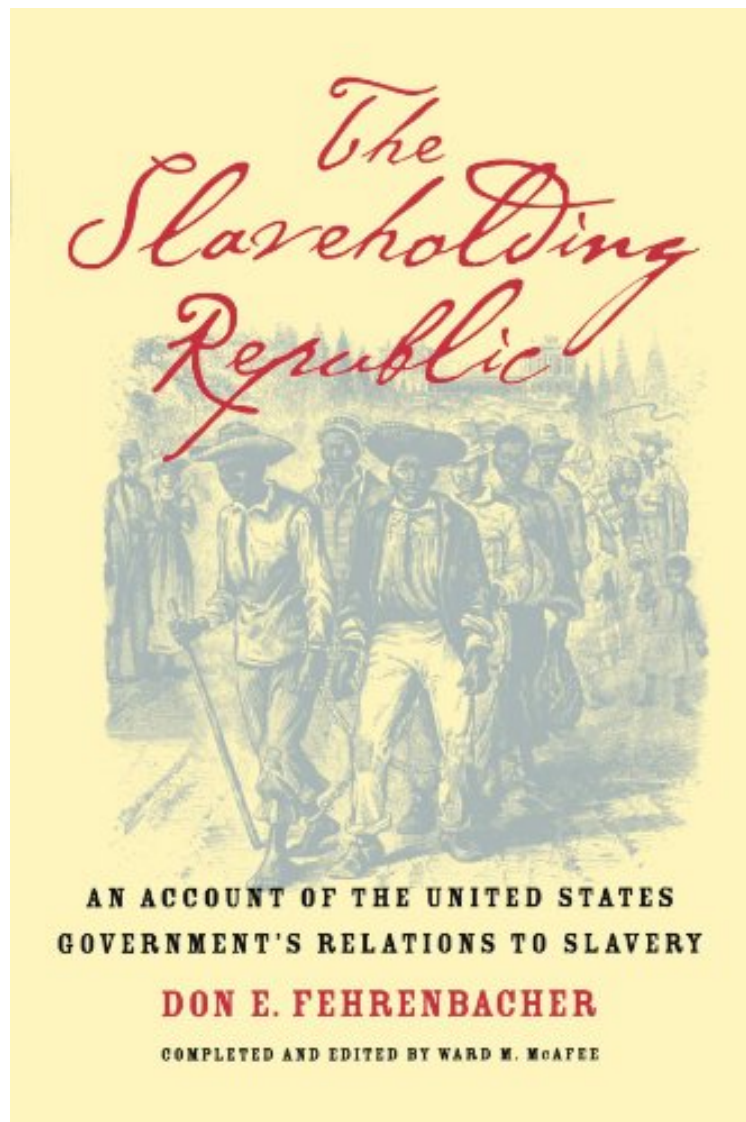


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## The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery

*Don E. Fehrenbacher*

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**Don E. Fehrenbacher : The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A very good book about the History of Slavery in the USA By S. Ceulemans A very good book about the History of Slavery in the USA. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A point of view average Americans may not be familiar with By peor The late Don Fehrenbacher, in his time the foremost authority on Abraham Lincoln, his times and the thirty or so years preceding the Civil War and the editor of the two volumes of Lincoln Speeches and Letters published by the Library of America, presents the evidence for the view that the United States, from its inception in 1787 were a slaveholding republic; the North tolerated every move that the South made in defense of their 'peculiar institution' and gave way to every threat during the Missouri Compromise in 1820, the admission of Texas in 1848, the compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska bill in 1854, the Dred Scott case in 1857, and, finally found its backbone in the person of Abraham Lincoln, who called the South's bluff, unfortunately at a cost that the United States have not yet completely recovered from in 2014, but which his predecessors forced onto him. Impartially written, with meticulous documentation, and with an easy to read style, it gives a fresh and not the usual interpretation to a lot of our nineteenth century. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent discussion that few if any other works discuss in this way By A Reader I've had this book for a while; I grabbed it when available in bookstores. Prof. Don Fehrenbacher was my teacher in an undergraduate course in 19th century American history. It shook my conventional thinking as history was taught then. I took my class notes home to my mother who taught high-school American History. I've finally begun to read the book in earnest. It is highly readable and covers the discussion of slavery, the antebellum environment and the discussion of slavery in a way that is original and no other book I've discovered does. It covers constitutional creation of slavery, and how the notions of what the constitution changed over time. It covers the issues slavery debate in the beginnings, the territories, foreign relations, etc. I have no negative comments. It is admirably finished by Ward McAfee and I thank him for doing so that the book could reach our eyes and minds.

Many leading historians have argued that the Constitution of the United States was a proslavery document. But in *The Slaveholding Republic*, one of America's most eminent historians refutes this claim in a landmark history that stretches from the Continental Congress to the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln. Fehrenbacher shows that the Constitution itself was more or less neutral on the issue of slavery and that, in the antebellum period, the idea that the Constitution protected slavery was hotly debated (many Northerners would concede only that slavery was protected by state law, not by federal law). Nevertheless, he also reveals that U.S. policy abroad and in the territories was consistently proslavery. Fehrenbacher makes clear why Lincoln's election was such a shock to the South and shows how Lincoln's approach to emancipation, which seems exceedingly cautious by modern standards, quickly evolved into a "Republican revolution" that ended the anomaly of the United States as a "slaveholding republic."

From *Library Journal* Was the Constitution, one of our nation's most revered documents, designed to provide for the protection of slavery, the country's greatest disgrace? This study, begun by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Fehrenbacher (*The Dred Scott Case*), addresses this highly significant and controversial topic. Completed after Fehrenbacher's death by McAfee (history, California State Univ., San Bernardino), the work concludes that the Constitution's framers did not intend to protect slavery but that, from 1789 to 1861, the federal government most often acted to protect the institution. Moreover, when Lincoln was elected in 1861, slaveholding states, no longer sure of Constitutional guarantees, seceded from the Union. This final work by a distinguished authority on the Constitution, slavery, and Lincoln reviews federal debate, compromise, and foreign policy surrounding slavery from the early republic to the 1860s. It will be read by specialists and is recommended for larger academic libraries. Theresa McDevitt, Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* Before his death in 1997, Fehrenbacher was professor of history at Stanford and an eminent Civil War and Lincoln scholar. McAfee, a former student of Fehrenbacher's, is a professor of history at California State University. They are dealing with a frustratingly complicated question: prior to the Civil War, did the federal government and the U.S. Constitution actively support the institution of slavery, or did they merely tolerate and protect it as the result of political compromises reached to placate the slaveholding South? Of course, for abolitionists the issue was simple--the U.S. Constitution was a sinful, proslavery document, a "covenant with death." For these authors, however, the issue was murkier than that. Many of the Founding Fathers despised slavery, and even some southern slaveholders both hoped and expected the institution to wither away. Ante-bellum Constitutional scholars could not even agree that federal, rather than state, law protected the rights of slaveholders. The portrait of Lincoln presented here is particularly interesting, effectively contradicting the revisionist view that he was, at best, a lukewarm opponent of slavery. Jay Freeman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved "The Slaveholding Republic not only advances our knowledge of the critical relationships of slavery to the American government, placing it in perspective and explaining its meaning, but it also helps frame contemporary debates over the perennial question about the relative power of the nation and the locality. One could hardly ask for more."--Ira Berlin, *The Washington Post* A fitting complement to Don Fehrenbacher's prize-winning book, *The Dred Scott Case*. With his hallmark of careful research and precise language, Fehrenbacher convincingly shows how domination of the federal government by slaveholding interests shaped a Constitution that

was originally neutral toward slavery into a bulwark of the peculiar institution. The election of Lincoln in 1860 brought this domination to an end, causing the South to create a new slaveholding republic that plunged the nation in war."--James M. McPherson, author of *Battle Cry of Freedom*"The portrait of Lincoln presented here is particularly interesting, effectively contradicting the revisionist view that he was, at best, a lukewarm opponent of slavery."--Jay Freeman, *Booklist*"Engagingly written, thoughtfully conceived, and filled with flashes of insight. Here is a compelling contribution to the ongoing debate about the nation's ends and means, its better angels, and its fundamental law."--Phillip Shaw Paludan, author of *"A People's Contest": The Union and the Civil War*"A major historian addresses a major theme in the late Don Fehrenbacher's *The Slaveholding Republic*. Rigorously based on the original sources, this book accurately and soberly relates the shameful story of how the federal government treated human beings as property."--Daniel Walker Howe, Rhodes Professor of American History, Oxford University"This work will stand as Fehrenbacher's most important."--*Journal of Southern History*"Don Fehrenbacher has left us a splendid monument to a life lived well in history. The culmination of a half-century of his scholarship, this book vindicates the United States Constitution and its framers from the opprobrium of establishing slavery. *The Slaveholding Republic* flows with Fehrenbacher's luminous thought and his fair, judicious judgments. What a magnificent testament it is."--William M. Wiecek, Syracuse University School of Law