



Masters, Slaves, and Exchange: Power's Purchase in the Old South (Cambridge Studies on the American South)

Kathleen M. Hilliard

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This book examines the political economy of the master-slave relationship viewed through the lens of consumption and market exchange. What did it mean when human chattel bought commodities, "stole" property, or gave and received gifts? Forgotten exchanges, this study argues, measured the deepest questions of worth and value, shaping an enduring struggle for power between slaves and masters. The slaves' internal economy focused intense paternalist negotiation on a ground where categories of exchange - provision, gift, contraband, and commodity - were in constant flux. At once binding and alienating, these ties endured constant moral stresses and material manipulation by masters and slaves alike, galvanizing conflict and engendering complex new social relations on and off the plantation.



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