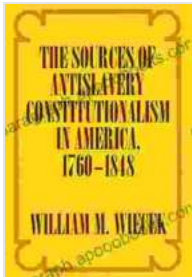


# The Sources of Antislavery Constitutionalism in America, 1760-1848



## The Sources of Anti-Slavery Constitutionalism in America, 1760-1848 by William M. Wiecek

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 861 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
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The abolition of slavery in the United States was a long and arduous process, but it was one that was ultimately successful. The roots of antislavery constitutionalism in America can be traced back to the colonial era, when the first stirrings of opposition to slavery began to emerge.

### The Influence of Enlightenment Ideas

The Enlightenment was a period of intellectual ferment that swept Europe and America in the 18th century. Enlightenment thinkers emphasized the importance of reason, individual rights, and natural law.

These ideas had a profound impact on the development of antislavery thought in America. Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke and Thomas Jefferson argued that all men are created equal and that no one should be held in bondage.

## **The Rise of Abolitionist Movements**

The first organized abolitionist movements in America emerged in the late 18th century. These movements were led by religious leaders, such as the Quakers and Methodists, who believed that slavery was a sin.

Abolitionists used a variety of tactics to promote their cause. They wrote pamphlets and articles, gave speeches, and organized petitions and protests.

## **The Legal Arguments for Abolition**

In addition to their moral arguments, abolitionists also made legal arguments against slavery. They argued that slavery was a violation of the natural rights of individuals and that it was unconstitutional.

These legal arguments were based on the principles of natural law and the Constitution. Natural law is the idea that there are certain rights that all human beings possess simply by virtue of being human. These rights include the right to life, liberty, and property.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the United States. It guarantees certain rights to all citizens, including the right to due process of law and the right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment.

Abolitionists argued that slavery violated both natural law and the Constitution. They argued that slaves were not free to contract or to own property. They also argued that slaves were subject to cruel and unusual punishment.

## **The Abolition of Slavery**

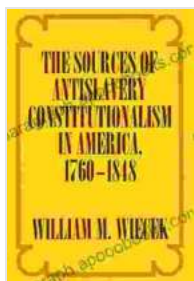
The abolition of slavery in the United States was a gradual process. It began with the passage of the Northwest Ordinance in 1787, which prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory.

In 1808, Congress passed the Act Prohibiting the Importation of Slaves, which made it illegal to import slaves into the United States.

The abolition of slavery was finally achieved with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1865.

The abolition of slavery in the United States was a major victory for the cause of human rights. The roots of antislavery constitutionalism in America can be traced back to the Enlightenment, the rise of abolitionist movements, and the legal arguments made by abolitionists.

These factors combined to create a powerful force for change that ultimately led to the abolition of slavery in the United States.



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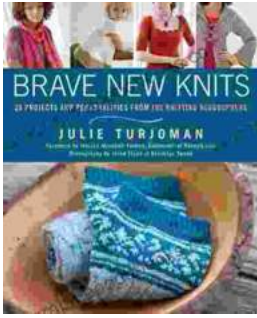
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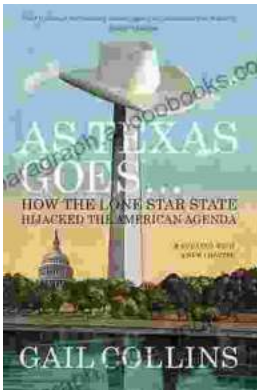
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