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# Out of Virginia

Black Americans’  
Search for Freedom in  
Nineteenth-Century Liberia

JOSEPH P. STINNETT

**The remarkable journey of a group of Black emigrants from the American South to Liberia after emancipation**

IN OCTOBER 1865, six months after the Civil War ended, more than one hundred of the Black residents of Lynchburg, Virginia, left their homes to cross the ocean and begin their lives anew. Their destination was Liberia. They risked everything for the chance to live as full citizens, educate their children, own land, and make a good living—all of which they felt they stood a better chance to do outside the United States, despite their newfound freedom. Why did they leave so soon after the dream of emancipation had finally been realized? And what happened when they ultimately disembarked in West Africa? *Out of Virginia* tells their story.

In this deeply researched and powerfully written book, Joe Stinnett explores the complex motivations and circumstances that compelled hundreds of Black Virginians to leave the United States and recounts in vivid detail the world they encountered and how they fared after their arrival in Liberia. He also demonstrates in a way few have done before the local, grassroots nature of the expatriation movement in nineteenth-century America. Above all, Stinnett underscores the depth of determination asserted by Black individuals and families to decide their future for themselves, regardless of the consequences.

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**Joseph P. Stinnett** is retired editor of the *News and Advance* (Lynchburg) and the *Roanoke Times*.