

A Letter to Liberia

Albert Heaton to Jesse and Mars Lucas

April 29, 1830

Exedra, Loudoun County
Virginia

April 29th 1830

I embrace the earliest opportunity with which I am favoured to let you hear from your Native home, and from your relations and friends. being far away in a distant country-- separated by a vast ocean from them all and now among strangers. I know full well that you will rejoice and be happy to get any tidings from Old Loudoun County, in which you were born and in which you lived until that trying time when you took your leave for Liberia to enjoy that freedom which you could not enjoy here. Ever since you sailed from Norfolk we have all been very anxious to hear from you, and have earnestly hoped that you have been blessed with health and have been contented. We have not yet heard of the brig Liberia on her voyage but before this time she has landed you we hope safe on the shores of "that"--country from which your forefathers were brought to "this country", a land tho' of Liberty yet for you and your Ancestors you could "not breathe its kindly spirit, but" you have been permitted (by us who have enjoyed it) to go to a country where we hope you have already felt what true Liberty is, - where you can estimate its value, and cherish every blessing it affords. You have felt and witnessed the degradations of your colour in this county whether slaves or the free people of Colour, the latter tho they have no Masters and are free yet--they are only so in name for they cannot enjoy it here, few indeed of the free black have done well here & never can--But you have gone to a Country where the noblest feelings of Liberty will spring up, and knowing full well the prize you have won, in going to Liberia, you will I hope secure it to yourselves & your children, the prize I mean is the prize of Liberty the dearest right of man, the strongest passion of the soul, you have shewed the true dignity of man by immigrating to Liberia, separating from parents, relations and friends in pursuit of your happiness and welfare for yourselves and your children. Let not grief disturb you, don't let the thoughts of tenderness too much employ your minds; Think not too much of relations or acquaintances here, your concern cannot make them more happy or miserable. It is well to shew feeling and to mourn at the loss of friends, but to distress yourselves about them over-much is unmanly and you ought not to do so--You can not forget them and you never should. it-- is a source of great happiness to look back to former days which brings the recollection of fond parents, relatives and friends. the good feelings you have had together, the concern you have each had for the happenings of the other, But to let those thoughts of them destroy your peace of Mind is cruel to you and your relations, who only wish to know of your happiness to make them so likewise. Think of yourselves and your family, and do every thing you can to make yourselves comfortable, prosperous and happy and in a few

short years you may be able to recross the sea and come and visit them all and give vent to your feelings of joy on again seeing them--You have both gained a good name in this Country all voices unite in singing your praise here and I have no doubt that you will soon let your fellow Liberians know that you deserve one where you are. You are now your own Masters and it depends greatly on your own conduct whether you will do well and prosper, Whether you will do well and be beloved or whether you will abuse your liberty, and drag out your existence in [sweat] and misery. I believe you will strive to do well, that you will be industrious and honest and never indulge in vice, by these means you will be respected and may in a few years become men of wealth and distinction and will have great careers to be thankful that your are in Liberia. No Man can expect to do much for himself or others unless he is industrious, saving and correct and fair in his conduct. Any man who thinks he will prosper without such qualities will find his mistakes from bad experience and when it is to late to make amends. But I think better of you both to believe for a Moment that you will act so, your ambition I hope is to get a living and prosper by industrious habits, and an honest and fair conduct, you both have a good character here, there are none but what speaks well of you and I trust you will merit and maintain a good character where you are and for your welfare, your health and happiness you have our best wishes.

Albert Heaton