

glass companies. Floyd deals with this briefly when she notes it is a story of revival on a future industry in Toledo.

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doi:10.1017/eso.2017.20

Published online August 10, 2017

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Calvin Schermerhorn. *The Business of Slavery and the Rise of American Capitalism, 1815–1860*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015. xi + 336 pp. ISBN 978-0-300-19200-1, \$65.00 (cloth).

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Calvin Schermerhorn's *The Business of Slavery* demonstrates the interdependent and symbiotic relationships connecting the expansion of race-based slavery to the ascent of capitalism and nation-building in the United States. The establishment and development of commercial cotton cultivation from the Carolinas to Texas, and commercial sugar cultivation in Louisiana, fueled the domestic slave trade. Schermerhorn convincingly asserts that the domestic slave trade explains the rise of American capitalism—a sophisticated system of trade dependent on investment, credit, debt, and future profits—better than any other economic activity in the antebellum period. He does this by investigating the economic and institutional forces that moved over a million enslaved African Americans from the Upper South to the Deep South in the five decades preceding the Civil War. He examines how this forced migration south and west relied on networks of entrepreneurs, investors, bankers, shippers, merchants, slave traders, politicians, legislators, and railroad operators. Schermerhorn illustrates that the business of slavery was national, not regional, and that investments in and profits from human bondage included financiers, banks, and transportation companies based in the northeast. In fact, the growth of the plantation economy depended on the economic activity of an array of people who lived in states that had declining populations of enslaved people, or had abolished slavery, or were in the process of doing so. Schermerhorn spotlights the economics of the domestic slave trade, but he never allows one to forget its human cost: the violence and destruction visited upon black people in the pursuit of profit, progress, and modernization.

The stories of individual entrepreneurs who made their wealth in the business of slavery are the subjects of the first three chapters.

Francis Rives and his partners, descendants of Upper South slaveholders, made a small fortune by marching enslaved people a thousand miles from Virginia to Mississippi, where they were sold for double their purchase price. Austin Woolfolk, a small-time Baltimore “negro buyer,” used persistent and exaggerated advertising and cultivated relationships with shipping merchants to build one of the largest slave-trading firms in the nation. John Marsh, a failed New Jersey dry-goods merchant, became a Louisiana sugar planter by tapping into a judge-run smuggling ring that sold enslaved New Jerseyans out of state and purchased the labor contracts of desperately poor black New Yorkers. Chapter 4 uses the establishment and dissolution of the Consolidated Association of the Planters of Louisiana bank to describe how the expansion of slavery led to financial innovations in banking—specifically, the practice of extending credit without requiring the surrender of property or assets. This practice allowed plantations and enslaved people to be used as collateral in obtaining loans to expand commercial sugar and cotton cultivation. Chapters 5 and 7 follow the careers of, respectively, Isaac Franklin, a slave-trading mogul, and Charles Morgan, a shipping tycoon. Franklin built a Virginia-based slave-trading network that spanned more than one thousand miles and transported as many as one thousand enslaved people per year in a ship he owned; moreover, his firm extended credit to slaveholders who could not afford to buy enslaved people outright. Morgan’s New York-based shipping company dominated the Gulf Coast shipping lane between New Orleans, Louisiana, and Galveston, Texas. The expansion of slavery to Texas drove the growth of his business. Chapter 6 examines the extension of slavery, the expansion of capitalism, and American imperialism from the vantage point of Solomon Northup, a kidnapped free black northerner who was enslaved in the South for thirteen years. Throughout the narrative, Schermerhorn questions how the business of slavery affected the lives of enslaved people; the Northup chapter explores this question and divulges the horror, violence, emotional stress, displacement, dislocation, and death that the operators of the domestic slave trade inflicted upon black people.

The federal government’s support of the business of slavery is highlighted throughout the text. Schermerhorn contends that federal policy was essential to the growth of race-based slavery and the economic revolution that accompanied it. In 1808 the slave trade ban gave Upper South slaveholders a monopoly on the sale of enslaved people. The removal of Native Americans opened up land for commercial agriculture. Investments in infrastructure and technology—roads, rivers, railroads—were essential to the spread of slavery to new territories, as were government contracts awarded to private companies.

The tariffs placed on foreign sugar made Louisiana sugar production competitive and profitable. The oversight, or lack thereof, of banking institutions made possible the massive extension of credit used to buy people, lands, and seeds, which allowed small enterprises to become large firm and companies.

Schermerhorn's *The Business of Slavery* effortlessly blends economic, social, and geo-political history and is a critical addition to the growing scholarship on slavery and capitalism. Through meticulous details and succinct prose, Schermerhorn explains how the business of slavery enriched individuals, institutions, and the nation as a whole. This social-economic history is intensely personal, fleshing out the backgrounds, personalities, and lives of its subjects. Schermerhorn simultaneously notes the creativity of slavery's businessmen and highlights the human cost of their economic ambition: the violent and morally devastating expansion of race-based slavery. He illuminates what is for many Americans the very uncomfortable truth that the United States of America became an economic power on the backs of enslaved black people, and the ingenuity, hard work, and entrepreneurial spirit celebrated in the popular narrative of the successful American businessman was made possible by a system of extreme and brutal exploitation.

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doi:10.1017/eso.2017.24

Published online July 18, 2017

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Scott Sumner. *The Midas Paradox: Financial Markets, Government Policy Shocks, and the Great Depression*. Oakland, CA: Independent Institute, 2015. xv + 507 pp. ISBN 9-781598-131505, \$37.95 (cloth).

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The causes of the Great Depression remain an active debate between historians and economists. Often fueling that debate, which can expand to include what ended the Depression, is current policy debates on finance and labor policies. What is the appropriate response to a financial downturn? Starting in the 1930s, policy makers and scholars have examined a variety of causes that include, but are not limited to, World War I and the economics of the Treaty of Versailles, the policies of 1920s Republican administrations in the United States, new Wall Street practices, Herbert Hoover's policies, and Franklin Roosevelt's