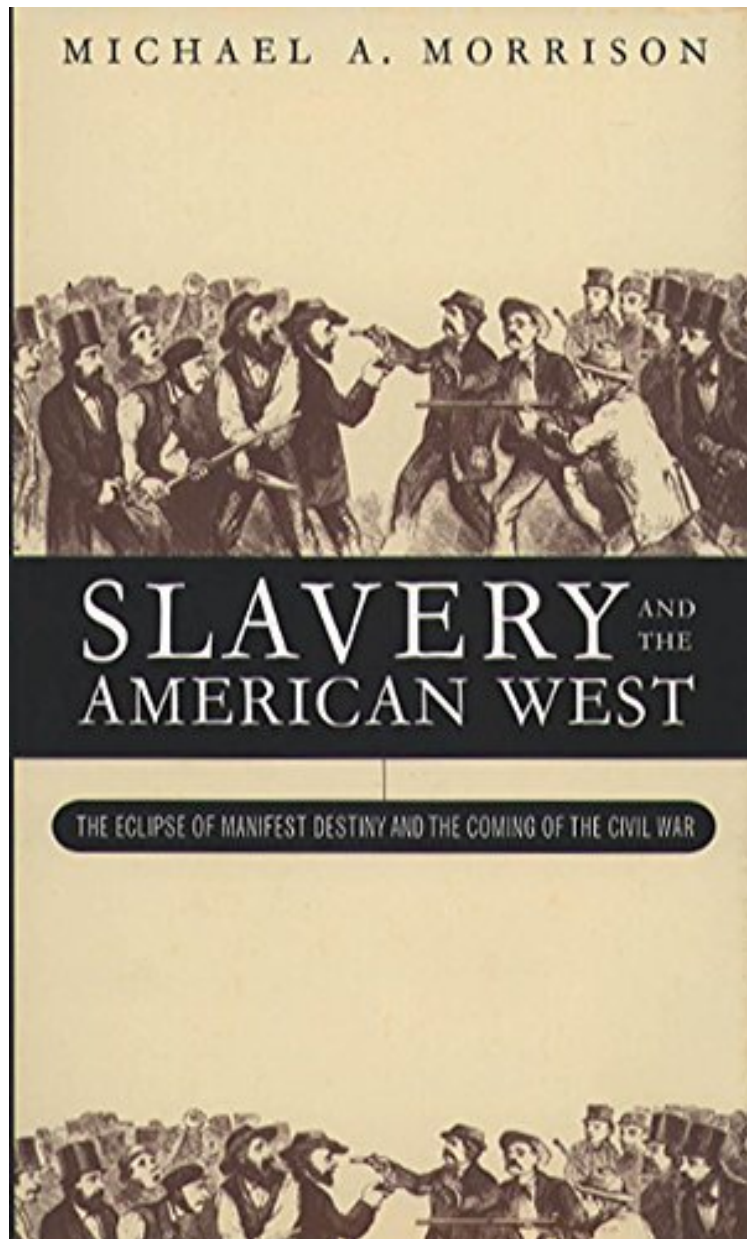


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# Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny

*Michael A. Morrison*

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**Michael A. Morrison : Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny:

4 of 20 people found the following review helpful. a fascinating book on the causes of the Civil WarBy A CustomerAn incredibly well researched, well written account of the causes of the American Civil War! It's actually worth the high price!!!5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An Interesting Re-hash of Old ThoughtsBy Barrie W. BrackenIn his introduction the author tells us "this book examines the relationship between the territorial issue in the origins of the American Civil War. This story is familiar; this telling has not.... The debate between Democrats and Whigs over Texas in 1844 were based on economics and divided the parties along national lines. By 1860, the struggle over westward expansion and settlement issued in sectional arguments and a fragmented political system. This transformation is the story here and told.[p. 4]"The expansionists quickly realized that the problem with moving the boundaries of this country westward was going to be slavery. And not so much slavery itself, but demagoguery, used by radicals on both sides to inadvertently hinder the progress of the westward movement. The author quotes the extreme expansionist Thomas B. Stevenson, "it is not, I fear, either the actual status of the actual settlement of the slavery question that the antagonistic agitators really wish to effect. It is the use they can make of it as it exists."[p.1] The acquisition of Texas and the subsequent territory obtained through the Mexican War became the hobbyhorse of the extremists during the 1840s. The 1850s opened a decade of extreme agitation on both sides of the question of opening territory or closing it forever to the peculiar institution. "Republicans [the North] used slavery to define broadly remaining and limits of freedom not only within the North's free labor economy but, more important, within the nation's republican political state."[p. 167] In the South the European class system was extolled by some of the most radical proslavery elements. A major portion of the expansionist program was the example to be set by a union of the nation reaching from sea to sea. It is because the South felt so strongly toward the Union that states rights activists were compelled to remind their southern cohorts, "the Federal Union is not a god -- it is a human institution. So long as it answers the hands of its creation, it should be and will be carefully preserved. When it fails those ends, it should be discarded."[p. 184]In 1856 James Buchanan, the second worst president this country has endured, entered the fray. Stephen A. Douglas, the famous Chicago politician of the Lincoln Douglas debates, decried the sectionalism of the Republicans. He maintained that the founding fathers, recognizing the diversity of economics and social institutions of the several states, and established a union of the fundamental right that every state could do as he pleased without his neighbors interfering. The Compromise of 1850, the Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act all reaffirmed the right of the state to settle its own local problems and decide what is best for its free existence. The Democratic Party attempted as far as possible to allow this operation. And Douglas, one of the major proponents of expansionism, defeated his own goal by not recognizing the importance of the slavery issue to the westward movement. Most people wanted a union as extended as possible, but half of them, not especially for humanitarian purposes but rather economic conditions, were dead set against the expansion of slavery into these areas, these new territories to be carved for the Empire.The author goes on to state, "because secession had transformed the sectional conflict over the territories into an ominous controversy over the preservation of the Union, Republicans refuse to sustain the latter by conceding their principles on the former. It is a view that, the issue of 1860 -- 61 was 'not union or disunion; but new guarantees to slavery or disunion.'"[p. 274] this comment pretty much sums up what the author has said in the whole book. His promise in the introduction to connect expansionism and slavery can probably be written off as poetic enthusiasm. He writes a very good book combining the two subjects but offers nothing really new. Readers who are already acquainted with this period in our history won't find anything very new. Someone new to the field will find an excellent introduction to the general subject of slavery and its effect on the westward movement. It fails to separate the political, economic, social aspects of this time in American history.I give this book 4 stars because it is well-written, well researched, and the author faces the same problem that we all do in writing on a time has been so well covered by so many for so long. The fifth star is withheld at the fault of the publisher. The format of the book and the text make it very difficult to read this book without strain I hope when a reissue the book is our hope that they will continuously something will be done to correct this fault.3 of 30 people found the following review helpful. KUDOS TO MR. MORRISON!By A CustomerIt is apparent that Mr. Morrison spent many long hours slaving over this book. It is well written, interesting, and a must have for civil war buffs. I only wish Mr. Morrison would write more books. It's heartwarming to see that Mr. Morrison credits his parents Al Joan Morrison, and his siblings - Chris, Nancy, Jim, and Tony with the fortitude, intelligence and support to get this book completed. Keep up the good work, Mr. Morrison. I want to read more of your books in the future!

Tracing the sectionalization of American politics in the 1840s and 1850s, Michael Morrison offers a comprehensive study of how slavery and territorial expansion intersected as causes of the Civil War. Specifically, he argues that the common heritage of the American Revolution bound Americans together until disputes over the extension of slavery into the territories led northerners and southerners to increasingly divergent understandings of the Revolution's legacy. Manifest Destiny promised the literal enlargement of freedom through the extension of American institutions all the way to the Pacific. At each step--from John Tyler's attempt to annex Texas in 1844, to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, to the opening shots of the Civil War--the issue of slavery had to be confronted. Morrison shows that the Revolution was the common prism through which northerners and southerners viewed these events and that the factor that ultimately made

consensus impossible was slavery itself. By 1861, no nationally accepted solution to the dilemma of slavery in the territories had emerged, no political party existed as a national entity, and politicians from both North and South had come to believe that those on the other side had subverted the American political tradition.

A strong book that is thoroughly and copiously documented. "Kansas History" Serious historians will find Morrison's book well worth reading. "Military" "A welcome study, a well-written authoritative work that provokes new answers to old but scarcely exhausted questions." "Slavery and Abolition" "Elegant, witty, and learned, "Slavery and the American West" is the finest book written on the 1850s since David Potter's classic study. "Civil War History" "A thoroughly researched, carefully reasoned account of antebellum politics. . . . This book is an intellectual tour de force." "North Carolina Historical" "A welcome study, a well-written authoritative work that provokes new answers to old but scarcely exhausted questions." "Slavery and Abolition" A thoroughly researched, carefully reasoned account of antebellum politics. . . . This book is an intellectual tour de force. "North Carolina Historical" "Elegant, witty, and learned, "Slavery and the American West" is the finest book written on the 1850s since David Potter's classic study. "Civil War History" Slavery and the American West shows in exhaustive detail just how the controversy over the expansion of slavery grew increasingly bitter and divisive until it provoked the departure of the lower South states in response to Lincoln's election in 1860 on a platform of containing slavery.--New York of Books Morrison's vigorous, thoroughgoing examination of the slavery extension issue, along with his ringing assertion of its significance, will insure that the underlying drama at work in the political arena during the 1840s and 1850s will always be given its rightful place in future accounts of the coming of the Civil War.-- s in American History Serious historians will find Morrison's book well worth reading. It captures the key events that led to civil war while superimposing them on a framework of western expansion.--Military A strong book that is thoroughly and copiously documented. . . . Slavery and the American West brings a range of fresh insights that will help historians rethink the conceptual framework of antebellum politics.--Kansas History A welcome study, a well-written authoritative work that provokes new answers to old but scarcely exhausted questions about the origins of America's greatest upheaval.-- Slavery and Abolition This book is a masterpiece. . . . Elegant, witty (mystery fans will note a good number of Sherlockian allusions), and learned, Slavery and the American West is the finest book written on the 1850s since David Potter's classic study of two decades past.--Civil War History A thoroughly researched, carefully reasoned account of antebellum politics. . . . This book is an intellectual tour de force.--North Carolina Historical Michael Morrison's important new book shows how expansionist appeals to the new nation's 'manifest destiny' at first subsumed and mitigated, but ultimately exacerbated sectional antagonisms. Slavery and the American West is a fresh and provocative contribution to our understanding of the process of party disorganization and sectional mobilization that brought the union to its final crisis.--Peter S. Onuf, University of Virginia This book is a masterpiece. . . . No historian who pretends to understand the sixteen-year countdown to Civil War will be able to ignore it.--Civil War History From the Inside Flap A comprehensive study of how slavery and territorial expansion intersected as causes of the Civil War. Specifically, the disputes over the extension of slavery into the territories led to divergent understandings of the legacy of the American Revolution, the Union, and republican government.