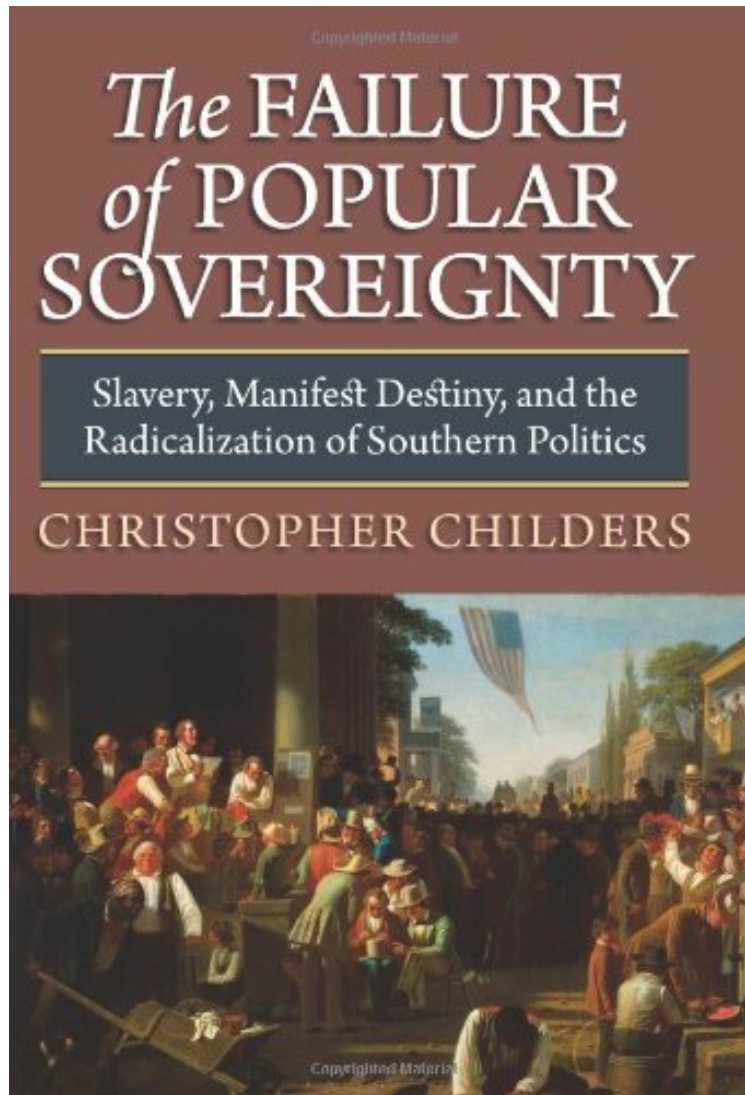


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# The Failure of Popular Sovereignty: Slavery, Manifest Destiny, and the Radicalization of Southern Politics (American Political Thought (University Press of Kansas))

*Christopher Childers*

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**Christopher Childers : The Failure of Popular Sovereignty: Slavery, Manifest Destiny, and the Radicalization of Southern Politics (American Political Thought (University Press of Kansas))** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Failure of Popular Sovereignty: Slavery, Manifest Destiny, and the Radicalization of Southern Politics (American Political Thought (University Press of Kansas)):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read!By Stephen YostThe Failure of Popular Sovereignty: Slavery, Manifest Destiny, and the Radicalization of Southern Politics (American Political Thought) (Hardcover)Christopher Childers has written a "must read" for any person wanting to learn more about popular sovereignty and its contributions to the rise of sectionalism before the start of the Civil War. The author provides a step by step approach in his book which provides a clear picture of the events, participants, and the unintended consequences of their actions. The research is outstanding and provides the reader with insights and the "thinking on the streets" by using quotes from contemporary newspapers and citizens. The author leaves no stone unturned as it relates to the topic. The maps are timely and beneficial to the reader. The book is thought provoking and should not be considered just another book on the Civil War.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent!By History ProfAn excellent book on the connections between national politics and the implementation of popular sovereignty in the West.

As the expanding United States grappled with the question of how to determine the boundaries of slavery, politicians proposed popular sovereignty as a means of entrusting the issue to citizens of new territories. Christopher Childers now uses popular sovereignty as a lens for viewing the radicalization of southern states' rights politics, demonstrating how this misbegotten offspring of slavery and Manifest Destiny, though intended to assuage passions, instead worsened sectional differences, radicalized southerners, and paved the way for secession. In this first major history of popular sovereignty, Childers explores the triangular relationship among the extension of slavery, southern politics, and territorial governance. He shows how, as politicians from North and South redesigned popular sovereignty to lessen sectional tensions and remove slavery from the national political discourse, the doctrine instead made sectional divisions intractable, placed the territorial issue at the center of national politics, and gave voice to an increasingly radical states' rights interpretation of the federal compact. Childers explains how politicians offered the idea of local control over slavery as a way to appease the South—or at least as a compromise that would not offend the states' rights constitutional scruples of southerners. In the end, that strategy backfired by transforming the South into a rigid sectional bloc dedicated to the protection and perpetuation of slavery—a political time bomb that eventually exploded into Civil War. Tracing the doctrine of popular sovereignty back to its roots in the early American republic, Childers describes the dichotomy between believers in local control in the territories and national control as first embodied in the 1787 Northwest Ordinance. Noting that the slavery extension issue had surfaced before but obviously not been resolved, he shows how the debate over this issue played out over time, complicated the relationship between the federal government and the territories, and radicalized sectional politics. He also provides new insight into such topics as Arkansas and Florida statehood, the early phases of California's statehood bid, and the emergence of John C. Calhoun's common property doctrine. Laced with new insights, Childers's study offers a coherent narrative of the formative moments in the slavery debate that have been seen heretofore as discrete events. His work stands at the intersection of political, intellectual, and constitutional history, unfolding the formative moments in the slavery debate to expand our understanding of the peculiar institution in the early republic.

“By analyzing the evolution of southerners’ attitudes toward popular sovereignty from the 1770s to the Civil War, Childers has found much that is fresh and important to say about this venerable topic. A most welcome contribution indeed.”—Michael Holt, author of *The Fate of Their Country* “A thoughtful volume that brings fresh and keen insight to the role played by the doctrine of popular sovereignty in the unraveling of the American Union.”—Lacy Ford, author of *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* “A well-written, well-organized, and close study of the multiple and conflicted meanings of popular sovereignty.”—Michael A. Morrison, author of *Slavery and the American West* “Childers significantly advances our understanding of how inter- and intrasectional debates about popular sovereignty shaped southern politics throughout the conflict over slavery's expansion.”—Civil War History “[A] thorough, nuanced, comprehensive, fair-minded, and original study.”—American Political Thought