

SEARCH FOR A PLACE

Black Separatism and Africa, 1860

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Search For a Place

Black Separatism and Africa, 1860

M. R. DELANY and ROBERT CAMPBELL

Introduction by Howard H. Bell



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Introduction

by

HOWARD H. BELL

Often, present-day black separatists look for ways to restore the balance of justice for centuries of oppression by penalizing the white man. Their counterparts a century ago looked often for a place beyond the borders of the United States where they might develop a powerful black nation, the products of which would compete economically with those of the slave South, and where the Negro's genius for politics and government would be unhampered by meddling whites.

Mindful always of their responsibility to those still in slavery, the Negro separatists of that era reasoned that uplift of the black race, whether in Canada, the Caribbean, Central America, or Africa would have a "reflex influence" on the plight of those still held in bondage and on those only partly removed from its curse in America. A black nation would in time accomplish the goals which an oppressed people could not accomplish for themselves. To support this thesis they pointed to such examples as the Puritans who had been unable to throw off the yoke of oppression in England until some of their number had braved the dangers of a new land and had established a viable government of their own. Of such conviction were Martin R. Delany and Robert Campbell, two black Americans who penetrated into the Egba and Yoruba areas of what is now western Nigeria in the search for a place where, in the Biblical language so meaningful to Americans of the mid-nineteenth century, "Ethiopia might stretch forth her hand."

Campbell begins his narrative at Liverpool, Eng-