

Exodus

It was still dark when Claus Clausen shook his mother's hand for the last time. Prompted by Norwegian settlers in Wisconsin, the twenty-two-year-old aspiring pastor was leaving Denmark for the relative unknown of America along with his twenty-seven-year-old wife Martha.¹ In time, Claus Clausen would become one of the most prominent Scandinavian anti-slavery pastors in America and chaplain of a celebrated Scandinavian Civil War unit (see Figure 2.1). Yet, this early spring morning, April 10, 1843, Claus and Martha Clausen were part of a mass-migration vanguard that in less than a century would lead more than two million fellow Scandinavians to the United States.²

Since the 1830s, *Amerikafeber* (America fever) had spread slowly across Scandinavia and was now beginning to reach even remote villages. Like an invisible hand, the “contagion” crept from Norway through Sweden and into Denmark.³ Poets and cultural icons such as Denmark's

¹ Rasmus Andersen, *Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen – Banebryder for Den Norske Og Danske Kirke i Amerika. Første Skandinavisk Feltpræst*. [*Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen: Trailblazer for the Norwegian and Danish Church in America. First Scandinavian Chaplain*] (Blair, NE: Danish Lutheran Publishing House, 1921), 27–30; Anders Bo Rasmussen, *I Krig for Lincoln [To War for Lincoln]* (Copenhagen: Informations Forlag, 2014), 25–29.

² Andersen, *Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen – Banebryder for Den Norske Og Danske Kirke i Amerika. Første Skandinavisk Feltpræst*. [*Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen: Trailblazer for the Norwegian and Danish Church in America. First Scandinavian Chaplain*], 235–236. See also Gunlög Fur, “Indians and Immigrants – Entangled Histories,” *Journal of American History* 33, no. 3 (2014): 55–76, 55.

³ The earliest nineteenth-century example of Scandinavian migration was a group of fifty-two Norwegians who arrived in New York in 1825, emigrating in large part because of



FIGURE 2.1 Claus L. Clausen photographed on the island of Langeland during a visit to Denmark after the Civil War. Courtesy Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum Archives.

Hans Christian Andersen, Sweden's Fredrika Bremer, and Norway's Henrik Wergeland (at least initially) helped spread this fervor for America and tied it closely to a mental image of an economic dreamland

religious reasons, but it would be more than a decade before a sizable party left Scandinavia for America again. In the subsequent years, partially spurred by emigration pamphlets, migration to the United States slowly but surely picked up. See Jørn Brøndal, *Ethnic Leadership and Midwestern Politics: Scandinavian Americans and the Progressive Movement in Wisconsin, 1890–1914* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 16–17. Also Andrew Nilsen Rygg, *Norwegians in New York 1825–1925* (New York: Norwegian News Company, 1941), 1–6; see also Rasmussen, *I Krig for Lincoln [To War for Lincoln]*, 25–29.

across the Atlantic.⁴ In America, according to Andersen, horses' hoofs were covered in silver and fields bloomed with money.

Der går solen aldrig ned [there the sun never sets],
 stegt er hver kastanje [every chestnut roasted],
 der er alting kærlighed [there everything is love],
 kilderne champagne [in champagne toasted]⁵

Together, Andersen and Bremer, who knew each other well, helped disseminate a New World image closely associated with upward social mobility, and Scandinavian literature regularly portrayed the United States as an El Dorado. Yet, perhaps not surprisingly, prospective Scandinavian emigrants needed more tangible advice before making life-changing decisions associated with emigration. Thus, when seemingly reliable pamphlets appeared just a few years after Andersen's song lyrics, so did Scandinavian communities start to appear across the Atlantic.

The first published pamphlet based on concrete experience in the United States was Ole Rynning's *True Account of America* from 1838, which sparked the migration imagination in several Norwegian villages. Rynning described abundant land, wildlife, and relatively cheap agricultural opportunities. Especially the idea of ample American government land was attractive for many Scandinavian smallholders who often found it impossible to amass more than a few acres in their Old World villages due to the nobility's vast landholdings.⁶

Rynning's account, written in the winter of 1837–8, "had a considerable effect upon the emigration," noted the late Norwegian-American historian Theodore C. Blegen.⁷ Unfortunately, Rynning's pioneer group of Norwegians settled in a swampy region of Iroquois County, Illinois, and by 1838 many had succumbed to malarial fever and other

⁴ Sven H. Rossel, "The Image of the United States in Danish Literature: A Survey with Scandinavian Perspectives," in *Images of America in Scandinavia*, ed. Poul Houe and Sven Hakon Rossel, pp. 1–23 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), 8–11, 15. Rossel notes that "the romantic poet Henrik Wergeland, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin were heroes who had perfected the ideal of humanity in the land of liberty," but by the 1840s he was warning against emigration to the United States. See also Norman L. Willey, "Wergeland and Emigration to America," *Scandinavian Studies and Notes* 16, no. 4 (1940): 121–127.

⁵ Rossel, "The Image of the United States in Danish Literature: A Survey with Scandinavian Perspectives," 3.

⁶ Theodore C. Blegen, ed., *Ole Rynning's True Account of America* (Minneapolis, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Society, 1921), 81–82. See also Richard N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin. Volume II. The Civil War Era, 1848–1873* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), 54.

⁷ Blegen, *Ole Rynning's True Account of America*, 16.

illnesses – Rynning among them.⁸ Yet Ansten Nattestad, one of Rynning's fellow community members, carried his manuscript back in the spring of 1838 along with several "America letters." Upon Nattestad's return to family and friends in Norway, he was besieged by prospective emigrants, one of whom noted:

Hardly any other Norwegian publication has been purchased and read with such avidity as this Rynning's *Account of America*. People traveled long distances to hear "news" from the land of wonders, and many who before were scarcely able to read began in earnest to practice in the "America-book," making such progress that they were soon able to spell their way forward and acquire most of the contents.⁹

Another writer noted, "It is said that wherever Ole Rynning's book was read anywhere in Norway, people listened as attentively as if they were in church."¹⁰ One of the emigration parties that left Norway shortly after the publication of Rynning's book, and Nattestad's visit, was a group from Telemarken who established their colony in eastern Wisconsin and by 1841 needed a spiritual guide. The settlement leaders, a young emigrant named Sören Bache among them, wrote family and friends back in Norway to find the right person. Bache's father, Tollef, helped convince Claus Clausen, who had traveled through Norway in the summer of 1841, that Muskego, Wisconsin, would be the best locality to do religious work. Letters from Sören Bache helped cement the agreement.¹¹

On October 6, 1842, Sören Bache wrote Clausen from Muskego, a Norwegian settlement about 20 miles south of Milwaukee, to ease any concern about "his material well-being"; he assured Clausen that the land "is very good and rich and bears all sorts of grains without being fertilized. There is still plenty of government land to be had at \$1.25 per acre. . . . I believe that anyone who is not too emotionally bound to his native place will be happy in America."¹²

Bache's letter to Clausen underscored the importance of landownership as a means to social uplift among Scandinavian immigrants, and Rynning's original account reflected these concerns by treating the "quality of the land" in one of his first and most thorough chapters.¹³

⁸ *Ibid.*, 9–15. ⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 17. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15–17.

¹¹ Andersen, *Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen – Banebryder for Den Norske Og Danske Kirke i Amerika. Første Skandinavisk Feltpræst* [*Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen: Trailblazer for the Norwegian and Danish Church in America. First Scandinavian Chaplain*], 13–16.

¹² Clarence A. Clausen and Andreas Elviken, eds., *The Chronicle of Old Muskego: The Diary of Sören Bache, 1839–1847* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1951), 91.

¹³ Blegen, *Ole Rynning's True Account of America*, 40–46.

While the decision to emigrate from Scandinavia could have multiple individual causes, economic opportunity, political rights, and religious freedom were the most significant factors pulling Scandinavian immigrants toward the United States in the Civil War era. The lack of land in the Old World was the most important circumstance pushing poorer immigrants out of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark in the years leading up to the Civil War, and the letters and emigration pamphlets that appeared in Scandinavia in the 1840s sparked ideas about American institutions that powerfully informed Scandinavian immigrants' imaginations about the meaning of American citizenship.¹⁴

To afford the dream of emigration to, and landownership in, America, a number of prospective Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish farmers started selling off their possessions during the 1840s.¹⁵ For Claus Clausen, the allure of "a safe income for the future" played an important part in his decision to emigrate, but there was also a strong religious component to his choice.¹⁶ In this, Clausen was far from alone. As Theodore Blegen argued in 1921, "religious motives" played a larger part "than has usually been recognized in connection with the emigration after 1825," and, for several Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes in the earliest settlements, the Scandinavian state churches' conservatism was a contributing factor to emigration.¹⁷

Clausen was deeply influenced by Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, who spearheaded the revivalist movement known as Grundtvigianism and was

¹⁴ Torben Grøngaard Jeppesen, *Danske i USA 1850–2000. En Demografisk, Social Og Kulturgeografisk Undersøgelse Af De Danske Immigranter Og Deres Efterkommere [Danes in the United States 1850–2000. A Demographic, Social and Cultural Geographic Study of The Danish Immigrants and Their Descendants]* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2005), 29–30.

¹⁵ See, for example, Andreas Frederiksen, "Wilmington Ill, Den 28 Juli 1850," in *Afskrift af 22 breve til Frederik Nielsen, Herlev DK fra A.F. Wilmington Ill. og West Denmark og Neenah Wisc. (1847–1872)* (Det Danske Udvandrerarkiv, 1850). See also Johannes Romwall, "Håkabo Okt. 16 1863," in *Sven August Johnson Papers, 1831–1921. SSIRC Mss P:9* (Augustana College, 1863). For a description of social conditions in Denmark in the 1840s, see Asger Th. Simonsen, *Husmandskår Og Husmandspolitik i 1840erne [Smallholder Conditions and Smallholder Politics in the 1840s]* (Copenhagen: Landbohistorisk Selskab, 1977), 16–19.

¹⁶ Clausen and Elviken, *The Chronicle of Old Muskego: The Diary of Søren Bache, 1839–1847*, 91.

¹⁷ Blegen, *Ole Rynning's True Account of America*, 16.

censored by the Danish state church between 1826 and 1837 for his writings.¹⁸ By 1843, however, Grundtvig had been accepted back into the state church, resumed preaching, and become an increasingly influential pastor of international renown.¹⁹ Additionally, Clausen had been introduced to the teachings of Hans Nielsen Hauge, a layman preacher who led a religious protest against the Norwegian state church and was jailed for his views between 1804 and 1814.²⁰ It was followers of Hans Hauge in Muskego who enticed Claus Clausen to emigrate with the promise of a denomination – as well as official ordination – in Wisconsin.²¹

Thus, the Clausen family members said their final goodbyes at 4 a.m. in a little Danish hamlet.²² “We wished them [to] live well in peace of the lord until we all are reunited at the lamb’s throne and they wished us the same under many tears,” wrote Clausen in his diary.²³

A friend drove the couple to the town of Slagelse, 63 miles (and a twelve-hour carriage ride) outside of Copenhagen, where they arrived half an hour before the horse-drawn stagecoach left for the Danish capital. Claus and Martha Clausen decided to remain in Copenhagen for a week

¹⁸ On Claus Clausen’s deep knowledge of Grundtvig’s abolitionist writings, see Andersen, *Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen – Banebryder for Den Norske Og Danske Kirke i Amerika. Første Skandinavisk Feltpræst* [*Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen: Trailblazer for the Norwegian and Danish Church in America. First Scandinavian Chaplain*], 61.

¹⁹ For a discussion of Grundtvig’s perspective on Christianity and the Danish state church, see Julie Allen, *Danish, but Not Lutheran: The Impact of Mormonism on Danish Cultural Identity, 1850–1920* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2017), 96–99.

²⁰ Eugene F. Fevold, “The Norwegian Immigrant and His Church,” *Norwegian-American Studies* 23 (1967): 3–16.

²¹ Andersen, *Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen – Banebryder for Den Norske Og Danske Kirke i Amerika. Første Skandinavisk Feltpræst* [*Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen: Trailblazer for the Norwegian and Danish Church in America. First Scandinavian Chaplain*], 13–16. See also Blegen, *Ole Rynning’s True Account of America*, 86. Rynning wrote about the multitude of religious strands in the United States: “Catholics, Protestants, Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, and many others.” And while there were also “various sects among the Norwegians,” he wrote, they did not “yet have ministers and churches.”

²² Clausen and Elviken, *The Chronicle of Old Muskego: The Diary of Søren Bache, 1839–1847*, 88–90.

²³ Claus L. Clausen, “Dagbog [Diary],” in *Clausen, Claus L. (1820–1892). P59* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1843). See also Andersen, *Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen – Banebryder for Den Norske Og Danske Kirke i Amerika. Første Skandinavisk Feltpræst* [*Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen: Trailblazer for the Norwegian and Danish Church in America. First Scandinavian Chaplain*], 39.

over Easter, where the couple, according to Clausen's diary entries, had the pleasure of attending several sermons by Grundtvig at an important political moment in the Danish anti-slavery cause.²⁴

Since 1839, Grundtvig had been one of three founding members of the Danish anti-slavery committee (the other two being Professor Christian N. David and Jean-Antoine Raffard of the French Reformed Church of Copenhagen), a society formed in the immediate aftermath of a visit from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.²⁵ The society's secretary, George W. Alexander, met with several dignitaries when he visited Scandinavia in September 1839 to advocate abolition of slavery on the islands of the Danish West Indies and Swedish St. Barthelémy, and he subsequently reported back that he deemed Grundtvig, along with David and Raffard, "among the best friends of the Cause of negro freedom."²⁶

Notably, none of the three founding members of the Danish anti-slavery committee were uncritical members of the Danish political and religious "establishment." Both Grundtvig and David (the latter an economics professor of Jewish descent) had experienced censorship of their writings, and Raffard's role in the French Reformed Church by definition set him apart from the Danish establishment clergy. The three founding anti-slavery committee members were therefore somewhat removed from more conservative societal institutions. The members of the committee advocated the importance of belief in a common humanity and the immediate abolition of slavery, but they also regularly expressed a sense of moral superiority in relation to people of African descent.²⁷

After the three members' first meeting, Grundtvig was asked to write a statement about the views and aims of the committee. Grundtvig denounced slavery and expressed empathy with "our unhappy fellow human beings, who are sold as commodities and are treated – be it harshly or in a lenient way – as domestic animals," but he also claimed that "the slaves on our west-indian islands usually are treated in a milder way than are the majority of others."²⁸ Grundtvig's statement was never published,

²⁴ K. E. Bugge, "Grundtvig and the Abolition of Slavery," *Grundtvig-Studier* 56, no. 1 (2005): 171–172.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 161–163. ²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ For American examples of the same sense of racial superiority within the abolitionist movement, see Stephen Kantrowitz, *More Than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829–1889* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012), 58–64.

²⁸ Quoted in Bugge, "Grundtvig and the Abolition of Slavery," 165.

but the document's ideological underpinnings – slavery's immorality, infused with supposed superior Scandinavian morality in dealing with slavery – were not uncommon among educated Scandinavians and found their way to the public through C. N. David's writings in late 1839.²⁹

After praising the Danish monarch for being the first European regent to abolish the slave trade in 1792, David informed Danish readers that the native inhabitants of the African Gold Coast, despite the supposed civilizing influence from Europeans, had over time only become more unenlightened, more sinful, and more bestial because of the slave trade.³⁰ Though the Danish slave trade ban did not take effect until 1803, the decree served as the source of countless claims of moral superiority by Scandinavian authors in subsequent debates over slavery.³¹ As Pernille Ipsen has succinctly pointed out, “the discourse that helped abolish the slave trade also helped produce racial difference” as the better-educated Scandinavians in the Civil War era came of age in a slaveholding nation where subjugation of Africans, justified in part through science and culture, was an extension of the power and labor dynamics within the Danish and Swedish kingdoms.³²

In Denmark, “the period of Atlantic slavery,” as Ipsen has demonstrated, was marked “by an ever-deepening linkage of slavery and

²⁹ A decade later, American congressman Thaddeus Stevens mirrored David's viewpoint when he noted that “slavery always degrades labor.” Quoted in Keri Leigh Merritt, *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 110.

³⁰ Christian N. David, “Om Slavehandel [On the Slave Trade],” *Fædrelandet*, September 28, 1839. Given the fact that the Danish monarch had imposed strict censorship on the press to eliminate revolutionary ideas from the public sphere, it was noteworthy that David's anti-slavery notions appeared in print without censure. The explanation, as Knud Bugge has suggested, may have been Grundtvig and Raffard's close ties to Princess Caroline Amalie (Grundtvig sermonized at the court, and Raffard helped the princess distribute food and supplies to the needy). K. E. Bugge, *Grundtvig Og Slavesagen [Grundtvig and the Slavery Cause]* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2003), 39–71, 202. See also Bugge, “Grundtvig and the Abolition of Slavery,” 161–164.

³¹ David, “Om Slavehandel [On the Slave Trade].” See also Pernille Ipsen and Gunlög Fur, “Scandinavian Colonialism: Introduction,” *Itinerario* 33, no. 2 (2009): 7–16, 11. For example, in 1828, the famous Danish poet Adam Oehlenschläger in a tribute to the royal family wrongfully claimed that Denmark had been the first country in the world to abolish slavery; see Bugge, *Grundtvig Og Slavesagen [Grundtvig and the Slavery Cause]*, 33–34.

³² Pernille Ipsen, *Daughters of the Trade: Atlantic Slavers and Interracial Marriage on the Gold Coast* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2015), 155.

blackness,” a process that “happened not only on European slave ships, but in European art, literature, and travel accounts and in every corner of the Atlantic touched or affected by the Atlantic slave trade and plantation system.”³³

These texts about Africa and Africans became part of a transnational flow of ideas that framed Black people as undesirable and inferior in an attempt to rationalize Danish slavery. As an example of perceived African inferiority, a Danish governor of the slavetrading post Christiansborg on Africa’s west coast in 1726 dismissed the idea of his men bringing their local African wives back to Copenhagen, “as the general opinion in Denmark was [not] in favor of Africans.”³⁴

The same was true in the Swedish kingdom, where cultural images and scientific texts legitimizing African inferiority circulated with increased frequency in the eighteenth century. While Benjamin Franklin, in his by now well-known classification from 1751, lumped Swedes together with “the Spanish, the Italians, the French, and the Russians” as people with a “swarthy complexion,” lower than white English people and slightly above “black or tawny” people, Scandinavian researchers more clearly demarcated themselves from Africans in culture and so-called science.³⁵

Swedish scientist Carl von Linné (Linnaeus), for example, in 1735 created a typology where he distinguished Europeans from Indians, Asians, and Africans. In his *Systema Naturae*, Linnaeus situated human beings at top of the animal kingdom, and at the “pinnacle of his human kingdom reigned *H. sapiens europaeus*: ‘Very smart, inventive. Covered by tight clothing. Ruled by law.’”³⁶ At the other end of Linnaeus’ typology were Africans, a group the Swedish scientist described as “sluggish, lazy ... crafty, slow, careless. Covered by grease. Ruled by caprice.”³⁷

³³ *Ibid.*, 100. ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 94.

³⁵ Quoted in Peter Kolchin, “Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America,” *Journal of American History* 89, no. 1 (2002): 154–173, 158. For examples of “romantic” and “scientific” hierarchies based on whiteness, see also Jørn Brøndal, “‘The Fairest among the So-Called White Races’: Portrayals of Scandinavian Americans in the Filiopietistic and Nativist Literature of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33, no. 3 (2014): 6–9.

³⁶ Quoted in Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016), 82. For a discussion emphasizing the nuances of Linnaeus’ work on race, see Stefan Müller-Wille, “Race and History: Comments from an Epistemological Point of View,” *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 39, no. 4 (2014): 600–602.

³⁷ Quoted in Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, 82. See also Erika K. Jackson, *Scandinavians in Chicago: The Origins of White Privilege in Moderne America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019), 60–61.

Linneaus' student, Peter Kalm, while expressing regret at enslaved Americans' subordinate position, also wrote about the enslaved kept in "their heathen darkness" in 1756.³⁸

Building on Linneaus' and Kalm's work, German anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in 1776 differentiated between races on account of the shape of the skull while Olof Erik Bergius, who had been an official in the Swedish West Indian colony St. Barthélemy, in 1819 published a book where he clearly demarcated Black and white people. The former was destined for servitude and would gain "bildung" (edification or enlightenment) through interaction with the white people who were destined to rule.³⁹ Additionally, Anders Retzius, a prominent Swedish scientist who was a member of the Royal Swedish Academy and in 1842 "introduced the cephalic index" linking race to skull size, knew and corresponded with German-born scientist Lorenz Oken, who in 1807 created a racial hierarchy based on senses (Black people who were associated with "touch" at the bottom and white people associated with "vision" at the top of Oken's five races) and was inducted into the prestigious Swedish society in 1832.⁴⁰

³⁸ Pehr Kalm, *En Resa Til Norra America [Travels to North America]* (Stockholm: Lars Salvii, 1756), 476–485. See also Frank Shuffelton, "Circumstantial Accounts, Dangerous Art: Recognizing African-American Culture Intravelers' Narratives," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 27, no. 4 (1994): 591–594.

³⁹ Ale Pålsson, *Our Side of the Water: Political Culture in the Swedish Colony of St Barthélemy 1800–1825* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, Faculty of Humanities, Department of History, 2016), 27–28, <http://su.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A967510&dsid=-7542>. For a discussion of "romantic" and "scientific" racism in the 1800s, see Brøndal, "The Fairest among the So-Called White Races": Portrayals of Scandinavian Americans in the Filiopietistic and Nativist Literature of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries." See also O. E. Bergius, *Om Westindien [About The West Indies]* (Stockholm: A. Gadelius, 1819), 30–31.

⁴⁰ On the cephalic index, see Alan Mann, "The Origins of American Physical Anthropology in Philadelphia," *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 52 (2009): 160. See also David Howes, ed., *The Sixth Sense Reader* (New York: Berg, 2009), 10. See also Olaf Breidbach and Michael T. Ghiselin, "Lorenz Oken and 'Naturphilosophie' in Jena, Paris and London," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 27, no. 2 (2002): 227. See also David Howes, "The Expanding Field of Sensory Studies," www.sensorystudies.org/sensorial-investigations/the-expanding-field-of-sensory-studies/. As David Howes has noted, "Oken's ascending scale of 'sensory perfection' in 'Man' (with the European eye-man at the apex) was not based on any intrinsic propensities of the peoples concerned, but rather dependent on the typologies of the Western social imaginary." On the connection between Retzius and Oken, I am grateful to Anne Miche de Malleray of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for providing this information in an e-mail dated November 29, 2018.

Retzius also corresponded often with Samuel George Morton, the founder of American physical anthropology, “about their mutual interest in craniometry.”⁴¹ Morton’s views were influential and his “measures of cranial capacity placed Europeans on top with the largest capacities, Africans at the bottom and Asians in between.”⁴² While Retzius early in his career criticized phrenology – later recognized as a pseudo-science based on skull measurements – Morton in his book *Crania Americana* included a section on phrenology’s relationship to anthropology and helped legitimize perceptions of Black inferiority.⁴³

While it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which culturally infused ideas of race and scientific racism impacted the general Scandinavian population, there are important examples of the cultural, social, and political elite being familiar with scientific explanations and the storytelling used, directly and indirectly, to undergird slavery in both the Old and the New World.

Among the prominent Scandinavians to demonstrate interest in, and knowledge of, the scientific currents of the day – and their ramifications in terms of race relations – was renowned Swedish writer Fredrika Bremer. During her travels around the United States between 1849 and 1851, Bremer, who was greatly interested in educational matters and regularly commented on issues of race, described Linneaus and Benjamin Franklin (along with Isaac Newton), as “heroes of natural sciences.”⁴⁴ Bremer also expressed interest in phrenology and wrote favorably about the relocation of the formerly enslaved from America to Africa. While the connection between Bremer’s admiration of Linneaus, belief in phrenology, and support for colonization are not in themselves a direct link between Old World racial ideology and its expression in the New World, they do help explain Bremer’s admission that “I can not divest my mind of the idea that

⁴¹ Mann, “The Origins of American Physical Anthropology in Philadelphia,” 160–161.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid. See also Steven Hahn, *A Nation without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830–1910* (New York: Viking, 2016), 67. According to Hahn, defenders of slavery in the United States “eagerly embraced the racist thought that had penetrated more and more of the Atlantic world since the last third of the eighteenth century.” Additionally, as Alan Levine has noted, Samuel Morton’s influence and arguments were “amplified” by immigrant scholars such as English-born George R. Gliddon and Swiss-born Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz. See Alan Levine, “Scientific Racism in Antebellum America,” in *The Political Thought of the Civil War*, ed. Alan Levine, Thomas W. Merrill, and James R. Stoner Jr. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018), 98.

⁴⁴ Fredrika Bremer, *The Homes of the New World: Impressions of America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1853), 20.

they [negro slaves] are, and must remain, inferior as regards intellectual capacity.”⁴⁵

Bremer published her thoughts on race relations in the United States in 1853, but, as we have seen, expressions of racial hierarchies were prevalent among the Europeans engaged with Atlantic World slavery decades earlier. Moreover, despite the physical distance between Denmark, Western Africa, and the Caribbean, there was no denying slavery’s larger societal impact in Scandinavia and its positive economic impact on Nordic maritime cities in the years leading up to 1849. Both in terms of the material wealth that slavery created and in terms of its cultural imprint, slavery directly and indirectly impacted life in major Scandinavian cities and, as Pernille Ipsen has argued, infused life in a city like Copenhagen with a sense of “colonial haunting.”⁴⁶

In Denmark, Hans Christian Andersen’s play *Mulatten* (The Mulatto), which was set in the French West Indies, debuted on the Royal Danish Theater’s stage in Copenhagen in 1840. At this time, the Danish abolitionist movement was still in its infancy, but the play – and the success it enjoyed – indicated Andersen’s awareness of slavery’s impact on Europe’s slaveholding nations while simultaneously revealing some of the racial stereotypes that helped legitimize slavery from a white European perspective.⁴⁷

By consciously situating his play on Martinique, Andersen likely helped his elite Copenhagen audience maintain the perception that Danish colonial slavery was qualitatively different from French colonial slavery, an argument that fit into Grundtvig’s view of “benign” Danish slave rule,

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 20, 351. In a previous paragraph, Bremer prefaced her assessment of Black people’s intellectual capacity by expressing support for colonization: “much is done in Georgia for the instruction of the negro slaves in Christianity for their emancipation, and their colonization at Liberia, on the coast of Africa.” See also Rossel, “The Image of the United States in Danish Literature: A Survey with Scandinavian Perspectives,” 10. Also Jørn Brøndal, “An Early American Dilemma? Scandinavian Travel Writers’ Reflections on the Founding Ideals of the United States and the Condition of African Americans, Ca. 1850–1900,” in *Les Constitutions: Des Révolutions À L’épreuve Du Temps Aux Etats-Unis Et En Europe* [*Constitutions: On-Going Revolutions in Europe and the United States*], ed. Marie-Elisabeth Baudoin and Marie Bolton (Paris, 2016), 143–144, 55.

⁴⁶ Pernille Ipsen, “‘Plant Ikke Upas-Træet Om Vor Bolig’: Colonial Haunting, Race, and Interracial Marriage in Hans Christian Andersen’s *Mulatten* (1840),” *Scandinavian Studies* 88, no. 2 (2016): 130–132. See also Ipsen, *Daughters of the Trade: Atlantic Slavers and Interracial Marriage on the Gold Coast*, 99–104.

⁴⁷ H. C. Andersen, *Mulatten* [*The Mulatto*] (Copenhagen: Bianco Luno’s Bogtrykkeri, 1840), 29.

while avoiding having his play comment explicitly on contemporary monarchical politics, in which the royal court along with Danish merchants for years had been intimately tied to the colonial goods flowing from the West Indies.⁴⁸

Moreover, Andersen understood the racial stereotypes that would make his play legible and perhaps even credible to an elite Scandinavian audience. Playing on fears of slave uprisings, Andersen made the half-naked former slave Paléme a central part of his play. Describing plans for a future slave rebellion, Paléme appeared in the first scene of Andersen's second act, sipping rum from a coconut (which he in Andersen's imagination had been nursed on), before proclaiming "in blood and fire everything shall perish."⁴⁹

Slaves, or former slaves, of African descent – half-naked, and perhaps by implication closer to nature, hard-drinking, and vengeful – were part of the stereotypes that helped maintain legal measures to keep the enslaved population and freedpeople under control and part of the stereotypes that shaped attitudes toward Africans in Europe in the decades leading up to the Civil War.⁵⁰

By being somewhat removed from the influence of the Danish state church and the political establishment, Grundtvig, David, and Raffard were able to set themselves apart from more "establishment" ideas of slavery and race relations in their concrete and active efforts to abolish slavery. In this small abolitionist circle, Grundtvig played an important part, and Claus Clausen on his way to America in April 1843 received concrete anti-slavery inspiration from the pastor that he considered "the North's spiritual high priest" as he

⁴⁸ Ipsen, "'Plant Ikke Upas-Træet Om Vor Bolig': Colonial Haunting, Race, and Interracial Marriage in Hans Christian Andersen's *Mulatten* (1840)."

⁴⁹ Andersen, *Mulatten [The Mulatto]*, 29.

⁵⁰ Even while working at the forefront of the small Danish abolitionist movement and trying to refute charges of slaves being "rude," "immoral," and "devoid of all religion," in an address read by Professor C. N. David to Danish politicians in 1844 the anti-slavery activists seemed to acknowledge the existence of a racial hierarchy. On behalf of the Danish anti-slavery committee, David did allow that the present generation of slaves may well be "as rude and morally corrupt" as they were represented to be, but he blamed the slaveowners for this condition before calling for immediate abolition (yet steeping the call in paternalist discourse): "It is obvious that freedom, to a certain extent at least, must be given before it can be enjoyed. A child will not learn to walk by being continually held in leading strings." See C. N. David et al., "Denmark – Proceedings in the States," *British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*, January 8, 1845. Also Ipsen, *Daughters of the Trade: Atlantic Slavers and Interracial Marriage on the Gold Coast*, 175.

attended several of Grundtvig's Easter sermons together with his wife Martha.⁵¹

On Maundy Thursday, April 13, 1843, at a time when he had been working actively for slavery's abolition for four years, Grundtvig preached on his belief in a common humanity.

[Humankind, originating from the same set of parents, was considered] as children of one blood as Christianity otherwise could not be extended to all people under the heavens, for wherever it comes to black or white ... it follows that all of mankind both can and shall be of one blood.⁵²

Grundtvig's Protestant Christian ideas, and his earlier expressed view of slavery's sinfulness, were part of the ideological inspiration that Clausen carried with him to America – ideas with important implications for discussions of citizenship. If one followed Grundtvig's conviction that slavery was sinful and “all of mankind of one blood,” then people “black or white” would deserve equal rights. Grundtvig's ideas about Christianity and slavery – and his history of state-church criticism – would therefore continue to play a part in Claus Clausen's own anti-slavery struggle in the New World well into the 1860s. While Claus Clausen initially devoted himself to religious matters in America, it became increasingly clear, as more Scandinavian immigrants arrived in the region, that this Danish “disciple” of Grundtvig was more forceful in his denunciation of slavery's sinfulness than his state church-affiliated colleagues but also served as one of many individual examples connecting ideas of landownership, liberty, and colonialism.

⁵¹ Andersen, *Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen – Banebryder for Den Norske Og Danske Kirke i Amerika. Første Skandinavisk Feltpræst. [Pastor Claus Laurits Clausen: Trailblazer for the Norwegian and Danish Church in America. First Scandinavian Chaplain]*, 40–41, 61. Clausen wrote, “That he is called the North's spiritual high priest is rather high [praise] but not [a] wholly incorrect designation.” See also Johannes W. C. Dietrichson, *Pastor J. W. C. Dietrichsons Reise Blandt De Norske Emigranter i “De Forenede Nordamerikanske Fristater.” Paany Udgiven Af Rasmus B. Anderson* (Madison: Amerika's Bogtrykkeri, 1896), 27.

⁵² Jette Holm and Elisabeth A. Glenthøj, eds., *Grundtvig: Prædikener i Vartov, 1842–43* [*Grundtvig: Sermons in Vartov, 1842–43*], vol. 5 (Copenhagen: Forlaget Vartov, 2007), 170–178. See also Sebastian N. Page, *Black Resettlement and the American Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 3.