



# **An African Republic: Black and White Virginians in the Making of Liberia (The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture)**

*Marie Tyler-McGraw*

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The nineteenth-century American Colonization Society (ACS) project of persuading all American free blacks to emigrate to the ACS colony of Liberia could never be accomplished. Few free blacks volunteered, and greater numbers would have overwhelmed the meager resources of the ACS. Given that reality, who supported African colonization and why? No state was more involved with the project than Virginia, where white Virginians provided much of the political and organizational leadership and black Virginians provided a majority of the emigrants.

In *An African Republic*, Marie Tyler-McGraw traces the parallel but seldom intersecting tracks of black and white Virginians' interests in African colonization, from revolutionary-era efforts at emancipation legislation to African American churches' concern for African missions. In Virginia, African colonization attracted aging revolutionaries, republican mothers and their daughters, bondpersons schooled and emancipated for Liberia, evangelical planters and merchants, urban free blacks, opportunistic politicians, Quakers, and gentlemen novelists.

*An African Republic* follows the experiences of the emigrants from Virginia to Liberia, where some became the leadership class, consciously seeking to demonstrate black abilities, while others found greater hardship and early death. Tyler-McGraw carefully examines the tensions between racial identities, domestic visions, and republican citizenship in Virginia and Liberia.

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