

Warrenton, Fauquier County, 25th Oct 1839

To His Excellency David Campbell
Governor of Virginia

Sir,

The late William Hunton of this county made his will, which has been admitted to record in Fauquier County, of which will the following is an extract: "I wish my executors to assemble my slaves, in the presence of several of the neighbors, between the first day of October and the first day of January 1840, and in a friendly manner, to explain to them, the nature of the colonization society and the colonies in Africa, that if they choose to go to Africa, they are permitted to do so, provided the Colonization Society, the State of Virginia, or the Federal Government, shall make provision for their transportation, but if it is ascertained that neither the Colonization Society, the State of Virginia nor the Federal Government have not made, and will not make in a short time, arrangements for transporting such as may be willing to go, or if any, or all of my slaves shall at the time, when they are assembled, refuse to go to Africa; then the portion or all of them that refuse to go, as the case may be, shall be divided amongst my wife and children as the law provides." The number of those slaves is about thirty five. They are of both sexes, and of various ages, from about seventy years, to three months old. A suit has been brought, in the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery of Fauquier County, for the purpose of carrying the testator's will into effect. The court has made an order or decree in that suit, of which the following is an extract: "The court doth adjudge, order and decree, that one of the commissioners of the court, do ascertain which of the slaves, if any, are willing to accept, upon the terms stated in the will of William Hunton deceased in the bill mentioned, the freedom thereby tendered to them; and also the probable age of each, if any, accepting his or her freedom; and enquire and ascertain whether any and what provision is made, or can shortly be made, by the Society for the Colonization of the free negroes or colored population, of the United States, in Africa, for the transportation of the slaves in the bill mentioned, to Liberia; and whether any other and what provision is already made, or likely to be made shortly, by the State of Virginia, or the government of the United States, for the transportation of the said slaves, and report his proceedings therein to the court, with any matter specially stated that he may deem pertinent, or any party may require to be so stated." The order or decree, from which the above extract is made, has come into my hands, as commissioner of the court, to execute. May I therefore, ask of you whether any provision is already made, or likely to be made shortly, by the State of Virginia, for the transportation of slaves or colored population to Africa. I hope you will answer this question, and give me any other information that you think important touching this subject. The importance of the subject, and a desire to collect the best information in my power, is my excuse for troubling you in this matter. My report must be made to the court on or before the 18th day of November next, and I hope to receive the information wanted at an early day to enable me to make my report on or before that day. It is also desirable that the slaves should embark on board the Saluda which will sail on the 25th day of December 1839 for Africa.

Yours with great respect
John Marr
Clerk of the Court

(I did not find the answer to this letter)