



Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South: A Brief History with Documents (Bedford Cultural Editions Series)

Paul Finkelman

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Within decades of the American Revolution, the Northern states had either ended slavery or provided for its gradual abolition. Slavery, however, was entrenched in the South and remained integral to American politics and culture. Nationally, it was protected by the U.S. Constitution, federal laws, and Supreme Court decisions, and slaveowners dominated all three branches of the federal government. From the time of the Revolution until the Civil War (and beyond), Southern thinkers offered a variety of proslavery arguments. This body of thought—based on religion, politics and law, economics, history, philosophy, expediency, and science—offers invaluable insights into how slavery shaped American history and continues to affect American society. In this volume, Paul Finkelman presents a representative selection of proslavery thought and includes an introduction that explores the history of slavery and the debate over it. His headnotes supply a rich context for each reading. The volume also includes a chronology, a selected bibliography, and illustrations.

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