

LIBRARY JOURNAL

March 15, 2005

BLUMROSEN, ALFRED W. & RUTH G. BLUMROSEN. *Slave Nation: How Slavery United the Colonies & Sparked the American Revolution*. Sourcebooks. 2005. 352p. index. ISBN 1-4022-0400-0. \$24.95. HIST

Civil rights lawyers Alfred and Ruth Blumrosen use the Somerset case of 1772, which freed all slaves in Britain, to illustrate how the price of freedom from English rule ensured continued bondage for slaves in the American South. The Blumrosens argue that Southerners feared that the ruling might be extended to the entire empire and therefore joined the move to win independence from Britain. Many of the Founding Fathers, most notably John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, were willing to compromise their principles to assure support from the Southern colonies. The Blumrosens systematically review some of the most important documents of the revolutionary period, including the Virginia Resolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Articles of Confederation, to discuss the political maneuverings and subtle revisions and rewordings that protected slavery without appearing hypocritical to the world. Although the authors occasionally get off track, this well-researched book is sure to be controversial. Recommended for libraries with an interest in the revolutionary period and slavery.

– Robert Flatley, Kutztown Univ., PA