documented, this book only suggests but does not provide what we need on this important subject.

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Jennifer L. Anderson, *Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012. Pp. 424. $35.00 cloth (ISBN 978-0-674-04871-3).
doi:10.1017/S0738248013000333

New World mahogany became a "transatlantic cultural phenomenon" in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as a confluence of biological, cultural, economic, and political factors transformed short-leaf West Indian mahogany (*Swietenia mahagoni* Jacquin) and big-leaf Honduran mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla* King) into objects of desire for Anglo-American and British consumers (19). The slave-driven production networks that facilitated the supply of mahogany across the British Empire expanded within the context of the mercantilist system, and thereby situate the history of this commodity trade within larger intra- and inter-imperial disputes over land, labor, and natural resources. The mahogany trade linked cabinetmakers, enslaved Africans, furniture buyers, itinerant woodcutters, merchants, naturalists, planters, sailors, and ship captains through networks of commercial exchange as well as attendant discourses of class, gentility, race, and refinement.

In her book, *Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America*, Jennifer Anderson traces mahogany's mid-eighteenth-century rise to the preferred furniture wood in Anglo-America and its mid-nineteenth-century fall, as technological advances quickened the pace of exploitation and, consequently, forest depletion. In following the harvesting, transport, and finishing of the wood from forests in the Bay of Honduras to parlors across North America, Anderson demonstrates that "fulfilling consumers' desires for mahogany came at a high price" (17). Mahogany production shared practices of land and labor usage with that of other slave-produced tropical plants, but the wood never became a staple crop of large-scale plantation cultivation. Rather, mahogany challenged "the Enlightenment idea that humans could master the living world" with its limited availability, durability, and increasing scarcity (249). In reconstructing this long-distance commodity chain, Anderson suggests that mahogany's ecological and human consequences force a scholarly reconceptualization of Enlightenment thought, the consumer revolution, imperial conflicts such as the Seven Years' War, and the Age of Revolution.

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North American consumers had embraced mahogany as a luxury by the 1760s, which Anderson expertly recovers through the records of merchants and cabinetmakers. The 1721 Naval Stores Act accelerated the existing economic and social trends of the consumer revolution to create a market for mahogany. Consumption, however, remained inextricably tied to expanding plantation agriculture in the Caribbean. As land exhaustion and deforestation limited Jamaican mahogany supplies by the 1770s, competition intensified over remaining timber resources. The collapse of sustainable tropical forestry spurred the British Land Commissioners to impose policies of land privatization and forest preservation in the Caribbean that increasingly displaced local inhabitants, often by force, from their native lands and ways of life. The British search for alternative sources of mahogany strengthened long-distance imperial infrastructure, but simultaneously heightened the uncertainties associated with extending trade into new territory. Many of those involved in this search around the circum-Caribbean also participated in the transatlantic slave trade, furthering the close relationship between enslaved labor and mahogany production. Trade in mahogany linked individuals such as Newport merchant Aaron Lopez, Captain James Card, and the enslaved huntsmen charged with locating mahogany trees in the forests of Belize. From these examples, Anderson demonstrates how logging practices at once shaped the character of slavery and daily life in the Honduras Bay settlement, and influenced the commercial calculations of merchants in Rhode Island.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, new apprehensions about quality control and sourcing accompanied the expansion of the American furniture-making industry. Steam-powered mass production and machine-cut veneers suddenly made mahogany more accessible than ever before. Despite this seeming democratization, mahogany still "mattered as a marker of social status" and increasingly became a symbol of racial difference amid overarching concerns about unstable social hierarchy (280). Marketing schemes obscured mahogany's ties to labor and violence, and in early America, the wood became estranged even further from its natural origins. The consumption of mahogany, however, continued to take an ecological toll on producing regions, while the commodification of mahogany was linked rhetorically to the objectification of African Americans. In Anderson's telling, by the late nineteenth century, mahogany reflected America's growing self-confidence as the wood took on more cultural power as an "abstract concept" propping up the American racial regime through "racialized, romanticized, or elegiac *ideas*" (294).

Political economy and geopolitics, such as British tax policy and the 1763 Treaty of Paris, play large roles here; but, as a material culture specialist, Anderson also offers a close reading of furniture, portraits, and woodworking techniques to illustrate the beauty and destruction of the mahogany trade. This sets *Mahogany* apart from other commodity studies. Despite such an attention to detail, the study cries out for more robust quantification to determine whether the trade's significance *in situ* rests with its uniqueness or its representativeness. Nonetheless, Anderson

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makes clear that recognition of the mahogany trade proves crucial to understanding patterns of imperial reorganization in the eighteenth-century Atlantic. Those interested in the ambiguous structural and discursive legacies of consumption, empire, and long-distance trade will find much to admire in this work.

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Jeannine Marie DeLombard, *In the Shadow of the Gallows: Race, Crime, and American Civic Identity,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2012. Pp. 456. $59.95 (ISBN 978-0-8122-4422-9).
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With American incarceration rates higher than those of any other nation, with more than 2,000,000 people in the country behind bars, and nearly 5,000,000 more on probation or parole, the flurry of recent cultural, political, and academic attention paid to mass incarceration is fitting, and long overdue. Much of this discussion has focused on the disproportionate impact of this process that has fallen on communities of color. Examining the histories of race, criminality, and citizenship in the interplay of print and legal culture from the eve of the American Revolution through the Civil War, Jeannine DeLombard's remarkable analysis pushes back the familiar plantation-to-prison narrative and argues that African American civic identity emerged, as the title of her book suggests, *In the Shadow of the Gallows.*

DeLombard begins her study in the late colonial and early national period, an era when masters listed slaves alongside livestock in wills, and advertised them as commodities for sale in newspapers. Americans considered slaves—and by extension, free blacks—to be "civil non-entities capable only of criminal agency" (9). Thus, DeLombard argues, black personhood was activated almost exclusively through (real or perceived) criminality. A slave's arrest, trial, and sentencing granted him (retroactive) membership in the polity.

If the legal fiction of slaves' mixed character—as both humans and property—located black personhood in criminality, it was through the popular medium of printed scaffold confessionals that the criminous slave asserted a civic presence. Rooted in Puritan Execution Day ritual, gallows literature through the nineteenth century detailed the condemned's path to the scaffold. The convicted slave's confession, DeLombard writes, "simultaneously recounts his ascent . . . from the civil death of the slave, via the culpable legal personhood of the felon, to the civil standing of the self-possessed, contracting individual" (97–98). An African American criminal convicted of a property crime, for example, would be

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