Michael J. Douma, *The Colonization of Freed African Americans in Suriname: Archival Sources relating to the U.S. Dutch Negotiations, 1860–1866*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Leiden University Press, 2019. 300 pp. (Paper US\$34.50)

It is widely known that during the U.S. Civil War President Lincoln considered plans for colonizing emancipated African Americans in parts of the Caribbean and Central America, but few know about U.S. negotiations with the Dutch government to encourage freed African Americans to relocate to Suriname in the wake of emancipation in that colony. Michael Douma's *The Colonization of Freed African Americans in Suriname* contributes to a surge in colonization scholarship in recent years, providing archival source material (mainly from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) relating to these plans and negotiations, both in the original Dutch and in English translation.

The interests of the U.S. and Dutch governments aligned during their virtually simultaneous abolition of slavery: the U.S. government was worried about vagrancy and unemployment among its emancipated African American population, while the Dutch government faced an acute labor shortage in the wake of emancipation in Suriname (1863). Even though the plans ultimately stalled during the war—due to both wartime distractions and African Americans' refusal to emigrate—negotiations tied emancipation in the two regions together in a way that is underappreciated in the historical literature. The archival materials also show that the Lincoln administration kept colonization on the table well into 1864 and 1865, longer than has been previously argued. Finally, these sources reveal a great deal about attitudes in each country regarding slavery and emancipation, the role of each government in protecting its citizens, and the nature of diplomatic networks in the nineteenth century.

The book is not a *history* of these negotiations, but rather a transcription of primary source material (mainly letters) to be consulted by scholars. A thorough 17-page introduction does, however, serve to explain the historical context and adequately position this material within the relevant literature—mainly on slavery and emancipation, labor networks in the postemancipation Western Hemisphere, Dutch colonial and U.S. Civil War eras, transatlantic diplomacy, and racial thinking in the mid-nineteenth-century Atlantic world. The translations are very clear and fairly literal, in order to reproduce the language of the time in the most objective way possible while still making it understandable to modern readers.

The volume would have benefited from two modifications. First, because the colonization of freed African Americans in Suriname never actually took place, the title could be confusing to students and scholars searching through a library catalogue; *The Plans to Colonize Freed African Americans in Suriname*

would have been a more accurate reflection of the book's contents. Secondly, the book could have divided the sources into "parts," making certain themes more easily visible. As it stands, the sources, which consist of diplomatic correspondence, are listed in chronological order, a logical choice. However, no attempt was made to structure them beyond simply reproducing them as a long series of letters. In the table of contents, the letters are clustered under a single heading: "Documents and Translations." It might have been useful to cluster them around certain events (such as the agreement on a colonization treaty; the U.S. Emancipation Proclamation of 1863; Surinamese emancipation in 1863; the end of the U.S. Civil War in 1865; et cetera). The three-page index is also relatively basic, making it difficult for readers to find detailed information without having to comb through all the letters.

These points do not detract from the usefulness and importance of this volume for historical scholarship on emancipation in the U.S. South and the Dutch colonies. Douma has done a great service to historians on both sides of the Atlantic. The volume will be especially interesting for labor historians, historians of slavery and emancipation, and diplomatic historians.

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