



Journey of Hope: The Back-to-Africa Movement in Arkansas in the Late 1800s (The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture)

By Kenneth C. Barnes

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Liberia was founded by the American Colonization Society (ACS) in the 1820s as an African refuge for free blacks and liberated American slaves. While interest in African migration waned after the Civil War, it roared back in the late nineteenth century with the rise of Jim Crow segregation and disfranchisement throughout the South. The back-to-Africa movement held great new appeal to the South's most marginalized citizens, rural African Americans. Nowhere was this interest in Liberia emigration greater than in Arkansas. More emigrants to Liberia left from Arkansas than any other state in the 1880s and 1890s.

In *Journey of Hope*, Kenneth C. Barnes explains why so many black Arkansas sharecroppers dreamed of Africa and how their dreams of Liberia differed from the reality. This rich narrative also examines the role of poor black farmers in the creation of a black nationalist identity and the importance of the symbolism of an ancestral continent.

Based on letters to the ACS and interviews of descendants of the emigrants in war-torn Liberia, this study captures the life of black sharecroppers in the late 1800s and their dreams of escaping to Africa.

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