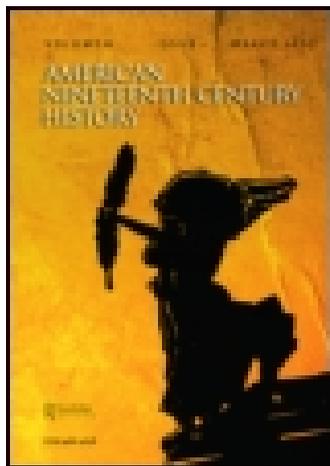


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The Danish St Croix Project: Revisiting the Lincoln Colonization Program with Foreign-language Sources

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Working from previously unknown sources in Danish archives, this article establishes for the first time the important role that the island of St Croix played in the Lincoln administration's considerations on colonizing African Americans abroad. This article argues that U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward, commonly viewed as an anti-colonizationist, was at least a mild proponent of colonization in its earliest stages. The article demonstrates further that in the summer of 1862, the St Croix colonization project was an important stepping stone in the Lincoln administration's legal justification for emancipation, and that it was recognized as such by high-ranking Confederates. The negotiations failed for reasons that had little to do with Lincoln or his opinion on the matter. Rather, the plan fell through because the Danes slowly turned against it for economic and political reasons. The substantial conclusion of this article is that, contrary to earlier perceptions in the historiography, African American colonization during the Civil War was not led and directed entirely from Washington. Rather, in this case, the Danish minister proposed a colonization plan and then worked with the U.S. Government to attempt to see it through.

Keywords: Abraham Lincoln; William H. Seward; African American colonization; St Croix; Denmark

When American historians of past generations studied Civil War-era African American colonization, they seldom took a serious look at foreign archival sources. Studies of colonization demonstrate that most historians have seen the topic primarily as an American story, briefly driven and then subsequently abandoned by the Lincoln administration. In this view, foreign nations were participants in colonization only insofar as they responded positively or negatively to the American call to settle African Americans elsewhere. The international element came and went in these narratives, as historians redoubled their efforts to understand the war from a domestic perspective.¹ Even articles specifically addressing colonization in particular foreign lands like Ecuador, Panama, and Haiti included no citations to foreign-language sources and relied almost entirely on official U.S. diplomatic records.² And,

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finally, when historians did improve upon the international picture of the war – though not necessarily addressing colonization – they naturally gravitated toward sources in the UK, partly because of the significant role England played in the diplomatic dynamic of the war, but also because the records there could be easily surveyed without the need for translation.³ In short, few have considered that archival collections from smaller nations such as the Netherlands or Denmark could yield significant insights for the understanding of the American Civil War. Most recent histories of Civil War colonization and related topics ignore the Dutch, Danish, and other Caribbean colonization projects entirely.⁴ Histories of the Caribbean similarly fail to address African American colonization.⁵

But in the past few years the tide has begun to turn, and the transnational perspective of colonization is finally beginning to receive its due, as historians nod in agreement with Eric Foner, who reminds us that colonization of New World blacks was “a truly Atlantic idea” with supporters in the Americas, Europe, and even Africa.⁶ A 2011 monograph from Phillip Magness and Sebastian Page, titled *Colonization after Emancipation*, set the tone for this new inquiry, as the authors demonstrated the advantages of a persistent search for foreign materials, which indicate that American negotiations with officials representing British Honduras, British Guiana, Haiti, Panama, and Dutch Suriname continued well after 1863.⁷ In other words, foreign-language sources show that Lincoln did not completely abandon colonization after emancipation. To further flesh out the picture of colonization during the Civil War, it is important to look beyond recent historiographical contributions and for the first time consult relevant documents written in lesser-known European languages.

In Copenhagen, at the Danish National Archives, a completely neglected but relevant collection of letters concerning colonization has recently been discovered. Like many other overlooked primary sources, these letters of the Danish Foreign Affairs Ministry were imprecisely labeled by well-meaning archivists. For example, a scholar looking in the Danish National Archives for records on African American colonization will find them in, of all places, a box labeled “Immigration of workers from Italy 1884 and others” in the collection of the Central Administration of the Danish Colonial Office.⁸ The Danish documents herein are being translated and the English documents transcribed for a forthcoming primary source publication.⁹ The authors of this article have identified in this collection alone no fewer than 18 letters in English and over 50 in Danish, covering the entirety of Danish-American negotiations concerning colonization between 1860 and 1865. Other sources in the Danish National Archives, in collections in the Caribbean, and in better-known record collections in the United States, combine to provide a thorough understanding of the centrality of Danish St Croix in the Lincoln administration’s thoughts on colonization.¹⁰ These articles do not shape our understanding of colonization in a small way, rather they promise a substantial reconsideration of the Lincoln administration’s initial thinking on the matter, while highlighting the profoundly international involvement and implications of colonization.

Although no African Americans were colonized on Danish St Croix, as they were in Haiti in 1863, St Croix provided the legal precedent for the Lincoln administration’s

further development of a colonization policy, a fact recognized by Lincoln's cabinet as well as by leading Confederate diplomats. It has long been known that in 1862, Denmark signed an agreement with the United States to receive on St Croix all Africans captured aboard slave ships on the Atlantic. What the newly discovered documents attest is that the agreement was not isolated to its explicit purpose of relocating these "recaptives," but that both sides saw it as a potential crucial first step in the Lincoln administration's plans to colonize African Americans abroad.

What is more, U.S. Secretary of State, William H. Seward appeared, at least according to the Danish view of the matter, to be quite positive about colonization on St Croix from late 1861 and throughout 1862. This should surprise most historians of colonization, who have seen Seward's actions on this topic as merely his reluctant acceptance of policies driven by the president.¹¹ In fact, historians often describe Seward as dragging his feet on colonization and serving as a foil to the initially enthusiastic Lincoln.¹² This image of Seward may not be entirely incorrect for the later years of the war, but historians have certainly been too eager to interpret the gaps in our understanding of the history of colonization as signs of Seward's persistent inactivity or unwavering opposition. The sources available to Kinley J. Brauer in the 1970s led him to conclude that Seward "never supported" colonization and that he showed "deliberate slowness" in negotiating such resettlement projects.¹³ This view has been accepted as conventional wisdom and continues to exert a powerful influence over Civil War historiography. Seward's most recent biographer, Walter Stahr, for example, has argued that "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."¹⁴ Stahr attributes to Seward a quote from his secretary George E. Baker, who wrote that Seward and Lincoln "never disagreed but in one subject – that was the colonization of the negroes." Foner, as well as Magness and Page, repeat this line from Baker.¹⁵ But the nature of the Seward–Lincoln disagreement on colonization is not entirely clear, and, as we shall see, Baker's words are difficult to square with Seward's actions.

In fact, contemporary primary sources in Danish show Seward actively engaged in formulating colonization policy. In Lincoln's Annual Message to Congress on 3 December 1861, the president confirmed his public endorsements of colonization made in the 1850s by again recommending colonization as an option for freed slaves. This speech prompted the Danish minister in D.C., Waldemar Raaslöff, to write his government about the possibility of a new channel for acquiring cheap labor. On 15 December 1861, following up on negotiations from the past year – negotiations between the former Danish minister and the Buchanan administration regarding Africans taken on seized slavers – Raaslöff met with Seward personally and asked him whether it would be possible to restart the recaptives negotiations and also organize the transfer to St Croix of free African Americans, whose numbers, after all, were climbing and who would soon threaten to burden the U.S. Government. The response from Seward, as Raaslöff reported it, is revelatory:

The Secretary of State then 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.¹⁶

Based on Raaslöff's report, Seward's use of "this way" refers to "transferring emancipated Negroes to St Croix" in order to achieve the "desired result" of obtaining "sufficient labor to the island of St Croix." According to Raaslöff, Seward immediately suggested developing a concrete plan for colonization even without a formal convention. Raaslöff continued, explaining that Seward:

[D]id not doubt for one moment that among the negroes many may be found who, with their families, had left their previous home without much prospect to return home in the near future and who would therefore gladly accept, on inexpensive terms, emigration to St Croix. He moreover noted that any foreign government who would try to induce free negroes to emigrate to their West Indian colonies would find the United States government ready to render all possible assistance.¹⁷

A second-hand report of Raaslöff's December meeting with Seward, recording the views of leading St Croix planters, describes Seward as expressing that "altho [sic] the U.S. Govern[t] [sic] could not interfere at the framing of any contract with the parties, yet every facility would be afforded to an agent from St Croix to obtain what number he might require."¹⁸ If Raaslöff is to be believed, Seward was in December 1861 a supporter of Caribbean colonization in general, and not just of colonization in St Croix. Additionally, Seward may have rejected the idea of formal treaties on colonization, but was not opposed to government involvement in principle.¹⁹

The preliminary idea, developing in Seward and Raaslöff's discussion was to have Danish ships, with U.S. authorization and political support, sail down the coast to recruit freed African Americans, even from southern states. Based on Seward's suggestion, Raaslöff mentioned South Carolina specifically as fertile recruiting ground. There, Raaslöff insisted, "the negroes emancipated because of the war... are among the best and most civilized in the United States."²⁰ At this point, much of the resistance to colonization was foreign. The British were reluctant to deal with contrabands and risk legal consequences should the Confederacy prove victorious. But Raaslöff and leading Danish politicians were initially more aggressive than their British counterparts. As the St Croix plan developed in the spring of 1862, the Danish call for laborers included both recaptives and contrabands.

If this were all that we had from Raaslöff concerning Seward's explicit support for colonization, we could question Raaslöff's perspective, motives, or perhaps even his understanding of Seward's English. But for months to follow, Raaslöff, in his correspondence with other Danish officials, continued to report Seward's support for the project. Raaslöff's letters indicate that Seward was primarily responsible for negotiating a plan, while Lincoln, consistent with diplomatic protocol, met less frequently with the Danish diplomat. It is, however, possible that Lincoln and Raaslöff discussed the topic in or around 13 February 1862, when Raaslöff wrote President Lincoln's secretary, John G. Nicolay, to request an audience with the President on that day or the next. In this letter, Raaslöff noted that he had heard from Seward that

morning.²¹ But months later, on 22 April 1862, Raaslöff explained that he had spoken “several times” with Seward and the Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon Chase, and that both had made “emphatic requests” which led him to “[refrain] from stating the case to the present [American] government in an official note.” Before presenting his official note to Lincoln on 23 April 1862, just a week after the emancipation of slaves in Washington, D.C., Raaslöff again “conferred about the tone and content of the note” with Seward.²² Not only was Seward in favor of the colonization, but he also worked with Raaslöff to develop a plan. According to Raaslöff, in July of 1862, Seward remained “well-disposed” toward to the proposal of transferring recaptives to St Croix.²³

In July, Raaslöff actually edited the recaptives bill with officials in the Department of the Interior, then discussed and amended it in a meeting with Seward and Senator Trumbull. For the Danish authorities, the matter of colonization of recaptives and colonization of African Americans were not indistinguishable but were certainly linked. Raaslöff, George Walker (an agent of St Croix in New York), and Vilhelm Birch (the governor of St Croix) all spoke of recaptives and African American colonists in the same breath, and Seward was aware of this connection in his discussion with Raaslöff. Probably because of the precedent of negotiating for the resettlement of recaptives on St Croix, and because it was more politically expedient, Raaslöff and Seward focused on recaptives first, with the intention of introducing a separate, additional plan for colonizing African Americans. With this revelation, we cannot agree with Stahr that Seward “never pursued colonization with the vigor that Lincoln would have wished.”²⁴ Danish sources demonstrate that the truth resembles more the memories of Elisha Oscar Crosby, who recalled that Seward was, in March of 1861 (prior to the outbreak of the war), a proponent of colonization as he, along with Francis Blair, Benjamin Wade, Charles Sumner, and Preston King, was responsible at that time for conceiving a plan for cooperating with Central American governments on colonization.²⁵

While Lincoln and members of his cabinet may have been discussing colonization before Raaslöff and Seward conversed on the topic in December 1861, it is now clear for the first time that the backroom negotiations over St Croix were among the earliest in the Lincoln administration’s dealings with foreign governments concerning colonization. A further key historiographical point is that the St Croix recaptives bill and the associated African American colonization proposal came about from the Danish initiative and was not a response to Lincoln’s later colonization announcement in the summer of 1862. This demonstrates the international nature of the emigration and supports the view that colonization was a concern that went beyond what the Lincoln administration prepared or desired. Any discussion of Lincoln’s views on race must recognize, when referencing the president’s ideas on colonization, that he was not entirely in control of what was unfolding. As Lincoln himself wrote in a letter from April 1864 describing the build-up to emancipation, “I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me.”²⁶ The St Croix colonization plan was certainly on Lincoln’s table in 1862, but neither its origin nor its failure owed directly to him.

The story to follow establishes the case that:

- (1) St Croix was among the very first places considered for colonization by the Lincoln administration and set a path for those that followed.²⁷ After the Danish plan was made public in June 1862, Raaslöff advised and worked closely with representatives from other nations interested in African American colonization. These included the British Minister, Lord Richard Lyons and Th. M. Roest van Limburg of the Netherlands. Confederates feared that these negotiations were among the Lincoln administration's first steps toward the abolition of southern slavery;
- (2) Seward was at least a mild proponent of colonization in its earliest stages, as demonstrated by his interest and direct involvement in the St Croix case;
- (3) The Danish St Croix colonization project failed for reasons that had little to do with Lincoln or his opinion on the matter. The recaptives bill was passed, but the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, never supported it, and since the U.S. Navy was otherwise occupied in the war effort, no new recaptives were acquired within the dates of the agreement and there were therefore none to send to St Croix. At the end of the war, Denmark attempted but failed to revive the resettlement of recaptives on St Croix. Meanwhile, the plan to colonize African Americans on St Croix fell through because the Danes slowly turned against it for economic and political reasons. Concerning this latter migration, Danish authorities on St Croix basically acknowledged that conditions for workers on that island were not far removed from slavery, meaning they could not attract labor from the contraband camps, and they had no desire to bring in African Americans who had enjoyed freedom and who would demand a higher wage than what the plantation owners were willing to pay. Moreover, Confederate diplomatic interference in the colonization debate, coupled with Confederate military success, forced the Danes to reconsider their interest in any official agreements concerning African American laborers, and;
- (4) Contrary to earlier perceptions in the historiography, colonization during the Civil War was not led and directed entirely from Washington, with other foreign powers only playing along. Rather, in this case, the Danish minister proposed a colonization plan and then worked with the U.S. Government in an attempt to see it through. As another recent case study has shown, it was not Lincoln's change of mind on colonization that was the primary factor in the success of the matter.²⁸ Colonization had international motivations, and the discussion lived and died within the context of international diplomacy, with all of its subtleties and potential for confusion, conflict, and failure. It was not St Croix that responded to Lincoln, but Lincoln who responded to St Croix.

The curtailment of the slave trade, the colonization of slaves in Liberia, and the beginnings of Lincoln's colonization plans therefore converge in Danish St Croix, an island which became a potential destination for African American colonists, in the Lincoln administration's plans, because it had already been designated as a site to

receive slaves captured on the high seas. While Lincoln had held colonization sympathies stemming from his involvement in the Whig party, his specific colonization plans for African Americans were partially inspired by the necessity of providing for the relocation of African recaptives once held in Florida. Demand for laborers on St Croix encouraged diplomatic dealmaking. In the spring and summer of 1862, as Lincoln was busy lobbying Congress for an appropriation for colonization, his administration was already actively involved in shaping policy with a representative of the Danish Government. St Croix was a gradual yet important step in the legal justification for Lincoln's colonization policy.

Prelude to colonization

To understand the significance and extent of the negotiations to bring African American laborers to St Croix during the American Civil War, we need to reconstruct the story from an international perspective, bringing into consideration the views of American government officials, Danish diplomats, St Croix planters, and Confederate statesmen, while also viewing developments as they unfolded within the context of Caribbean labor relations.

The history of slavery and emancipation in the Danish West Indies provides important background to these developments. Inspired by British intellectuals, Denmark had in 1792 introduced legislation which by 1803 outlawed the transatlantic slave trade to the Danish West Indies. In 1847, the Danish authorities decided to abolish slavery altogether within a 12-year period. Events – most importantly a host of European revolutions with demands for greater individual rights – however, overtook Danish policy. Fearing slave revolts, the French abolished slavery on Guadeloupe and Martinique in 1848. Consequently, the governor of the Danish West Indies, Peter von Scholten, concluded that slaves on the Danish islands would not wait another 11 years for freedom. A widespread but generally peaceful slave uprising on St Croix in July settled the matter, and Von Scholten declared the slaves free. Von Scholten, however, was widely criticized for his proclamation, which at that moment was not authorized by the government in Copenhagen. Von Scholten was subsequently replaced by councilor of state Peter Hansen.

To the newly appointed governor Hansen fell the task of reorganizing labor relations between, on the one hand, a planter class that felt betrayed by the Danish government's failure to ensure a promised 12-year transition period, and, on the other hand, newly freed laborers who demanded better work conditions.²⁹ The result was a series of labor regulations, inspired by British example, that forced workers to enter into one-year contracts every October. The labor regulations guaranteed former slaves rights to a minimum wage (though only five cents a day for so-called third-class workers), housing, a small garden, and free hospital care, but the regulations also stipulated that “[laborers] shall attend faithfully to their work, and willingly obey the directions given by the employer or the person appointed by him.”³⁰ In addition, as Lomarsh, Roopnarine has pointed out, “New systems of domination were subsequently introduced to check out-migration of ex-slaves from the plantations,” in post-emancipation Caribbean colonies, but the one-year contract on the Danish

West Indies gave the former slaves the option to pursue work as artisans or vendors in the cities.³¹

Consequently, from 1848 forward Danish attempts to alleviate labor shortages in the West Indies were widespread and included, as documents in the Danish and American National Archives abundantly attest, continued attempts to import labor with the help of French and British authorities, well before attention was turned toward the United States.³² In fact, ever since the downfall of slavery in the Caribbean, European colonial powers had been seeking new sources of labor, so the glance toward labor from the United States in 1860 must be seen within the context of a long-term labor shortage across the Caribbean.³³ By the 1840s, Caribbean colonies were receiving “coolies”: free Asian laborers who worked for such low rates that many observers felt they were undercutting the costs of slave labor, or were themselves, only partially free.³⁴ But because the distance to the United States was much shorter and the cost of importing African American laborers therefore much cheaper than recruiting workers from Asia, the Danish Government and the reigning Burgher Council of St Croix saw the negotiations to receive black laborers as an advantageous and economically favorable deal that would help alleviate the labor shortage.

St Croix was formally governed from Denmark. A governor on the islands served as an intermediary to the colonial Burgher Council, which consisted of elected representatives from the island’s elite. Legally, the Burgher Council had no authority, but it served an important advisory function, and as a mouthpiece for the local planter class it indeed had a hand to play in formulating policy, not least in the matter of colonization.³⁵ 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. Until a colonial act in November 1863 gave the islands greater autonomy, the finances of this Danish colony were considered the state’s finances. The Danish Government in Copenhagen, meanwhile, shared with the ruling class of St Croix particular economic interests in sugarcane cultivation and cotton production.³⁶ In the early 1860s, Burgher Council meetings on St Croix were often held at the governor’s house, 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.³⁷

Concerned with profit and with an eye toward international exchange markets, St Croix planters and government officials followed the news with particular interest, as an increase in American anti-slaving patrols in the summer of 1860 resulted in the capture of nearly 2000 African slaves aboard illegal vessels. These recaptured slaves or “recaptives” were held by the American government in Key West, Florida.³⁸ By the end of June 1860, the news of this potential source of labor was “generally known” amongst the island’s planter class. In response, the governor of St Croix, Vilhelm Birch, encouraged the American consul on the island, Robert Finlay, to inquire if the American government could send 500–1000 of the recaptives to St Croix, where they would be set to labor for five-year terms. Birch argued that since St Croix was a “free labor” island, the U.S. Government could save itself the trouble of sending these captured “savages” to Liberia, and could place them on a nearby civilized island

instead.³⁹ Finlay gladly cooperated and forwarded Birch's correspondence to the U.S. Secretary of State Lewis Cass, along with the consul's own recommendation for the health and character of the island.⁴⁰

By the end of July, however, all of the recaptives in Florida had been sent to Liberia. In the end, only 823 of the official count of 1432 recaptives made it to Liberia alive, most of the deceased having perished from disease.⁴¹ The bulk of the recaptive population were slaves from the Congo, destined for Cuba. Meanwhile, to entice Democratic support, American President James Buchanan had considered the annexation of Cuba as a slave state, but the president showed no interest in colonization in the Caribbean. Instead, he followed the established policy of James Monroe and sent recaptives to Africa. In fact, Buchanan even pressed Congress to aid the recaptives' colonization in Liberia.⁴²

Yet, the Danes were not deterred at the news of the Liberian shipment and hoped that future recaptives might be sent to St Croix. Responding to Finlay's correspondence, Acting U.S. Secretary of State William Henry Trescot expressed doubts about any possible arrangement, given existing laws.⁴³ In August, in St Croix, Peter Vedel, the head of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, granted a power of attorney from the Danish King Frederik VII to St Croix vice-governor Louis Rothe to conduct negotiations.⁴⁴ In September, Rothe presented to Lewis Cass a formal proposal in which St Croix asked to receive up to 2000 Africans.⁴⁵ Rothe had discussed the topic with Cass in a meeting, and while Cass treated him courteously and kindly, he did not see much prospect for the proposal. The government lacked the authority, Cass said, and the political situation in the country would not allow it. Rothe even met with a "very cautious" President Buchanan who expressed his belief that Liberian colonization was "reprehensible" but that not a single congressman would vote for a change in sending recaptives to St Croix instead. The news of rejection flowed back to St Croix in two channels then, from Rothe, on the one hand, and from Trescot, on the other, who explained in few words that President James Buchanan had seen the proposal, but could not act upon it, "as 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 by the U.S. vessels."⁴⁶ Although the Danish plan was rejected, Rothe, the man who had authored the formal proposal, offered Trescot and Cass an open invitation to reconsider the matter in the future, as he argued that the experimental Liberian Republic was unfit to continue receiving boatloads of "savages" on its shores.⁴⁷ And again, Trescot had to turn Rothe down, as he confirmed his stance that the president "could not receive these proposals, nor would they be submitted to Congress for any legislative action."⁴⁸

St Croix's demand for African laborers and their interest in the United States as a source to procure them, therefore, preceded the Lincoln administration. But whereas President Buchanan had denied any legal precedent for colonization and showed no desire to send freed slaves to the Caribbean, Lincoln expressed genuine interest in such ideas. On 3 December 1861, Abraham Lincoln gave his first annual message to Congress and explicitly suggested colonizing confiscated slaves in a "climate congenial to them."⁴⁹

The international nature of the Caribbean labor shortage meant that many European colonial powers subsequently expressed interest in African American colonization, but with the help of their American envoy, Danish authorities moved first.

Colonization before emancipation

Abraham Lincoln and the Danish *chargé d'affaires* Waldemar Raaslöff (who since 1857 had represented Danish interests in America) probably met for the first time on 18 September 1861, in an introductory meeting coordinated by William Seward.⁵⁰ Based on the available sources, the topic of colonization did not arise; however, until 14 December 1861, when Raaslöff first brought up the issue with Seward. Raaslöff's motivation for introducing the topic was at least twofold. The proximate cause was that Lincoln had mentioned colonization in his first annual address. But it was also general news of the emancipation of Negro slaves that led the Danish minister to resurrect the negotiations of 1860, now with the dual purpose of receiving recaptives and liberated African Americans as laborers. Raaslöff was familiar with news about "contrabands," African Americans freed in the course of the war, and likely had first-hand knowledge gathered from a visit to Fort Monroe in the summer of 1861.⁵¹ Moreover, in November of 1861, the Union navy captured South Carolina's Port Royal and the adjacent coastal sea islands. As white residents fled the area, they left approximately 10,000 slaves behind. James McPherson explains that these South Carolina contrabands "soon became part of an abolitionist experiment in freedmen's education and cotton planting with free labor." However, as the Danish documents show, contrabands in Virginia and South Carolina also became an important part of the colonization discussion.⁵² In early January 1862, Governor Birch explained to the Finance Ministry that in resurrecting the 1860 proposal, they needed to modify its language and make provisions for African American colonization as well.⁵³

Birch learned of Seward's interest through Raaslöff, but letters and newspaper reports from the United States also supported the view that the U.S. Government would soon have to dispose of many "inconvenient individuals."⁵⁴ Birch and the Burgher Council responded quickly, partly because Raaslöff had encouraged "action ... as hurried as possible without a too strict attention to form" if the plan was to succeed.⁵⁵ On 2 January, Birch informed the Danish Finance Ministry of the development, and the Burgher Council met on 6 January 1862, where they "declared themselves willing to receive emancipated negro slaves" to the number of 300–500.⁵⁶ St Croix was willing to pay the costs of the transportation, so 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 24 work days per month.⁵⁷ The precedent of negotiating for African recaptives in 1860 had prepared St Croix, so, in an immediate sense, they had a head start on other nations interested in African American colonization. With a representative agent already on American soil, an experienced diplomat in Raaslöff, relatively quick steamship access from the Danish West Indies to Washington, D.C., and a desperate planter class with a cooperative, almost single-

minded Burgher Council, St Croix was eager to invest in the opportunity, as long as it appeared profitable. At this point, the subject of recaptives faded and contrabands were the object of the diplomacy.

In February of 1862, the Danes provided a \$20,000 line of credit for an agent, George Walker of New York, who was also a “merchant and plantation administrator” on St Croix, to recruit African Americans from across the American South.⁵⁸ Birch informed Walker that he was not to exceed expenses of \$30,000 or \$30 per laborer for a maximum of 1000 laborers.⁵⁹ Each adult laborer recruited was to sign a contract. Birch added that “it has been considered unnecessary to mention in the contracts the amount of the wages paid in the island, as of course, the parties concerned cannot understand the value of money in the islands.”⁶⁰ Birch and Walker must have known the omission of information about wages masked the fact that the wages were much lower in St Croix than in the United States. With this secured line of credit, however, Walker preceded straightaway to Washington, D.C., intending to see Secretary of State Seward. Walker warned Birch about cultural obstacles the plan to recruit African American labor would face:

It is more than probable 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, 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.” 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.⁶¹

But economic concerns also might block recruitment, as Walker explained to Birch, contrabands were paid \$8.00 a month by the U.S. Government, a sum twice as high as what St Croix was willing to offer. Walker’s prediction was that a quick end to the war might free too many slaves for the U.S. Government to handle, so that the recruitment for St Croix should continue with that expectation. The mail delay from the United States to the Danish West Indies meant that news about the high American wages did not reach Birch until March, at which time Birch also learned that the U.S. army, according to Raaslöf, was paying contrabands \$10 a month, with only \$2 going into their pockets after expenses for clothing, food, and care of the sick and weak were withheld. Raaslöf hoped the U.S. Government would provide additional financial incentive for emigration.⁶²

Meanwhile, in Denmark, C. C. Hall (the powerful Danish Prime Minister who also headed the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs between 1860 and 1863) felt that negotiating an official treaty with the American government would be “fruitless and a complete waste of time,” as any freedmen would presumably have right to decide for themselves where to live. Yet Hall supported efforts toward voluntary recruitment of African Americans through special agents.⁶³

In April 1862, in response to the news from Raaslöf, the Burgher Council relaxed the expected terms of the contracts for recruiting African American laborers. Instead

of three-year contracts, Walker was informed that, upon his discretion, he could allow contracts of any number of years, so long as he deemed the laborers fit and the contract advantageous to the island. Birch also suggested to Walker, following up on a remark from Raaslöff that perhaps a few contraband Negroes should be brought to visit St Croix and then return to the United States as sub-agents for recruitment.⁶⁴

On the morning of 31 March 1862 “two Gentlemen from St Croix” arrived on a visit to Washington, D.C. Raaslöff wrote hastily to Frederick Seward to ask if his father, the Secretary of State, William Seward, was available for a meeting that day.⁶⁵ It is most likely that Walker was one of the two visitors, as Raaslöff reported on 22 April that he had been visited by the same, and that thereafter he had spoken “several times” with the elder Seward and Chase. Perhaps then, he was not able to gain an audience with Seward for Walker specifically. But Raaslöff planned to finish an official note, confer with Seward about its language the next day, and have Seward “immediately present it to the President.”⁶⁶

Raaslöff’s “note” of 23 April 1862, was a letter addressed to Seward, although Seward had a hand in shaping its language as well. This letter has long been available in the records of the U.S. Department of State, and it states clearly that the plan for receiving African American immigrants was “devised by the authorities of St Croix.” Other historians of colonization during the Civil War seem to have missed or ignored this line, however, since they consistently speak of foreign powers responding to the United States’ colonization proposal, and not the United States responding to the call of Denmark. Because the news about the relaxation of the contract terms had not yet reached Raaslöff, the letter states that proposed terms were to be three years. The letter asks for the U.S. Government’s “willingness to negotiate [*sic*] –with or without a convention – the emigration of negroes emancipated ‘in consequence of the recent political events.’”⁶⁷ In multiple sources, Raaslöff speaks about the confidentiality of the negotiations, an approach encouraged by Seward. Weeks after Raaslöff tendered the 23 April note, for example, he wrote that “The whole matter is very delicate and must be treated exceedingly carefully and discretely in order not to embarrass the government and potentially give occasion to opposition and dispute.”⁶⁸

Accompanying Raaslöff’s note to Lincoln was a memorandum describing the “free rural negro population” in St Croix. This was a short history of St Croix since it emancipated its own slaves in 1848 and it included a copy of the labor regulation enacted by Governor Peter Hansen. It explained moreover that the price of labor since 1848 had been fixed by law in St Croix and that laborers were engaged in one-year contracts, with the freedom to move and seek new work at the end of each term, even to emigrate from the island if they desired. The memorandum also spoke of the advantages of St Croix. English was spoken widely and almost exclusively on the islands, there were free schools, religious freedom, and laborers who were “contented and happy people.”⁶⁹

Without the knowledge that Seward and Raaslöff were in personal conversation on the matter, Seward’s formal response of 1 May 1862 could be read as a lack of interest or a terse dismissal of Raaslöff’s proposal. But now we know more was going on. Seward mentions nothing of the president having seen the proposal, and instead

wrote that “a copy of your note has been communicated to the Secretary of the Interior, who is charged with the disposition of captured Africans.”⁷⁰ Within a week of Seward’s response, Raaslöf had met with the Secretary of the Interior, Caleb Smith, where after Raaslöf left for New York to fetch Walker, whom Smith wished to see. Smith intended to report to Lincoln after a discussion with this agent of St Croix. From New York, perhaps with a visiting Raaslöf still at his side, Walker wrote to Birch on 7 May to say that Smith “appears to favor our project.”⁷¹ Walker determined then to leave for Washington that evening, leaving Raaslöf temporarily behind to rest in New York. “I presume they will give us leave to receive immigrants if we can get them to go,” Walker professed. “The Emigrants, if we can get them, will be from S. Carolina, the best place.”⁷² The fact that Walker thought recruitment would take place in South Carolina indicates that Raaslöf probably thought the same, and that neither Seward nor Smith had convinced the Danish minister that this was off the table.

Walker indeed soon met with Smith, who declared himself “entirely willing for emigrants to go to St Croix if it could be brought about.” Smith promised to bring the case before the president and the cabinet, and on 9 May wrote a long letter to the president on the topic of colonization in which Liberia, Haiti, Chiriqui, and St Croix were discussed as potential destinations for newly emancipated slaves then living in Washington, D.C. Even though Smith assured Lincoln that “I do not doubt that those who may go there will find their condition greatly improved,” it was not at this time a feasible solution since the St Croix Burgher Council insisted on receiving “those who had been accustomed to field labor,” and therefore would not receive the “colored population” of D.C.⁷³

In late May, Raaslöf agreed to negotiate for the receipt of recaptives in addition to African Americans. In a letter to Seward, Raaslöf suggested the two populations would be treated the same, except that recaptives would serve five-year apprenticeships and receive less pay, since “the Captured African,” according to the Danish diplomat, generally was “almost a savage, entirely unaccustomed to and unacquainted with regular agricultural labor.”⁷⁴ While Seward responded on 29 May that he had no authorization to consider the former proposal, he did pass a copy of Raaslöf’s notes to the chairmen of the Committees on the Judiciary in the Senate and the House of Representatives, Lyman Trumbull and John Hickman. Perhaps, Seward explained, Congress would be willing to “modify existing legislature to meet the wishes of [the government of St Croix].”⁷⁵ The St Croix Burgher Council noted that Smith and Seward looked favorably on the recaptives proposal.⁷⁶

As Raaslöf waited for Congress to consider his proposal, he lobbied for its success. On 16 June 1862, Raaslöf wrote to explain that he had met with Trumbull and Hickman again and had introduced them to the agent George Walker. He had also spoken with Lord Lyons, who approved the plan. But more importantly, and more crucial to the historiography, Raaslöf reported that Lincoln’s cabinet during the last month had held “repeated deliberations” about the St Croix proposal and had finally reached a decision to allow Walker to recruit contrabands. The Secretary of the Interior, Raaslöf wrote, “was instructed to devise a plan and instructions for this attempt.” What follows in Raaslöf’s letter is another rare and completely new glimpse

into Lincoln's thinking about colonization. Raaslöf explained that Lincoln was cautious about proceeding. Before Smith could proceed with a plan:

The president had second thoughts and the Government then decided to avoid all responsibility, to present the whole matter to Congress, a final decision that I do not view as unfortunate or necessarily disadvantageous for us, as a venture as this could not be successfully brought to implementation without having been discussed publicly and through this avenue having gained the support of public opinion.⁷⁷

In other words, at least parts of Lincoln's cabinet, according to Raaslöf, felt more secure about the St Croix proposal than Lincoln did, and Lincoln deferred to Congress so that he could avoid responsibility for making the crucial decision.

Seward, in order to "appeal to public opinion" and support the St Croix proposal, provided for the publication of his formal correspondence with the Danish minister.⁷⁸ On 13 June 1862, as Lincoln organized funds for a colonization office, the "New Plan of Negro Colonization" for St Croix came to press in the *National Intelligencer*. It was a "new and somewhat singular proposition" from the Danish, the newspaper claimed. The reporter appears to have had access to the most recent letters between Raaslöf and Seward, as the print language reads like a paraphrase of the written correspondence. Yet, the reporter opposed the idea because the island was too small to provide home for enough African Americans to make any real effect on the "large class in this country to whom it relates" and would not "relieve us from the embarrassment of their increasing numbers."⁷⁹ In June, the press covered the story widely, but offered little additional commentary.⁸⁰

On 8 July, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, J.P. Usher, wrote Trumbull a letter which Raaslöf delivered by hand. Usher's letter referred to the importance of providing the president the authority to contract with the Danish Government on recaptives, but said nothing about African American colonists. Usher took a neutral tone, but noted that Raaslöf would be able to "advance many excellent reasons [*sic*] in favor of the project."⁸¹ Two days later, Usher wrote to Hickman, informing him that he anticipated the Senate would on that very day pass the bill.

On 13 July 1862, the U.S. Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, recorded in his diary a, by now well-known, conversation with Abraham Lincoln and William Seward, during which the president openly mentioned the topic of emancipation for the first time. Welles's diary "is valuable beyond most diaries," in the words of its editor Howard Beale, because Welles was in a position to "record facts otherwise unascertainable," about the Lincoln administration. But as Eric Foner reminds us, "much of Welles's 'diary' is not contemporaneous."⁸² If Welles is to be trusted, however, this entry shows that Lincoln shifted to a multi-pronged strategy on slavery as he responded to events in the war. But while most recent scholarship has acknowledged the dual pursuit of colonization and emancipation from July forward, no one has until now made a convincing case for how the Lincoln administration in the spring and summer of 1862 came to see Caribbean colonization as a concrete way to alleviate racial tension within the United States. In this explanation, St Croix plays a pivotal part.

On 17 July, only four days after apparently having broached the subject of emancipation with Welles and Seward, Lincoln approbated a bill that had passed through the House and the Senate the previous day, with Waldemar Raaslöf's active help behind the scenes. The act received the awkward name "An act to amend an act entitled 'an act in addition to the acts prohibiting the slave trade.'" It granted the president the authority to instruct commanders of armed vessels of the United States to deliver slaves captured in the slave trade to agents or authorities of foreign governments.⁸³ Usher called the act "important," and argued that it was cheaper for the United States and more favorable for the recaptives to send them to St Croix than to Liberia. "No party objection can be made to it," he wrote.⁸⁴ These acts emerged in direct parallel with the bulk of congressional action on Lincoln's colonization bills. Colonization was part of an appropriation bill that went through the House Ways and Means committee in early July. This was then paired onto the better-known Second Confiscation Act, which was the intended legal justification for what became the Emancipation Proclamation.

Much of the correspondence about the St Croix matter refers to a single act, sometimes conflating the first general authorization mentioned above, and a 19 July agreement that specifically granted advantage to St Croix in receiving recaptives. In a letter home, Raaslöf described actually drafting the agreement with the help of the Americans:

Relevant officials in the Department of the Interior and I then edited a bill, which I personally took with me to the Senate along with a letter from the Secretary of the Interior which claimed the bill as its own. The same day the chairman of the Senate's committee (on the judiciary) Senator Trumbull, State Secretary Seward and I, discussed and amended the bill in which mainly the alteration was made, that the words "treaty or convention," found in the draft, were left out for the two reasons being that the President *is* authorized to enter into such, so that a special authorization from Congress would be superfluous, a redundancy, and because a treaty or convention would demand confirmation by the Senate, which in this case could not hold a session before next winter.⁸⁵

To elaborate then, on the heels of the procedural act of 17 July, Raaslöf and Walker met with Smith and his assistant in the Department of the Interior, George C. Whiting, to sign a separate agreement for St Croix to receive all recaptives taken by U.S. ships over the next five years.⁸⁶ Raaslöf forwarded all the paperwork to Copenhagen. Of course, the formal correspondence was only a small part of Seward and Raaslöf's larger conversation.

The Danish agreement was the earliest agreement with a foreign power in the Lincoln administration's development of a Caribbean colonization policy. It spurred the activity of other nations who sought similar agreements. The Dutch Minister, Th. M. Roest van Limburg wrote to Raaslöf on 19 July to seek an audience with him. Raaslöf received the letter the day before he left on a trip to New Jersey, where he found time to respond. Raaslöf's response, in French, demonstrates that Raaslöf provided Van Limburg with printed copies of his correspondence with Seward. Raaslöf felt that the recruitment of contrabands had stalled, but imagined that better

circumstances would lie ahead. "Misery will strike," he wrote, "the U.S. Govt. will soon be very interested in relieving itself of all that part of the population, and then, I think, the moment will come for you and me to act."⁸⁷ In August 1862, J.P. Usher also received a letter from the Spanish Minister, who also had learned of the Danish agreement, and who wondered if the Spanish island of Fernando Po might receive "a portion of the Negroes" captured in the slave trade.⁸⁸ As well, as the news of the Danish recaptives plan became public, members of the American Colonization Society denounced the act.

British Caribbean colonies, although already interested in colonization, were further inspired by the Danish proposal. In August, British Guiana's government secretary William Walker arrived in Washington, D.C., to represent British interests in colonization.⁸⁹ William Walker (no apparent relation to the agent George Walker) described negotiations in a letter sent to the governor of British Guiana. This letter was forwarded to the British Guiana newspaper *The Colonist*, which published a summary of it in its 5 November 1862 issue. While neither the original letter from Walker nor the original newspaper summary have been found, a complete Dutch translation of the letter appeared in an Amsterdam newspaper after the story traveled from British Guiana to neighboring Dutch Suriname. The source explains that William Walker had met Caleb Smith and had scheduled a meeting with Seward. Walker explained to his colleague in British Guiana that "the government of the United States appears very inclined to propose to enter into deliberations to transfer freed slaves to the British West-Indian colonies."⁹⁰ Walker expected three sources of supply of laborers: recaptives, slaves freed in middle-states by Lincoln's proclamation, and contrabands, the first source being already claimed in its entirety by St Croix. But the time had not come for negotiations on colonization, William Walker warned, since American blacks were laboring for the U.S. Government, were spread across the country, had family members still enslaved, and were generally not willing to leave when they knew nothing of foreign lands. These new documents in Danish and Dutch archives help us better understand the documents that have long been available, and they provide context to the well-established actions of Lincoln on colonization in August and September of 1862. They also show European colonial powers taking the lead in seeking colonization agreements without a formal prompt by the Lincoln administration.

With this knowledge, we can see Lincoln acting at least in part in response to international developments. That is to say, U.S. colonization policy did not begin when Lincoln created the U.S. Emigration Office in early August 1862, and appointed James Mitchell its first commissioner. Nor can we read Lincoln's relative silence as indication that he ever opposed colonization. It is true Lincoln's public statements regarding colonization were few, likely because such statements were politically risky. In one example, on 14 August 1862, Lincoln took the controversial step of suggesting to a black delegation at the White House that "you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race ... it is better for us both, therefore, to be separated."⁹¹ While Lincoln was productive, he was also careful, and liked to keep many options available. On 11 September, Lincoln authorized Smith to provide money and support for a Chiriqui colonization project in present-day Panama. He

continued to insist, however, that colonization was to remain voluntary “and without expense” to the emigrants.⁹²

When Gideon Welles sat down to write his diary entry for 26 September 1862 his thoughts turned to “the several meetings of late” at the highest levels of American government over the “subject of deporting the colored race.” Welles noted that “Great Britain, Denmark and perhaps other powers would take them.”⁹³ All who desired to leave the country could now do so; whether black or white, “the emigrant who chose to leave our shores could, and would go where there were the best inducements,” wrote Welles. In his diary entry on 11 September 1862, Welles wrote about his opposition to the removal of recaptives and freedmen to Chiriqui and expressed skepticism on 26 September when the topic came up again. Welles even considered the 19 July 1862, agreement between Denmark and the United States unconstitutional, and he hinted at its “illegality” in his diary entry from 9 October 1862. He told Seward, moreover, that the treaty with Denmark was a strange anomaly, which had never been ratified by the Senate and which was “not negotiated in conformity with the requirements of the Constitution nor through the Department that is charged with the special duty of making treaties”⁹⁴ Lincoln’s cabinet continued to have “[l]ingering divisions” on colonization through the end of the year.⁹⁵

By August 1862, news of the Danish-American recaptives treaty had spread to the Confederacy where it led to anger and fear. William Trescot called it “the most serious move” among northern colonization plans. As Acting Secretary of State in the Buchanan administration, Trescot had closed the door on the St Croix recaptives negotiations of 1860. Trescot knew the intentions of St Croix. Men like Rothe had convinced him that St Croix was in desperate need of laborers. Trescot was certain, for this reason, that the Danes also had their eyes on acquiring “confiscated negroes now in the possession of the U.S. forces.” This, in fact, was the purpose of the recaptives bill, he surmised.⁹⁶ Judah P. Benjamin, noting that the “perfidy of our enemies is notorious,” imagined Trescot could be correct, and he was not willing to risk the consequences without putting up a diplomatic fight.⁹⁷

On 14 August 1862, Judah P. Benjamin wrote to the Confederate diplomat in Brussels, Ambrose Dudley Mann, to declare that this act “betray[ed] the design of converting the war into a campaign of indiscriminate robbery and murder.”⁹⁸ Benjamin felt that the Lincoln administration was attempting to deceive neutral Denmark by making it complicit with the war aims of the Union, and that the North was likely preparing to deliver the slaves of the Confederacy to St Croix. Benjamin’s dispatch to Mann was intercepted and reprinted in the *National Intelligencer* among other newspapers. But other letters reached Mann, who proceeded to Copenhagen, where he was granted an audience with the Danish Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs C.C. Hall on 24 October. The Confederate diplomats in Europe were actively seeking recognition of the independent status of the Confederacy. But according to a letter from the American minister in Denmark, Bradford Wood, the Danish Minister, refused to embroil himself in the controversy by seeing Mann in an official capacity; instead, Hall entertained Mann as a private citizen only. Mann saw the situation in a different light. “As far as practical purposes are concerned our existence as an Independent Power was admitted,” he wrote. In his meeting with

Mann, the Danish Minister explained that he could hardly imagine that the United States would be able to deceive the Danish by substituting African Americans for Africans to be sent to St Croix. Mann believed, however, that Hall admired the Confederacy and sympathized with its aims of independence.

For the first time since Mann's letters were published in official sources, the new documents allow us a look at how the Danish Government felt about the Confederacy and the visit from its representative. It must have been an awkward discussion for Hall, with a Confederate visitor suspecting Yankee perfidy in stealing southern slaves, while Hall himself had not dismissed the idea of recruiting the same. Vedel explained that the Danish ministry "acted from the understanding that the Union government was fully entitled to emancipate the slaves, who during the course of the war had actually obtained freedom" but he had also directed Raaslöf to ensure that any African Americans recruited for St Croix were "completely emancipated."⁹⁹ In St Croix, Birch had been worried from the beginning of negotiations that African Americans brought to St Croix might be subject to reclamation should the Confederacy successfully endure the war. For this reason, Birch hoped to recruit only contrabands or slaves freed by law in the North.¹⁰⁰ Congress repealed the Fugitive Slave Act in June 1864. Had this action come two years earlier, it would likely have relaxed Danish concerns about the legal status of potential African American immigrants.¹⁰¹

At any rate, the success of the recaptives bill convinced George Walker that his services recruiting African Americans would not be necessary, and on 18 August the Burgher Council agreed, relieving Walker, at least temporarily, of his duties.¹⁰² While the newly discovered documents rarely mention workers' conditions explicitly, some indirectly allude to conditions being quite poor, especially with an admission that emancipated slaves could probably not be contracted for St Croix because of what they were used to in the South.¹⁰³ So, while the Danish officials worked to convince the American government of the pleasant condition of the islands, they knew that African Americans would find the working conditions on the island intolerable. The wages St Croix offered were always a problem, and Waldemar Raaslöf alluded to this as early as February 1862, when he wrote the governor of St Croix to say that it was uncertain if anyone could be found willing to engage in a contract when offered such "low pay."¹⁰⁴ In July 1862, St Croix's emigration agent, George Walker, forwarded information to Governor Birch gained from a friend in Port Royal, alluding to the fact that the freed African Americans on South Carolina's coast were too attached to the land to be induced by the Danish offer, even if the offered wages were to be increased.¹⁰⁵

Although the members of the St Croix Burgher Council were bitterly divided about issues of political economy in the transition to free labor, they generally agreed with government-sponsored immigration. Indeed, many even saw it as a step toward deregulation of the labor market, as "sufficient" labor through immigration was a prerequisite for funding social welfare programs. When this labor pool had grown in such a manner, one councilor argued, "the cajoling of the labourers will be at an end and the planters will get the labour properly done for wages within reasonable limits."¹⁰⁶ Waldemar Raaslöf remained a supporter of government action in

recruiting African Americans, and educated at the elite Danish Sorø Akademi, embodied the paternalistic attitude that the “raw and uncivilized” Africans found on slave ships could be uplifted and find improved opportunity by working on St Croix.¹⁰⁷ Consequently, Raaslöff in both 1862 and later in 1865 suggested renewed negotiations on the matter of colonization. But with the Union army struggling in the war effort, Vedel continued to express sincere worries of potential reclamations, which he argued could more easily be countered if Denmark did not enter into a formal agreement but instead worked to ensure that “the transfer of Negro slaves to His Majesty’s West Indian Possessions” did not appear to be a plan of either government but was instead “solely a result from the spirit of private enterprise.”¹⁰⁸ Delays in action gradually established Vedel’s position as the default.

But just as Denmark started backing away from the idea of a formal convention with the United States to organize the colonization of African Americans, U.S. Ambassador Bradford Wood proposed just such a thing. Wood had received a letter from Seward, dated 30 September 1862, announcing that the president had authorized Wood to enter into negotiations with Denmark for the colonization of African Americans. Seward wrote to the Dutch with a nearly identical message nine days later on 8 October 1862.¹⁰⁹ In Copenhagen, Wood was thrilled. As a supporter of emancipation and a “stringent persecution of the war” he found the news “most gratifying,” as he wrote to Seward on 20 October. A 4 December 1862 report from James Mitchell, the administrator of Lincoln’s Emigration Office, confirms that the Danish West Indies continued to play a serious part in the colonization debate in the fall of 1862.

But the Burgher Council and the government in Denmark now opposed such a treaty, albeit for different reasons. Walker had informed the Burgher Council that African Americans were not willing to emigrate, and would not be satisfied with conditions if they did. Birch, on the other hand, declared that the recaptives alone would “completely remedy the island’s need for labor.”¹¹⁰ In the end, having come full circle, Denmark rejected the American colonization proposal as untimely and unnecessary. While Lincoln and his cabinet argued with each other in the same room, and wrestled tremendously, the main Danish political actors investigated, discussed, and ultimately rejected colonization with the handicap of communicating across the ocean. Compared to the Dutch, who dreamed bigger and readied a network of consular agents, the Danish provided actual funding for a recruiting agent and lobbyist, and were more realistic about the opportunity to receive African American laborers. By the end of 1862, the Danish turned on the idea, while the Dutch continued to promote colonization to their South American colony, Suriname. The Dutch realized in 1865 what the Danes learned already in 1862: recruitment by private enterprise would be more politically expedient, but economic conditions dissuaded African Americans from migrating.¹¹¹ The fear of potential legal and diplomatic repercussions if the Confederate States gained their independence frustrated Danish interests just enough to delay potentially successful negotiations.

On 10 October 1862, five days before leaving the United States for diplomatic duties in China, Raaslöff met with the Dutch Minister in New York City, where again “the subject of emigration of free negroes to the Danish colony of St Croix came up

in conversation.”¹¹² Raaslöff’s departure left the issue of colonization for others to decide. Raaslöff had been a major driving force and supporter of African American colonization, so his departure also contributed to a temporary suspension of the Danish pursuit of emancipated slave labor. Raaslöff’s successor to the post of Danish minister in the United States, Count Piper from Sweden, did not receive instructions to pursue colonization.¹¹³

Conclusion

Discussion of sending captured African slaves to St Croix began well before the Civil War but was rejected by President Buchanan. Lincoln’s first annual message inspired the Danish minister to inquire into recruiting African Americans. Although Denmark and the United States never organized an agreement for colonizing freed African Americans on St Croix, their agreement for recaptives endured beyond the Emancipation Proclamation and indeed past the end of the war. The Danish sources indicate that the intention of the Lincoln administration in the summer of 1862 seemed not to be to conduct colonization right away, but to establish a precedent which would allow for its fuller implementation should the circumstances warrant it at a later time. In late 1861 and early 1862, William Seward and Caleb Smith, presumably with Lincoln’s approval, appear to have jointly supported a more aggressive colonization policy, which was scaled back because of the delicate political nature of the negotiations and foreign powers’ uncertainty of the direction of the war. The St Croix recaptives bill was the first step in this direction. Despite failing to pursue further negotiations for African American colonists, St Croix continued to play a role in American diplomacy and to seek other sources of labor abroad.

What then explains the contradictions between Seward’s support of St Croix colonization in 1861–1862 and his later recorded statements against colonization in general?¹¹⁴

It is possible first of all, that Seward’s opposition to colonization strengthened during the course of the war, particularly as colonization schemes in Haiti and Panama proved embarrassing failures. As indicated in his discussion with Raaslöff, though, Seward appears to have opposed appropriations and formal treaties for colonization – the strategy which Lincoln pursued in late 1862 – but not the voluntary emigration of African Americans. This certainly would not have been an inconsistent position. And to maintain the perception of consistency, an older Seward could, when projecting backwards, justly maintain that he had never supported colonization, at least not the kind of colonization Lincoln had desired. What motive Seward had for “broadcasting” his anti-colonization views, especially after the war, is an open point of interpretation, but it could be answered by Gideon Welles, who, in his diary in 1868 offered his view on why Seward ridiculed Lincoln’s colonization plans. “His purpose is to cast off his blunders and mistakes on the dead President, to whom he meant to impute all the faults of the State Department.”¹¹⁵ Seward, in fact, tried to “magnif[y] his own doings” when discussing colonization, according to Welles. Concerning Seward’s role in colonization, the Secretary of the Navy recalled, “I do not remember that he took an active, or very active part of it, but I am confident he took no part against it.”¹¹⁶

Raaslöf, who had returned to the United States on 31 December 1863, met formally with Lincoln on 15 January 1864, to present his credentials from the Danish King and to express the hope that Lincoln would bestow on him “the same personal kindness as heretofore.”¹¹⁷ Correspondence between Raaslöf and Seward from 1864 to 1870 demonstrates that the two knew each other well and could even be called friends. Raaslöf sent Seward wine, for example, and they communicated on personal as well as diplomatic matters. In their continued correspondence, a letter from Raaslöf contains a piece of information that likely leads to another historiographical revision. “I have spoken to nobody about the St Thos affair except a few words, confidentially” to a mutual friend, Raaslöf included as a postscript in a letter to Seward.¹¹⁸ Raaslöf was likely alluding to the American government’s interest in acquiring St Thomas in the Danish West Indies as a naval station. According to Raaslöf, the events of the preceding few years made it clear that the United States would gain much advantage in “the possession of a harbor and a stronghold in the West Indian waters,” as the Secretary of State termed it a month later.¹¹⁹

Histories of the Danish West Indies (which became the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1917) relate that at a New Year’s party in 1865, Abraham Lincoln singled out Raaslöf for a lengthy private discussion. A few days later, Raaslöf sat down with Seward before a dinner party at a French diplomat’s house where many believe Seward first introduced Raaslöf to the idea that the United States wanted to buy the Danish West Indies.¹²⁰ But Raaslöf’s letter from December indicates that Seward had developed these plans at least one month earlier. While one Danish study from 1953 places the origin of the idea at the feet of Lincoln (without specific evidence of this claim), another study from 1997 argues that the idea of the attempted purchase originated with Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus Vasa Fox.¹²¹

Meanwhile, Danish interest in acquiring cheap labor with the help of the American military persisted, extending even past the end of the Civil War. As late as October 1865, Raaslöf assured Seward, that “the Danish authorities on the Island of St Croix are as well prepared, and as desirous as ever, to receive and properly provide for such persons of color”¹²² William Hunter, filling in for a wounded Seward, confirmed that the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of the Interior would not overlook the agreement. Additionally, on 20 June 1865, Raaslöf wrote Gustavus Vasa Fox to inquire about the status of the 1862 recaptives agreement. Raaslöf tried to prod the American Navy’s high command into action:

[P]robably on accord of the war, no slaves were captured since the date of that agreement ... it would do our beautiful and hospitable Island of St Croix a great deal of good, if you would capture some two or three slavers on the coast of Cuba and land the poor inmates of them on our shores.¹²³

But the answer from Vasa four days later, kept strictly in diplomatic speak, and directly labeled “unofficial,” said everything the Danish diplomat needed to know about American intentions.

The instructions issued to the Gulf Squadrons in pursuance of that agreement are still in force should any of our vessels succeed in making captures of that character indicated, it may be practicable to secure the object which you so much desire.¹²⁴

By this time, however, the diplomatic power dynamic between Denmark and the United States had shifted markedly. Denmark – which in 1862 had been a proud European power, with global colonies and duchies in Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg – had been reduced to a small state by late 1864 through a disastrous war that helped spark German unification. The military defeat left Denmark's economy in shambles and the prospect of potentially selling the West Indian islands to the United States gained traction, after initial hesitation, as the Civil War drew to a close.

To remedy the labor shortage on the island, Denmark explored other avenues simultaneous with the colonization negotiations. Archival sources indicate that in the 1860s a great diversity of workers came to St Croix from places like Anquilla, St Eustatius, and Barbados. An elaborate tax and subsidy policy was designed in St Croix to encourage such labor recruitment, and planters employed the services of immigrant agents who advertised contracts abroad. As islands across the Caribbean competed for labor, political authorities grew frustrated at their inability to keep their own laborers from emigrating.¹²⁵ At the same time, these islands looked to Asia for labor. For at least a decade, British colonies had imported labor from East India, and in the summer of 1862, Denmark passed laws regarding treatment of imported labor, to gain British permission to bring Indian laborers to St Croix the following year.¹²⁶

In the summer of 1863, some 321 British Indian immigrants disembarked only to discover work conditions worse than promised. The newly arrived laborers discovered that they had to buy food despite their contract saying otherwise, and when a British inspector came to survey the conditions, he found housing facilities “totally inadequate,” with up to six workers living in one room, and deteriorating health conditions. Within 18 months of their arrival, 22 Indian workers were dead, and both British and Indian authorities warned against sending more workers to St Croix before conditions had improved. As a testament to the conditions on the island, only four of the original 321 Indian workers remained on the Danish Virgin Islands by 1873. As soon as their contracts were up in 1868, more than two-thirds immediately returned to India. Although a few hundred British Indians came to St Croix from 1863 forward, the system of indenture failed within a decade because planters treated the laborers poorly in their attempts to maximize returns on their investments.¹²⁷

In light of global events, diplomatic discussions are seen to go beyond national history. Sebastian Page wrote that “Historians’ unawareness of the imperial schemes has hitherto made the cabinet’s discussion of treaties look like an isolated episode that went nowhere. Yet they actually became an important element of colonization policy, even if not ... its *sine qua non*.”¹²⁸ This is most certainly true. Page’s perspective echoes the warnings of E.H. Carr, who wrote about the failure of reading diplomacy from only one side. About German diplomatic records from the Weimar Republic, Carr wrote:

These records have one feature in common. They depict Streseman as having the lion's share of the conversations and reveal his arguments as invariably well put and cogent, while those of his partner are for the most part scanty, confused, and unconvincing.¹²⁹

The picture of American diplomacy during the Civil War, relying only on domestic records, would result in the same picture of a poorly devised, reactionary Danish diplomacy. And yet, when we turn the story around, and investigate it from a transnational perspective, we see the opposite. The Danes were incredibly efficient diplomatically, and they had to be. They jumped at the chance to receive laborers for St Croix, provided money, stood unanimously behind the proposal, and trusted both their diplomatic representative and their recruiting agent in the United States. From this perspective, the Americans, and Lincoln in particular, appear hesitating and unsure. Continued transnational, multi-archival, and multilingual archival research presents an opportunity to see the American Civil War from a new, wider perspective. International cooperation among scholars, with the advantages of modern technology, enables, perhaps even demands, such a research paradigm.

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Notes

1. Examples of such writings include: McPherson, "Abolitionist and Negro Opposition"; Neely, "Abraham Lincoln and Black Colonization"; Staudenraus, *African Colonization Movement*; Vorenberg, "Abraham Lincoln and the Politics"; Paludan, "Lincoln and Colonization"; and Escott, *What Shall We do with the Negro*.
2. Scheips, "Lincoln and Chiriqui," 444–5; Gold, "Colonization Schemes in Ecuador," 308; Lockett, "Abraham Lincoln and Colonization," 418–53. One notable exception is Schoonover, "Misconstrued Mission."
3. Jones, *Union in Peril*; Blackett, *Divided Hearts*; Foreman, *A World on Fire*.
4. Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution*; Yarema, *American Colonization Society*.
5. Examples of relevant works which nonetheless omit reference to St. Croix colonization include: Pendleton, "Our New Possessions"; Skrubbeltrang, "Dansk Vestindien 1848–1880"; and Hall, *Slave Society*.
6. Foner, "Lincoln on Colonization," 137.
7. Magness and Page, *Colonization after Emancipation*.
8. Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet). Collection 1175 Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse. Kolonialkontoret, Box 910: Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 m.m.
9. Douma and Rasmussen, *Colonization, Emigration, Emancipation*.
10. The authors conducted research in the collections of the U.S. Virgin Islands (RG 55) at the U.S. National Archives (NARA), but we note that these papers are extensive, have

not been exhausted, and offer potential for further research into the story. We have also learned of papers of George Walker at the archives of the Land Treasury on St. Croix, and suggest that future research on this topic be taken up there.

11. One exception to this is Schoonover, who showed Seward at the lead in suspended plans for colonization in Spanish-speaking countries in Central America. Schoonover, "Misconstrued Mission," 619.
12. Taylor, *William Henry Seward*; Lind, *What Lincoln Believed*, 204.
13. Brauer, "The Slavery Problem," 454–5.
14. Stahr, *Seward*, 341.
15. Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 234; Magness and Page, *Colonization after Emancipation*, 133, fn 11.
16. Waldemar Raaslöff. "Kongl. Dansk Gesandtskab. Washington Den 15de December 1861." Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910, folder *Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 mm*. Translation of the Danish

Statssecretairen svarede mig herpaa, at denne Idee egentligen var ham aldeles ny, idet han endnu ikke havde tænkt paa, paa denne Maade at anbringe de betræffende emanciperede slaver, men at han dog, selv uden at have forelagt den for Præsidenten, ikke tog i betænkning at udtale sig bestemt for planen, og at forsikkre [sic] mig, at dens Udførelse vilde paa bedste Maade blive understøttet af de forenede staters Regjering.

17. *Ibid.*, December 15, 1861. Translation of the Danish:

Han tvivlede ikke et öieblik paa, at der jo vilde findes Mange iblandt de Negere som med deres familier havde forladt deres hidtige hjem, uden synderlig Udsigt til at kunne i en nær Fremtid vende tilbage til samme, som med Glæde vilde gaae ind paa, paa billige Vilkaar, at emigrere til St Croix. Han bemærkede tillige at enhver fremmed Regjering, som maatte ville forsøge paa denne Maade at formaae frie Negere til at emigrere til deres vestindiske Colonier, vilde finde de Forenede Staters Regjering beredt til at yde den enhver mulig bistand.

18. Secretary, Burgher Council, February 4, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 691, box 45.3.14.
19. Letters from H. Döllner, the Danish Consul in New York, who was the interim Danish representative in the United States during Raaslöff's many absences, demonstrate that Seward was informed of Danish intent to receive recaptives as early as December 1860. In the spring of 1861, Döllner and Raaslöff were discussing opportunities to re-start recaptives negotiations. Döllner to Wm. H. Seward, December 24, 1860 and Döllner to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15 March, 1861. Rigsarkivet. Collection 0002, Box 139.
20. Waldemar Raaslöff, Washington, December 15, 1861. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910. Translation of the Danish "emanciperede Negere, navnlig de i Syd-Carolina hjemmehørende, høre til de bedste og mest civiliserede i de forenede stater."
21. The Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, Series 2. General Correspondence. 1858–1864. Waldemar R. Raaslöff to John G. Nicolay, Thursday, February 13, 1862. Lincoln usually had a full schedule of visitors, and the Danish Minister might have been mistaken to think he could have an audience with the President on short notice. No known records suggest a meeting between Raasloff and Lincoln on that date. For Lincoln's frustrations with throngs of visitors, see Burlingame, *Lincoln*, vol. 2, 253–6.
22. Waldemar Raaslöff, Washington, DC, April 22, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
23. Waldemar Raaslöff, New York, July 30, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
24. See note 14 above.
25. Barker, *Memoirs of Elisha Oscar Crosby*, 87.
26. Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 245.

27. Magness and Page, *Colonization after Emancipation*, 14–25. In what may be a reflection of the order which the Lincoln Administration reviewed the colonization plans, Mitchell's report from December 4, 1862 lists the Danish proposition first. See Mitchell, *Report on Colonization and Emigration*, 8.
28. Douma, "Lincoln Administration's Negotiations."
29. Wilhelm Birch, "Memorandum, 1860" in Rigsarkivet Collection 1175, Box 909, folder "Immigration af arbejdere fra Afrika 1855–1859."
30. Miller, *Treaties and Other International Acts*, 835–7.
31. Roopnarine, "First and Only Crossing," 115–6. See also Skrubbeltrang, "Dansk Vestindien," 354.
32. Vilhelm Birch, "Gouvernementet for De Dansk Vestindiske Besiddelser [June 27, 1862]," in Rigsarkivet collection 1175, Box 910, folder "Oplysninger, navnlig gennem konsular beretninger om indførsel af arbejdere til fremmede kolonier."
33. Roopnarine, "First and Only Crossing," 113–40.
34. Jung, *Coolies and Cane*, 19.
35. Skrubbeltrang, "Dansk Vestindien," 366–74; Hornby, *Kolonierne i Vestindien*, 268–73. The Colonial Council for the Danish West Indies consisted of 20 members chosen among men who had resided in the Danish West Indies for at least five years, were 25 years of age, and had a yearly minimum income of 500 West Indian dollars, thereby excluding 95 percent of the islands' population.
36. Andræ, *De Dansk-Vestindiske Øer*, 57–8; Hornby, *Kolonierne i Vestindien*, 262.
37. Rosenstand, "Fra Guvernør Birchs Dage," 373–5.
38. Cuthburt and Robert Finlay to Commodore Christmas, Rigsarkivet, collection 1175, box 910.
39. Birch to Finlay, June 27, 1860. Records of the Department of State, RG 59, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in St. Croix, Virgin Islands. 1791–1876. T233-5.
40. Finlay to Birch, June 27, 1860. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910. Finlay to Lewis Cass, June 29, 1860, Records of the Department of States, RG 59, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in St. Croix, Virgin Islands. 1791–1876. T233-5.
41. Malcolm, "Transporting African refugees."
42. Maris-Wolf, "Of Blood and Treasure."
43. W.H. Trescot to R.A. Finlay, July 27, 1860, RG 59. General Records of the Department of State. Consular Correspondence, 1785–1906. Instructions to Consular Officers, 1808–1906. Volume 28 of 201.
44. Peter Vedel to Danish Finance Ministry, August 4, 1860, Rigsarkivet, collection 1175, box 910.
45. Rothe to Cass, September 14, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
46. Trescot to Rothe, September 17, 1860, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
47. Rothe to Trescot, September 18, 1860, Rigsarkivet collection , 1175, box 910.
48. Trescot to Rothe, September 20, 1860, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
49. Skrubbeltrang, "Dansk Vestindien," 354–78; Hornby, *Kolonierne i Vestindien*, 255–70. See also Lincoln, "First Annual Message," December 3, 1861. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29502>.
50. Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. Transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College. Galesburg, Illinois. William H. Seward to Abraham Lincoln, Wednesday, September 18, 1861 (Meeting with minister from Denmark) From William H. Seward to Abraham Lincoln, September 18, 1861.
51. Charles Sumner to Benjamin Franklin Butler, June 24, 1861, in *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, During the Period of the Civil War, vol. 1*. Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1917), 669.
52. McPherson. *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 371.
53. Birch to Finance Ministry, January 2, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.

54. Ibid.
55. Ibid. Translation of the Danish “ifølge en privat Udtalelse af Oberstlieutenant Raaslöff maa denne Sag, hvis den skal have et heldigt Udfald, paaskyndes saameget, som muligt, uden at der tages et altfor strengt Hensyn til Formerne.” See also Peter Vedel to Finance Ministry, January 9, 1862, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
56. Vilhelm Birch to Finance Ministry, January 11, 1860, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910. Also Birch to Raaslöff, January 9, 1862, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
57. Birch to Raaslöff, January 9, 1862, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
58. Birch. February 13/14, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910. Birch, February 15, 1862. Rigsarkivet February 15, 1862.
59. A month later, the Burgher Council raised this sum to \$65,000 and gave Walker discretion in negotiating the length of labor contract terms. Francis DuBois, March 31, 1862. “Meeting at Governmenthouse 31 March 1862.” In Rigsarkivet collection 691, box 45.3.14.
60. Birch to Walker, February 15, 1862, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
61. George Walker to Birch, March 16, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
62. Raaslöff to Government of Danish West Indies, February 15, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
63. Hall, February 23, 1862, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910. Translation of the Danish “Ere disse nemlig uden Videre blevne frie, kan Regjeringen selvfølgelig ikke *disponere* over dem ... Men medens jeg under disse Omstændigheder antager ethvert forslag paa at opnaae det tilsigtede Formaal ved en Traktat for at være aldeles frugtesløst og tidsspildende, er jeg derimod af Hr Wood kun bleven endmere bestyrket i den Tro, at det vilde være meget heldigt, om der strax gjordes de fornødne skridt for med særlige Agenter at contrahere med de arbejdsløse Frigivne.”
64. Birch to Walker, April 4, 1862, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
65. Waldemar Raaslöff. “Danish Legation. Monday Morning. March 31, 1862.” In *William Henry Seward Papers, Microform edition*, University of Rochester. Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation, 1862.
66. Raaslöff to Birch, April 22, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
67. Raaslöff to Seward, April 23, 1862. NARA, RG 59: Notes from the Danish Legation in the United States to the Department of State, 1801–1906. Roll T-3, Vol. 3, January 9, 1861–December 27, 1865.
68. Raaslöff to Birch, May 8, 1862, Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910. Translation of the Danish “Jeg maa nemlig bemærke, at hele Emnet er meget delicat og maa behandles med særdeles megen Varsomhed og Discretion for ikke at sætte Regjeringen i Forlegenhed og eventuelt at give Anledning til Opposition og Anfægtelser.”
69. Raaslöff to Seward, April 23, 1862. Notes from the Danish Legation in the United States to the Department of State, 1801–1906. Roll T-3, Vol. 3, January 9, 1861–December 27, 1865.
70. Seward to Raaslöff, May 1, 1862, NARA, RG 59, No. 99, Roll 18: Notes to Foreign Legations in the United States from the Department of State, 1854–1906, Denmark: July 1, 1834–April 23, 1873.
71. Walker to Birch, May 7, 1862, Rigsarkivet, Collection 1175, box 910.
72. Walker to Birch, May 7, 1862, Rigsarkivet, collection 1175, box 910.
73. Burgher Council Minutes, June 30, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 691, Box 910. And Miller, *Treaties and Other International Acts*, 849–50.
74. Raaslöff to Seward, May 26, 1862, NARA, Notes from the Danish Legation in the United States to the Department of State, 1801–1906. Roll T-3, Vol. 3, January 9, 1861–December 27, 1865.
75. Seward to Raaslöff, May 29, 1862; Seward to J. Hickman, June 6, 1862. 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. House of Representatives 37th Congress, 2nd session, Mis Doc. No. 80.

76. Burgher Council Minutes, June 20, 1862. Rigsarkivet, collection 1175, box 910, *St Croix Borgerråd. 1814–1865. Forhandlings- and referatprotokoller. 1861–1863.*
77. Raaslöff to Foreign Ministry, June 16, 1862, Rigsarkivet, Collection 1175, box 910. Translation of the Danish:

[Kabinettet] var kommet til den Beslutning at Agenten fra St. Croix skulde bemyndiges til at begive sig til Port Royal for dersteds at prøve paa at faae Contraband-negere til at emigrere, samt at det var blevet Indenrigsministeren paalangt at udarbeide en Plan og Instructioner for dette Forsøg men at der senere, og forinden dette kunne skee, for Presidenten opstod Betænkeligheder, og at Regjeringen da besluttede, for at undgaa alt Ansvar, at foreligge Hele sagen for Kongressen, en endelig Beslutning, som jeg ikke anseer for uheldig eller nødvendigviis ugunstig for os, da et Foretagende som dette dog ikke med Held vilde kunne bringes til Udførelse uden at være bleven drøftet offentligen og at have ad den Vei erhvervet sig, den offentlige Menings Bistand.

78. Raaslöff to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 0002, box 139.
79. National Intelligencer, June 13, 1862. Reprinted from the Newark Daily Advertiser.
80. For example, see *New York Tribune*, June 14, 1862; *Missouri Republican* (St. Louis), June 17, 1862; *Times* (London), June 23, 1862.
81. J.P. Usher to L. Trumbull, July 8, 1862. NARA: Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior Relating to the Suppression of the African Slave Trade and Negro Colonization, 1852–1872. RG 48, Publication number M160, Roll 0001.
82. Beale, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, liii and 70–1. Also Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 217 and 285.
83. July 17, 1862, Rigsarkivet, Collection 1175, box 910.
84. J.P. Usher to John Hickman, July 10, 1862. NARA: Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior Relating to the Suppression of the African Slave Trade and Negro Colonization, 1852–72. RG 48, Publication number M160, Roll 0001.
85. Raaslöff to Foreign Ministry, July 30, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910. Translation of the Danish:

Vedkommende Embedsmænd i Indenrigsministeriet og jeg redigerede da et Lovudkast (bill) som jeg selv tog op med mig i Senatet, tilligemed en Skrivelse fra Indenrigsministeriet, ved hvilken dette anbefalede Lovudkastet, som sit eget. Samme dag discuterede og amenderede Formanden for Senatets betræffende Committee (on the judiciary) Senator Trumbull, Statssecretairen Hr. Seward som tilfældigviis var tilstede i Senatet, og jeg, Lovudkastet, i hvilken navnlig den Forandring blev foretaget, at de Ord "Treaty or convention" som fandtes i Udkastet, udelodes af den dobbelte Grund, at Presidenten er bemyndiget til at indgaae saadanne, saa at altsaa en speciel bemyndigelse af Congressen vilde være overflødig, en Pleonasm, samt fordi en Tractat elle Convention vilde Kræve Confirmation af Senatet, hvilken i dette Tilfælde ikke vilde kunne erholdes førend til næste vinter.

86. On July 19, 1862, Rigsarkivet, Collection 1175, box 910.
87. W. Raasloff (Long Branch, New Jersey Mansion House) to Th. M. Roest van Limburg, July 25, 1862. Netherlands National Archives, Collection 2.05.01, No. 3230–3231 "Stukken betreffende de emigratie van wekvolk naar Suriname, 1858–1870." Translation of the French "Mais la misère viendra – le Gouv. des E.U. sera bientôt très intéressé à se débarrasser de toute cette population et alors viendra je crois le moment pour vous et moi d'agir."
88. J.P. Usher to Seward, August 4, 1862. NARA: Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior Relating to the Suppression of the African Slave Trade and Negro Colonization, 1852–1872. RG 48, Publication number M160, Roll 0001.

89. Magness and Page, *Colonization after Emancipation*, 21.
90. A.D. Van der Gon Netscher writing for *Nieuwe Amsterdamsche Courant: Algemeen Handelsbald*, January 10, 1863. Since the original English version is missing, this is translated back from the Dutch, which reads “Het gouvernement der Ver. Staten schijnt echter zeer genegen om voorstellen in overweging te nemen ter overzending van vrijgemaakte slave naar de Britsche West-Indische kolonien...”
91. Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 224.
92. Beale, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 150–3.
93. *Ibid.*, 150–2.
94. Miller, *Treaties and Other International Acts*, 852.
95. Magness and Page, *Colonization after Emancipation*, 23.
96. William H. Prescott to J.P. Benjamin, August 5, 1862, Records of the Confederate States of America, Library of Congress.
97. J.P. Benjamin to William H Prescott, August 11, 1862. Records of the Confederate States of America, Library of Congress.
98. J.P. Benjamin to Dudley A. Mann, Intercepted dispatched, published in the *National Intelligencer*, reprinted in *Daily Advertiser* (Boston), January 29, 1863.
99. Peter Vedel to Danish Ministry of Finance, November 15, 1862. Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910. Translation of the Danish:

...[Da] Ministeriet imidlertid gik ud fra den Forudsætning at Unionsregjeringen maatte være fuldt berettiget til at emancipere de Slaver, der som en følge af Krigsbegivenhederne allerede factisk havde erholdt deres Frihed blev det ikkun Oberstlieutnant Raaslöff paalagt at virke til, at der fra de Forenede Staters Regjering gaves den Kongelige Regjering tilstrækkelig Garanti for, at de Slaver, om hvis Overførsel til de dansk-vestindiske Besiddelser der kunde blive Spørgsmaal, iforveien vare fuldstændigt emanciperede.

100. Birch to Finance Ministry, January 2, 1862.
101. A good history of attempts to repeal the act can be found in Oakes’s *Freedom National*, 434. Oakes, we would argue, overestimates the power of the Republican administration to control the destiny of developments relating to colonization (see Oakes, *Freedom National*, 277–82).
102. Secretary, Burgher Council. August 18, 1862. “Meeting at Governmenthouse According to Invitation of His Excellency.” Rigsarkivet collection 69, box 45.3.14, St Croix Borgerråd. 1814–1865. Forhandlings- and referatprotokoller. 1861–1863. A statement of the St. Croix Treasury indicates that in 1863, Walker was paid 230 dollars for his services. For 1862, a St. Croix Immigration committee spent over 500 dollars on expenses relating to U.S. immigration. RG 55 Records of the Government of the Virgin Islands, Box 2028, St. Croix Municipal Councils and Commissions, Letters Received, 1858–1865.
103. Waldemar Raaslöff. “Til Udenrigsministeriet I Kjøbenhavn. Kongeligt Danske Gesandtskab, Washington D. 16^e Juni 1862.” Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910. And Vilhelm Birch. “Gouvernementet for De Dansk Vestindiske Besiddelser [December 27, 1862].” Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910.
104. Waldemar Raaslöff. “Kongl. Dansk Gesandtskab. Washington Den 15 Februar 1862.” Rigsarkivet collection 1175, box 910, Immigration af arbejdere fra Italien 1884 m.m.
105. George Walker, “New York, July 17, 1862,” in Rigsarkivet collection 0002, box 139, Sager til journal A 3284–3303. Box 139.
106. Burgher Council minutes, October 3, 1862. NARA, RG 55, Records of the Government of the Virgin Islands; Box 2087, Printed Copies of Drafts of Legislation, Committee Reports and Other Records, 1852–1864.

107. Waldemar Raaslöff, Washington, DC, December 15, 1861; United States Department of State, United States' 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).
108. Peter Vedel to Danish Ministry of Finance, November 21, 1862. Rigsarkivet, collection 1175, box 910. Translation of the Danish "det [forekommer] dog Ministeriet utvivlsomt at saadanne Reclamationer langt lettere ville kunde imødegaaes, naar Negerslavernes Overførelse til Hans Majestæts vestindiske Besiddelser ikke fremtræder som Resultat af en af de tvende Regjeringer organiseret Plan, men udelukkende skyldes den private Foretagelsesaand."
109. Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 234. Britain, France, and the Netherlands, who all had "colonial possessions in the Caribbean basin," received nearly identical propositions from Seward at this time. Mitchell, *Report on Colonization*, 28–9.
110. Birch to Finance Ministry, December 27, 1862.
111. See note 28 above.
112. Th.M. Roest van Limburg (New York City) to the Netherlands Foreign Affairs Department in the Hague, October 11, 1862. Netherlands National Archive, Collection 2.05.13, Folder 142. Translation of the Dutch "Ter sprake kwam de aangelegenheid der emigratie van vrije negers naar de Deensche Kolonie van St. Croix."
113. Parton, *Danish Islands*, 3–4.
114. Carpenter, *Six Months at the White House*, 290–1.
115. Beale, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, Vol. 3, January 1, 1867–June 6, 1869, 429. Entry for September 4, 1868.
116. *Ibid.*, 428.
117. Waldemar Raaslöff. "Address Delivered on the 15th January 1864." In *Washington D.C., Diplomatisk repræsentation. 1854–1909. Korrespondancesager (aflev. 1918). Politisk Korrespondance 1864–1868*. Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1864. Raaslöff's letter introducing himself as a "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary" and Lincoln's response was published in *Daily National Intelligencer*, January 16, 1864.
118. Waldemar Raaslöff. "New York Decbr. 6, 1864." In *William Henry Seward Papers. Microform Edition*: University of Rochester. Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation, 1864.
119. Waldemar Raaslöff. "Kongelig Dansk Gesandtskab. Washington D. 9de Januar 1865." In *Udenrigsministeriet. 1856–1909 Samlede sager. Vestindien 1865–1909. Box number 771*. Copenhagen: Rigsarkivet, 1865.
120. Parton. *Danish Islands*, 1869, 3–5; Skrubbeltrang, "Dansk Vestindien," 389–91; Erik Overgaard Pedersen. *The Attempted Sale of the Danish West Indies to the United States of America, 1865–1870*. Frankfurt am Main: Haag + Herchen, 1997, 9–11.
121. Skrubbeltrang. "Dansk Vestindien," 389.

The Civil war had convinced Abraham Lincoln that the States should incorporate parts of the West Indies as an expansion of the Monroe doctrine ... The American minister in Copenhagen in 1864 eyed a risk that Austria after the war would obtain the Danish West Indian islands as compensation for its part in capturing Southern Jutland, and in his inquiry to Secretary of State *William H. Seward* he found a willing listener.

Translation of the Danish:

Borgerkrigen havde overbevist Abraham Lincoln om, at Staterne burde inkorporere dele af Vestindien som en udvidelse af Monroedoktrinen ... Den amerikanske

minister i København øjnedede i 1864 en fare for, at Østrig efter krigen skulle opnaa de dansk-vestindiske øer som en kompensation for dets andel i det erobrede Sønderjylland, og i sin henvendelse til statssekretær *William H. Seward* talte han ikke for døde øren.

Pedersen. *The Attempted Sale of the Danish West Indies to the United States of America, 1865–1870*, 1997, 4. In his letter Raaslöff, for example, wrote:

I was most happy to see that you Kept me in unaltered friendly remembrance and also that you were not hopeless in regard to a satisfactory arrangement of the St. Thomas affair. As you have started the idea of the purchase it is quite natural that you should feel a considerable interest in the accomplishment of it.

Waldemar Raaslöff. "Private & Confidential. Copenhagen Septbr. 15. 1868." In *Gustavus Vasa Fox Collection 1823–1919 (bulk 1860–1889). Letters received*. New York Historical Society, 1868.

122. Raaslöff, "Danish Legation, Washington D.C. October 2nd, 1865."
123. Waldemar Raaslöff. "Danish Legation. New York June 20. 1865." In *Gustavus Vasa Fox Collection 1823–1919 (bulk 1860–1889). Letters received.*: New York Historical Society, 1865.
124. Gustavus Vasa Fox, "June 24, 5. [Col. Wm Raasloff]." In *Gustavus Vasa Fox Collection 1823–1919 (bulk 1860–1889) Letters sent*. New York Historical Society, 1865.
125. U.S. National Archives, RG 55, Records of the Government of the Virgin Islands, Box 2028, St. Croix Municipal Councils and Commissions, Letters Received, 1858–1865.
126. Magness and Page, *Colonization after Emancipation*, 52.
127. Sircar, "Emigration of Indian Indentured," 139–44; Roopnaine, "Re-Indenture, Repatriation and Remittances", 247–67.
128. Page, "Lincoln and Chiriqui," 307.
129. Carr, *What is History*, 19.

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