



# Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West (Jeffersonian America)

*John Craig Hammond*

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Most treatments of slavery, politics, and expansion in the early American republic focus narrowly on congressional debates and the inaction of elite "founding fathers" such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. In *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West*, John Craig Hammond looks beyond elite leadership and examines how the demands of western settlers, the potential of western disunion, and local, popular politics determined the fate of slavery and freedom in the West between 1790 and 1820.

By shifting focus away from high politics in Philadelphia and Washington, Hammond demonstrates that local political contests and geopolitical realities were more responsible for determining slavery's fate in the West than were the clashing proslavery and antislavery proclivities of Founding Fathers and politicians in the East. When efforts to prohibit slavery revived in 1819 with the Missouri Controversy it was not because of a sudden awakening to the problem on the part of northern Republicans, but because the threat of western secession no longer seemed credible.

Including detailed studies of popular political contests in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Missouri that shed light on the western and popular character of conflicts over slavery, Hammond also provides a thorough analysis of the Missouri Controversy, revealing how the problem of slavery expansion shifted from a local and western problem to a sectional and national dilemma that would ultimately lead to disunion and civil war.



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