We the representatives

Declaration of Independence.

We the representatives of the people of the Commonwealth of Liberia, in Convention Assembled, invested with ity for forming a new government, relying upon the aid and protection of the Great Arbiter of human events, in the name and on behalf of the people of this Commonwealth, publish and declare the said Commonwealth a Free and Independant State, by the name and title of the Republic of Liberia.

While announcing to the nations of the world the new position which the people of this Republic have felt themselves upon to assume, courtesy to their opinion seems to demand a brief, accompanying statement to the causes which them, first to expatriate themselves from the land of their nativity and to form settlements on this barbarous coast now to organize their government by the assumption of a Sovereign and independent character. Therefore we fully ask their attention to the following facts.

We recognise in all men, certain natural and inalienable rights: among these are life, liberty, and the right acquire, possess, enjoy and defend property. By this practice and consent of men in all ages, some system or form of vernment is proven to be necessary to exercise, enjoy and secure these rights; and every people has a right to in a government and to choose and adopt that system or form of ~~government~~ which in their opinion will most tually accomplish these objects, and secure their happiness, which does not interfer with the just rights of others. therefore exist to institute government, and to all the powers necessary to conduct it, is an inalienable right, cannot be resisted without the grossest injustice.

We the people of the Republic of Liberia were originally the inhabitants of the United States of North America. In some parts of that country, we were debarred by law from all the rights and privileges of men — in oth public sentiments, more powerful than law, frowned us down.

We were every where shut out from all Civil office

We were excluded from all participation in the government. We were taxed without our consent

We were Compelled to Contribute to the resources of a Country which gave us no protection.

We were made a separate and distinct class, and against us every avenue to improvement was effec closed. Strangers from all lands of a color different from ours, were preferred before us.

We uttered our complaints, but they were unattended to, or only met by alledging the peculiar insti of the Country

All hope of a favorable change in our Country was thus wholly extinguished in our bosom, and we with anxiety abroad for some asylum from the deep degradation.

The Western Coast of Africa was the place selected by American benevolence and philanthropy, for future home. Removed beyond those influences which depriped us in our native lands, it was we would be enabled to enjoy those rights and privileges, and exercise and improve those faculti the God of nature has given us in Common with the rest of mankind.

J. Benedict

Under the Da[illegible] so
Under the auspices of the American Colonization Society, we established ourselves here on land acquired by purchase
from the Lords of the Soil—
In an original Compact with the Society, we for important reasons delegated to it certain political p
While this institution stipulated that whenever the people should become capable of Conducting the go
-ment, or whenever the people should desire it, this institution would resign the delegated power, peaceably
-draw its supervision, and leave the people to the government of themselves.
Under the auspices and guidance of this institution, which has nobly and in perfect faith re
its pledges to the people, we have grown and prospered.
From time to time our number has been increased by migration from America, and by accessions from
tribes; and from time to time, as circumstances require it, we have extended our borders by acqu
of lands by honorable purchased from the Natives of the Country
As our territory has extended, and our population increased, our Commerce has also increased. The flag
most of the civilized nations of the earth float in our harbours, and their merchants are opening
honorable and profitable trade. Until recently, these visits have been of an uniformly harmonious cha
but as, they have become more frequent and to more numerous points of our extending Coast, grie
have arisen, which it is supposed can be adjusted only by agreement between Sovereign powers.
For years past, the American Colonization Society has virtually withdrawn from all direct and a
part in the administration of the government, except in the appointment of the Governor, who is also a C
for the apparent purpose of testing the ability of the people to Conduct the affairs of government, and no
of Crude legislation, nor of mismanagement nor of Mal administration has yet been heard
In view of these facts, this institution, the American Colonization Society, with that good faith which has uni
marked all its dealings with us, did by a set of resolutions in January, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand
Hundred and Forty Six, dissolve all political Connexion with the people of this Republic, return the power
which it was delegated, and left the people to the government of themselves
The people of the Republic of Liberia then, are of right, and in fact a free, Sovereign and independent St
possessed of all the rights, and powers, and functions of government
In assuming the momentous responsibilities of the position they have taken, the people of this Repub
feel justified by the necessities of the case, and with this Conviction they throw themselves with confidence
the Candid Consideration of the Civilized world
Liberia is not the offspring of grasping ambition, nor the tool of avaricious Speculation.
No desire for territorial aggrandizement brought us to these shores; nor do we believe so sordid a mo
intend hints the high consideration of those who aided us in providing this asylum.
Liberia is an asylum from the most grinding oppression.

J. Benedict
Presd

Lewis

Hilary Long

Beasley R. Wilson

Elijah Johnson

J. D. Gryson

John Day

A. W. Gardner

James Flemming

Captain Apth

R. E. Harvey

In Comity to the views of Africa, we indulged the pleasing hope that we would be permitted to exercise and improve those faculties, which impart to man his dignity — to nourish in our hearts the flame of honorable ambition, to cherish and indulge those aspirations, which a Beneficent Creator hath implanted in every human heart, and to evince to all who despise, ridicule and oppress our race, that we possess with them a common nature, are with them susceptible of equal refinement, and capable of equal advancement in all that adorns and dignifies man.

We were animated with the hope, that here we should be at liberty to train up our Children in the way they should go, to inspire them with the love of an honorable fame, to kindle within them the flame of a lofty philanthropy, and to form strong within them, the principles of humanity, virtue and religion.

Among the strongest motives to leave our native land — to abandon forever the scenes of our Childhood and to sever the most endeared Connexions, was the desire for a retreat where, free from the agitations of fear and molestations, we could, in Composure and Security approach in worship the God of our Fathers.

Thus far our highest hopes have been realized.

Liberia is already the happy home of thousands, who were once the doomed victims of oppression, and if left unmolested to go on with her natural and spontanious growth, if her movements be left free from the paralysing intrigues of Jealous ambition and unscrupulous avarice, she will throw open a wider and wider door for thousands, who are now looking with an anxious eye for some land of rest.

Our Courts of Justice are open equally to the Stranger and the Citizen, for the redress of grievances, for the remedy of injuries, and for the punishment of Crime. Our numerous and well attended Schools attest our efforts and our desire for the improvement of our Children. Our Churches for the worship of our Creator, every where to be seen, bear testimony to our piety, and to our acknowledgements of His Providence.

The native Africans bowing down with us before the altar of the living God, declare that from us, feeble as we are, the light of Christianity has gone forth, while upon that Curse of Curses, the Slave trade, a deadly blight has fallen as far as our influence extends.

Therefore in the name of humanity, and virtue and religion — in the name of the Great God, our common Creator, and our common Judge, we appeal to the Nations of Christendom, and earnestly and respectfully ask of them, that they will regard us with sympathy and friendly Consideration, to which the peculiarities of our condition entitle us, and to extend to us that Comity which marks the friendly intercourse of civilized & independent Communities

Done in Convention at Monrovia, in the County of Montserado by the unanimous Consent of the people of the Commonwealth of Liberia this twenty sixth day July, in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty seven, and of the Republic the First.

In witness whereof we have hereto set our names

Sam'l W Brooke Secy

J Benedict

President