

THE BARQUE (BARK) AZOR

The Barque (Bark) Azor is most famously known for her maiden voyage when she carried 260 African American emigrants to Monrovia, Liberia, from Charleston, South Carolina, for resettlement. The Azor's home port was in Boston, and she was originally owned by Dabney & Cunningham—a prominent shipping company started about 1849.

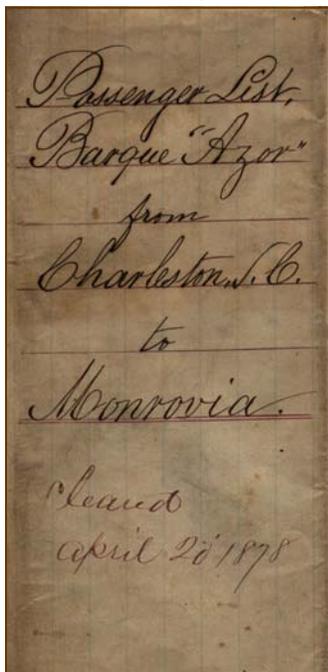
The Azor was purchased in 1878 by the Liberian Exodus Joint Stock Steamship Company. She left Boston for Charleston, South Carolina with provisions where she would then take a group of emigrants to Monrovia, Liberia for relo-

cation. The Liberian Exodus Association had big plans for the mass emigration to Africa, hoping that after this first voyage, they could sell more shares in the company to buy a steamship. With this steamship, the Joint Stock Company would establish a port in Monrovia where groups of emigrants would be taken once a month for the next forty-seven years. During that time, over 160,000 emigrants would leave the United States to go to Africa. However, the Liberian Exodus Association soon went out of business, and this dream was never realized.

The Maiden Voyage

The Bark Azor left Charleston on April 21st 1878 with a crew of fourteen men and women and 260 passengers under the direction of Captain Edmund W.

Holmes. They had some unexpected trouble, as many stowaways could not pay for passage or could not wait for the next trip and had to be escorted off the Azor. When the Azor was finally able to begin her voyage to Monrovia, the passage took a total of 42 days. The Azor was forced to make an unexpected stop in Sierra Leone before landing in Monrovia as the passengers had run out of provisions, and measles and fever were rampant on the ship. As many as 24 people died on the journey before the ship made port in Monrovia because of these outbreaks.



When the Azor did finally make port on June 3rd in Monrovia, the emigrants were not greeted with the celebration they had been promised. The Monrovia government seemed unaware that the emi-

igrants were coming, so many found themselves without shelter or food, until they could purchase such themselves. The new emigrants only had enough provisions for about three weeks. They had been originally promised enough for six months, but as the voyage of the Azor continued, the supplies of the passengers were severely depleted. According to the receipt of an emigrant's purchased shares from the Joint Stock Company, he was given the same amount of supplies for his family of six, as another emigrant who had only a spouse to support. Some people actually started out worse than before, because of the Joint Stock's carelessness in the appropriation of funds.

The natives of Monrovia were welcoming to the emigrants, offering to temporarily provide food and a place to live until the emigrants could establish a home in this new place. The emigrants spoke with the natives on farming and the possibilities of crops in Monrovia. They were soon surprised to learn

GENERAL CUSTOMS REGULATIONS OF 1864 (Act No. 477)
Form 33
LIST OF PERSONS composing the Crew of the Bark Azor of Charleston, S.C. whereof E. W. Holmes is Master, bound for Monrovia, Liberia.

NAME	PLACE OF BIRTH	PLACE OF RESIDENCE	OF WHAT COUNTRY CITIZEN OR SUBJECT	DESCRIPTION OF THESE PERSONS				
				Age	Sex	Complexion	Hair	Eyes
E. W. Holmes								
J. C. Horne	New York	New York	U. States	31	M	Sw	Blk	Blk
Frank Tatehn	do.	do.	do.	52	M	Sw	Blk	Blk
L. M. English	Jamaica	Jamaica	England	38	M	Blk	Blk	Blk
Joseph Phillips	W. Indies	W. Indies	do.	31	M	Blk	Blk	Blk
Amy Smith	Liberia	Liberia	Liberia	36	F	Blk	Blk	Blk
M. G. Hutchfield	Virginia	Virginia	U. States	19	M	Blk	Blk	Blk
Charles W. W. W.	Philadelphia	Philadelphia	do.	28	M	Blk	Blk	Blk
P. Manly	E. Indies	E. Indies	England	28	M	Blk	Blk	Blk
E. Anchor	W. Indies	W. Indies	do.	22	M	Blk	Blk	Blk
P. Smith	Charleston	Charleston	U. States	20	M	Blk	Blk	Blk
W. R. Roberts	W. Indies	W. Indies	England	35	M	Blk	Blk	Blk
Robert Fleming	Charleston	Charleston	U. States	20	M	Blk	Blk	Blk
Mary Powell	Virginia	Virginia	do.	40	F	Blk	Blk	Blk
Prof. Curtis	B. Guinea	Charleston	do.	61	M	Blk	Blk	Blk

that most of the crops they had grown in the United States—such as beets and corn—had never been planted in Liberia. Many emigrants claimed the crops would be successful with the right leadership and ambition, and many dreamed of prosperous farms in their new home.

On June 17th the Azor embarked from Monrovia for its return trip back to Charleston, leaving the emigrants behind to start a new life in Monrovia, all the while clinging to the dream that was Africa. The Azor ended her maiden voyage to Africa on July 24th landing once again in Charleston.

The images on this page are from the Records of the U. S. Customs Office, National Archives—Southeast Region (Atlanta).

For more information, see <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/williams/menu.html>

—Samantha Boden
Brigham Young University