

Colonization and Colonialism

The second session of the 37th United States Congress convened on Monday, December 2, 1861, the same day that Scandinavian readers out west opened *Emigranten* to Claus Clausen's retraction and an editorial focused on the state of the Union. On December 3, Lincoln's private secretary John George Nicolay "communicated" the president's first annual message to Congress and distributed the content widely.¹

The president's message, as we have seen, underscored the threshold principle's importance in terms of population growth ("eight times as great" since the 1790 census) and acquisition of territory to "furnish homes for white men" by colonization of "colored men."² Lincoln's words immediately spurred a flurry of activity in Danish and American diplomatic circles and demonstrated the racial ideology of white superiority that connected colonization abroad and colonialism at home, rhetorically as well as chronologically and practically. Immediately after Lincoln's message, the Danish charge d'affaires in Washington, DC, Waldemar Raaslöff, alerted the government in Copenhagen (see Figure 6.1). In a December 6 report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Raaslöff directed the ministry's attention to Lincoln's "latest message" and "the planned Colonization of Negroes" who were, or would be, "emancipated due to the progress of the military operations."³ In Lincoln's message, Raaslöff saw opportunities to revive

¹ "The Proceedings of Congress," *New York Times*, December 4, 1861.

² Abraham Lincoln, "First Annual Message."

³ Waldemar Raaslöff, "Kongl. Dansk Gesandtskab. Washington Den 15de December 1861 [Royal Danish Legation, December 15, 1861]," in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855-1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet,



FIGURE 6.1 Waldemar Raaslöff represented the Danish government in Washington, DC, in the Civil War era and helped redirect American colonization policy. But overall his tenure was met with mixed success.

previous discussions over colonization between the United States and Denmark.

Concerns over labor shortages on St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John had been a recurring theme since emancipation in 1848. As freedmen and women exercised their newfound, albeit limited, autonomy to seek employment opportunities away from agricultural labor, their former masters and Danish colonial administrators grew increasingly worried. In one estimate, the number of agricultural workers “decreased by one quarter” within the first five years of emancipation, and the lack of laborers in turn created economic challenges that played a role in a brief Danish parliamentary discussion of selling the West Indian “possessions” in 1852.⁴ Partly due to worries related to

1861). Also Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources,” *American Nineteenth Century History* 15, no. 3 (2014): 10–15. Parts of the colonization research in this chapter has been done in collaboration with Dr. Michael Douma. I am grateful for his, and *American Nineteenth Century History*’s, permission to rewrite and republish those sections here.

⁴ Bent Knie Andersen, *Sukker Og Guld [Sugar and Gold]* (Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 2015), 133; *Betænkning Afgiven Af Den i Henhold Til Lov Nr. 294 Af 30. September 1916 Nedsatte Rigsdagskommission Angaaende De Dansk Vestindiske Øer [Report Submitted by the Parliamentary Commission Appointed under Act of*

the threshold principle, Danish politicians voted against selling St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John and instead worked consciously to bolster the economic interests of the islands' elites by exploring opportunities for importing foreign labor.⁵ The story was not singular to the Danish West Indies. Ever since the downfall of slavery in the Caribbean, European colonial powers had been seeking new sources of labor to remedy shortages across the area.⁶ By the 1840s, Caribbean colonies, not least the British West Indies, were receiving "coolies," Asian laborers who worked for such low rates that many observers felt these laborers, themselves only partially free, were also undercutting the costs of slave labor.⁷ From 1856 and forward, the St. Croix Burgher Council, a citizens body consisting of elected representatives from the island's international elite, spearheaded an effort to bring in laborers from areas as geographically diverse as "Madeira, Africa, China, and the East Indies."⁸ But because the distance to the United States was much shorter and the cost of importing African

September 30, 1916 Regarding the Danish West Indian Islands (Copenhagen: J. H. Schultz A/S, 1916).

⁵ Selling the Danish West Indian islands, "a very historic part of the Danish Kingdom," according to Minister of Finance William C. E. Spønneke, would diminish the nation's territory and population ("a multitude of interests here in the mother country are connected with the colonies," argued conservative politician C. N. David), and partly based on this concern, coupled with the need for post-emancipation stability, the motion did not advance from the Danish parliament by a vote of 53–27. On the topic of Danish "subjects," Spønneke maintained: "The Danish West Indian possessions are a part and a very historic part of the Danish Kingdom . . . and even if the Danish nationality and the Danish language should not be the predominant, I think, that His Majesty's subjects out there are subjects of the Danish state just as well and just as legitimate, as we are." See "Om Fremme Af Jespersens Og Wilkens Indbragte Forslag [On Furthering Jespersen's and Wilkens' Motion]," in *Rigsdagstidende* (1852), 4057–4067.

⁶ Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 17–20. See also Lomarsh Roopnarine, "The First and Only Crossing: Indian Indentured Servitude on Danish St. Croix, 1863–1868," *South Asian Diaspora* 1, no. 2 (2009). See also Sebastian N. Page, *Black Resettlement and the American Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 189–192.

⁷ Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation*, 19. See also Roopnarine, "The First and Only Crossing: Indian Indentured Servitude on Danish St. Croix, 1863–1868."

⁸ Peter Hoxcer Jensen, *From Serfdom to Fireburn and Strike: The History of Black Labor in the Danish West Indies, 1848–1916* (Christiansted, St. Croix: Antilles Press, 1998), 78–79. See also H[einrich] M[atthias] Keutsch, "Chamberlain L. Rothe," in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855–1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1860). See also Sharla M. Fett, *Recaptured Africans: Surviving Slave Ships, Detention,*

American laborers therefore much cheaper, the Danish government and the St. Croix Burgher Council started viewing Black laborers in the American South as a more advantageous and economically favorable way to alleviate labor shortages.⁹

Concerned with profit and with an eye toward international exchange markets, St. Croix planters and government officials by 1860 followed American news with particular interest and turned their gaze toward the large slaveholding nation to the north when the United States navy increased its anti-slaving patrols. In the spring of 1860, American naval efforts “near the Cuban coast” resulted in the seizure of three vessels, “the *Wildfire* (26 April), the *William* (9 May), and the *Bogota* (23 May),” with nearly 2,000 enslaved Africans aboard.¹⁰ The “US Home Squadron” transported the ships to Key West in Florida, and the news of this potential labor source spread

and Dislocation in the Final Years of the Slave Trade (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 17.

⁹ The St. Croix Burgher Council, consisting of a mix of British citizens, islanders of Dutch and German descent, and Danes, embodied an international outlook and influence. Legally, the Burgher Council had little authority, but as a mouthpiece for the local planter class it played an advisory role in shaping colonization policy. In the early 1860s, Burgher Council meetings on St. Croix were often held at the governor’s residence, and, according to an account from a contemporary resident, the governor worked hard alongside the Burgher Council to bring immigrants to the island and thereby further these mutual economic interests. See Ph. Rosenstand, “Fra Guvernør Birchs Dage [from Governor Birch’s Days],” in *Tilskueren*, edited by M. Galschiøt (Copenhagen: Det Nordiske Forlag, 1900), 373–375; Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources,” 7–11. Also Fridlev Skrubbeltrang, “Dansk Vestindien 1848–1880: Politiske Brydninger Og Social Uro [Danish West Indies 1848–1880: Political Conflict and Social Unrest],” in *Vore Gamle Tropekolonier*, edited by Johannes Brøndsted (Copenhagen: Fremad, 1967), 7–29; P. Andræ, *De Dansk-Vestindiske Øer Nærmest Med Hensyn Til Deres Nuværende Politiske Og Finansielle Forhold [The Danish West Indian Islands Regarding Their Present Political and Financial Conditions]* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1875), 57–59. See also Ove Hornby, *Kolonierne i Vestindien [The West Indian Colonies]*, edited by Svend Ellehøj and Kristoff Glamann (Copenhagen: Politikens Forlag, 1980), 262–273.

¹⁰ Mrss Culbert & Finlay, “Extract of a Letter from Mrss Culbert & Finlay, Dated New York 8 June 1860 to Finlay & Co St. Croix,” in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855–1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1860). Also Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources,” 8–9.

among the St. Croix planter class in June.¹¹ By the end of the month, St. Croix governor Vilhelm Birch encouraged the American consul on the island, Robert Finlay, to inquire if the American government, instead of sending “savages” to West Africa, could send 500 to 1,000 of the so-called recaptives to St. Croix, where they would be set to labor for five-year terms.¹²

Finlay responded positively to Birch’s question and forwarded the correspondence to the American secretary of state, Lewis Cass.¹³ Underscoring the situation’s importance, Denmark’s King Frederik VII in July personally signed a document dispatching chamberlain Louis Rothe to conduct negotiations with the American government as it debated the recaptives’ fate.¹⁴ Rothe soon proposed transferring up to 2,000 Africans to the Danish West Indies as it, in his estimation, would save the Americans the expense of a return journey, help planters on St. Croix acquire cheap labor, and provide “the African race” civilizational uplift through “the advantages” the island of St. Croix offered.¹⁵

¹¹ Culbert & Finlay, “Extract of a Letter from Mrss Culbert & Finlay, Dated New York 8 June 1860 to Finlay & Co St. Croix.” Also Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources,” 8–9.

¹² Culbert & Finlay, “Extract of a Letter from Mrss Culbert & Finlay, Dated New York 8 June 1860 to Finlay & Co St. Croix”; Fett, *Recaptured Africans: Surviving Slave Ships, Detention, and Dislocation in the Final Years of the Slave Trade*, 39.

¹³ Vilhelm Birch, “Government House. Saint Croix, June 27th 1860,” in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855–1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1860). See also Hunter Miller, ed., *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America*, vol. 8, Documents 201–240: 1858–1863 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948); R. A. Finlay, “Consulate of the U.S. of America. St. Croix, June 29th 1860,” in RG 59. *Records of the Department of State. Despatches from U.S. Consuls in St. Croix, Virgin Islands. 1791–1876. T233-5* (National Archives at College Park, 1860).

¹⁴ L. [Louis] Rothe, “Washington D.C. 15de Septbr 1860. Til Gouvernøren for De Dansk Vestindiske Besiddelser,” in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855–1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1860).

¹⁵ “The Africans of the Slave Bark, Wildfire,” *Harper’s Weekly*, June 2, 1860. See also Ted Maris-Wolf, “‘Of Blood and Treasure’: Recaptive Africans and the Politics of Slave Trade Suppression,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4, no. 1 (2014): 60. On September 14, 1860, Rothe wrote to Secretary Cass: “[I seek] an arrangement, by which Africans captured in slavers by the United States vessels of war may be transferred to the Danish Island of St. Croix.” See Louis Rothe, “Washington D.C. Septbr. 14th 1860,” *ibid.* (Rigsarkivet). Sending recaptives back across the Atlantic also seemed costly and inconvenient to American politicians like Mississippi Senator Jefferson Davis: “I have no right

In the end, however, President James Buchanan's administration chose to send the recaptives to Liberia and effectively brushed off Danish diplomatic advances with the explanation that "the laws of the United States provide a positive mode of disposal for the slave cargo of all vessels captured in the procurement of the African slave trade."¹⁶ Absent from Buchanan's argument were considerations of the human cost. By late summer, the American government had sent 1,432 recaptives from Key West, but only 823 made it to Liberia, as many other perished from disease.¹⁷ Danish officials' correspondence also demonstrated that economic interests and perceived racial hierarchies, more than concerns over civilizational uplift, determined their policy proposals. As Rothe wrote on September 14, 1860, the "imperfectly civilized population" of Liberia was unfit to continue receiving boatloads of "captured Africans" in need of being "reclaimed from barbarism" on its shores.¹⁸

Before returning home, Rothe offered his American counterparts an open invitation to reconsider the colonization offer in the future and left instructions to his successor.¹⁹ Thus, Waldemar Raaslöf in December 1861 took it upon himself to again present Caribbean colonization plans when Abraham Lincoln brought up the issue to Congress.

In a meeting with Secretary Seward on December 14, Raaslöf posed the question of "transferring Negroes found on seized slavers" and attempted to gauge the American government's willingness to support larger colonization plans.²⁰ "Since the number of Negroes" who were or would be emancipated already added up "to several thousand" and was "steadily rising," Raaslöf

to tax our people in order that we may support and educate the barbarians of Africa," argued Davis in 1860. Quoted in Maris-Wolf, "'Of Blood and Treasure': Recaptive Africans and the Politics of Slave Trade Suppression," 67.

¹⁶ Quoted in Douma and Rasmussen, "The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources," 9.

¹⁷ Corey Malcolm, "Transporting African Refugees from Key West to Liberia," *Florida Keys Sea Heritage Journal* 19, no. 2 (Winter 2008/2009).

¹⁸ Rothe, "Washington D.C. Septbr. 14th 1860."

¹⁹ To entice Democratic support, President Buchanan at this time considered the annexation of Cuba as a slave state, but in his decision regarding recaptives the president showed little interest in potential future colonization schemes in the Caribbean. See Maris-Wolf, "'Of Blood and Treasure': Recaptive Africans and the Politics of Slave Trade Suppression," 56–66.

²⁰ Raaslöf, "Kongl. Dansk Gesandtskab. Washington Den 15de December 1861 [Royal Danish Legation. Washington, December 15, 1861]."

argued, it would “be impossible for the United States to provide work for them all.”²¹ In short, they would soon “be a big burden.”²²

Raaslöff had visited Fort Monroe in the summer of 1861 and was therefore likely familiar with runaways being considered contraband.²³ Moreover, the Union navy’s capture of South Carolina’s Port Royal and the surrounding Sea Islands in November 1861 made white residents leave while approximately 10,000 formerly enslaved stayed behind.²⁴ Raaslöff stressed that these so-called contrabands were an important part of an ideal colonization agreement:²⁵

The negroes emancipated because of the war, particularly in South Carolina, are among the best and most civilized in the United States and thereby are much above the negroes found on slaveships, as these are completely raw and uncivilized, [and] do not know the language, the work and the entire way of living here and in our colonies.²⁶

Seward, in Raaslöff’s words, viewed the Caribbean colonization idea favorably and explicitly encouraged the Danish authorities to appoint agents, equip ships, and solicit the labor of “negroes emancipated because of war” along the eastern seaboard.²⁷ Seward also offered the American government’s assistance, a proposal that aligned poorly with the later recollection of his opposition to colonization (always in support of “bringing men and States into the Union” and never “taking any out”),

²¹ Ibid. See also Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources,” 10–15.

²² Raaslöff, “Kongl. Dansk Gesandtskab. Washington Den 15de December 1861 [Royal Danish Legation. Washington, December 15, 1861].” Also Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources,” 10–15.

²³ “From Hon. Charles Sumner to General Butler. Washington, June 24th, 1861,” in *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler During the Period of the Civil War* (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1917), 159.

²⁴ According to James McPherson, these South Carolina contrabands “soon became part of an abolitionist experiment in freedmen’s education and cotton planting with free labor.” See James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 371. Also Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources,” 10.

²⁵ Raaslöff, “Kongl. Dansk Gesandtskab. Washington Den 15de December 1861 [Royal Danish Legation. Washington, December 15, 1861].”

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid. Raaslöff reported, “Mr. Seward [suggested] . . . a suitable agent for the Danish government or the Danish West Indian authorities to sail a ship down the coast and collect emigrants to St. Croix.” See also Richard H. Immerman, *Empire for Liberty: A History of American Imperialism from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Wolfowitz* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 112.

but it aligned well with the Lincoln administration's commitment to a white man's republic in the early years of the Civil War.²⁸

Colonization would remove Black people to make room for white people, and, if Danish authorities enticed a few thousand fugitive slaves settle in the West Indies, such an arrangement could potentially open the door to much larger agreements with powerful Caribbean colonial powers such as Britain, France, or Holland.²⁹ Consequently, Seward supported the idea.³⁰

The Secretary of State answered me that this idea was actually completely new to him, as he had not thought of placing the above-mentioned emancipated slaves this way, but that he, without having presented it to the President, pronounced himself for the plan and assured me that its implementation would in the best way be supported by the United States government.³¹

According to Raaslöf's description of the December 14 meeting, Seward reiterated the importance of "completely voluntary" emigration to St. Croix but also believed that many runaway slaves would willingly work in the Caribbean and "noted that any foreign government that would try and induce free negroes to emigrate to their West Indian colonies would find the United States government ready to render all possible assistance."³²

As a result, Danish officials for months worked hard to realize a plan that would facilitate colonization of the "most civilized" emancipated Black laborers.³³ Encouraged by Raaslöf, the governor of St. Croix Peter Birch and the island's Burgher Council quickly formulated a proposal.³⁴ Governor Birch shared Raaslöf's perspective on runaway "negro slaves," whom he described as a burden on the United States, and confidently wrote to Copenhagen on January 2, 1862, that the American

²⁸ Quoted in Sebastian N. Page, "'A Knife Sharp Enough to Divide Us': William H. Seward, Abraham Lincoln, and Black Colonization," *Diplomatic History* 41, no. 2 (2017): 3. Also Walter Stahr, *Seward: Lincoln's Indispensable Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 341. Also Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, 234. In the words of Stahr, "sending free blacks away from the United States was inconsistent with Seward's lifelong desire to encourage immigration in order to build up the American population and economy."

²⁹ Walter Stahr, *Seward: Lincoln's Indispensable Man*, 341. See also Douma and Rasmussen, "The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources," 4, 19.

³⁰ Raaslöf, "Kongl. Dansk Gesandtskab. Washington Den 15de December 1861 [Royal Danish Legation. Washington, December 15, 1861]."

³¹ Ibid. ³² Ibid. ³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Peter Vedel, "Udenrigsministeriet. Kjøbenhavn, Den 9 Januar 1862," *ibid.* (1862). Also Douma and Rasmussen, "The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources," 10.

government was considering “disposing” of “these, under present conditions, inconvenient individuals by colonizing them in Central America or the West Indies.”³⁵

Following a meeting on January 6, 1862, the council, according to Birch, “declared themselves willing to receive emancipated negro slaves” to the number of 300 to 500.³⁶ Additionally, Birch added in his letter to Raaslöf, the St. Croix planters were willing to pay the costs of the transportation, as long as they received agricultural workers who would contract to work for at least three years in sugar cultivation on the island in exchange for free housing, a ration of flour and salted fish, and pay of 95 cents per week with twenty-four work days per month.³⁷ In a flurry of letters aimed at the top of Lincoln’s administration, Raaslöf offered free transport to St. Croix for people of “African Extraction,” a work day from sun up to sun down, and, echoing Lincoln’s annual message, all in an “extremely agreeable and salubrious” climate.³⁸

Yet by the spring of 1862 it seemed increasingly clear that the formerly enslaved had little interest in taking advantage of the Danish proposal. African-American perspectives on colonization could be gleaned from the agent appointed to hire laborers by the St. Croix Citizen’s Council on February 4, 1862.³⁹ The agent, George Walker, quickly ran into problems recruiting “refugees from the Southern States” and discussed the nature of his difficulties along the South Carolina Sea Islands in a letter to the

³⁵ Wilhelm Birch, “Gourvenementet for De Dansk Vestindiske Besiddelser [January 2, 1862],” in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855–1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1862).

³⁶ Wilhelm Birch, “St. Croix Den 9de Januar 1862,” in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855–1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1862). See also Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources.”

³⁷ Birch, “St. Croix Den 9de Januar 1862.” See also Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources.”

³⁸ United States Department of State, *Employment of Laborers of African Extraction in the Island of St. Croix. Correspondence between the State Department of the United States and the Chargé D’affaires of Denmark, in Relation to the Advantages Offered by the Island of St. Croix for the Employment of Laborers of African Extraction* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862), 4.

³⁹ “Extra Meeting 4 Februy 1862,” in *Collection 691. St. Croix Borgerråd. 1814–1865 Forhandlings- og referatprotokoller 1861–1863. Box 45.3.14* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1862).

St. Croix Governor's Mansion:⁴⁰ "It is more than probably that I can get the consent of Mr. Seward to go to Fort Monroe, Hatteras, or Port Royal, and hire all the negroes I can get, who will go willingly to St. Croix, as laborers," Walker wrote to Governor Birch on March 16, 1862, "but when I go to the negroes themselves to induce them to go aboard ship and go over the sea, I am afraid all the satisfaction I shall get will be 'no want to go Massa.'"⁴¹

Walker added:

The negroes are strongly attached to the soil where they live, and their masters tell them that the "Yankees" are making war for the purpose of catching them and selling them off to Cuba, and I fear that field hands, which are the only class you want, will have a great aversion to going on board ship, and the Government will not probably now use any coercion to induce them to go.⁴²

Walker seemingly held out hope that the American government could use some form of "coercion" in the future to induce so-called contrabands to leave the country but realized it was almost impossible to attract former slaves, who would "go willingly," because of the comparatively poor labor conditions on the islands.⁴³ Former slaves hired by the American government in coastal Carolina made \$8.00 a month, according to Walker, which was considerably more than the maximum 15 cents a day on weekdays and 20 cents on Saturdays (even when factoring in the plantation laborers' accommodations and garden plots), proposed by the Danish authorities.⁴⁴

Additionally, given Lincoln, Seward, and several other high-ranking Republican supporters' insistence that colonization had to be voluntary, agents like Walker faced an uphill challenge since the African-American community was far from silent on the issue.⁴⁵ Despite some internal division regarding the judiciousness of colonization, Black Americans and abolitionists had resisted colonization attempts for decades.⁴⁶ On

⁴⁰ Ibid.; George Walker, "New York March 16th 1862," in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse koloniakontoret. 1855-1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1862).

⁴¹ "New York March 16th 1862." ⁴² Ibid. ⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Mitchell, *Report on Colonization and Emigration Made to the Secretary of the Interior by the Agent of Emigration* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1862), 11-15. See also Page, *Black Resettlement and the American Civil War*, 192. As Page points out, "wages in the colonies were, notoriously, one-fourth to one-half their levels in the United States."

⁴⁵ Brooks D. Simpson, Stephen W. Sears, and Aaron Sheehan-Dean, eds., "Abraham Lincoln, Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1861," in *The Civil War: The First Year Told by Those Who Lived It* (New York: Library of America, 2011), 665-666. See also Page, *Black Resettlement and the American Civil War*, 115-125.

⁴⁶ According to Martha S. Jones, colonization was "premised in the consent of free black people," but many "viewed proposals for their removal as undercutting their status as

January 23, 1862, a little more than a month after Lincoln's annual message to Congress, freeborn abolitionist and lawyer John S. Rock pointed out the racial discrimination behind the Republican Party's course on colonization and immigration at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. In his speech, Rock argued that sending Black Americans out of the country instead of utilizing their abilities at home, for example in armed service, undermined the nation's military strength and highlighted the racial discrimination underlying the Republican Party's homestead advocacy. "Why is it that the people from all other countries are invited to come here, and we are asked to go away?" Rock asked. "Is it to make room for the refuse population of Europe?"⁴⁷

Given the opposition to colonization among the Black population and the sensitivity with which the issue was treated by the Lincoln administration, Raaslöf by late spring suggested an alternative to Seward.⁴⁸ In a May 26, 1862, letter, Raaslöf reiterated his preference for former slaves with agricultural experience but was prepared "to negotiate and to conclude a special convention for the transfer to that island of Africans who may hereafter be found on board of slavers captured by cruisers of the United States."⁴⁹

While these "captured Africans," from a Danish diplomat's perspective, were far from equal to white men, he reiterated the government line that the opportunity to live with an "excellent and highly civilized colored population" could however expedite the development of these supposedly primitive workers.⁵⁰ In the Danish diplomat's mind, and in actual labor practices on St. Croix, a hierarchy of workers clearly existed. As Raaslöf informed Seward, former slaves on St. Croix were divided into first-, second-, and third-class laborers and paid accordingly based on an assessment of their knowledge, ability, physical strength, and endurance.

The captured African, who generally is almost a savage, entirely unaccustomed to and unacquainted with regular agricultural labor, would therefore quite naturally

citizens" and "organized against the ACS." See Martha S. Jones, *Birthright Citizens: A History of Race and Rights in Antebellum America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 37. See also Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 160–166.

⁴⁷ John S. Rock, "Speech of John S. Rock, Esq., at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Thursday Evening, Jan. 23," *The Liberator*, February 14, 1862. See also Edna Greene Medford, *Lincoln and Emancipation* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015), 57.

⁴⁸ Mitchell, *Report on Colonization and Emigration Made to the Secretary of the Interior by the Agent of Emigration*, 16.

⁴⁹ Ibid. ⁵⁰ Ibid.

and justly have to pass through the lower classes and not become entitled to form part of the first class, which involves the highest pay.⁵¹

Former slaves with agricultural experience, presumably elevated in their social standing through interaction with Europeans, were at the top of such a hierarchy, which explained Raaslöff's interest in South Carolina; but, realizing the short-term diplomatic and legal obstacles for such an agreement, and perhaps more importantly Black opposition to voluntary colonization, the Danish diplomat settled for what he considered third-class laborers.

Raaslöff's arguments were repeated almost word for word in newspapers such as the *National Intelligencer* after June 10, 1862, when the Government Printing Office officially disseminated the correspondence between Seward and Raaslöff.⁵² On June 13, the *National Intelligencer*, based on the *Newark Daily Advertiser*, described the "New Plan of Negro Colonization," where Raaslöff's portrayal of Africans as almost savages was slightly rephrased and the Danish diplomat's position that the endeavor would be "entirely satisfactory" from a "humane and christian" perspective was relayed.⁵³ Moreover, in a newspaper clipping enclosed by Raaslöff in his report home on July 15, 1862, the *National Intelligencer* lauded the Danish government for its philanthropy in regard to "recaptured Africans" and hoped the Danish proposition "would receive the sanction of Congress" as it offered the "triple advantage" of "a benefit to the productive industry of a friendly Power, a benefit to the poor negroes themselves, and a saving of great expense and inconvenience to us."⁵⁴

Demonstrating the chronological connection between issues of colonization and colonialism, Raaslöff's May 26 offers to "conclude a special convention" on "captured Africans" coincided with Scandinavian editors out west, in an echo of Republican Senator Benjamin Wade, excitedly announcing that "Land for the Landless" had triumphed over "Negroes

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Department of State, *Employment of Laborers of African Extraction in the Island of St. Croix. Correspondence between the State Department of the United States and the Chargé D'affaires of Denmark, in Relation to the Advantages Offered by the Island of St. Croix for the Employment of Laborers of African Extraction.*

⁵³ "New Plan of Negro Colonization," *National Intelligencer*, June 13, 1862; "Danmark Og Vore Frigivne Slaver [Denmark and Our Freed Slaves]," *Emigranten*, July 28, 1862.

⁵⁴ W. Raaslöff, "Ligation Danoise. Washington a 15 Juilles 1862," in *Collection 0002. Udenrigsministeriet. 1848-1972 Depecher. Washington 1861-1862 mm. Box 155* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1862).

for the Negroless” as the long-awaited Homestead Act was finally signed.⁵⁵

Critical perspectives on homestead legislation were absent from Scandinavian newspapers, but abolitionists connected colonization and colonialism and criticized the political establishment’s land distribution in favor of white Europeans, a plan that, in their view, further enabled the enslavement of “Africans in the Americas.”⁵⁶

The Danish government’s active work to amend American colonization policy and Scandinavian-American immigrants’ support for Indian removal indicated an acceptance of Old World racial ideology that, in part, shaped life and policy debates within American borders.⁵⁷ Danish diplomats like Birch, Rothe, and Raaslöff characterized Africans as “savages” and “barbarians”; only enslaved people who lived among white planters, such as those in South Carolina or the West Indies, were described as having civilized potential and in the American West, Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish immigrants’ descriptions of Native people often echoed those of Old World colonial representatives. Designating American Indians as “wild” and “savages” helped settlers justify their pursuit of land.⁵⁸ As such, Scandinavian immigrants, as demonstrated by Karen V. Hansen, aided “the US imperial project of

⁵⁵ “Hjemstedbillen [The Homestead Act],” *Emigranten*, May 26, 1862; “‘Land for De Landlösa’ Har Wunnit En Seger Öfwer ‘Negrer for De Negerlösa’ [‘Land for the Landless’ Has Won a Victory over ‘Negroes for the Negroless’],” *Hemlandet*, May 28, 1862. Frustrated with the lack of progress on the Homestead Bill, Benjamin Wade asked, on February 25, 1859, “shall we give niggers to the niggerless, or land to the landless?” See Page, *Black Resettlement and the American Civil War*, 112.

⁵⁶ Natalie Joy, “The Indian’s Cause: Abolitionists and Native American Rights,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 8, no. 2 (2018), 215–216. According to Joy, the anti-slavery movement drew important inspiration from opposition to dispossession of American Indians. Initially focused on resistance to President Andrew Jackson’s 1830 policy of Indian removal in the South, the abolitionist movement’s advocacy on behalf of American Indian rights “continued well into the 1860s.” See also Steven Hahn, *A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910* (New York: Viking, 2016), 45; Rock, “Speech of John S. Rock, Esq., at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Thursday Evening, Jan. 23.”

⁵⁷ By not distancing themselves from the Danish government’s pursuit of colonization policies, Scandinavian-American editors, such as *Emigranten*’s Carl Fredrik Solberg, implicitly supported them. See, for example, “Danmark Og Vore Frigivne Slaver [Denmark and Our Freed Slaves].”

⁵⁸ Hansen, *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and Dispossession of Dakota Indians, 1890–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 5; Christiansen, *En Pioners Historie (Erindringer Fra Krigen Mellem Nord- Og Sydstatene) [A Pioneer’s Story: Memoirs from the War between North and South]* (Aalborg: Eget forlag, 1909), 73–74.

seizing and transforming North America,” even if they did not arrive as “conscious participants in a colonial scheme.”⁵⁹ Yet a key policy plank in this “colonial scheme” was the Homestead Act, which for years had found explicit support among the Scandinavian elite and rural communities. The Homestead Act was an important part of their support for the Republican Party, as well as being an important part of their divergence with the abolitionist movement.⁶⁰

To *Emigranten* the Homestead Act also had important transnational implications, as it was clear that it would “benefit the settlers by promoting the nation’s development.”⁶¹ In part due to the Lincoln administration’s conscious efforts, the Homestead Act attracted widespread attention in Europe, not least in Scandinavia, and thereby advanced Republican politicians’ combined attempts to grow both territory and population in accordance with the threshold principle.

When Abraham Lincoln spoke in December 1861 of “furnishing homes for white men” through acquisition of territory and colonization of “colored men,” he was simultaneously laying the ideological and practical groundwork for further expansion into the west.⁶² The Homestead Act’s passage in May 1862 (along with the Morrill Land-Grant College Act and the Pacific Railroad Act in early July) further cemented the Lincoln administration’s commitment to white settlement on land previously occupied by Native people.⁶³

⁵⁹ Hansen, *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and Dispossession of Dakota Indians, 1890–1930*, 2–3.

⁶⁰ For examples of Homestead Act advocacy before, during, and after the Civil War, see “Hjemstedsløven [The Homestead Act],” *Emigranten*, March 31, 1854. Also C. Fr. Solberg, “Emigranten under Præsidentvalgkampen [The Emigrant During the Presidential Election],” *ibid.*, July 2, 1860. Also “Hjemstedbillen [The Homestead Act].” See as well “Atter Om Homesteadløven [Once Again on the Homestead Act],” *Fædrelandet*, March 5, 1868. And “Wigtigt För ‘Homesteadsettlare’ i Minnesota [Important for Homestead Settlers in Minnesota],” *Hemlandet*, May 19, 1868.

⁶¹ “Hjemstedbillen [The Homestead Act].” See also Thomas C. Mackey, ed. *A Documentary History of the Civil War Era: Legislative Achievements*, vol. 1 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), 63–66.

⁶² Lincoln, “First Annual Message.”

⁶³ Stephen Kantrowitz, “‘Not Quite Constitutionalized’: The Meaning of ‘Civilization’ and the Limits of Native American Citizenship,” in *The World the Civil War Made*, edited by Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 80; Alyssa Mt. Pleasant and Stephen Kantrowitz, “Campuses, Colonialism, and Land Grabs before Morrill,” *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 8, no. 1 (2021). See also Keri Leigh Merritt, *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

To *Emigranten* the Homestead Act's "benefit to settlers without means" was "too evident to warrant any explanation," and its importance underlined by the fact that it was translated word for word (just as an earlier homestead proposal had been as far back as 1854).⁶⁴ Similarly, *Hemlandet* praised it a victory for free labor as the landless could now become free men.⁶⁵ The Homestead Act, which allowed citizens to claim seemingly free land if they were willing to inhabit the area and improve the land for five years, thereby fulfilled a long-standing Scandinavian immigrant dream as well as a long-standing Republican goal.⁶⁶

Scandinavian-American immigrants quickly seized on the opportunities provided by the Lincoln administration, but tellingly there was no mention of the Dakota people living in Minnesota – or indigenous people living elsewhere – when the Homestead Act's potential was espoused in Midwestern immigrant enclaves. On August 6, 1862, *Hemlandet* published a letter from Andrew Jackson, a Swedish-American pastor living in Minnesota, which drew Scandinavian immigrants' attention to homestead opportunities:

It is known that the Swedes and Norwegians have taken up a section of approximately 15 square miles that is very sparsely settled. I had hoped that our countrymen would come and settle among us to fill the empty space, especially as the Homestead Act makes it so easy to acquire land here.⁶⁷

Time was of the essence, however. According to Jackson, who first arrived at Green Lake in 1859, Americans were eyeing the land, and so the

2017), 267–269; Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War*, 27–29.

⁶⁴ "Hjemstedbillen [The Homestead Act]"; "Land for De Landlösa' Har Wunnit En Seger Öfwer 'Negrer for De Negerlösa' ['Land for the Landless' Has Won a Victory over 'Negroes for the Negroless']." See also "Hjemstedsloven [The Homestead Act]." See also Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War*, 27–29. Homestead legislation, as demonstrated by Foner, had since the mid-1850s been one of the Republican Party's preferred precepts for alleviating urban poverty and attracting white foreign-born voters. See also Mackey, *A Documentary History of the Civil War Era: Legislative Achievements*, 63–66.

⁶⁵ "Land for De Landlösa' Har Wunnit En Seger Öfwer 'Negrer for De Negerlösa' ['Land for the Landless' Has Won a Victory over 'Negroes for the Negroless']."

⁶⁶ Mackey, *A Documentary History of the Civil War Era: Legislative Achievements*, 63–66. For a person to formally stake out a homestead claim, he or she had to be the "head of a family," at least twenty-one years of age, and "a citizen of the United States" or an immigrant who had "filed his declaration intention to become such" that had never "borne arms against the United States government or given aid and comfort to its enemies."

⁶⁷ Andrew Jackson, "Från Green Lake [from Green Lake]," *Hemlandet*, August 6, 1862.

Swedish pastor's countrymen needed to be both faster and bolder if they were to get a slice of "empty" Minnesota farmland before the Americans did.⁶⁸ Otherwise Scandinavian newcomers would have to settle even further west where there would be no pastors, no schools, and no fellow Scandinavians: in short, immigrant sheep without a herder. Hurry to Minnesota, Jackson pleaded.⁶⁹

Pastor Jackson's 1862 letter fit a broader pattern among Nordic settlers. As we have seen, since the first Scandinavian newspaper broadside was published in the Midwest in 1847, editors and correspondents in immigrant enclaves had regularly expressed support for territorial expansion as well as general disregard for Native people's interests and rights.⁷⁰ In a letter dated November 16, 1857, Norwegian-born pastor Johan Storm Munch wrote to his brother in Norway about Minnesota extending westward "to the possessions of the Indians" and noted that the Norwegians had "occupied the best land" while only briefly alluding to American Indians' presence in travel descriptions.⁷¹ "Here and there (although now seldom) a forlorn Indian, wrapped in his blanket, curiously stares," Munch wrote in an account of a journey down the Mississippi, which included observations from a trip inland:⁷²

The road went over desolate, wild prairies, and from there into thick, dark woods, where only a couple of years ago hordes of Indians had their home. Now, however, hardly one was to be seen.⁷³

Pastor Munch's wife, Caja, in a letter home relayed the idea that "here in America all were equal," yet her impressions of Native people in a letter to her parents dated October 24, 1858, made it clear that she did not consider them so.⁷⁴ Caja Munch described "Indians" as "howling like wild

⁶⁸ E. Norelius, "Dr Andrew Jackson," in *Korsbanneret*, ed. J. G. Dahlberg and A. O. Bersell (Rock Island: Lutheran Augustana Book Concern, 1902), 179.

⁶⁹ Jackson, "Från Green Lake [from Green Lake]."

⁷⁰ Arlow William Andersen, *The Immigrant Takes His Stand: The Norwegian-American Press and Public Affairs, 1847-1872* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1953) 34-51. See also "Den Enstemmige Erklæring Af De Tretten Forenede Stater Af America [The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America]," *Nordlyset*, July 29, 1847.

⁷¹ Peter A. Munch, *The Strange American Way: Letters of Caja Munch from Wiota, Wisconsin, 1855-1859. With an American Adventure Excerpts from "Vita Mea" an Autobiography Written in 1903 for His Children by Johan Storm Munch - Translated by Helene Munch and Peter A. Munch with an Essay Social Class and Acculturation by Peter A. Munch* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), 114-115.

⁷² Ibid. ⁷³ Ibid. ⁷⁴ Ibid., 11.

animals,” travelling in big bands, instilling fear in Scandinavian women, and, in an anecdote about alcohol, lacking self-control.⁷⁵

While Scandinavian-born men and women on several occasions also expressed some empathy for Native people, it was often with the assumption of inevitable Indian dispossession.⁷⁶ Thus, even Scandinavian immigrants who “wrote of shameful treatment of Indians” did not, as Betty Bergland points out, challenge “the justice of federal policies ceding land.”⁷⁷ This justification of land-taking was rooted in a notion of white superiority: civilized Europeans as opposed to “half-wild children of nature.”⁷⁸ In this sense, the Scandinavian immigrants’ whiteness (and their Protestant religion) set them apart in their own eyes from American Indians and people of African heritage. In Jon Gjerde’s words:

As they began to label themselves in relation to others, European immigrants transposed the despotism of Europe to the unfreedom of the nonwhite as a vehicle to juxtapose their freedom in the United States. As historians have illustrated time and time again, this transformation from the unfree European to the free American tragically was connected to the denial of freedom to others.⁷⁹

Often Scandinavian immigrants did not reflect on the fact that they were settling on land formerly inhabited by American Indian tribes, though

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 148–149. See also Betty Bergland, “Norwegian Immigrants and ‘Indianerne’ in the Landtaking, 1838–1862,” *Norwegian-American Studies* 35 (2000): 333–334. Duus, along with women like Elise Wærenskjold and Elisabeth Koren, according to Betty Bergland conveyed “empathy in the few references to Indians found in their letters,” even if the latter two only initially had few if any interactions with native bands, as American Indians had been removed from the lands they were now inhabiting. Thus, Elise Wærenskjold, who settled in Texas, wrote home in 1851 that “as yet I have not seen a single Indian,” and Elisabeth Koren, married to Pastor Ulrich Vilhelm Koren, wrote home that the Indians lived in “the very westernmost part of Iowa and we in the easternmost; here it is peaceful enough.”

⁷⁶ “Norwegian Immigrants and ‘Indianerne’ in the Landtaking, 1838–1862,” 341. As Bergland has noted, Norwegian-born H. A. Preus, for example, acknowledged the tragic outcome of both Indian removal and slavery. “Among the various heathen tribes there are hardly any who have been in closer contact with Christians than Indians, but with the exception of the unhappy Negro slaves, neither is there anyone who has suffered more from the cruel treatment of Christians than Indians. They are therefore entitled to a special sympathy of Christians, a sympathy that can only be increased by a closer familiarity with this, in many respects, distinctive and excellent peoples.”

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 340–342. ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Jon Gjerde, “‘Here in America There Is Neither King nor Tyrant’: European Encounters with Race, ‘Freedom,’ and Their European Pasts,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 19, no. 4 (1999): 690.

they were clearly aware of the fact. Norwegian-born Ole Andersen, for example, hoped to attract fellow immigrants to the newly organized Dakota territory in 1861 by detailing how settlers were benefiting from native people's agricultural practices. "In the James Valley and along the Missouri wheat yields are 26 bushels an acre. Corn, grown on old Indian plantings, yields 78 bushel an acre," Andersen wrote.⁸⁰

Also C. C. Nelson, who settled in Minnesota and recounted his experiences later in life, noted the presence of indigenous people. "We arrived on the 10th day of July, 1858, and found the country a complete wilderness, with the exception of Indians who were there only human beings around here," Nelson wrote, before adding, "We didn't find them very pleasant or agreeable."⁸¹

Moreover, Pastor Jackson's letter from August 6, 1862, described the area around Green Lake, Minnesota, as "empty space," despite the fact that it was located on recently ceded Native lands and located only about 30 miles east of the Yellow Medicine Agency where Dakota people retained an ever-decreasing slice of land west of the Minnesota River.⁸²

Though the Homestead Act gave the impression that the "unappropriated public lands" offered were indeed uninhabited land, the situation in Minnesota proved more complex.⁸³ Despite negotiations throughout the 1850s with the Dakotas, which led to Indian bands ceding "millions of acres," including ancestral grounds, the American government's failure to survey reservation borders until 1858 strained the relationship between Native Americans and Northern European settlers.⁸⁴

Tension between Dakota bands and immigrants had been on the rise at least since late 1854 when German-born settlers moved into "abandoned

⁸⁰ Ole Andersen, "Det Norske Settlement i Dakota [The Norwegian Settlement in Dakota]," *Emigranten*, May 20, 1861.

⁸¹ C. C. Nelson, "Lafayette, Minnesota, April 13th, 1926," in *Dakota Conflict of 1862 Manuscripts Collection* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1926). As a potential indication of the Dakota War's divisiveness for decades to come, the *Lafayette Ledger* omitted Nelson's description of American Indians as "human beings" when it published his account in 1926. See "The Lafayette Ledger. Lafayette, Minnesota. C. C. Nelson Writes Interesting History of Indian Massacre in New Sweden and Bernadotte," in *Bent Vanberg Manuscript. Mss P1104* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1926).

⁸² Jackson, "Från Green Lake [from Green Lake]."

⁸³ Mackey, *A Documentary History of the Civil War Era: Legislative Achievements*, 64.

⁸⁴ Gary Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650-1862* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 226-237. See also Hahn, *A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830-1910*, 245-246.

summer lodges” built by Sisseton bands.⁸⁵ As described by Gary Anderson, European immigrants thereby effectively reduced the land available for hunting, and, when Dakota bands returned in the spring of 1855, newly arrived settlers were confronted by Indian women angrily pounding their fists into the ground, signifying possession of the land.⁸⁶ As more German and Scandinavian settlers moved into the river valleys, lack of cultural understanding caused ever-simmering conflict.

Most of these settlers were foreigners who knew nothing about the Indians and did not understand the importance of reciprocity in Sioux society. If they aided a passing hunting party, it was usually out of fear rather than from a willingness to share. Consequently many Dakota men came to hate their German and Scandinavian neighbors.⁸⁷

Additionally, the Dakota community, split between farmers and hunters, disagreed on how to deal with settlers. Spurred by government agents, who handed out “annuity money and food only to Indians who showed some inclination to become farmers,” a faction of Dakota tried to adopt white people’s practices and appearances, but the hunter bands continued to view white people as trespassers.⁸⁸ The settlers, however, remained in place and – bolstered by a series of treaties signed between 1837 and 1858 – over time only augmented their presence.⁸⁹

According to the 1850 census, 6,038 white people (and thirty-nine “free colored”) lived in the Minnesota territory, whereas 8,000 “Sioux” were counted.⁹⁰ By 1860, however, Native people made up just 1.4 percent of Minnesota’s population (2,369 out of 172,023), while foreign-born residents accounted for 34.1 percent (58,728) with 6.84 percent of the recently admitted state’s population registered as Scandinavians (mainly Norwegians and Swedes).⁹¹

⁸⁵ Gary Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota–White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650–1862* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 240.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁸⁸ Gary Clayton Anderson and Alan R. Woolworth, eds., *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988), 12.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 8–9.

⁹⁰ *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington, DC: Robert Amrstrong, Public Printer, 1853), ix, xciv.

⁹¹ Joseph C. G. Kennedy, ed., *Population of the United States in 1860* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1864), xxix, 252–254. For comparative purposes, German immigrants accounted for 10.7 percent of the state’s population (18,400 in all). See Jeppesen, *Danske i USA 1850–2000. En Demografisk, Social Og Kulturgeografisk Undersogelse Af De Danske Immigranter Og Deres Efterkommere* [*Danes in the*

Thus, in the spring of 1861, when a conflict over stolen pigs from a nearby farm was on the verge of escalating to violence, the Dakota made clear that both land and animals belonged to them and that Scandinavian immigrants, in turn, belonged east of Fort Snelling. Still, settlers kept coming.⁹²

By the summer of 1862, the US government's failure to deliver promised food supplies and money, along with the immigrants' encroachment, had stretched Dakota hunters' trust to the breaking point.⁹³ Out of desperation, a band of Dakota raided a warehouse in early August, which allegedly prompted one "Indian agent" to exclaim, "If they are hungry, let them eat grass."⁹⁴ On August 17, four Dakota hunters, in a tragic attempt to demonstrate bravery, attacked and killed five settlers in Acton, Minnesota, and in the early morning of August 18 asked the support of Little Crow, the most influential leader of the Mdewakanton band.⁹⁵ As Gary Anderson and Alan Woolworth have explained, several of the Dakota hunters who sought out Little Crow were part of an influential hunting lodge that had "increasingly become an instrument for resisting government acculturation and a forum for voicing discontent with the reservation system."⁹⁶ The hunting lodge denied admittance to Indians who, in accordance with the American government's wishes, had taken up farming, and the hunters' position was strengthened by the delay of provisions and annuities. Thus, "faced with the full force of about

United States 1850–2000. A Demographic, Social and Cultural Geographic Study of The Danish Immigrants and Their Descendants (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2005), 131.

⁹² Victor E. Lawson, Martin E. Tew, and J. Emil Nelson, *The Illustrated History of Kandiyohi County, Minnesota* (Saint Paul, MN: The Pioneer Press Manufacturing Departments, 1905), 16. Also Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota–White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650–1862*, 233–237. See also Hansen, *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and Dispossession of Dakota Indians, 1890–1930*, 2–13. See also Anderson and Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, 8. I am grateful to Gunlög Fur for alerting me to this Scandinavian-Dakota encounter.

⁹³ Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota–White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650–1862*, 226–27. Also Hansen, *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and Dispossession of Dakota Indians, 1890–1930*, 36–37. As well as Jennifer Graber, "Mighty Upheaval on the Minnesota Frontier: Violence, War, and Death in Dakota and Missionary Christianity," *Church History* 80, no. 1 (2011): 81–88.

⁹⁴ Gary Clayton Anderson, "Myrick's Insult: A Fresh Look at Myth and Reality," *Minnesota History*, no. Spring (1983): 199–201. Also Hahn, *A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910*, 245.

⁹⁵ Anderson and Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, 13, 34–36.

⁹⁶ See, for example, Big Eagle's narrative of the Dakota War. *Ibid.*

a hundred members of the soldiers' lodge, Little Crow reluctantly agreed to join the war."⁹⁷

Shortly thereafter, at 7 a.m., the attack, supported by the majority of Dakota men, began in response to broken treaties, hunger, and foreign-born advances onto what they considered their lands.⁹⁸ Scandinavian immigrants in the area where Pastor Jackson had advocated future settlements were among the first attacked. Soon letters recounting the trauma of violence started appearing in Scandinavian-American newspapers and reinforced widespread disdain for the Dakota Indians' humanity and their claims to land.

On August 27, 1862, two lengthy articles appeared in *Hemlandet* under a large typeset heading "Fiendtligt anfall af Indianerne i Minnesota" (Hostile attack by Indians in Minnesota) followed by the subheader that in translation read "Horrible bloodbath among the settlers on the borders." A correspondent, who was only identified as "A Minnesotan," described a community that within a month had gone from blissful ignorance of the Civil War to feeling the conflict's consequences in a shockingly concrete manner:

We did not think we were in any danger or that we should have any need for our soldiers here at home, but we were deceived. The Indians, both the Sioux and the Chippewa, have just now attacked our settlements on the border and are raging forward like wild animals, burning, stealing, and murdering anything in their path.⁹⁹

The Dakota initially targeted settlements along the southern part of the state: New Ulm, Mankato, Fort Ridgely, and, a little further to the north, Norway Lake. In Wisconsin, *Emigranten* in a September 1 article under the headline "Indian Unrest in Minnesota – a Norwegian-Swedish Settlement Attacked" brought the war's horrors into Scandinavian log cabins:¹⁰⁰

The Norway Lake settlement is chiefly made up of Norwegian and Swedes. They were gathered in church Wednesday afternoon on August 20 and on the way back from service they were attacked by a roaming mob of Indians. Some rode ponies,

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Graber, "Mighty Upheaval on the Minnesota Frontier: Violence, War, and Death in Dakota and Missionary Christianity," 88. See also Hahn, *A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910*, 245.

⁹⁹ Minnesotabo, "Minnesota D. 21. Aug 1862."

¹⁰⁰ Graber, "Mighty Upheaval on the Minnesota Frontier: Violence, War, and Death in Dakota and Missionary Christianity," 81–89. See also Hahn, *A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910*, 244–248.

other[s] were on foot and approximately fourteen people were killed and horribly mutilated . . . There is now no communication between Green Lake and Norway Lake.¹⁰¹

The reports published in *Hemlandet* were equally grim. “A number of countrymen killed,” read a headline on September 3, 1862, where a letter from Red Wing, Minnesota, named some of the war’s casualties: “Lars Lindberg, Anders Lindberg, August Lindberg, A. B. Brobäck and their child Daniel Brobäck” among several others.¹⁰² Andrew Jackson, who had advocated land claims in Minnesota three weeks earlier, doubted his survival when he penned a letter on August 25. “[The Indians] are on horseback and seem to be well trained in their hellish doings,” Jackson wrote. “God help us.”¹⁰³

The assaults on civilians and ensuing military engagements were harrowing for all involved. Pastor Jackson, perhaps too traumatized to describe the violence, wrote to fellow pastor Erik Norelius on August 20, 1862, in the middle of the attacks, but did not devote a single word to his experience or those of congregations by Eagle Lake, Nest Lake, Wilson Prairie, or Norway Lake. Similarly, Swedish-born Erik Jönsson could apparently never bring himself to send a letter, written on March 3, 1863, to his Old World family detailing the trauma.¹⁰⁴

You may have heard that the Indians have ravaged in Minnesota. They came over here on August 23, six savages on horseback, just as we were ready to drive to St. Peter . . . Unfortunately, in our fear when we hid in the grass we became separated. I had son Nils and son Olof, three years old, and my wife had a little ten-month-old son [August] with her as well as the girl [Inga] and Pehr . . . When the savages came back they found my wife right away and the three children lying in the grass beside their mother. When they heard the savages talking, Inga said (afterwards) that mother prayed, Lord Jesus, receive my soul into your bosom. They shot her in the chest. Then they

¹⁰¹ “Indianerurolighederne i Minnesota – Et Norsk-Svensk Settlement Angrebet. [Indian Unrest in Minnesota – A Norwegian-Swedish Settlement Attacked],” *Emigranten*, September 1, 1862.

¹⁰² E. Norelius, “Red Wing Minn. Den 27. Aug. 1862,” *Hemlandet*, September 3, 1862.

¹⁰³ Andrew Jackson, “Från Pastor A. Jackson,” *ibid.*, September 3, 1862.

¹⁰⁴ Erik Jönsson, “Skandiangrof Den 3die Mars 1863 [Scandian Grove, March 3, 1863],” in *Jönsson (Johnson) Erik and Erickson, Ingar papers 1863; n.d. SSIRC SAC P:81* (Augustana College, 1863). Jönsson’s letter, written to his Swedish relatives, is preserved in the archives of Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, but according to a note written by a Jönsson descendant, the letter was never sent.

took Inga and dragged her around in the grass until her skin as torn and lacerated from the hips to the feet, but the Lord gave her strength. She was as still as if she were dead. They felt of her pulse and opened her eyes, but when they saw no sigh of life they let her lie. Then they took Pehr a little distance away and shot him.¹⁰⁵

The Dakota Indians, according to Jönsson, then burned the family home as well as that of five neighbors. Jönsson acknowledged receiving a letter from his family in Sweden in September 1862, but “because of my great sorrow and misery I neglected to write.” In his postscript, Jönsson added a few words about his youngest son, who had initially survived the Dakota attack: “August, who was born October 21, 1861, became ill with measles on January 22 and died on February 2, 1863.”¹⁰⁶

With accounts in the vein of Jönsson’s flowing east, the Scandinavian-language newspapers were soon brimming with reports of “hostile” Indian attacks – “wild animals,” burning, stealing, and plundering.¹⁰⁷ The two main Scandinavian newspapers *Emigranten* and *Hemlandet* at times shared content and *Emigranten* on September 15, 1862, published an account from *Hemlandet* under the heading “More on the Indian Unrest in Minnesota,” in which the writer described his encounter with “the savage enemy” and corroborated the main details of the letter that Erik Jönsson never sent.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps understandably, little attention was paid to the conflict’s causes in these particular accounts.¹⁰⁹ When a Scandinavian correspondent, Lars Lee in South Bend just outside Mankato, finally did venture an explanation in *Emigranten*, he acknowledged that “the Sioux Indians have not received their government pensions yet,” but he then added, “We now hope they will get them in lead and steel.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Jackson, “Columbia, Monongalia Co Minn D. 2ode Aug ’62,” in *Eric Norelius papers, 1851–1916. Letters 1851–1864. SSIRC MSS P:1* (Augustana College, 1862). See also Norelius, “Dr Andrew Jackson,” 185. See as well Jönsson, “Skandiangrof Den 3die Mars 1863 [Scandian Grove, March 3, 1863].”

¹⁰⁷ Minnesotabo, “Minnesota D. 21. Aug 1862.” See also Jackson, “Från Pastor A. Jackson.”

¹⁰⁸ “Mere Om Indianer-Urolighederne i Minnesota [More on the Indian Unrest in Minnesota],” *Emigranten*, September 15, 1862.

¹⁰⁹ Anderson and Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, 8–13.

¹¹⁰ Lars Lee, “South Bend, Blue Earth Co., Minnesota, August 22de, 1862, [South Bend, Blue Earth Co., Minnesota, August 22nd, 1862]” *Emigranten*, September 1, 1862.

To quell the Dakota uprising, President Lincoln in early September appointed Major General John Pope, fresh from defeat at the battle of Second Manassas in the war's eastern theatre. Pope's army, the Department of the Northwest, included the 3rd Minnesota Infantry Regiment with a sizeable contingent of Scandinavian soldiers (Company D), and the new commander did not hide his contempt for the enemy he was about to face. "They are to be treated as maniacs or wild beasts, and by no means as people with whom treaties or compromises can be made," Pope instructed.¹¹¹

Within six weeks, the government forces and Minnesota militia gained the strategic upper hand. Chief Little Crow's defeat at the hands of Colonel Henry H. Sibley's troops at the battle of Wood Lake on September 23, 1862, effectively ended the conflict.¹¹² Close to 500 settlers, soldiers, and militia men had lost their lives along with an "unknown but substantial number" of Dakota Indians.¹¹³ With an additional 303 Native people condemned by a military commission, it was obvious from the Minnesota settlers' perspective that many American Indians would have to pay a physical price in order for the Lincoln administration to escape paying a political price.

While subsequent interviews with Dakota Indians, mediated through, and recorded by, white missionaries, demonstrated that not everyone had taken active part in the bloodshed, Scandinavian immigrants and the American government's response did not differentiate between Dakota bands – and initially not between individual Dakota men either.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Major General John Pope, quoted in Hahn, *A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910*, 246–247.

¹¹² Pelle, "Korrespondens Fra Col. Sibleys Expedition Mod Indianerna [Correspondence from Col. Sibley's Expedition against the Indians]," *Hemlandet*, October 22, 1862. See also Graber, "Mighty Upheaval on the Minnesota Frontier: Violence, War, and Death in Dakota and Missionary Christianity," 90.

¹¹³ Anderson and Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, 1. See also Carol Chomsky, "The United States-Dakota War Trials: A Study in Military Injustice," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 13 (1990): 21–22. Based on varying estimates of the war's casualties, Chomsky arrives at twenty-nine Dakota warriors killed, while Isaac V. D. Heard in his 1865 account writes that the "admitted losses of the enemy in 1862" totaled forty-two. See Isaac V. D. Heard, *History of the Sioux War and Massacres of 1862 and 1863* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1865), 248.

¹¹⁴ A. W. Williamson, "Information Got from Indian Prisoners in Camp McClellan in Reference to the Outbreak," in *Williamson family papers 1854–1950. Mss 122. Box 1* (Augustana College, 1863). Robert H. Caske (or Chaska), who had helped save missionary Thomas Williamson's life before seemingly reluctantly joining the Dakota war effort, was initially sentenced to death but found himself among the 260 Dakota warriors

Pope's view of American Indians as "maniacs or wild beasts" was echoed in letters from Scandinavians who survived the conflict.¹¹⁵ The inhabitants of Minnesota, a loyal Republican state, for months remained so anxious that trepidation even crossed state lines to Wisconsin. Within Minnesota, fear of the "savage Indians" also crossed ethnic and political lines. The pro-Republican Scandinavian newspapers were far from the only outlets concerned with the US–Dakota War. In Brown County, the Democratic *Green Bay Advocate* expressed the same ideology of white superiority as was found in *Emigranten*, but its editor also implicitly criticized the government for lack of vigor in dealing with "the Sioux" and their "savage outbreak."¹¹⁶

In the end Lincoln, after his assistants' careful review, assented to the execution of thirty-eight Indians who were hanged on December 26, 1862, in the "largest official mass execution" in American history.¹¹⁷ On December 31, 1862, Wisconsin's adjutant general, August Gaylord, submitted his annual report to the governor and tied the Dakota War directly to the need for a state militia in order to continue population growth in the region.¹¹⁸

[The Indian raid in Minnesota] also gave rise to uneasiness on our northern frontier, and for a time threatened serious consequences, the result of panic rather than of actual danger. The settlers along the frontier rushed terror stricken from their homes . . . some have left entirely; preferring to sacrifice their homesteads, than to

pardoned by President Lincoln. Caske was removed from Mankato in Minnesota to Camp McClellan in Davenport, Iowa, after the December execution and told Thomas Williamson's son, Andrew, about his experiences when interviewed in January 1863. According to Andrew W. Williamson, Caske initially remained home (having taken up farming in the vicinity of Williamson's mission along the Yellow Medicine River) but was eventually pressured into joining the war on the Dakota side around the area of New Ulm. See also Curt Brown, "Minnesota History: Caught in the Middle of the Dakota War," *Star Tribune*, April 2, 2015.

¹¹⁵ As an example, see Alan Swanson, "The Civil War Letters of Olof Liljegren," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1980): 101–104. While Liljegren, according to Swanson, was prone "to speak in extreme terms," his letters revealed the emotional frenzy brought on by the war. Liljegren supported vigilante action against the arrested Dakota Indians and did not distance himself from "secret clubs organized" in Minnesota to kill any Indian pardoned by the president.

¹¹⁶ "Matters in Minnesota."

¹¹⁷ Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota–White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650–1862*, 260. See also Hahn, *A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910*, 247. See also Anderson and Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, 15.

¹¹⁸ August Gaylord, *Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Wisconsin for the Year 1862* (Madison: Atwood & Rublee, State Printers, 1863), 55.

remain subjects to continued fear. A State military organization would do much to reassure the timid, and give confidence to those in the more exposed localities, and thereby prevent what might otherwise prove a serious hindrance to immigration.¹¹⁹

The 1862 US–Dakota War, in time, became part of the argument for continued settlement on former or current indigenous land, a practice of elimination that Patrick Wolfe has termed “settler colonialism” (see Figure 6.2).¹²⁰ The war also continued to play a role at the national



FIGURE 6.2 The dispossession of American Indians in Minnesota forced many native bands further west into the Dakota territory where they soon again encountered Northern European immigrants in pursuit of landownership. This May 28, 1928, photo shows the Redfox family – Solomon (standing left), June, Mary, Louise, Esther, George Two Bear, and Archie – with Reverend Mathias B. Ordahl (standing right), who baptized the infant, and his grandchild sitting in front. Courtesy of Louis Garcia.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 388; Stephen Kantrowitz, “White Supremacy, Settler Colonialism, and the Two Citizenship of the Fourteenth Amendment,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 10, no. 1 (2020): 29–53; Gunlög Fur, “Indians and Immigrants – Entangled Histories,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 22, no. 3 (2014): 65.

level. To prevent further political consequences, the Republican-led Congress, “with Lincoln’s assent,” exacted an even higher toll on the Dakota community than the mass execution. As Steven Hahn has noted, by early 1863, Congress effectively stripped the Dakota of “their reservation along the Minnesota River, abrogating all claims they might have, terminating the payment of annuities and forcing them out of the state and onto the open plains, along Crow Creek, in southeastern Dakota Territory.”¹²¹ Thereby, the US–Dakota War, and the memory of that war, helped Scandinavian immigrants more clearly articulate a settler colonial mindset that was mostly implicit before the struggle over landownership turned violent – but a mindset that persisted subsequently.¹²²

As the Homestead Act’s colonial consequences were beginning to show in Minnesota, concrete colonization steps were simultaneously taken in Washington. Consequently, Waldemar Raaslöff made his way up the stairs of the United States Capitol, on a warm Wednesday in the middle of July 1862.¹²³ The Danish chargé d’affaires sensed he was on the cusp of

¹²¹ Hahn, *A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910*, 246–247. Robert H. Caske was among the Dakota removed to Crow Creek after his imprisonment.

¹²² Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.” See also Hansen, *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and Dispossession of Dakota Indians, 1890–1930*, 30–39; Karl Jakob Skarstein, *The War with the Sioux*, (Digital Press Book, 2015), <https://commons.und.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=press-books>, xxii. In the following decades, and even well into the twentieth century, US–Dakota War experiences reflecting a sense of white superiority were handed down and recounted within the Scandinavian communities; it was eventually named “the Sioux massacre.” See Louis Pio, “The Sioux War in 1862,” *Scandinavia*, March, 1884, 142. See also O. J. Wagnild, “History of the Norwegian Settlements in Jackson, County, Minnesota,” in *P1523 Local History: Minnesota – Jackson County* (Norwegian-American Historical Society, 1944). See also Ole D. Sando, “Til Fædrelandets Redaktion,” *Fædrelandet*, April 30, 1868. See as well Wilhelm Moberg’s immensely popular historical fiction account of Swedish immigrants in Minnesota where the main character Karl Oskar Nilsson becomes visibly upset when accused of settling on land “stolen from Indians.” Wilhelm Moberg, *Sista Brevet Till Sverige [Last Letter Home]* (Stockholm: Alb. Bonniers boktryckeri, 1968), 61. I am grateful for Professor Dag Blanck’s recommendation of Moberg’s book.

¹²³ Waldemar Raaslöff, “Kongelig Dansk Gesandtskab. P.t. New York Den 30te Juli 1862 [Royal Danish Legation, Presently New York, July 30, 1862],” in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855–1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1862). See also Robert Krick, *Civil War Weather in Virginia* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007), 65. See also “Local,” *Alexandria Gazette*, July 16, 1862. Officially Raaslöff was designated “Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary” when presenting his credentials to the Lincoln administration. See Waldemar Raaslöff, “Address Delivered on the 15th January 1864,” in

a binding agreement that would fundamentally alter American colonization policy. Despite acknowledging to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that anything “touching on the great Negro question [is] treated by the [United States] government with the utmost caution,” Raaslöf was optimistic about eventually bringing African-American laborers to St. Croix.¹²⁴

To ensure smooth passage, Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Lyman Trumbull and Secretary Seward had personally helped Raaslöf edit the proposed document by striking words such as “treaty,” “convention,” and “apprenticeship,” as these terms would draw political opponents’ attention and result in undesirable debates or votes on the Senate floor.¹²⁵

Amended to the liking of Trumbull and Seward, and bearing the official name “An act to amend an act entitled ‘an act in addition to the acts prohibiting the slave trade,’” the bill passed the Senate, by a vote of 30–7, late in the evening of Tuesday, July 15, thanks to Trumbull’s efforts.¹²⁶ The following day, Raaslöf “had the pleasure of seeing the bill pass the House of Representatives unamended,” and on July 17 President Lincoln approved the act followed by a go-ahead for further negotiations.¹²⁷

Raaslöf therefore met with Secretary of the Interior Caleb Blood Smith on July 19 and, in the presence of two witnesses, signed an agreement regarding “recaptured Africans,” which was understood by the parties involved, as well as Confederate Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin when he later learned of it, as a first step to pursuing concrete colonization

Washington D.C., diplomatisk repræsentation. 1854–1909 Korrespondancesager (aflev. 1918). Politisk Korrespondance 1864–1868 (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1864).

¹²⁴ Raaslöf, “Kongelig Dansk Gesandtskab. P.t. New York Den 30te Juli 1862 [Royal Danish Legation, Presently New York, July 30, 1862],” 65. See also John C. Rivers, ed., *The Congressional Globe: Containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Globe Office, 1862), 3997.

¹²⁵ Raaslöf, “Kongelig Dansk Gesandtskab. P.t. New York Den 30te Juli 1862 [Royal Danish Legation, Presently New York, July 30, 1862].” Instead of “apprenticeship,” Seward and Trumbull, with Raaslöf’s blessing, settled on the phrase “to employ them at wages”; this, according to the Danish diplomat, was consistent with the labor regulations existing in the Danish West Indies since the authorities’ reluctant abolition of slavery in 1848.

¹²⁶ Rivers, *The Congressional Globe: Containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress*, 3358–3359.

¹²⁷ Raaslöf, “Kongelig Dansk Gesandtskab. P.t. New York Den 30te Juli 1862 [Royal Danish Legation, Presently New York, July 30, 1862].”

plans for current so-called contrabands or even future freedpeople in the Caribbean.¹²⁸

The agreement between the United States and Denmark stipulated that for the next five years, “all negroes, mulattos or persons of color seized by the US armed vessels onboard vessels, employed in the prosecution of the Slave Trade,” would be transported to St. Croix and employed as third-class agricultural laborers earning 5 cents a day.¹²⁹ It was an “unconditionally advantageous” agreement, asserted Raaslöff proudly in his letter home to the Danish Ministry.¹³⁰ The congressional bill did not explicitly mention colonization of refugees, contraband slaves, or freedpeople within American borders, but it expanded the president’s options for negotiating with “foreign Governments having possessions in the West Indies or other tropical regions” regarding so-called recaptured Africans; and politicians, both North and South, with the help of the Second Confiscation Act, understood it as opening the door to what was called voluntary emigration to a colony “beyond the limits of the United States.”¹³¹ In other words, the agreement was read with great concern in the Confederacy.

Confederate Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin, who incidentally had been born on St. Croix in 1811, clearly interpreted the Danish-American agreement as a legislative step to undermine Southern slavery. After reading about the colonization agreement, Benjamin wrote to his European commissioner Ambrose Dudley Mann on August 14, 1862 and instructed him to ensure that Danish leaders “reject any possible complicity, however remote, in the system of confiscation, robbing, and murder which the United States have recently adopted to subjugate a free people.” According to Benjamin, Confederate president Jefferson Davis

¹²⁸ Judah P. Benjamin, “Department of State. Richmond, 14 August. 1862,” in *Ambrose Dudley Mann letters, 1850–1889* (LSU Libraries, Baton Rouge, 1862). See also Douma and Rasmussen, “The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-Language Sources,” 16–18.

¹²⁹ Secretary, “Monday 18 Augt 1862. Meeting at Governmenthouse According to Invitation of His Excellency.” See also Miller, *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America*.

¹³⁰ Raaslöff, “Kongelig Dansk Gesandtskab. P.t. New York Den 30te Juli 1862 [Royal Danish Legation, Presently New York, July 30, 1862].”

¹³¹ Rivers, *The Congressional Globe: Containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress*. See also James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861–1865* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 235–239.

specifically feared that the Lincoln administration was corrupting a “neutral and friendly power by palming off our own [Confederate] slaves seized for confiscation by the enemy as Africans rescued at sea from slave-traders.”¹³²

Though Benjamin admitted to not knowing “the precise terms” of the Danish-American agreement, his and Davis’ fears were not wholly unfounded. Raaslöff had, as we have seen, on more than a few occasions expressed desire to use former Confederate slaves for labor in the Danish West Indies.¹³³ This link between “recaptured” Africans and emancipated “negroes” remained clear to Danish, American, and Confederate officials. The silver lining, from a Confederate perspective, was the fact that the Danish-American agreement “only” included “Africans captured at sea from slave-trading vessels,” and, in addition, it seemed near inconceivable to Benjamin that the Lincoln administration could garner widespread support for emancipation among a xenophobic white electorate.¹³⁴ “The prejudice against the negro race is in the Northern States so intense and deep-rooted that the migration of our slaves into those States would meet with violent opposition both from their people and local authorities,” assessed Benjamin in his letter to Mann.¹³⁵ “Already riots are becoming rife in Northern cities, arising out of conflicts and rivalries between their white laboring population and the slaves who have been carried from Virginia by the army of the United States,” Benjamin added.¹³⁶

In some ways Benjamin’s letter was both obvious and prophetic. In the late summer of 1862, “prejudice against the negro race” *was* intense in the North, and riots *were* becoming rife in Northern cities. Senator Lyman Trumbull, a supporter of colonization who had helped Raaslöff edit the document that led to a change in American policy in July 1862, also expressed ambivalence about the role of future freedpeople in American society. As Eric Foner has noted, Trumbull, “who included a colonization provision in the original

¹³² Benjamin, “Department of State. Richmond, 14 August. 1862.”

¹³³ Raaslöff, “Kongl. Dansk Gesandtskab. Washington Den 15de December 1861 [Royal Danish Legation. Washington the 15th of December, 1861].”

¹³⁴ Benjamin, “Department of State. Richmond, 14 August. 1862.”

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* Also Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861–1865*, 225.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

version of the Second Confiscation Act, explained candidly, ‘There is a very great aversion in the West . . . against having free negroes come among us. Our people want nothing to do with the negro.’”¹³⁷

Inadvertently underscoring Benjamin’s point, President Lincoln on August 14, 1862 – the very same day that the Confederate Secretary of State wrote to Ambassador Mann – held a meeting with five leading delegates from Washington’s Black community.¹³⁸ At this meeting Lincoln advocated colonization more directly than ever before.

Black people, Lincoln said, were cut off from “many of the advantages” that “the white race” enjoyed.¹³⁹ Even when slavery would eventually end, there was little prospect of racial equality. “On this broad continent, not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours. Go where you are treated the best . . . I do not propose to discuss this, but to present it as a fact with which we have to deal,” Lincoln plainly stated.¹⁴⁰ While the president acknowledged that free Blacks could be unwilling to leave the country where they were born, he called such a position “selfish” on their part and reiterated that voluntary emigration from the United States was his preferred solution. “It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated . . . There is an unwillingness on the part of our people, harsh as it may be, for you free colored people to remain with us.”¹⁴¹

Such comments fit well with Raaslöf’s impression of the American president. In the wake of the April 16, 1862, compensated emancipation act in Washington, DC, the Danish diplomat reported home that he had “heard people say” they regretted the president’s approval of the bill and that, if Lincoln had not signed the emancipation bill, it would have been in accordance with the views he had always maintained.¹⁴² These statements indicated a lack of belief in Black people’s capacity for citizenship in the

¹³⁷ Quoted in Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, 222.

¹³⁸ Medford, *Lincoln and Emancipation*, 57. According to Medford, the “five men selected were all prominent members of the African American community – Edward Thomas, leader of the group and active in various fraternal orders and in fund-raising for the National Freedmen’s Relief Association; John F. Cook Jr., like his father, an educator; Benjamin McCoy, founder of the Asbury Methodist Church; Cornelius Clark, a member of the Social Civil and Statistical Association (an organization whose membership consisted of some of the most elite Black men in the city); and John Costin, whose family had been a prominent fixture in the African American community for decades.”

¹³⁹ Roy P. Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 5 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 370–375.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² W. Raaslöf, “Ligation Danoise, Washington a 28 April 1862,” in *Collection 0002. Udenrigsministeriet. 1848–1972. Depecher. Washington 1861–62 mm. Box 155* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1862).

Lincoln administration, a perspective supported by the DC emancipation bill's appropriation of \$100,000 for "voluntary colonization of African Americans living in the capital," which, as Kate Masur has noted, was "a nod to those, including Lincoln, who doubted that black and white people could peacefully coexist in the United States once slavery was over."¹⁴³

Thus, it was likely that Raaslöf's hearsay regarding the public's surprise over Lincoln signing the bill, if credible, could be traced to the fact that the bill in some respects went further than Lincoln then had hoped.¹⁴⁴ After hesitating for a few days, Lincoln, who had drafted a bill to abolish slavery in the nation's capital in 1849 but privately advocated gradual, compensated emancipation, supported by a popular vote, did sign the bill, as he felt "a veto would do more harm than good."¹⁴⁵ Moreover, by August 1862, Lincoln had, according to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, already started thinking of widespread and potentially also uncompensated emancipation. In his July 13, 1862, diary entry, Welles wrote of a carriage ride to a funeral that he shared with President Lincoln:

It was on this occasion and on this ride, that he first mentioned to Mr Seward and myself the subject of emancipating the slaves by Proclamation in case the rebels did not cease to persist in their war on the government and the Union, of which he saw no evidence. He dwelt earnestly on the gravity, importance and delicacy of the movement – said he had given it much thought and said he had about come to the conclusion that we must free the slaves or be ourselves subdued.¹⁴⁶

Welles added that this discussion on July 13, 1862, marked an important break with the president's previous thinking on the emancipation as Lincoln had previously "been prompt and emphatic in denouncing any interference by the general government with the subject."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Kate Masur, *An Example for All the Land: Emancipation and the Struggle over Equality in Washington* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 25.

¹⁴⁴ In Foner's words, the "measure did provide for compensation to loyal owners, up to a maximum of \$300 per slave (well below their market value, critics charged). But emancipation was immediate, not gradual, and the law made no provision for a popular vote on the subject." See Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, 57–58, 199–201.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 57–58, 199–200.

¹⁴⁶ Howard K. Beale, ed. *Diary of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln and Johnson*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1960), 70–71.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

While Lincoln, prodded by abolitionists, was clearly considering the idea of emancipation, his August 14 meeting and his administration's subsequent pursuit of large-scale voluntary colonization suggests that the president was at this point following a dual strategy with continued belief in colonization as a viable partial solution for dealing with race relations within American borders.¹⁴⁸

Opposition to colonization among Black Americans, however, remained widespread. Abraham Lincoln's August 14 demand for voluntary emigration received a cordial but clear rebuttal from the African American community.¹⁴⁹ Frederick Douglass described the president as "silly and ridiculous" in his inconsistent advocacy of colonization, but Lincoln's preliminary Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, nevertheless included a provision for the freed people to "be colonized, with their consent."¹⁵⁰ Additionally, Welles noted in his diary on Friday, September 26, 1862:

On Tuesday last the President brought forward the subject and desired the members of the Cabinet to each take it into serious consideration. He thought a treaty could be made to advantage, and territory secured to which the negroes could be sent. Thought it essential to provide an asylum for a race which we had emancipated, but which could never be recognized or admitted to be our equals. Several governments had signified their willingness to receive them. M. Seward said some were willing to take them without expense to us. Mr. Blair made a long argumentative statement in favor of deportation. It would be necessary to rid the country of its black population, and some place must be found for them. He is strongly for deportation, has given the subject much thought, but yet seems to have no matured system which he can recommend. Mr. Bates was for compulsory deportation. The negro would not, he said, go voluntarily, had great local attachments but no enterprise or persistency. The President objected unequivocally to compulsion. Their emigration must be voluntary and without expense to themselves. Great Britain, Denmark, and perhaps other powers would take them.¹⁵¹

After Lincoln's August 14 meeting with Black leaders, Raaslöf, who himself had called Africans "almost savages," seemed to believe that colonization continued to be a key part of Lincoln's racial policy, and when the preliminary emancipation proclamation was issued it therefore took Raaslöf by surprise.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Medford, *Lincoln and Emancipation*, 56–57. ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 57–59. ¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁵¹ Beale, *Diary of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln and Johnson*, 152.

¹⁵² W. Raaslöf, "Ligation Danoise. Washington a 23 Septbr. 1862," in *Collection 0002. Udenrigsministeriet. 1848–1972 Depecher. Washington 1861–1862 mm. Box 155* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1862). See also Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, 231–234.

Still, on September 30, 1862, eight days after President Lincoln's preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, American diplomats in European countries with "colonial possessions" such as Great Britain, France, Holland, and Denmark, were instructed to invite the respective prime ministers to a convention regarding emigration of "free persons of African derivation."¹⁵³ Secretary of State Seward authorized his ambassador in Copenhagen, Bradford R. Wood, to "inquire whether the Danish govt" had "a desire to enter into such a negotiation [sic]," and suggested a treaty running for ten years regarding the free Blacks and former slaves, many of whom Seward claimed, despite significant evidence to the contrary, had "made known to the President their desire to emigrate to foreign countries." Moreover, Seward wrote, "it is believed that the number of this class of persons so disposed to emigrate is augmenting and will continue to increase."¹⁵⁴

In part pressured by Confederate emissaries, the Danish government declined to pursue further negotiations with the American government despite the September 30 overtures.¹⁵⁵ The decision was influenced by the Danish Kingdom's declining international stature following the Napoleonic Wars, and dependence on Europe's great powers to resolve the Schleswig War of 1848, coupled with continued tension in relation to the German confederation and the Danish Kingdom's German-speaking residents.¹⁵⁶ In the belief that the July 19 agreement would send thousands of recaptives to St. Croix and the knowledge that it would be close to impossible to attract freedpeople from the United States, the Danish

¹⁵³ William H. Seward, "Department of State, Washington, 30th September 1862, Bradford R. Wood, Esquire," in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855-1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Rigsarkivet, 1862). See also Mitchell, *Report on Colonization and Emigration Made to the Secretary of the Interior by the Agent of Emigration*, 28. Diplomats in Britain, France, Holland, and Denmark were all instructed to broach the subject of "emigration" with leading politicians.

¹⁵⁴ Seward, "Department of State, Washington, 30th September 1862, Bradford R. Wood, Esquire."

¹⁵⁵ A. Dudley Mann, "Copenhagen, October 24, 1862," in *Records of the Confederate States of America* (Library of Congress, 1862); Peter Vedel, "Udenrigsministeriet, Departementet for De Politiske Sager. Kjøbenhavn Den 21de November 1862," in *Collection 1175. Koloniernes centralbestyrelse kolonialkontoret. 1855-1918 Immigration af arbejdere. Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm. Box 910* (Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1862).

¹⁵⁶ Rasmus Glenthøj, "Pan-Scandinavism and the Threshold Principle?," in *A History of the European Restorations: Governments, States and Monarchy*, edited by Michael Broers and Ambrogio Caiani (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 9-11.

diplomats tacitly accepted their lack of *Grossstaat* status and agreed to heed Confederate warnings.¹⁵⁷

As the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs phrased it in a missive from November 21, 1862, it would be wise not to negotiate about importation of labor with the Lincoln administration currently, “as it was doubtful if the North American Union would emerge victorious from the war with the separatist movement.”¹⁵⁸ With that, official Danish colonization interest petered out, and the same seems to have been the case within American borders. Seward’s circular in many respects was the pinnacle of official optimism regarding colonization initiatives from the Lincoln administration, though there is evidence that the idea continued to hold sway over the president privately.¹⁵⁹

The main Scandinavian-born actor driving the colonization negotiations in the United States, Waldemar Raaslöff, was sent on a mission to China, and his successor, Swedish count Edward Piper (see Figure 6.3), less actively pursued implementation of the July 19 agreement. As it turned out, no recaptives were ever transported to St. Croix by the United States navy, and instead the Danish government’s simultaneous negotiations with Great Britain proved somewhat more fruitful. On June 15, 1863, 321 laborers from India, so-called coolies, arrived at St. Croix and were provided housing that a British official who later visited found “totally inadequate.” As Kalyan Kumar Sircan has pointed out, men and women were “lodged indiscriminately together in one room,” and provided such poor diet that within “18 months of their arrival twenty-two [Indians] had died.”¹⁶⁰

Importantly, also in this case of labor importation, Denmark had to rely on a more powerful international player. In comparison to Great Britain or

¹⁵⁷ Benjamin, “Department of State. Richmond, 14 August. 1862.” See also Walker, “New York March 16th 1862.”

¹⁵⁸ Peter Vedel, “Udenrigsministeriet, Departementet for De Politiske Sager. Kjøbenhavn Den 21de November 1862,” *ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Philip W. Magness and Sebastian N. Page, *Colonization after Emancipation: Lincoln and the Movement for Black Resettlement* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011); Guelzo, “Review: Phillip W. Magness and Sebastian N. Page. *Colonization after Emancipation: Lincoln and the Movement for Black Resettlement*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011. Pp. 164”; Philip W. Magness and Sebastian N. Page, “Lincoln, Colonization, and Evidentiary Standards: A Response to Allen C. Guelzo’s Criticisms of *Colonization after Emancipation: Lincoln and the Movement for Black Resettlement* in the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, Winter 2013” (2013).

¹⁶⁰ Kalyan Kumar Sircan, “Emigration of Indian Indentured Labour to the Danish West Indian Island of St. Croix 1863–1868,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 7, no. 19 (1971): 139–141.



FIGURE 6.3 Count Edward Piper, sitting on the far left, is pictured here with fellow diplomats (e.g. France's Henry Mercier, third from the right) and William Seward at Trenton Falls, New York, in 1863. Piper proved less active in high-level colonial negotiations than his predecessor, Waldemar Raaslöf. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

the United States, Denmark's international influence had for years been waning and the nation was no longer able to affect change internationally without outside help. Yet, this realization did not directly dawn on key Danish politicians until an even further descent into *Kleinstaaterei* starting in 1864 and culminating in 1870 with diplomatic fiascos in both the Old and the New Worlds, the latter at the hands of the United States.

By 1862, however, Danish and American diplomatic relations were relatively strong, though one particular piece of legislation would prove to be the source of much diplomatic energy exerted over the coming years. The transnational connection between the issue of conscription and immigration in relation to the 1862 Homestead Act was immediately recognized by European, Confederate, and American diplomats. In Europe, Confederate diplomat A. Dudley Mann – who saw immigration to the United States as a direct threat to the Confederate war effort and “was convinced that in every part of Europe [there] were scores of Union agents who existed for the sole purpose of recruiting soldiers” – warned the Confederate government about the bill and its consequences.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Robert L. Peterson and John A. Hudson, “Foreign Recruitment for Union Forces,” *Civil War History* 7, no. 2 (1961): 178–179.

On at least “twelve occasions,” Mann sent reports home about European immigrants serving the cause of the Union armies. Without Irish and German troops, Mann claimed, “the war against the South could not have been carried on,” and the Midwest especially was becoming “a receptacle for foreign emigrants, who are chiefly controlled by out-and-out abolition propagandists, driven from Germany on account of their red-republican, socialistic demonstrations.”¹⁶²

Thus, as colonization faded from the forefront of international diplomacy and domestic policy, the interrelated issues of citizenship and American empire persisted.

The Homestead Act laid the foundation for further territorial expansion based on white settlement and, in time, provided an almost irresistible incentive for landless and smallholding European immigrants to add to the American population. As Don Doyle has noted, the Homestead Act’s transnational appeal was “a remarkable campaign to replenish the Union army and score a clever public diplomacy coup in the bargain.”¹⁶³

Consequently, on August 8, 1862, Secretary Seward issued Circular No. 19 to his American envoys in Europe, aiming to spread knowledge about the agricultural, manufacturing, and mining opportunities the Homestead Act provided. “You are authorized and directed to make these truths known in any quarter and in any way which may lead to the migration of such people to this country,” Seward wrote.¹⁶⁴ Soon thereafter, on August 12, 1862, the American consul in Bergen, Norway, O. E. Dreutzer, reported back that he had translated the Homestead Act and was working to get it published locally.¹⁶⁵

Other American envoys followed suit. The Homestead Act was prepared for publications in both Sweden and Norway, while the same approach was followed by American diplomats in other European countries such as Germany and France.¹⁶⁶ When the Homestead Act was

¹⁶² Ibid, 178–179.

¹⁶³ Don H. Doyle, *Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), 168–169, 77–81. I am grateful to Dr. Michael J. Douma for guiding me to these sections of Doyle’s book. See also Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War*, 236–237.

¹⁶⁴ Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 418–420.

¹⁶⁵ Halvdan Koht, “When America Called for Immigrants,” *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 14, no. 8 (1944). See also Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America: The American Transition* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1940), 408–413.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. See also Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 419.

distributed and advocated in Scandinavia by local consuls directed by the State Department in August 1862, it renewed interest in questions of emigration and citizenship on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁶⁷

On the one hand, American authorities were trying to detail the wondrous opportunity within American borders and were helped by the fact that living conditions for many smallholders in Scandinavia was equated with poverty.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, the Civil War, and thus fear of forced military service, diminished Old World emigration enthusiasm some. Scandinavian-language migration pamphlets were increasingly critical of the United States after the federal draft in the fall of 1862, and foreign-born consuls within the United States complained regularly over immigrants being forced into military service.

American attempts to promote the Homestead Act led to heightened diplomatic activity, as European governments charged the Lincoln administration with what can be termed an indirect draft due to the Homestead Act's attraction for impoverished Europeans. Additionally, the Homestead Act raised two interrelated issues of importance to European immigrants: on the one hand, citizenship's relation to military service; and on the other, as we have seen, the notion of the American West as empty land.¹⁶⁹

The Homestead Act stipulated that American citizenship, or intended citizenship, was required to claim land. Yet, in their quest for landownership, Scandinavian immigrants often did not contemplate the potential consequences of this prerequisite for a homestead claim, but after the Militia Act and Enrollment Act passed in 1862 and 1863 respectively it was clear that the right to a homestead claim equalled eligibility for military service. As Ella Lonn pointed out:

President Lincoln, in order to avoid misapprehension concerning the obligations of foreigners under the law of 1863, issued a proclamation on May 8, 1863, declaring no alien exempt who had declared his intention of becoming a citizen of the United States or a state or had exercised other political franchise. Such an alien was allowed sixty-five days to leave the country if he so desired.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ "Lidt Om Udvandringen Fra Norge Og De Formentlige Aarsager Til Samme [About the Emigration from Norway and Its Presumed Causes]," *Emigranten*, August 18, 1862.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, 190–200. According to Smith, the Republican Party with its support of a Homestead Bill succeeded in establishing the myth of an agrarian utopia in the West, which, "among recent German immigrants as well as among the descendants of pioneer settlers," was a crucial issue.

¹⁷⁰ Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 440–41. See also James M. Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), 28.

Thus, a noticeable shift in migration patterns from Scandinavia occurred in the wake of the 1862 US–Dakota War and Militia Act.¹⁷¹ The Danish emigration writer Rasmus Sørensen spent the early summer of 1862 in Wisconsin and specifically recommended New Denmark and several other places in the Midwest subsequently. Yet, when Sørensen published an updated pamphlet with emigration advice in 1863, he explicitly made the Lincoln administration’s draft policies part of the reason why he now recommended Canada. Scandinavian immigrants were encouraged by Sørensen to settle north of the United States because of the “insecurity” brought on by the “incessant recruiting and equipping of their people and money for warfare.”¹⁷²

Sørensen did, however, try to dismiss rumors that circulated in Scandinavian newspapers about immigrants being kidnapped for military service, potentially due to some highly publicized British cases, but he acknowledged that countrymen could try to coax newly arrived immigrants into the army so they would not have serve themselves.¹⁷³

Perhaps just as importantly, Sørensen directly tied the opportunities under the Homestead Act to potential military service, as he recognized the Homestead Act’s provision that, since only citizens

¹⁷¹ Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America: The American Transition*, 408–409.

¹⁷² Rasmus Sørensen, *Er Det for Tiden Nu Bedre for Danske Udvandrere at Søge Arbejdsfortjeneste Og Jordkjøb i Canada, End i Wisconsin Eller i Nogen Anden Af De Vestlige Fristater i Nord-Amerika? [Is It Now Better for Danish Emigrants to Seek Profit and Land in Canada Than Wisconsin or Any Other of the Western Freestates in North America?]* (Copenhagen: Græbes Bogtrykkeri, 1863), 1.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3. The following year M. A. Sommer also advocated emigrating to Canada, since the “war in America over the past three years had damaged the country in many respects.” Sommer did not mention the draft specifically, but he made it clear that Canada offered “peace, security, calmness, and good order,” which the United States by implication did not. See M. A. Sommer, *Nogle Bemærkninger Til Det Skandinaviske Folk Angaaende Udvandring Til Amerika Især Til Den Store Engelske Provinds Canada Samt Oplysning Om Befordring Til Australien, Ny Seland Og Nord Amerika [Some Remarks to the Scandinavian People Regarding Emigration to America Especially the Large English Province Canada as Well as Information About Transportation to Australia, New Zealand and North America]* (Copenhagen: J. Cohens Bogtrykkeri, 1864). For cases of British subjects alleging kidnapping, see Michael J. Douma, Anders Bo Rasmussen, and Robert O. Faith, “The Impressment of Foreign-Born Soldiers in the Union Army,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 38, no. 3 (2019): 93–95.

or intended citizens could take out land under the 1862 Act, doing so equalled military obligations to the American government:

It is true that every settler can attain unsold free land, namely 160 acres . . . by pledging to become a citizen and thereby assume duty of military service and committing to settle and cultivate as much of this free land as he can for 5 years before he thereupon gets the deed.¹⁷⁴

The draft's impact on issues of citizenship, as well as the American government's aim of growing the population through European emigration, was also noticeable in immigrant naturalization petitions. Whether newly arrived immigrants were sought out as targets for countrymen trying to evade either the draft, Yankee Americans trying to collect their draft bounty, or felt cultural pressure to volunteer in small close-knit communities, this indirect draft was perceived as a significant problem among prospective Scandinavian emigrants.

The diplomatic tension based on the issue of forced military service was less pressing for the Scandinavian governments than was the case for the British or German legations, but thinly veiled recruitment by American consuls in Norway and Sweden did cause smaller diplomatic incidents. When Seward directed his European envoys to spread information about the Homestead Act's opportunities, he also indirectly raised the ire of Sweden's King Karl (Charles) XV.¹⁷⁵ According to Seward's representative in Stockholm, Jacob S. Haldeman, the Swedish government had since 1861 been fierce opponents of American attempts to recruit laborers whether in agricultural or industrial sectors:

It is well known that the King and his brother Prince Oscar are violently and bitterly hostile to all who recommend or encourage immigration, and I find if I wish to stand well with the King and his Ministers the less said for the present on this subject the better.¹⁷⁶

The Swedish authorities, likely linking the solicitation of laborers to the solicitation of military men, expressed such opposition to recruitment that Foreign Minister Count Manderström advised "the American Embassy in

¹⁷⁴ Sørensen, *Er Det for Tiden Nu Bedre for Danske Udvandrere at Søge Arbejdsfortjeneste Og Jordkjøb i Canada, End i Wisconsin Eller i Nogen Anden Af De Vestlige Fristater i Nord-Amerika?* [*Is It Now Better for Danish Emigrants to Seek Profit and Land in Canada Than Wisconsin or Any Other of the Western Freestates in North America?*], 8–16.

¹⁷⁵ Quoted in Lonngren, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy*, 418–420.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, 427.

Stockholm that his government could not condone the solicitation of soldiers by United States consuls in Sweden.”¹⁷⁷

Yet, both in the Old World and the New World, fear of forced military service was the main story.¹⁷⁸ While the concrete influence of emigration writers warning against forced military service in the United States is difficult to measure, the hesitancy to travel to the United States during wartime – partly due to fear of an indirect military impressment – is supported quantitatively. In a demographic study based on millions of census pages, Danish historian Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen found that Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish immigration, along with that from Germany and Holland, fell “fairly significantly” during the Civil War.¹⁷⁹ In other words, the fear of forced military service for some time contributed to undermining the Lincoln administration’s goal of growing the population through the Homestead Act.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in *ibid.*, 416–427.

¹⁷⁸ As early as November 1861, Danish newspapers had published stories about opportunity in the United States after the Civil War’s outbreak now being correlated with potential loss of life. Anyone not willing to be killed, it was suggested in a letter from “a countryman,” was strongly advised “to say home until conditions improve, the prospects of which presently unfortunately only seem poor.” See En Landsmand, “Af Et Brev Til Redact. Af ‘Aarhuus Stiftstidende’.” *New-York Den 14de Octbr. 1861* [From a Letter to the Editorial Office of ‘Aarhus Stiftstidende.’ *New York, October 14, 1861*], *Aarhuus Stifts-Tidende*, November 9, 1861.

¹⁷⁹ While the official emigration numbers from Denmark recorded in the United States fluctuated during the 1850s from a low of three in 1852 to peak of 1,035 in 1857, there was a perceptible fall of Scandinavian immigrants after 1862 despite information circulating about the Homestead Act. See Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen, *Danske i USA 1850–2000. En Demografisk, Social Og Kulturgeografisk Undersøgelse Af De Danske Immigranter Og Deres Efterkommere* [*Danes in the United States 1850–2000. A Demographic, Social and Cultural Geographic Study of the Danish Immigrants and Their Descendants*], 124–125.