

Stocktons and the Colonization Movement

SANKOFA COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP
JUNE 6, 2023

MORVEN
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Stockton's Exposure to Colonization

- Founded by Princeton alumni in 1816, the American Colonization Society (ACS) sought the removal of the formerly enslaved to Africa.
- One of the society's founding architects, Reverend Robert Finley, had taught Robert F. Stockton at Basking Ridge Classical School.



Who was the American Colonization Society?

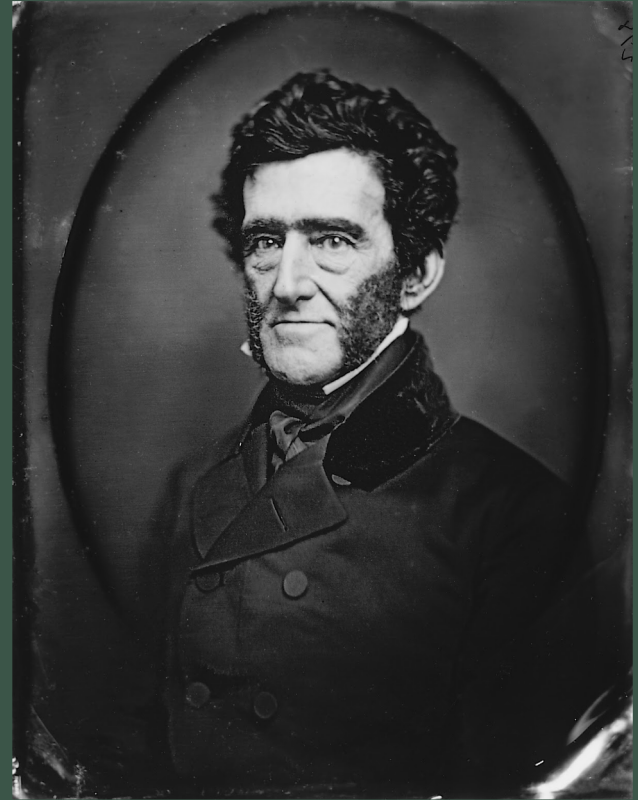
- **Bushrod Washington**, nephew of George Washington, good friend of Stockton family, founding president of ACS
- **Elias Boudinot Caldwell**, a secretary of ACS, and the namesake and adopted child of Stockton's great-uncle Elias Boudinot and brother-in-law of Rev. Robert Finley
- **James Madison** (US President 1809–1817) elected president of ACS from 1833 until his death in 1836. Enslaved people at Montpelier.
- **Henry Clay**, 2nd president of ACS 1836 to 1849. Enslaved people at Ashland
- **Francis Scott Key**, founding member of ACS. Enslaved people in Maryland
- **James Monroe** (US President 1817–1825), capital Monrovia named for him in 1824. Enslaved people at Highland.



American Colonization Society to James Madison. Membership Certificate. 1816. Library of Congress

Robert Field Stockton

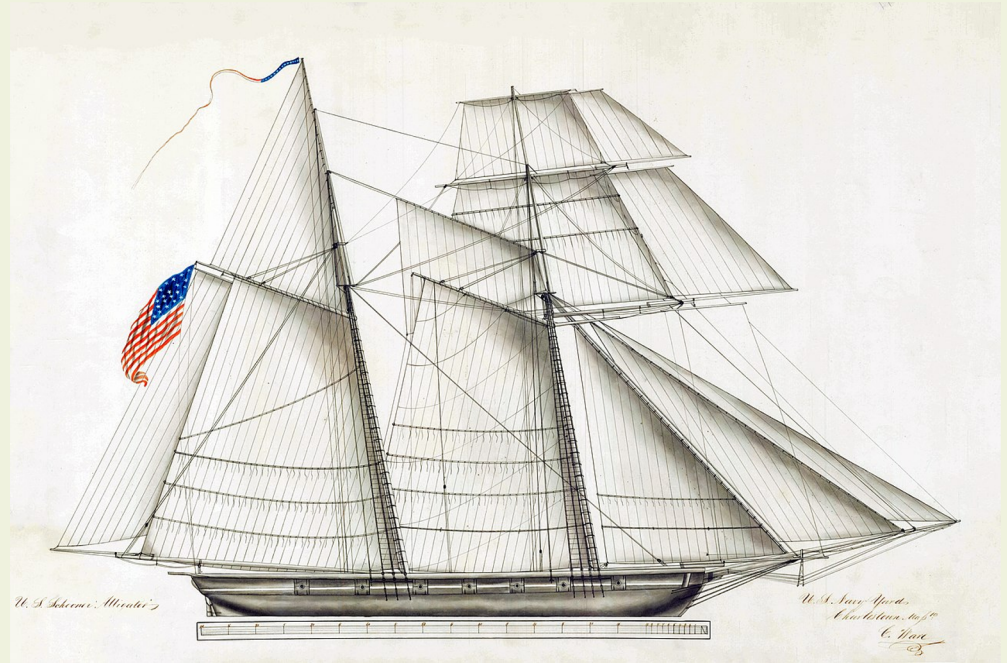
BORN AT MORVEN 1795



Collection of the Historical Society of Princeton

Stockton sets sail for the ACS

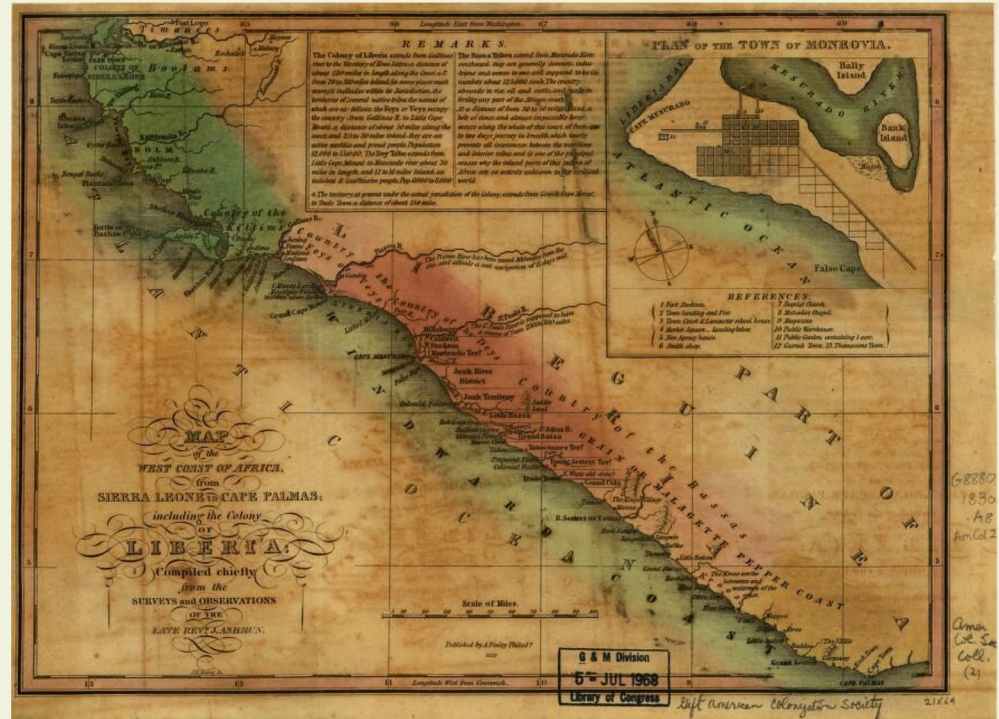
- In 1820, Congress granted the ACS use of the U.S.S. Alligator
- Aided by influential friends in Washington, Stockton was granted command of the ship.
- He set sail for the west coast of Africa with the task of securing land for the creation of a successful colony of formerly enslaved people.



Drawings of Naval Vessels and Equipment. The U.S.S. Alligator. Ware Collection, National Archives

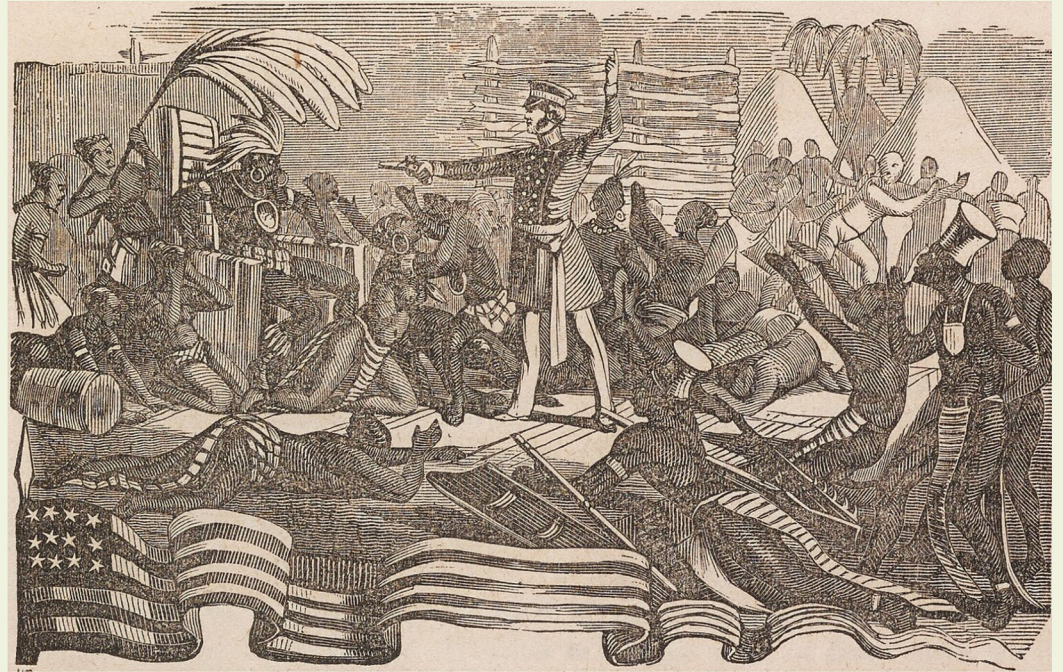
Arrival on the African Coast

- Stockton identifies Cape Mesurado, a strip of land south of Sierra Leone, as an appropriate site for colonization.
- Visible here is the capital of Liberia, named Monrovia for President Monroe, and Stockton Creek named for the Commodore.



Map of the West Coast of Africa from Sierra Leone to Cape Palmas, including the colony of Liberia, 1830. Surveyed and compiled by J. Ashmun, engraved by J.H. Young, published by A. Finley. Collection of the Library of Congress.

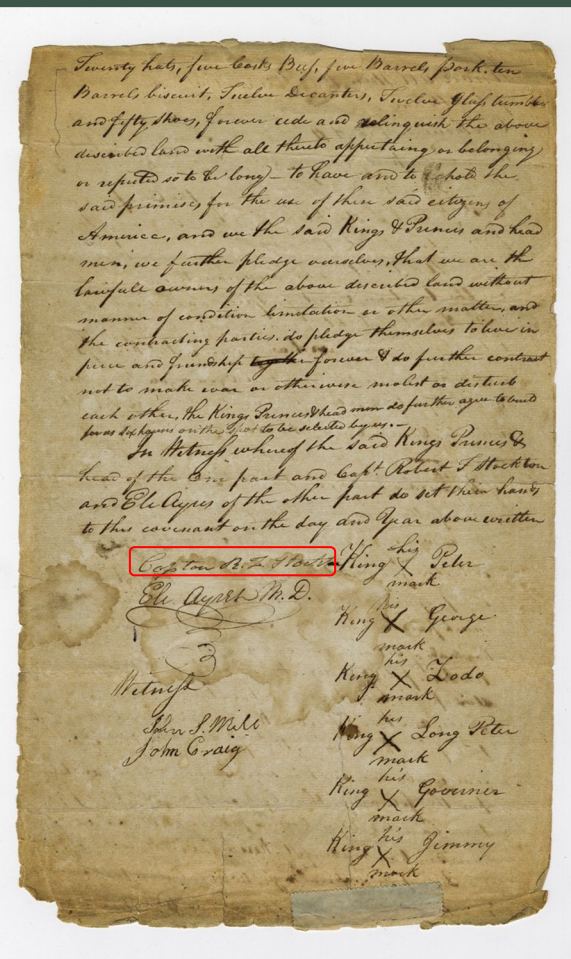
“Captain Stockton...drawing one of his pistols, pointed at the head of the king, while raising his other hand to heaven, he solemnly appealed to the God in Heaven for protection...King Peter flinched before the calm courage of the white man...”



Stockton holding a pistol to King Peter's head, from Thomas Curtis Clarke's *The mission of America...Compiled from official documents by Thomas C. Clarke*. Philadelphia, S.C. Paul & Co., 1852. Collection of Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

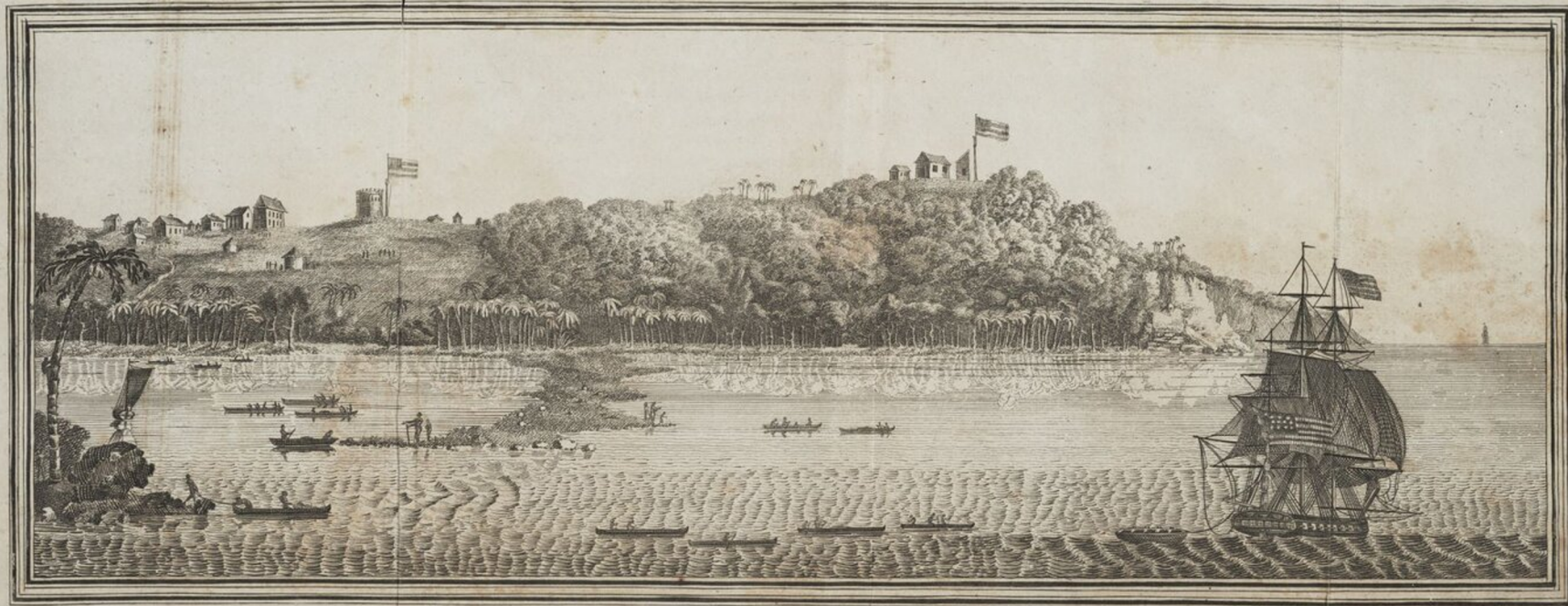
Cape Mesurado Land Contract

The second page of the document (right) includes the signatures of Captain Robert F. Stockton and six leaders of Dei, Bassa, Vai, and Gola people. December 15, 1821.



Courtesy of Chicago History Museum.

View of the Colonial Settlement at Cape Montserado, June 1825. Drawn and engraved by Henry Stone. Collection of the Library of Congress. This view shows Cape Montserado (or Mesurado) four years after Stockton had confronted Zolu Duma. The accompanying legend marks the round tower as "Stockton Castle" named for the Commodore.

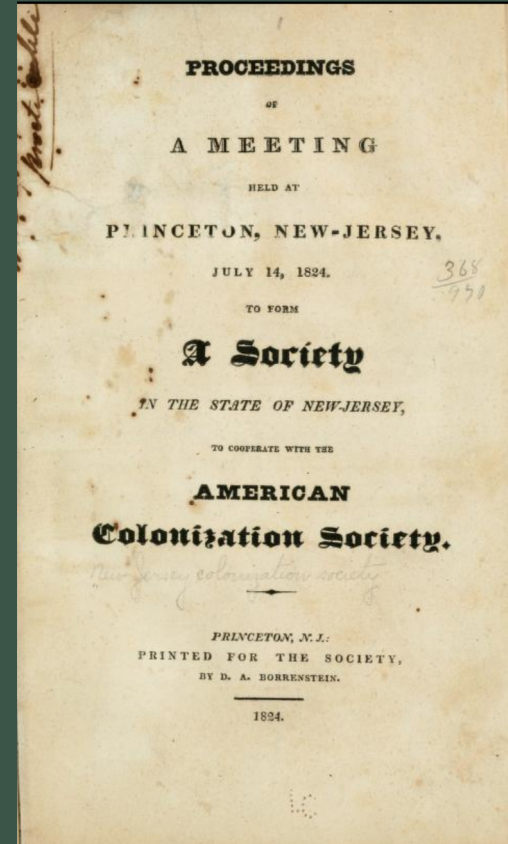


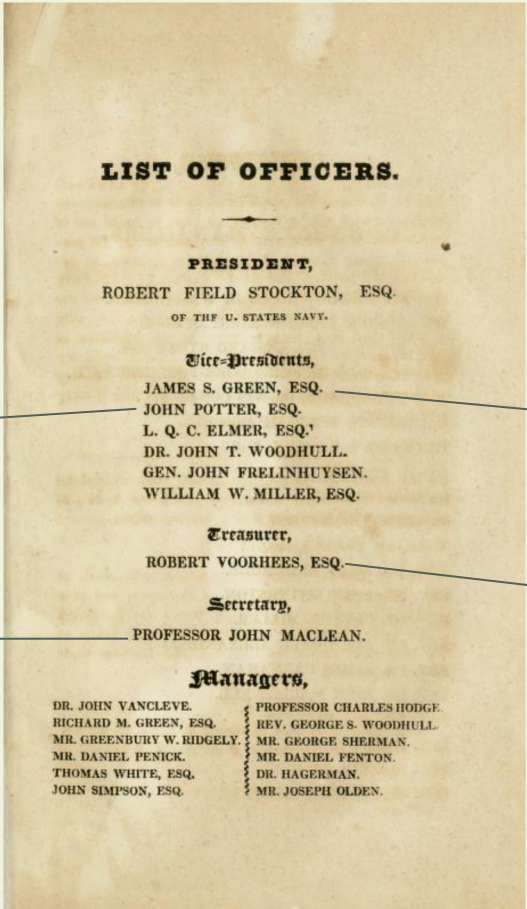
View of the Colonial Settlement at Cape Montserado.

Henry Stone del. et sculp.

“To civilize this degenerate people [of Africa], to change their ignorance into knowledge, their horrible superstition into a right understanding of the Christian Religion, their treachery into good faith, and their slothfulness into industry, are among the results contemplated by the proposed Plan of the American Colonization Society.”

—*Robert Field Stockton, Addressing the New Jersey Colonization Society, July 14, 1824*





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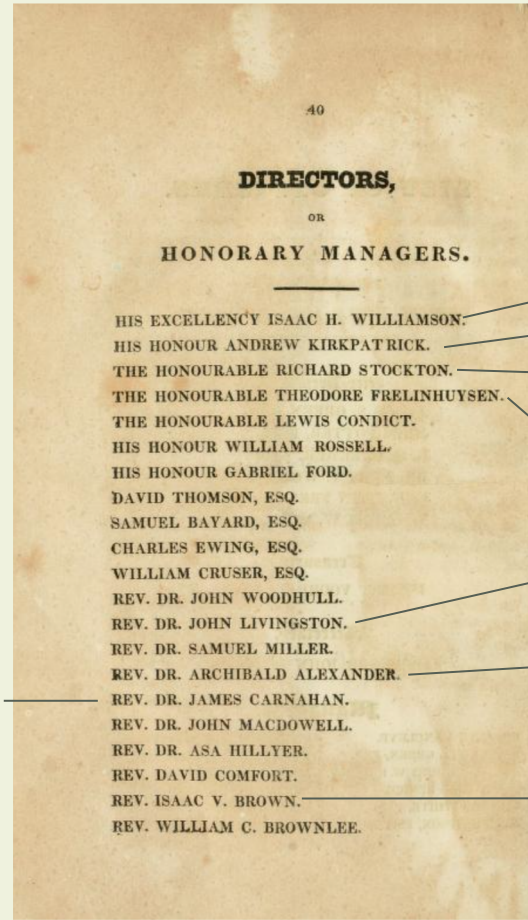
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Governor of NJ

Chief Justice of NJ

Father of RFS

Future president of Rutgers

President of Rutgers

First president of Princeton Theological Seminary

Founder of Lawrenceville School

Richard Stockton (1764–1828)

- Father of Robert Field Stockton, son of Richard Stockton “the Signer”
- Enslaved men, women, and children at Morven
- Trustee of College of New Jersey
- Donated the land to the founding of the Theological Seminary where he was also a trustee



John Potter (1765–1849)

- Father-in-law to Robert Field Stockton from Charleston and Savannah
- Built Prospect House (now on Princeton campus), enslaved people there until 1830
- Enslaved over three hundred men, women, and children at his Savannah River plantation, Colerain

