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“*Contesting Slavery* certainly makes a substantial and original contribution to the history of the early republic. The essays, by a wide range of expert scholars, achieve a felicitous balance of new research and synthesis.”—**Elizabeth Varon, University of Virginia**

“John Craig Hammond and Matthew Mason are at the cutting edge of their profession, and these essays represent the best of the new scholarship on slavery, sectionalism, politics, and abolitionism.”—**Michael A. Morrison, Purdue University**

## **CONTESTING SLAVERY**

### The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the Early American Republic

Recent scholarship on slavery and politics between 1776 and 1840 has wholly revised historians’ understanding of the problem of slavery in American politics. The essays contained in **CONTESTING SLAVERY (July 2011; UVA Press)** build on the best of that literature to reexamine the politics of slavery in revolutionary America and the early republic.

Conflicts over the “peculiar” institution of slavery were present during this period, but they have been marginalized in the conventional historical narrative because they were not solely about slavery, nor were they coded in the highly moralistic, polarizing language characteristic to the sectional crisis preceding the Civil War. The essays within this volume force historians to rethink the multiple meanings of slavery and antislavery to a broad array of Americans, from free and enslaved African Americans to proslavery ideologues, from northern farmers to northern female reformers, from minor party functionaries to political luminaries such as Henry Clay. In the end, **CONTESTING SLAVERY** both establishes the abiding presence of slavery and sectionalism in American political life and challenges historians’ long-standing assumptions about the place, meaning, and significance of slavery in American politics between the Revolutionary and antebellum eras.

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July 2011

336 pages, 6 1/4 x 9 1/4, 1 map

\$49.50 S cloth ISBN 978-0-8139-3105-0 / \$49.50 S e-book ISBN 978-0-8139-3117-3