

Anthony Gardiner

NATIVE SON, PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA

**NAT
TURNER
TRAIL**

1831
Southampton
Insurrection

Anthony William Gardiner (Gardner), one of the early leaders of Liberia, Africa, was born in Southampton County, Virginia, on February 3, 1820. He was 11 years old when he and his family sailed to Monrovia, Liberia, from Norfolk, Virginia, aboard the *Volador* on February 12, 1831.

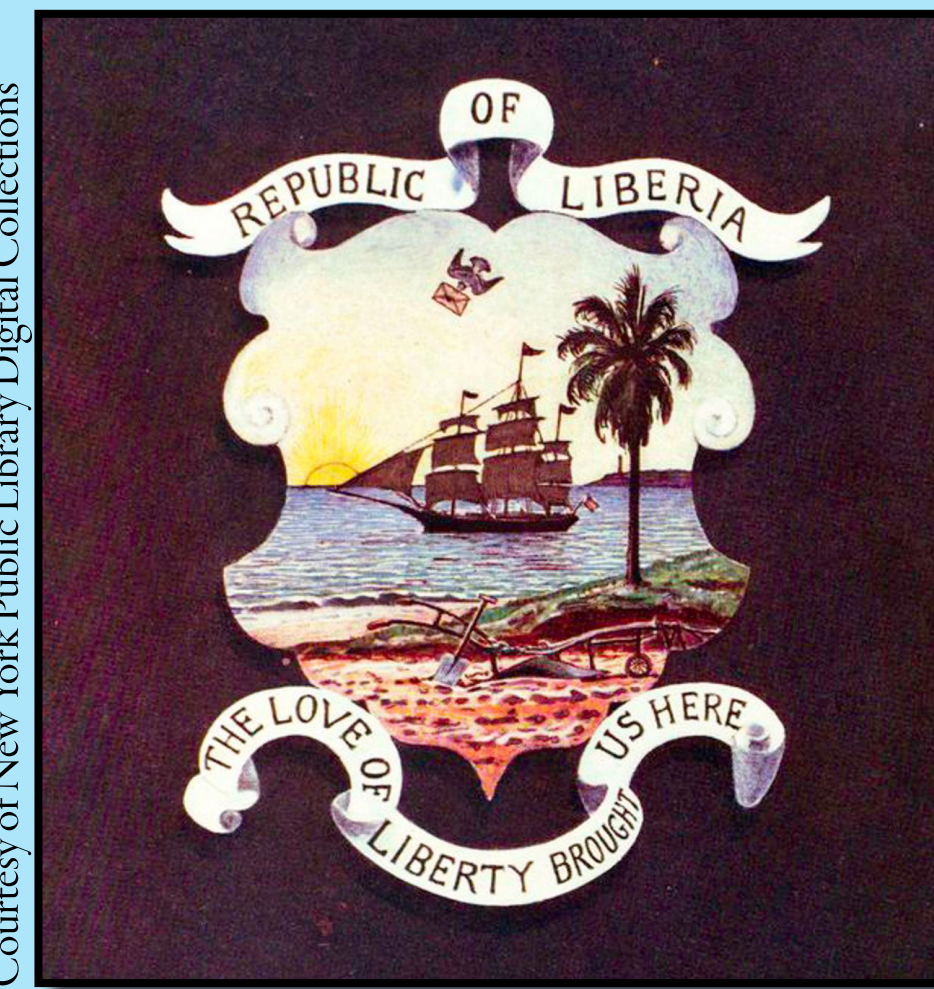
American Colonization Society

Located on the west coast of Africa, Liberia was established by the American Colonization Society (ACS), a group founded in 1816 in Washington, D.C. Its mission was to promote the freedom of enslaved persons and their relocation to Africa. Prominent politicians such as James Madison, Francis Scott Key, and Henry Clay supported the Society, believing that repatriation was preferable to the emancipation of enslaved persons.

The Commonwealth of Virginia levied a tax on free Black people that helped underwrite the ACS's transportation of these individuals to Liberia. By December 1831, the ACS had transported one-sixth of Southampton County's free Black population to Liberia.



President James Madison's American Colonization Society membership certificate, 1816.

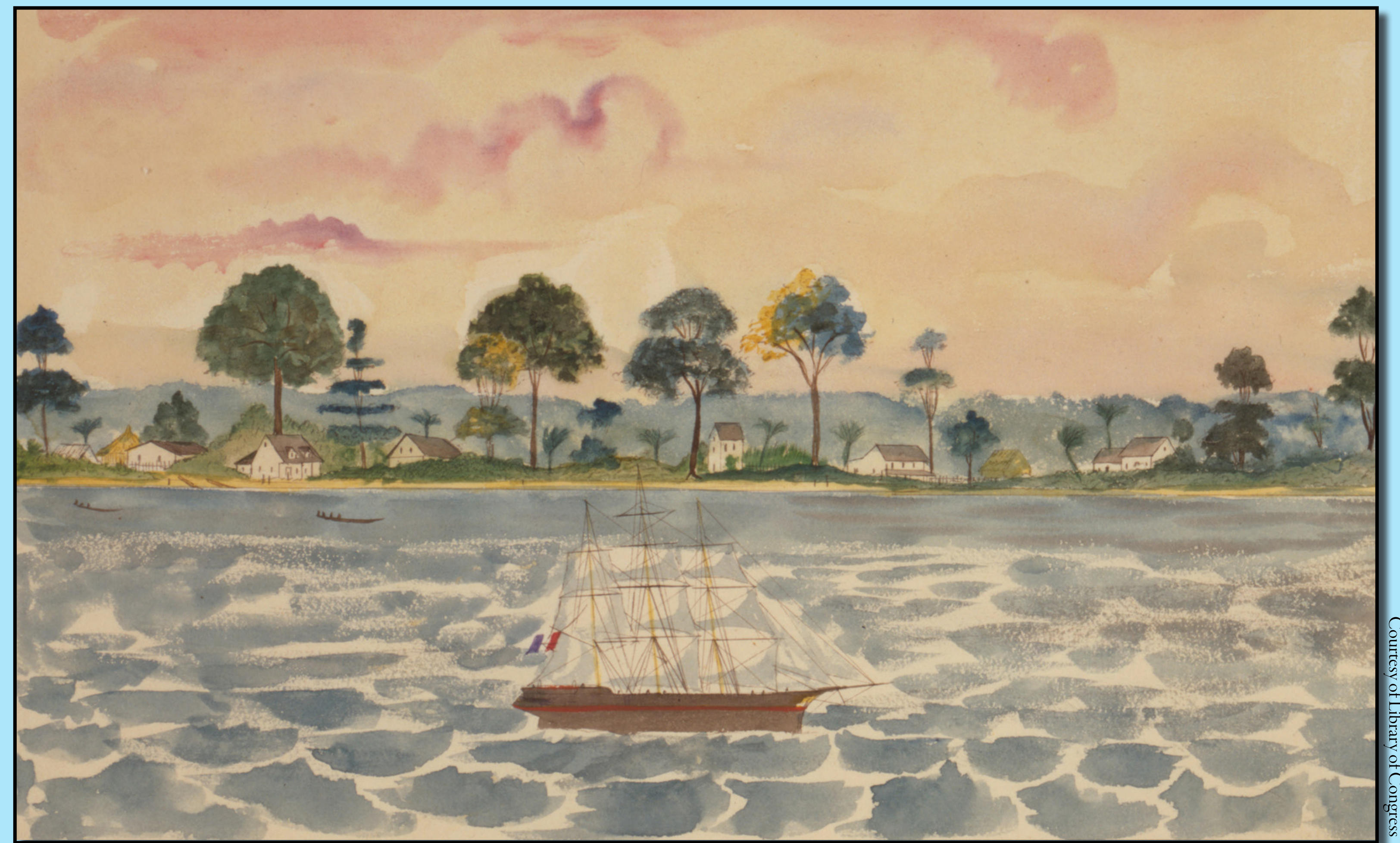


The Shield, Emblems, and Motto of Liberia as established in 1847.

Gardiner's Success

Anthony Gardiner prospered politically in Liberia. He was a signer of the country's Declaration of Independence, helping draft that new nation's constitution in 1846. He became Liberia's first attorney general in 1855 and was elected vice president in 1872. Gardiner became acting president in 1876 when President J. J. Roberts

became incapacitated. He was elected to Liberia's highest office in 1878, serving until 1883. Gardiner, who died in 1885, is acknowledged for enhancing educational opportunities, improving relations with native populations, and expanding foreign investment.



"Fish Town at Bassau, Liberia," watercolor, ca. 1856. Attributed to Robert K. Griffin.