

*In 1827, John Brown Russwurm cofounded Freedom's Journal, the first newspaper edited and published by black people in the United States. Initially opposed to the program of colonization, Russwurm eventually changed his ideas about the subject. Here, he writes about his embrace of colonization in the February 14, 1829 issue of Freedom's Journal.*

LIBERIA. –

Our readers will perceive by the statement below, received by the way of England, that a dreadful accident has lately happened to the Colony at Liberia. Whatever may have been our opinions hitherto, concerning the plan of colonizing the free people of Colour on the coast of Africa, all must sympathise with the friends of the cause, that so great a misfortune should befall the Colony. In the death of Mr. Carey, the Colonists have to deplore one whose loss will not easily be supplied; and the Society, and able and persevering auxiliary, who was devoted heart and soul to the enterprise.

As our former sentiments have always been in direct opposition to the plan of colonizing us on the coast of Africa: perhaps, so favourable an opportunity may not occur, for us to inform our readers, in an open and candid manner, that our views are materially altered. We have always said, that when convinced of our error, we should hasten to acknowledge it - that period has now arrived. The change which has taken place, has not been the hasty conclusion of a moment: we have pondered much on this interesting subject, and read every article within our reach, both for and against the society, and we come on from the examination, a decided supporter of the American Colonization Society.

We know, that in making this avowal, we advance doctrines in opposition to the majority of our readers, to many of whom we are personally known, and for whose opinions we still entertain great respect: but how unpopular soever they may be, we know, they are conscientious ones - formed from no sordid motives; but having for their basis, the good of our brethren.

We have carefully examined the different plans now in operation for our benefit, and none we believe, can reach half so efficiently the mass, as the plan of colonization on the coast of Africa; for if we take a second look into any or all of them, we find them limited to a single city or state. We consider it a mere waste of words to talk of ever enjoying citizenship in this country: it is utterly impossible in the nature of things: all therefore who pant for these, must cast their eyes elsewhere.

The interesting query now arises, where shall we find this desirable spot? If we look to Europe, we find that quarter already overburdened with a starving population; if to Asia, its distance is an insuperable barrier, were all other circumstances favourable. Where then shall we look so naturally, as to Africa? In preferring Liberia, we wish not to deprive any of the right of choice between it and Hayti; as is not our object to say ought against Hayti or the able ruler at its head; but it is a fact well known to all, that our people have strong objections against emigrating to that country, arising in many cases, from the unfavourable reports of those who have returned. Sensible of this fact then, of the unwillingness of our people to emigrate to Hayti; we feel it our duty, to offer to their consideration, our present sentiments concerning African Colonization; and perhaps, what we may be able to offer hereafter, may be the means of enlightening some, whom it was our misfortune to have misled by our former opinions.