (either a steam or sailing vessel as may be deemed proper by the Quartermaster General) sent to the colored colony established by the United States at the Island of Vache, on the coast of San Domingo to bring back to this country such of the colonists there as desire to return. You will have the transport furnished with suitable supplies for that purpose, and detail an officer of the Quartermaster's Department who, under special instructions to be given, shall have charge of the business. The colonists will be brought to Washington, unless otherwise hereafter directed and be employed and provided for at the camps for colored persons around that City. Those only will be brought from the island who desire to return, and their effects will be brought with them.

Abraham Lincoln

Hon. Edwin M Stanton  
Secretary of War

### Discussion Questions

- 1) Who was Lincoln's letter sent to and what is his position?
- 2) Why was this request made to this Cabinet member?

- 3) Where was the colony in question located? (*Be as specific as possible!*)
- 4) Why was this being done for re-colonized African-Americans?
- 5) How were these “returnees” reincorporated into American Society?
- 6) What did this action say about President Lincoln’s feelings about the treatment of African Americans?
- 7) Why do you think Lincoln felt this action was important for the government to undertake?