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**A Country United by Slavery:
Historians Unveil A Shocking Truth About Our Nation's Past**

“A radical, well-informed and highly original reinterpretation of the place of slavery in the American War of Independence.”

— David Brion Davis, Yale University

Slave Nation: How Slavery United the Colonies and Sparked the American Revolution (ISBN: 1-4022-0400-0; February 22, 2005; History; \$24.95 U.S.), by Alfred W. and Ruth G. Blumrosen, is a chilling, fascinating, and carefully documented account of the role slavery played from the beginnings of our country in drawing the South and North together in seeking freedom from Great Britain. It continues with the role slavery played at the First Continental Congress in 1774, in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the Articles of Confederation of 1777 and the adoption of the Constitution and the Northwest Ordinance in 1787.

The authors highlight the significant events in this process, including:

- How the freeing of Somerset, a black slave in London, moved the South into the vanguard of the Revolution by a judicial declaration that slavery was “so odious” that a runaway black slave in Great Britain had to be freed.
- Jefferson’s immortal, “All men are created equal...” was carefully crafted to avoid a filibuster by slave holders like the Virginia filibuster of 1776, when George Mason had proposed a declaration that “all men are *born* free and equal...”
- At the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the South feared the North would leave the Convention over the issue of slavery. In a compromise, the southern states agreed to slavery’s prohibition north of the Ohio River, leading to adoption of the Northwest Ordinance. This national division continued to widen, culminating in the Civil War.

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The bottom line: slavery was protected by our Revolution, and was lawful everywhere in the colonies by agreement by the 1774 agreement in Philadelphia between the North and South. That agreement was changed in 1787, to allow Congress to draw a line between slave and free territories. This principle carried forward until the 1850s.

The general view of history has been that slavery was not an issue in the revolutionary period. This has “absolved” the North of any responsibility for its continuance. The authors take the position that the North was also an important participant in maintaining American slavery.

Slave Nation challenges America to recognize that our country was born in large part to protect black slavery and then, in 1787, to limit it. White indentured servitude was limited to a number of years. Black slavery was life long and hereditary. The role of slavery in our birth period—a role historians have been remiss to recognize—helps us to understand why problems of race today often appear intractable: our nation was born accepting the evils of slavery.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alfred W. Blumrosen and the late Ruth G. Blumrosen have both worked in the field of employment discrimination law, assisted in establishing the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, consulted with federal, state and local agencies, and written extensively on employment-related matters.

Alfred Blumrosen is the Thomas A. Cowan Professor of Law Emeritus at Rutgers University Law School, Newark, New Jersey, specializing in labor and employment law, with a long history in enforcement of Civil Rights. He received his BA and JD degrees from the University of Michigan, and has taught at Rutgers Law School since 1955. He is also the author of *Modern Law: The Law Transmission System and Equal Employment Opportunity* (1993), *Black Employment and The Law* (1971), and numerous law review articles. He lives in New York City.

Ruth Blumrosen was an adjunct professor of law at Rutgers University Law School, Newark and former associate professor at Rutgers University Graduate School of Management. She received her BA and JD degrees from the University of Michigan. Ruth wrote groundbreaking articles on wage discrimination against women, and argued the case establishing the constitutionality of state fair housing laws.