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Artisan Workers in the Upper South Petersburg, Virginia, 1820-1865

By L. Diane Barnes

Louisiana State Univ Pr. Hardcover. Condition: New. 253 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.0in. x 1.1in. Though deeply entrenched in antebellum life, the artisans who lived and worked in Petersburg, Virginia, in the 1800s--including carpenters, blacksmiths, coach makers, bakers, and other skilled craftsmen--helped transform their planter-centered agricultural community into one of the most industrialized cities in the Upper South. These mechanics, as the artisans called themselves, successfully lobbied for new railroad lines and other amenities they needed to open their factories and shops, and turned a town whose livelihood once depended almost entirely on tobacco exports into a bustling modern city. In *Artisan Workers in the Upper South*, Diane Barnes closely examines the relationships between Petersburg's skilled white, free black, and slave mechanics and the roles they played in southern Virginia's emerging market economy. Barnes demonstrates that, despite studies that emphasize the backwardness of southern development, modern industry and the institution of slavery proved quite compatible in the Upper South. Petersburg joined the industrialized world in part because of the town's proximity to northern cities and resources, but it succeeded because its citizens capitalized on their uniquely southern resource: slaves. Petersburg artisans realized quickly that owning slaves could increase the profitability of...



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