



Norfleet Browne

Letter to the
American Colonization Society

28 January 1880

In *Black Nationalism in America*, ed. John H. Bracey, Jr., August Meier, and Elliott Rudwick. Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1970. Originally published in *African Repository* LVI (July 1880), 73-74. Copyright holder unidentified.

Norfleet Browne, a school teacher in North Carolina, emigrated to Liberia via New York City with relatives and acquaintances in 1880.

Brewerville
January 28, 1880

Dear Sir:

Thank God and the American Colonization Society for aiding me to remove to Liberia. After a pleasant run of thirty-one days from New York, I landed at Monrovia, the capital city of this republic. I remained in Monrovia one day, and then came to the town of Brewerville, on the St. Paul river, some ten miles distant. I never was so well pleased as when I set my feet on Africa's shore, for here I am at home. All that is wanted in this country is intelligent, enterprising and moneyed men from the United States. By this class a large and powerful republic can be built on the coast of Africa. Ministers are also wanted to preach to our brethren that are in heathenism. I find this to be a good country—the only country for the Negro. Africa, dear Africa, is the only land that a colored man can say is his. I expect to start a school soon at Brewerville for the natives—to teach them the truths of the gospel, the blessings of civilization, and the elevating beauties of the English language. I say to my brethren in America, come to your own country. Here you can feel that your soul is your own; here you will not be despised as of another race;

here you can rule instead of being ruled; here are no white men to say whether you shall vote or not, and here you will not be kicked about from pillar to post as a football by white people or politicians.

The Western coast of Africa was wisely selected by American benevolence and philanthropy for the settlement of the exiled people of color. I find here all kinds of fruit, vegetables and grain, as in the United States. It is not so hot here—and January is the warmest month—as to burn the fish in the rivers or the fine coffee growing on trees. It is pleasant; the air is sweet and soft, and it is quite cool in the morning and evening. At noonday it is not hotter than in North Carolina in summer time.

If I were again in the United States I would not remain, but would return to Liberia, even if I had to grieve my bones with labor until I should raise money enough to bury my body here. The emigrants that left with me are all well. They have selected their lands and are at work upon them.

Please have this statement published and send it to Rev. Lewis Browne, my minister, and to Mr. Alexander Browne, my brother, both at Littleton, N.C. I write them to come; and please aid them all you can in removing to this republic of true liberty, equality and happiness.

Very respectfully yours,

Norfleet Browne