

pointed a committee to whom was referred the subject of the status of the free colored population. The committee was required to submit to the convention "some prospective plan, looking to the riddance of this State, of the free negro, and mulatto population thereof, and their colonization in Africa."

The increase of the free black population in Maryland between the years of 1840 and 1850 was eleven thousand one hundred and twenty-nine. From 1790 to 1850 the annual increase averaged one thousand and fifty-two. The counties of Cecil, Kent, Caroline, Worcester, Harford and Baltimore City, had more free negroes than slaves in 1850. The counties of Charles, St. Mary's, Calvert, Kent, Caroline and Worcester showed an increasing per cent of free negroes over the whites in the ten years between 1840 and 1850. The total white increase during the same decade for the whole State was 29.9 per cent. The free black increase was 17.9 per cent. Slaves had decreased.⁶⁵ The committee showed that at the given rate of progression, the free negro population must in a few years exceed the white population in eleven of the counties. The committee explained the cause of this increase by the emigration of the white population to the western states, while the free negro remained, knowing that when once he emigrated, the law forbade his return.

The Maryland State Colonization Society was incorporated by the state legislature in 1831.⁶⁶ The object of the society was to employ the funds collected in Maryland for the removal of the free negro population. From this time the plan of colonization in Africa was adopted as a state policy.

The act of 1831 ordered the governor and council to appoint a board of three managers, members of the Maryland Colonization Society, whose duty it should be to

⁶⁵ Committee's Report, Debates, vol. ii, p. 220.

⁶⁶ Act 1831, ch. 314.